Indian Tourism
Indian tourism has come of age. It is time that it moves forward in the right direction. Analysis of authors in the book allows for a deeper, objective perspective based on what possible competitors in the world are doing – a must-read for tourism practitioners and students.

G Kamala Vardhana Rao
Director-General, Ministry of Tourism, Govt of India

I appreciate the authors for coming up with such a scholarly contribution to a pertinent thematic segment of Indian tourism. Lately, more and more diasporic communities visit their homelands, perhaps reroot their identities. Although different generations of the Indian diaspora have different reasons for travelling to India, which needs to explore. Lucid and topical, this book will be useful for students and scholars not only in the tourism sector but also for political studies, sociology, diaspora studies and international relations.

Sat Prakash Bansal
Professor of Tourism and Vice-Chancellor,
Central University of Himachal Pradesh, India

Indian tourism has come of age, and it is time that it is researched and analysed in depth to develop in the right direction. The book offers an in-depth analysis of Indian tourism and provides a comprehensive perspective based on global competitiveness. The Editors should be congratulated for providing a dynamic overview of tourism in India. The book is a must-read for tourism students, academics, researchers and professionals interested in Indian tourism.

Dimitrios Buhalis
Professor, Bournemouth University Business School;
Visiting Professor at the School of Hospitality and Tourism Management, The Hong Kong Polytechnic University

It is delightful reading this book on Indian tourism. Anyone interested in Indian tourism must read this book to get insight into how global tourism academics look at Indian tourism. Contributors have made an objective analysis. In this book, the
Editors have created content that any academic on Indian tourism would like to discuss in their class. This book presents an outside view of tourism dynamics in India as understood by global Indo-centric researchers.

*Rajiv Mehra
President, Indian Association of Tour Operators*

The external narrative is essential to get an insight into the functioning of the Indian Tourism System, and this collection fills the void on it. The selection of a wide array of scholarly works is appreciable and would be valuable for researchers and practitioners in the field. I congratulate the team on the book.

*Manjula Chaudhary
Professor of Tourism and Dean,
Academic Affairs, Kurukshetra University;
Ex-Director, Indian Institute of Tourism and Travel Management*
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Indian Tourism: Diaspora Perspectives

EDITED BY

NIMIT CHOWDHARY
Jamia Millia Islamia, India

SUMAN BILLA
United Nations World Tourism Organisation, Spain

And

PINAZ TIWARI
Jamia Millia Islamia, India
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About the Contributors

**Shraddha Bhatawadekar** is affiliated with the DFG-Research Training Group ‘Cultural and Technological Significance of Historic Buildings’ at the Brandenburg University of Technology, Cottbus-Senftenberg, Germany, from where she has pursued her doctoral degree in heritage conservation. Shraddha is an archaeologist by training and has worked in the field of heritage conservation, management and education for over a decade. She has gained international research experience through prestigious fellowships like the Fulbright-Nehru Academic and Professional Excellence Fellowship, USA (2015–16), and Alexander von Humboldt German Chancellor Fellowship, Germany (2016–17). Shraddha is also actively engaged in heritage outreach activities and training for diverse groups.

**Suman Billa** is an officer belonging to the Indian Administrative Service and is currently Director, Technical Cooperation & Silk Road at the United Nations World Tourism Organisation. Before taking up this assignment, he has worked in several capacities in the tourism sector. As Joint Secretary in the Ministry of Tourism, Government of India, he spearheaded the Swadesh Darshan project for developing tourism infrastructure with around 1 billion USD, launched the Incredible India V2 campaign, started the India Travel Mart and was Chairman of the India Convention Promotion Bureau. As Secretary, Kerala Tourism, he championed the Responsible Tourism initiative which won the UNWTO Ulysses Award for Excellence and Innovation in Tourism in 2014. He has also worked as Director of Kerala Tourism in an earlier stint.

