



# TOURISM IN INDIA PROSPECTS AND CHALLENGES



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## Contents

Foreword

v

Preface

vii

Sl.No.	Title of the Paper	Page No.
1.	<b>Eco-Tourism and Sustainable Development</b> - <i>Rippala swamy</i>	1
2.	<b>Eco Tourism Development in the United Mahaboobnagar Dist. Telangana: Its Impact on Socio-Economic Development of the People</b> - <i>Munnoor Anjaneyulu &amp; M. Rani</i>	7
3.	<b>Ecotourism in Sustainable Development</b> - <i>C.Jammanna</i>	17
4.	<b>Ecotourism in Telangana - An Over View</b> - <i>Mrs. M. Sagarika Dasa</i>	23
5.	<b>Tourist's Attraction Path Model Approach in Eco-Tourism Market: A Study of National Parks in Telangana State</b> - <i>Dr. Ramakrishna Bandaru</i>	34
6.	<b>Sports (Adventure Eco-Tourism Scope in Telangana State)</b> - <i>K.Ranga Rao</i>	48
7.	<b>Role of Environmental Education in Eco-tourism in India</b> - <i>J.Triveni</i>	53
8.	<b>A Case Study in Eco-tourism in Telangana State</b> - <i>D.Padmavathi &amp; P. Bala Padma</i>	64
9.	<b>Touring: Incentive for Motivating Employees</b> - <i>Ms. Madhuri Thakur &amp; Ms. Shatabdi Das</i>	69
10.	<b>Socio-Economic Impacts of Tourism in India : A Case Study of Telangana</b> - <i>Maheshwaram Karuna Sree</i>	76
11.	<b>Tourism in Andhra Pradesh with Special Reference to Historical Monument - Nagarjunakonda</b> - <i>V.Mallikarjuna</i>	81



Sl.No.	Title of the Paper	Page No.
12.	<b>Impact of Cultural Tourism in Telangana</b> - <i>Ms. Rahmath unnisa, Ms. Manjari Harnoor &amp; Mrs. CH.NagaSurvachala</i>	86
13.	<b>Faith, Spirituality and Cultural Heritage: Glimpses of Commerce and Economy of Kumbh Mela in Tirthraj Prayag</b> - <i>Dr. Vinita Pandey</i>	95
14.	<b>Community Based Cultural Heritage Tourism in Rural Areas - A Tool for Socio- Economic &amp; Sustainable Development of Tourism in India</b> - <i>Dr.B.Swajan</i>	105
15.	<b>Adventure Tourism in Telangana: Untapped Potential and Promotion</b> - <i>Syeda Fahmeena Bibi</i>	113
16.	<b>Marketing of Adventure Tourism</b> - <i>V.Vijaya Kumar</i>	120
17.	<b>Pilgrimage Tourism in Telangana: Problems and Prospects</b> - <i>Dr. Gujjeti Tirupathi</i>	126
18.	<b>India - The Land of Faith and Pilgrimage - with Special Reference to Tourism</b> - <i>Ms. Tulja Bhavani</i>	139
19.	<b>Food Tourism: An Effective Marketing tool for Development of Tourism in Telangana State</b> - <i>Dinesh Kumar.Gattu</i>	146
20.	<b>Women at Work: Exploring the Issues and Challenges of Women Employees in Travel and Tourism</b> - <i>Dr.Krishna Chaitanya</i>	155
21.	<b>Public Libraries and the Role of Information Services in the Development of Tourism</b> - <i>Alagandula Mahendar</i>	161
22.	<b>The Role of Information and Communication Technology in Tourism</b> - <i>Naresh Gandhasiri</i>	164
23.	<b>Growth of Tourism in India - A Study</b> - <i>Dr. B. Sandhya Rani</i>	168
24.	<b>Tourism in Telangana: An Analysis</b> - <i>Mrs. G. Nalini</i>	176
25.	<b>A Bibliometric Analysis of Research Publications on Tourism Research: 2007-2017</b> - <i>Gadde. Karunakar</i>	184

