



An Analysis of Indian Inbound Tourism Post-9/11

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Abstract

Global travel and tourism were greatly affected by the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks. This study examines how the 9/11 attacks affected inbound tourism in India, including tourist arrival trends, source market changes, and travel destination perceptions. The article identifies short-term interruptions and long-term patterns in tourist behaviour using statistics from the Ministry of Tourism, Government of India, and foreign agencies. The report also examines how government policy, security, and marketing have revived and reshaped India's tourism business. The data imply that strategic positioning and diversity of tourism services helped India recover and boost foreign tourist arrivals after an initial dip. This study examines how global events affect regional tourism economies and emerging destination resilience measures.

Keywords Inbound Tourism, India, September 11 Attacks, Tourism Trends, Travel Crisis Impact

1. Introduction

Inbound tourism involves non-residents visiting a country. Tourism is when people travel and stay in new places for pleasure, business, or other reasons. Over five million international tourists visit India annually, making it one of the top ten destinations. India scored 40th out of 136 countries in the 2017 Travel & Tourism Competitiveness Report. Tourism accounts for 9.6% of India's GDP and 8.1% of employment. Tourism brought in Rs.1,64,485 crores (US\$25 billion) in 2016–17. The 2017 World Travel & Tourism Report predicts India to be the 7th largest tourism economy by 2027. The World Economic Forum's Travel & Tourism Competitiveness Report 2015 placed India 52nd out of 141 countries.

September 11 changed worldwide terrorism in the post-WWII world. Global tourism has suffered since then, mostly due to international security concerns.



Some localities saw a 7–14% drop in inbound arrivals from 2000 after the attacks. Even after September 11, India's international tourist arrivals, especially from the US, continued to climb, making it the third most popular destination for Middle Eastern and Gulf visitors after the US and UK. Tourist arrivals in India have grown rapidly after the assaults, indicating no major impact on incoming tourism. Meanwhile, the Indian government has taken steps to enhance the business and tourism.

Changes in global politics and decision-making have affected foreign travellers' motives and locations. Even after September 11, Indian tourism has grown due to its political activism and diplomatic ties, making it a top tourist destination.

2. Historical context of Indian tourism

From the late 19th century, India attracted 8–10 million tourists a year, mostly from the US, UK, Germany, and France [1]. According to Ministry of Tourism data, Central Asia was a major nationality in the 1950s and 1960s. Leisure, religious, and recreational reasons drove India visits. From New Delhi and Calcutta, most foreigners visited Agra, Jaipur, Kerala, Mumbai (Bombay), Goa, and the North East [2].

3. September 11's Global Tourism Impact

Life and economics were regular until September 11, when the World Trade Centre twin buildings collapsed, unleashing terrorists worldwide and creating an unstable environment. In days or moments, the tourism industry lost everything it had built over a century. After terrorism, wars, and political upheavals, worldwide debates, conversations, and accords on traveler safety and security waned.

The resulting war fears kept tourists home and pushed airlines to slash staff and operations. The USA's tourist revenues, arrivals, days of stay, and spending fell significantly. September 11 affected Indian tourism. Tourism includes travel trade and business, and September 11 may have an immediate detrimental impact on both divisions, albeit the extent is unknown. Tourism accounts for 8% of global employment and loses 11% in boom times. Gross national product also changes. This study narrows its focus on post-2001 inbound tourism in India for several reasons.

4. Post-9/11 Indian Inbound Tourism Trends



International tourists visiting India climbed from 2.38 million in 2001 to 2.78 million in 2002 and 3.16 million in 2003, suggesting a global trend to replace Asia for other locations [2]. International visitor arrivals in India are mostly consistent, although the global economic slump, increased insecurity, and travel restrictions after 9/11 hurt the country. The decrease of key source markets like Japan, the US, and the UK is largely offset by growth from East European, CIS, Arab, and Asian countries. With new markets opening, the top 20 source markets generated 70% of arrivals in 2002 and 2003, although their share is likely to fall.

Average inbound visitor stay dropped from 22.2 days in 2001 to 18.8 days in 2002 and 18.2 days in 2003. Business travel and visiting friends and relatives (VFR) are the main motivations, with VFR arrivals rising by 19% in 2003 and 4.6% in the first trimester of 2004, with some support from the Indian diaspora, which faces travel restrictions.