**Jacques Bulchand-Gidumal** is a Professor at the Institute of Sustainable Tourism and Economic Development at the University of Las Palmas de Gran Canaria, Spain. He teaches Digital Business, Digital Tourism and Digital Entrepreneurship courses. His research interests are related to the implementation of information systems and information technology in organisations with a focus on digital tourism, social media, artificial intelligence, and service automation. He has written more than 100 papers, has published in the top journals in the tourism field, such as *Tourism Management*, *Annals of Tourism Research*, *Current Issues in Tourism* and *Journal of Destination Marketing and Management*. He holds a Bachelor in Computer Sciences and a PhD in Business Management. He has more than 15 years of experience in the public and private sectors in areas related to the planning and management of information systems. He advises several organisations regarding innovation and entrepreneurship.
Ekta Chauhan is currently pursuing her PhD in World Heritage Studies at Brandenburg Technical University, Cottbus (Germany). She has previously done a Master’s in Public Policy from National Law School of India University (Bangalore) and a Bachelor’s in History from St. Stephen’s College, Delhi University. Her doctoral thesis focuses on the role of communities in managing heritage tourism in New Delhi. Her research interests lie in community development, heritage landscape management, oral history and tourism development.

Nimit Chowdhary is an Engineer with an MBA and a PhD in Management. He has more than 27 years of postgraduate teaching and research experience. He has been a Full Professor for close to 14 years serving at Mizoram University, IITTM (Gwalior, Noida and Nellore), and currently working as a Professor in the Department of Tourism and Hospitality Management at Jamia Millia Islamia, New Delhi. Recently, Arizona State University accorded him the honour of Adjunct Professorship. He is a recipient of the AICTE Career Award for Young Teachers; SIDA Fellowship, Sweden; Linnaeus Palme Exchange Programme Grants, Sweden; Scholars’ Grant (EMTM), Erasmus Mundus, Europe, among others. His research has focused on tourism, travel, service experiences and transformational travel. He is a referred researcher in many international journals. He has researched for UGC, ICSSR, AICTE and Ministry of Tourism, Government of India, worth around US$ 5 million. He has supervised 15 PhDs, authored eight books, edited four books and contributed more than 125 papers.

Anya Diekmann is Professor in Tourism at the Université Libre de Bruxelles (Belgium) since 2006. After her studies in Archeology and working as an archaeologist for 10 years, she joined the tourism department in 1997 where she did her PhD on the relationship between heritage protection and tourism management. Anya has collaborated on numerous national, European and international research projects related to cultural and social tourism in Europe and India. In addition, for over a decade, Anya teaches extensively in India (Mumbai) and Vietnam. Her research and publications include work on social tourism and cultural tourism with a particular focus on heritage, urban slum and ethnic tourism in Europe and India.

Bindiya Dutt is a student in the faculty of Media and Social Sciences at the University of Stavanger and has written an article titled ‘The wellness modification of yoga in Norway’ in the International Journal of Spa and Wellness published by Taylor & Francis.

Ankita Ghosh holds a PhD in Hospitality Management from the University of Nevada, Las Vegas. She has published in top-tier peer-reviewed hospitality journals and presented at international academic conferences. She taught undergraduate courses at the Middle Tennessee State University and University of Nevada Las Vegas. She received her Master’s Degree from Kent State University in Hospitality and Tourism Management.

Shaheed Khan is academically qualified and armed with postgraduate degrees in History, Tourism, Business Administration and Law. His focus areas have been
Tourism, Mergers and Acquisitions and Human Resources. He also has a micro-specialisation in Strategy Management from the Indian Institute of Management Kozhikode and a Corporate Program in Leadership Management from the Harvard School of Publishing. He brings to the table multiple facets of functioning that supports any area of academics and practice in the corporate world. Having worked in the Government, Private and Social Sectors, Shaheed has a broad understanding of Tourism, Travel and Hospitality (TTH). Shaheed is the Head, Research and Training, with Dharthi Learning Centre, Bangalore. He is also an Adjunct Faculty for a Leading Deemed to be University and engages in in-class sessions for Corporates in Leading IT and manufacturing companies of India in the domain of Strategy, M&A, Tourism and Human Resources.

Jung Ha Kim is Associate Professor, Department of Airline Service and Tourism, Kyung-In Women’s University, Incheon (South Korea). She was a visiting scholar at MDS University, Ajmer, India, and has travelled India from Ladakh and Sikkim to Kerala. Her research interests include international tourism, tourism policy, and tourism marketing.