Sl.No.	Title of the Paper	Page No.
39.	<b>Tourism in India Impact of Incredible India Campaign</b> - <i>M. Sulochana &amp; V. Santhoshi</i>	284
40.	<b>Impact of Climate Change on Tourism</b> - <i>M.Chandrakalavathi</i>	291
41.	<b>Ecotourism in India: Its Impact, Prospects and Challenges</b> - <i>Neha Raghuvanshi</i>	297



# Tourism in India Impact of Incredible India Campaign

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## Abstract

*Tourism industry plays a major role in any country's economic development. Tourism has become the world's largest industries generating wealth and employment. Tourism benefits India in three ways- employment, foreign currency and infrastructure development. "Incredible India" Athidhi Devo Bhava" the marketing slogan that attracts tourists to India from around is resulting in incredible results. The campaign projected India as an attractive tourist destination by show casing different aspects of Indian culture and history like yoga, spirituality, etc. The campaign has been conducted globally and received appreciation from tourism industry observers and travelers alike. The percentage increase in foreign tourist arrivals has gone up to 17.2% in June 2017 while in 2012 it was 4.3%. Incredible India, initiative of Government of India is an international marketing campaign to promote tourism in India. Incredible India undertook such a marketing strategy that not only comprised traditional marketing media mix but also integrated online marketing such as that Ministry of Tourism could reach the rising number of people who research their actual travel data. The campaign also came in for criticism from some quarters. Some observers felt that it had failed to cover several aspects of India, which would have been attractive to the average tourist. This study is an attempt to study the impact of incredible India campaign in promoting tourism in India.*

*Keywords: Tourism, Incredible India, Digital Tourism, Ministry of Tourism*

## Introduction

India is a country with a history of civilization expanding over more than 5000 years. The soul of Vedic, Islamic and Western cultures are intermingled in Indian civilization. Mark Twain beautifully quoted India as the cradle of human race, the birthplace of human speech, the mother of history, the grandmother of legend and the great grandmother of tradition. In terms of tourism potential, India is the essence of the world. No single country in the world has been endowed with such diversity and as varied geographical and climatic conditions as in India. Tourism plays vital role in the economic development of a country. The tourism is the second largest foreign exchange earner in India. For the past decade beginning 2002, Ministry of Tourism has been extensively promoting India tourism through the Incredible India Campaigns in the domestic and international markets. This encompasses



a wide range of marketing activities, including advertising, public relations, promotions, participation in trade and consumer travel shows, production of brochures and related material and area familiarization tours by travel industry sellers. The specific elements of promotional efforts undertaken overseas include advertising in the print and electronic media, participation in fairs and exhibitions, organizing seminars, workshops, road shows and India evenings, printing of brochures and collaterals, brochure support / joint advertising with travel agents / tour operators, inviting the media and travel trade to visit the country under the hospitality program.

### Statement of the problem

The highly successful Incredible India campaign was initially launched by the government of India in 2002. The aim was to showcase the natural and architectural treasure of the country, the geography and the varied culture and develop India as a foremost International tourism destination. The campaign was the brainchild of Amitabh Kant, the then Joint Secretary at the Ministry of Tourism. Previous to the launch of this initiative, the Government of India had not made any concerted efforts to bring in more tourist to the country. The country has all the right ingredients - good food, rich culture, beautiful historic monuments, spirituality, and diversity - to lure travelers from all over the world. Yet India lags behind Asian tourist hubs like Thailand, Malaysia, South Korea and China. The reasons for India's struggle to attract visitors are many ranging from infrastructure to formalities and security concerns.

### Objectives of the study

1. To study the various policy measures initiated by the Government of India to promote tourism in the country,
2. To examine various activities Incredible India Campaign in the country and abroad
3. To analyze the impact of Incredible India campaign in increasing Foreign Tourists Arrivals and Foreign Exchange Earnings in India.