5. Government Initiatives and Policies

The Indian government amended foreign tourist policies to mitigate the effects of global events on incoming tourism. It streamlined visa application, extended validity to three months, and added ten countries to the Tourist Visa Category [2]. India began a reciprocal 'Open Skies Policy' with eleven nations in 1992, improving air connectivity without discrimination, however it had a restricted direct service policy with only four countries. The policy liberalised bilateral aviation agreements by 2000–2001, allowing Indian airlines to operate beyond capital cities, allow stopovers, and grant fifth or seventh freedom rights on agreed routes. Indian authorities also issued a two-year, renewable multi-entry Tourist Visa that allows 90-day stays every visit, as well as six-month and one-year visas. To boost tourism and lengthen stays, the government has issued e-Tourist Visas to certain nations.

6. Safety and Security

After September 11, 2001, international tourists focused on security during the worldwide travel downturn. The Indian government took many steps to improve tourist safety, which, along with other strategic actions, strengthened inbound tourism [3]. In major cities, transport hubs, heritage sites and other tourist destinations, armed patrols intensified. Major urban centres, hill stations, cultural, historical, and religious sites, international airports, and railway crossroads received special attention.



While fighting terrorism, government agencies also protected against petty theft, scammers, and urban hazards. Tourist-related violence and criminality decreased during this time. To ensure tourist safety, the government took these steps:

- refusing asylum to terrorists and other criminals;
- non-resident weapons bans;
- requiring foreigners to have passports or IDs;
- respecting religious and cultural differences;
- finding and preventing drugs banned in various countries;
- improved monitoring and surveillance.

7. Inbound tourism marketing strategies

India's tourism organisations increased safety and security assurances to regain international visitors' trust. Since September 11, the administration has prioritised health, hygiene, and service delivery, relaunching promotional programs [4]. World-class facilities and services at trans-shipment hubs, hotels, and convention centres were promoted [5]. India's bilateral air services agreements and abroad diplomatic and consular network aided tourism boycotts.

Publicity materials promoted clean, healthful, and comfortable travel and lodging, healthy lifestyle, and the country's rich traditional medical items. Longer-term development strategies emphasised India's ability to accommodate expanding demand for culture, heritage, medical and eco-tourism, spirituality, adventure, and nature-based experiences [2]. Commercially, business meeting and convention services were a priority.

8. Technology Impacts Tourism

Tourism is the most important industry in many third-world nations, including India. Tourism promotion relies on technology. Information technology is crucial to society's change. It has changed life paths and created new industrial models. Learning how to use technology and information to address travel concerns is in demand.



IT has greatly impacted travel and tourism. Tourists use information technology to research places and buy and trade travel products. Travel paperwork were filled out to book flights before the internet and took weeks to confirm. E-commerce lets travellers buy flights in a minute after the internet. Global tourist transactions would be impossible without IT. Virtual tours and reality have changed how people consume nowadays thanks to information technology. Technology is also used in printing, publishing, and travel IT model development. Travel search engines and online recommendations help tourists find information and chose the best tourism items [6].

The lack of air seat capacity, accessibility to tourist locations, housing, and qualified labour is the biggest barrier to tourism development in India. Due to inadequate infrastructure, poor hygiene, and touting and harassment of tourists, visitor experience can be bad [2].

9. Tourism and Culture Exchange

Many discourses surround tourism and culture. Culture, once associated with intellectual and artistic achievement, now encompasses socially transmitted behavioural patterns, arts, beliefs, institutions, and all other human work and thought characteristic of a population or community. Culture is a general resource relevant to tourism, as this extended term shows. Tourism is culturally significant in Japan. The symbolic value of travel in Japanese society, pilgrimage, mementos, and holiday distinctions all reflect broader cultural influences.

International tourists want to learn about different cultures and have new experiences, which allows them to exchange cultures and enrich their own. Guest-host interaction boosts local pride in the environment and community histories and traditions. Tourism acts as agents for cultural assimilation, a binding force in an overwhelmingly Americanized world, and a means of transmitting cultural values across international audiences, according to Rubi. These demonstrate how the worldwide tourism business promotes cultural unity and vibrancy. Tourism may boost local pride, promoting social and cultural harmony.