Anil Padhra is an Associate Professor at the University of West London, UK, and a Senior Researcher at the University of Cambridge, UK. He has a background in aviation and meteorology and has authored several research papers on the impacts of climate change on aviation and tourism. Since 2019 he has been a member of the expert team studying the impacts of climate change and variability on aviation at the UN World Meteorological Organisation. Anil is a Visiting Associate Professor in aviation management at the Kazimieras Simonavicius University in Lithuania and an approved IATA instructor in Airline Revenue Management. He has previously worked within the aviation industry with National Air Traffic Services (NATS), UK, EasyJet Airlines and British Airways.

Mrinal Pande is an anthropologist whose research, publication and interests are centred on performance, media representations and body-sensory complexities of religion, particularly Hindu practices. Her doctoral research work (2012–15), in the DFG initiative of the Excellence Cluster, ‘Religion and Politics’ at the University of Muenster, focused on voice as a medium of popular religiosity within Hindu performances. Her postdoctoral project (2015–19) at the Collaborative Research Centre 1150 ‘Cultures of Decision-Making’ (DFG) investigated the socially constructed practice of matrimonial decision-making including language, identity, memory and culture. She has taught courses on the anthropology of decision-making, narratives, migration, marriages in India and media anthropology.

Swathi Ravichandran is a Professor and Founding Director for the Cedar Fair resort and attraction management programme at Bowling Green State University. Before this, she was the faculty of the hospitality management programme at Kent State University for 14 years. She has published extensively in prestigious peer-reviewed journals and generated $1.6 million in grants for projects related to enhancing student access to higher education and degree completion. The 131st general assembly of Ohio named her one of “Ohio’s finest educators.”
Ravichandran has a doctorate in foodservice and lodging management from Iowa State University.

Gunjan Saxena holds a chair in Marketing at the Faculty of Business, Law and Politics, University of Hull, United Kingdom. She has published extensively on Integrated Rural Tourism. Her current research focuses on creative enterprise in marginal communities with a particular thrust on how women owned small and micro firms. Email: g.saxena@hull.ac.uk; +44 1482-463970.

Amit Sharma is Professor and Associate Director of the School of Hospitality Management, and Director of the Food Decisions Research Laboratory at Pennsylvania State University. He is also a Senior Research Associate at the University of Johannesburg (South Africa), Visiting Professor at Institut Paul Bocuse (France) and a former Visiting Professor at the Kyung Hee University (South Korea). Dr Sharma teaches finance and economics, and his interdisciplinary research focuses on Cost–Benefit Analysis, small business financing and economics of the food service system. He has published his research in top-tier hospitality and tourism journals and received funding from the USDA and World Bank Group. He is founding editor of ICHRIE Research Reports, past President (2017–18) of International Council of Hotel, Restaurant, and Institutional Education (ICHRIE), President of the International Association of Hospitality Financial Management Educators (IAHFME) (2020–23) and creator and host of the allinfoodz podcast featured on iTunes.

Nitasha Sharma is a tourism geographer and works as a Research Affiliate at the University of Groningen, Netherlands. Her research broadly examines the multiple and contested representations of South Asia and Europe through projects situated in critical tourism studies and human–environment interactions. Her research interests are tourist psychology and behaviour; authenticity; ethics and moral issues in tourism; rituals and sacred geographies; sustainability issues in tourism; and postcolonial studies. She has published several peer-reviewed research articles on dark tourism in India using critical theory-based approaches.

Freeda Maria Swarna M has over 15 years of experience in the Sustainability, Conservation Science, Environment, Communities and Tourism domains. Her strength lies in combining Applied Sciences and the integration of sound research with a robust implementation. As Director, Dharthi NGO was nominated to the Karnataka Ecotourism Development Board as a member of the General Body, where during her three-year tenure, she was instrumental in conducting Cumulative Impact assessment (CIA) studies, having consultations with stakeholders for a robust Ecotourism Policy for the State of Karnataka. Freeda is in the process of authoring two books, one on Ecotourism, and has published articles and papers to her credit. With a penchant for writing, she is in the process of putting up her blogsite called https://highwaymybeckoning.com, which will contain impactful stories of her travels, people and places.