### Research Methodology

The present study is of analytical and exploratory nature. Therefore, the data is collected from secondary sources such as Annual Reports, Ministry of Tourism, Government of India and World Tourism Organization, Various Journals and newspapers like The Hindustan Times, The Times of India, The Economic Times, and The Financial Express.

### Period of Study

As the Incredible India campaign started in the year 2002, the study covers a period of 14 years i.e from 2002 to 2015. It studies the growth of foreign tourist arrivals and foreign exchange earnings during this period.

### Policy Initiatives by the Government

In 1982, National Tourism Policy was formulated in a closed economy with stringent licensing procedures. The policy was formulated in an environment of a closed economy with rigid licensing procedures. The policy did not emphasize the role of private sector, and foreign investment was not



envisaged. The policy also did not lay adequate emphasis on domestic tourism and the need for product development. The main objectives of the new policy are:

1. To position tourism as a major engine of economic growth
2. To position India as one of the global brands to reap benefits from the global tourism trade and to promote the untapped potential of India as a tourist destination.
3. The new policy is built around the 7-S Mantras of Swaagat (welcome), Soochanaa (information), Suvidhaa (facilitation), Surakshaa (security), Sahyog (cooperation), Sanrachnaa (infrastructure) and Safaai (cleanliness).
4. The policy proposes the inclusion of tourism in the concurrent list of the Constitution so that both the central and state governments may participate in the development of the sector.
5. Stress on development of tourism in sustainable and responsible manner
6. Emphasis on technology enabled development in tourism
7. Focus on promotions in established source markets and potential markets, which are contributing significantly to global tourist traffic, with targeted and country specific campaigns

**Incredible India Campaign:** "Incredible India" is an international marketing tourism campaign run by India's Ministry of Tourism to promote tourism in the country. V. Sunil and Amitabh Kant, Joint Secretary, Ministry of Tourism conceptualized the first marketing initiative of its kind, Incredible India in 2002. The primary objective of the branding exercise was to create a distinctive identity for the country. This resulted in the iconic 'Incredible India' logo. The 'Incredible India' campaign was an integrated marketing communication effort to support the Indian tourism industry's efforts to attract tourists to the country. The campaign projected India as an attractive tourist destination by showcasing different aspects of Indian culture and history like yoga, spirituality etc. It was conducted globally and has received appreciation from tourism industry observers and travelers alike. The campaigns have been launched in three different formats of television, print and online media, with a series of commercials and advertisements. The advertisements have brought attention to the different facets and hidden treasures in India's geographic and socio-cultural diversity, belying myths prevalent in the popular mind in many parts of the world. The Incredible India Campaign has been awarded for its ingenuity and ranked the 'Highest Recall Advertisement' worldwide by Travel and Leisure.

In order to position and maintain tourism development as a national priority activity, the Incredible India campaign formulated the following objectives.

1. To enhance and maintain the competitiveness of India as a tourism destination.
2. To improving India's existing tourism structure and expanding these to meet new market requirement.
3. To create world-class infrastructure.
4. To develop sustained and effective marketing plans and programs.

In 2002, the tourism ministry engaged the services of Ogilvy & Mather (India) (O & M) to create a new campaign to increase tourist inflows into the country. The "Incredible India" campaign



launched with a series of television commercials and print advertisements. The campaign was based on striking pictures and themes related to India's cultural legacy. The aim of the campaign was to "project India as a unique opportunity for physical invigoration, mental rejuvenation, cultural enrichment and spiritual elevation".

**Year wise activities of Incredible India Campaign are as under**

2002-03	The campaign began in middle of tourism crisis in 2002 started off on a low note with an outlay of just Rs. 15 crore. At that time all outlay was divided into 18 foreign offices, and hotel occupancy rates were 20%
2004-05	It focused on spiritual tourism, which resulted in a 28.8% increase in tourist traffic. It also won gold in (PATA) Pacific Asia Travel Association and the Bombay Ad club. In March 2005, a TV campaign "Let us go to India" was launched in Japan and a campaign "Walk with Buddha" in Thailand and China. Two schemes were launched. The "rural tourism" scheme had the twin objectives of highlighting the uniqueness of the arts, crafts, and heritage of rural India and helping the rural folk benefit from tourism. Similarly, under the "Priyadarshini" scheme, the ministry made efforts to bring more women into tourism-related areas. The ministry has spent Rs. 1bn in the year 2005
2006-07	In the year 2007-08, The Colors of India campaign emphasized India's diverse cultural spectrum. Featuring breathtaking images and color-based headlines such as Coffee Brown and Red Hot, the campaign was launched globally in 71 leading newspapers and magazines. Using traditional and interactive media – print, outdoor and the internet – India was positioned as a unique and vibrant destination for tourists.
2008-09	The India Tourism 2008 campaign was rested on the experiences of those who came to visit India as tourists and stayed back to make India their home. It takes a special bond with the country and its people to give up everything and set up home. The creative idea employed a simple device that stated the country of their birth, followed by the text that said "Motherland India".
2009-10	The domestic campaign focused on the concept of "Athidhi Devo Bhava" welcoming tourists to India. The Athithi Devo Bhava (the guest is God) program was a social awareness initiative of the ministry to sensitize the general Indian public to the importance of treating foreign tourists with respect and courtesy.
2016-17	Incredible India 2.0 campaign is focused on specific promotional plans, with greater emphasis to be given to social media, whereas, 'Adopt A Heritage' Project plans to entrust heritage sites to the public sector and private sector companies and individuals for the development of tourist amenities. The President on 37th edition of "World Tourism Day" also launched "New Incredible India Website"



Year wise Activities Incredible India Campaign in Foreign Countries

2005	Several road shows were organized as a part of "Incredible India" campaign in Milan, Paris and cities in Serbia and other East European countries, A tram in Berlin, Germany was painted with the "Incredible India" colors and it reportedly became the talk of the town for the top ten countries for tourists in India.
2007	<p><b>India Now</b> It was 3 months campaign to display the culture and economy. An estimated one million visitor to London participated in these events. There was also a 16% jump in inbound tourism from the U.K</p> <p><b>India @60, New York 2007</b> It was launched in New York from 23<sup>rd</sup>-26<sup>th</sup> September 2007 to coincide with the UN General Assembly Session.</p> <p><b>ITB Berlin 2007</b> In March 2007 the global brand, campaign was extended to the ITB Berlin. Campaign used entire city as a canvas covering it with billboards, branding on taxis and buses and exhibitions.</p>
2009	<p><b>Los Angeles Campaign</b> For Incredible India campaign in LA, the names of famous Hollywood movies are used as headlines and were set against images from India.</p>
2010	<p>Incredible India gone digital in the year 2009-10. The Ministry of Tourism has appointed Crayons Advertising and Ignitee Digital Solutions to handle the creative duties of for the online campaigns of the Incredible India! Account. The size of the account was pegged at Rs. 20 crore.</p> <p>The 'Incredible India' campaign attracted maximum number of foreign tourists from the United States, followed by the United Kingdom in 2010. The visitors from the US and the UK stood at 9, 31,292 and 7, 59,494, respectively. A total 5.78 million foreign tourists visited India in 2010 as against the previous year's 5.11 million.</p>
2017	<p>The Embassy of India in Cairo organized the month-long "Incredible India!" campaign, in coordination with the India Tourism Office in Dubai, the Cairo Governorate, and the Cairo Public Transport Authority. As part of the campaign, 12 buses of transport authority will highlight various tourist destinations in India, including culture, festivals, monuments, landscape, wildlife, people and food.</p>