Toney K. Thomas is an Assistant Professor in Tourism at the School of Tourism Studies, Mahatma Gandhi University, India. Before his appointment at
Mahatma Gandhi University, Toney has held positions of Associate Professor, Programme Director, Deputy Dean and Head of School in Taylor’s University Malaysia. His main academic endeavour is focusing on tourism research including publications, projects and conferences in the Asian tourism context. His research interest is on Asian Tourism Research, Destination Benchmarking and Tourist Behaviour.

Pinaz Tiwari is a Senior Research Fellow in the Department of Tourism and Hospitality in Jamia Millia Islamia, New Delhi, India. She completed her graduation in Commerce from Delhi University and completed her MBA in Tourism with a specialisation in International Tourism Business. Her research areas are tourists’ behaviour, tourism marketing, destination management and tourism education. She has more than 12 publications to her credit including book chapters in edited books published by Routledge, Palgrave Macmillan, Springer and Emerald, SCOPUS-listed and ABDC-‘A’ category research articles, and conference papers.

Pooja Biswas Rambhakta has a PhD in Economics from the Université Paris 1 Panthéon-Sorbonne. She has two master’s degrees to her credit, in Town & Regional Planning (The University of Sheffield, UK) and Geography (CSRD, JNU). Pooja is an Urban Planner and a Social Scientist with a keen interest in sustainable international development and urban heritage. She specialises in sustainable development, heritage management, cultural conservation, community development, socio-economic studies and inclusive urban planning. She has worked nationally and internationally on multiple and diverse urban projects. She worked on the economic feasibility of conserving private buildings for her Doctoral research titled: ‘Endangered built Heritage: Understanding Economic Viability of Conservation – A Tale of Two Cities’. She is the Co-Founder of ArtH Design Studio and heads the research and development team.

Sowmya Venkat-Kishore has a BA in Economics and Commerce (Bombay University) and a Master’s in Tourism Administration (The George Washington University, D.C.). Having worked with The National Trust for Historic Preservation, Organization of American States, Consulate of Canada and Kuoni Travel, since 2005, she has been with Centennial College, Toronto, Canada, as Faculty (School of Hospitality, Tourism & Culinary Arts) and currently on secondment with their Centre of Faculty Development and Teaching Innovation. An avid researcher, she has received numerous institutional Fellowships and Scholarships of Teaching and Learning and also chairs Centennial’s Research Ethics Board. She is pursuing her Doctoral degree in Management (University of Liverpool, UK) and has previously contributed to the book Indian Tourism: A View From Outside. Sowmya is multilingual, enjoys reading, the creative arts and the outdoors.
India is one of the fastest emerging tourist destinations in the world. Marketed as ‘Incredible India’ by the Ministry of Tourism, Government of India, the country is known for its diversity, cultural values, spirituality and delightful cuisines. The tourism and hospitality sector in the Indian subcontinent has witnessed unprecedented growth, thanks to governmental intervention in marketing and promoting the country as a tourist destination. According to the Ministry of Tourism, Government of India, the foreign tourist arrivals (FTAs) were 10.89 million in 2019, indicating a growth of 3.2% compared to 2018. Likewise, the Foreign Exchange Earnings (FEEs) during 2019 were US$ 29.96 billion with a growth rate of 4.8% compared to the previous year. Undoubtedly, the increased growth unleashed employment opportunities for millions of Indians. Moreover, the promising role of tourism and hospitality is backed by several enabling initiatives like e-visa facility, cleanliness drive, smart city initiative, leveraging adoption of heritage sites to private stakeholders for better management and creating infrastructure along tourist circuits to name a few. But does an increase in tourist footfalls and introducing new schemes indicate the long-term growth of the sector?