The table below shows the number of foreign tourist arrivals and foreign exchange earnings in India from 2002-2016

Table 1

Foreign Tourist Arrivals (FTAs), Foreign Exchange Earnings in India from 1999-2016 (till June)

Year	FTA in millions	Percentage (%) change over the previous year	FEE in Rs.crores	Percentage (%) change over the previous year
2002	2.38	---	15.064	---
2003	2.73	14.3	20.729	37.6
2004	3.46	26.8	27.944	34.8
2005	3.92	13.3	33.123	18.5
2006	4.45	13.5	39.025	17.8
2007	5.08	14.3	44.360	13.7
2008	5.28	4.0	51.294	15.6
2009	5.17	2.2	53.700	4.7
2010	5.78	11.8	64.889	20.8
2011	6.31	9.2	77.591	19.6
2012	6.58	4.3	94.487	21.8
2013	6.97	5.9	107.671	14.0
2014	7.68	10.2	123.320	14.5
2015	8.03	4.5	135.198	9.6

Source: i) Bureau of Investigation

ii) Ministry of Tourism, Govt. of India 2002-2015

During the period 2002 to 2009, the country witnessed an increase in foreign tourist arrivals from 2.38 million to 5.17 million. Due to global slowdown, terrorist activities, H1N1 influenza pandemic, etc., growth rate in foreign tourist arrivals fell during 2009. The year witnessed a contraction in global tourism by 4.3 percent. From the year 2012 to 2015 there is 237.4 % increase in foreign tourist arrivals.

The foreign exchange earnings have shown continuous increase from 2002 after Incredible India campaign started. The foreign exchange earnings were Rs. 15.064 crores in 2012 and in 2015 it has gone up to Rs. 135.193 crores. There is a 797% increase in foreign exchange earnings.

On examining the performance of Incredible India campaign over a period of 14 years, it is observed that Incredible India campaign is successful in increasing the foreign travelers into India and also in enhancing the foreign exchange earnings.

The Ministry of Tourism undertakes various promotional and marketing activities including advertising to promote tourism products and destinations in major international markets overseas. Several of these advertisements are released to cover many countries and regions and are not country specific. The expenditure on this account is incurred from the budget which is allocated



under the Restructured Scheme of Overseas Promotion & Marketing Development Assistance (OPMD).

Financial Year	Expenditure (Rs. in Crore)	FEE in Rs.	FTA In millions
2009-10	242.67	53700	5.17
2010-11	249.02	64889	5.78
2011-12	238.50	77591	6.31
2012-13	182.83	94487	6.58
2013-14	195.29	107671	6.97
2014-15	166.35	123320	7.68
2015-16 (till date)	24.99*	135193	8.03

\*Provisional, Source: Ministry of tourism, Govt. of India

From the above table it is observed that in spite of decrease in the expenditure on campaign there is continuous increase in the foreign tourist arrivals and foreign exchange reserves. Though the expenditure has reduced from 242.67 crores in 2009-10 to 166.35 crores in 2014-15 there is an increase of foreign tourist arrivals from 5.17 lakhs to 8.03 million. In the same way foreign exchange earnings from 53,700 crores to 135,193 crores. This is due to the strong impact made by the incredible India campaign.

In spite of appreciations from Travel industry analysts and tour operators, some of the industry observers differed in their opinions on the positioning of India in the campaign. G.S. Murari, Director Fidelis Advertising and Marketing Pvt.Ltd opined that since India was not a unidimensional country like Singapore or Maldives, using a word like 'incredible' to describe India as a whole was not appropriate. He argued that a single word could never describe a multifaceted country like India. Though there is increase in the tourist arrivals following the campaign, India the seventh largest country in the world in area has received only a fraction of the number of the tourists than a city like Hong Kong. The Incredible India also suffered from the criticisms that it could not appeal to the average tourist and it has not covered all the aspects.

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