India as a tourist destination has fascinated many tourists, researchers and investors primarily because of its varied tourism products. The perspective of looking at India differs by different sectors of society. One of those sectors is the Indian diaspora. During the colonial period, Indians migrated initially to South Africa, Fiji, the Caribbean and Southeast Asia owing to the enormous demand for cheap labour in these regions. However, when the Britishers abolished slavery in the early twentieth century, migrations of skilled and semi-skilled personnel from India became a common phenomenon. Millions of Indians migrated from India to other parts of the world in search of better jobs, increased standard of living and to create a better future for their descendants. According to official reports, the Indian diaspora is present in all continents and regions on the planet – from the Caribbean islands to the Americas, Europe, Gulf countries, South-east Asia and New Zealand. As per the official statistics, the Indian diaspora currently stands at a whopping number of 20 million. Despite living away from their homeland, Indian diasporas are culturally connected to India and often visit the country for several reasons. Some of these are meeting their extended families, attending family functions, transferring property rights, making investments and involving in charitable works and vacations.
Recently, the Government of India lauded the Indian diaspora for their significant contributions in different domains all over the world. Despite adapting to the culture of the foreign land, their individuality is reflected in their work and thoughts. Considering the international tourist arrivals in the country, diaspora forms a considerable part of the overall numbers. Based on the authors’ experience, the people belonging to this section of society vocally discuss and compare the situations in their homeland and foreign lands. The diasporas weave their experiences and often compare them with that of their home country. For instance, an Indian diaspora is very likely to compare Indian cuisine offered at an Indian restaurant in the United Kingdom with that in India. Or maybe, compare the roads and state of tourist infrastructure in India with the United States. Indeed, if you are an Indian, you’ll know that drawing comparison is in our genes!

Giving these comparisons a theoretical lens, the book offers objectivity by including the diaspora’s perception of ‘development’ in the Indian tourism and hospitality sector. With this thought, the editors came up with an idea to critically analyse the situation of the Indian tourism sector and explore the potential from the perspective of the Indian diaspora the world over.

Accordingly, the chapters are structured in a way that would take readers from a macroscopic to a microscopic viewpoint of Indian tourism, and Indian diaspora’s perception of the current and potential state of tourism in the country. Section A discusses the historical development of the Indian tourism sector over the period, growth in the number of tourists as well as governments’ policies and initiatives. Chapter one highlights that despite enormous growth, the metrics, especially the FTAs, are less compared to similar tourist destinations like Thailand, Maldives and Singapore. Chapter two examines several paradigms of the Indian tourism sector that makes it distinct from other countries, such as tourist mechanisms inside the country and various types of tourism industry modelling. The last chapter of section A presents a macro view of the state of research in Indian tourism and hospitality using Bibliographic review, indicating a dearth in addressing several themes and evaluating the effectiveness of Government’s initiatives for sectoral development.

Section B provides an objective view of different tourism products offered in India. It includes wellness tourism, rural tourism, gastronomic tours, urban tourism, smart tourism, heritage walks, dark tourism and responsible tourism practices. The authors have discussed these tourist products extensively and attempted to compare and contrast their potential in the light of technology, COVID-19 and sustainability.

Section C puts forward some contemporary topics for discussion, like the impact of climate change. Chapter 13 elaborates that there is an opportunity for India’s tourism industry to adapt through physical and policy interventions to make India a more competitive and sustainable tourism destination.

COVID-19 occurred when India’s tourism sector was on a strong growth trajectory. Along with other businesses in the service sector, the pandemic posed a serious threat to the survival of the tourism and hospitality industry. The industry suffered huge losses on account of nation-wide lockdowns with subsequent restrictions on the movement of people and transport. Millions lost their jobs,
companies got shut down and destinations observed a situation of zero tourism worldwide. Nevertheless, as the world struggles to survive the COVID-19 pandemic, tourism prepares for resurrection, and encouraging domestic tourism is seen as the first step towards revival. Chapter 14 focuses on domestic tourism and proposes a phased approach for safe tourism, with the 3S (Safety, Security and Sanitation) India campaign and networks between public and private sectors as suggestions for safe tourism amidst COVID-19. To attain long-term sustainability and build resilience in the sector, Chapter 15 discusses several disaster management strategies to be adopted by the Indian tourism sector. The last chapter analyses the relatively low number of international arrivals in India using a multi-perspective approach. It is worth noting that the challenges faced by the tourism sectors of different countries are different. The socio-cultural, economic and political situations vary in emerging countries compared to developed countries. Indeed, not only the promotional but also the revival strategies for tourism and hospitality need tailor-made solutions.

Nimit Chowdhary
Suman Billa
Pinaz Tiwari
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Nimit Chowdhary
Suman Billa
Pinaz Tiwari