Given the changed geopolitical atmosphere post-September 11, such processes are crucial. While most other destinations saw a major fall in international arrivals that was not immediately recovered, India's inbound data barely changed [4]. Despite the threat of terrorism, violence, and conflict, visitors nevertheless visited Asia. When possible, a comprehensive, integrated approach was taken, including policy changes, extensive safety and security measures,



marketing campaigns that highlighted India's tourism sector's unique attractions and low risk status, and the use of appropriate technology to help travellers and industry [1].

10. The Economic Impact of Inbound Tourism

Tourism development, mostly driven by government reforms, affects multiple sectors, increasing employment and foreign exchange revenues [7]. Tourist arrivals, employment, tourism receipts, GDP percentage, and public investment measure the sector's economic impact [2]. The impact of September 11 on Indian incoming tourism is substantial economically. Foreign travel was reassessed due to the US-led global war on terrorism. Tourist arrivals fell, hurting Indians in this area.

The sector creates foreign exchange, revenue, jobs, and tax revenue for the Indian economy. Tourists boost aviation, trains, leger and hospitality, transportation, travel-costume, imports and exports, and handicrafts. Thus, visitor arrivals affect more than only travel and tourism. Inbound tourism boosts India's cultural variety and service industry. However, infrastructure, air-seat capacity, destination accessibility, housing, and skilled manpower remain impediments. Poor facilities, hygiene, and touting and harassment in certain areas further detract from visiting experiences.

11. Tourism Challenges

India's tourism industry is hindered by a lack of infrastructure, particularly air seat capacity, accessibility to tourist attractions, lodging, and educated labour. Due to inadequate infrastructure, poor hygiene, and touting and harassment of tourists, visitor experience can be bad [2]. Tourism is especially vulnerable to negative occurrences, and since there is always a crisis somewhere in the world, the business seems to be under constant threat with another catastrophe looming. Tourists usually have short memories and keep travelling after the threat passes [8].

12. Key Tourist Destination Case Studies

Selected stories show how safety and security affect tourist choice and how the tourism department and entrepreneurs respond, providing useful lessons for India's inbound tourism development. Step 1 examines how inbound tourism is affecting foreign relations in India after September 11. The analysis shows a decline in the first three years after the terrorist attacks, exacerbated by other violent incidents at Indian tourist destinations. Safety, marketing, e-tourism,



cultural exchange, and an economic assessment of inbound tourism in India are examined. Safety and security are crucial, according to the research.

The research examines three tourist destinations: Agra in Uttar Pradesh, Jaipur in Rajasthan, and Kerala, known as "God's Own Country." These destinations are chosen for their status as major tourist hubs, significant contribution to tourism income, and historical role in opening India's doors to foreign tourism. Primary data from tourists visiting these places emphasises safety and security. A second poll of tourism entrepreneurs in the same destinations addresses five key issues facing inbound tourism in India.

12.1. Agra, Taj Mahal

Asia's oldest route, the Grand Trunk Road, links New Delhi with Agra, a tourist destination featuring Sikh, Mughal, and British monuments. One of India's most popular routes. Kipling called it a "marvellous road" that includes the Taj Mahal, Agra Fort, Fatehpur Sikri, and Gunfort, symbolising India's history. The former Mughal capital, Agra, is in Uttar Pradesh on the western Yamuna. Shah Jahan erected the Taj Mahal in 1630 to honour his favourite bride, Mumtaz Mahal [9]. One of the New Seven Wonders of the World, the Taj Mahal attracts thousands of tourists each year, including honeymooners, architectural enthusiasts, and foreigners. International travellers visiting the Delhi–Agra route still marvel at the Taj Mahal. The monument is a major attraction in India international tourism.

12.2. Heritage of Jaipur

Rajasthan, in northern India, is known for its palaces, havelis, and folk culture. The capital, Jaipur, is full of art, craft, and historical treasures. Safety and security worries have affected Jaipur tourism, especially after September 11. The replanning of Indian tourism was meant to help execute policies and marketing tactics that promote the sector's growth and link it to the country's social and economic growth.

Tourist protection has increased, notably in state capitals and tourist destinations like Jaipur. Terrorism fears in Kashmir and the northeast have hurt Rajasthan tourism in recent years. Tourist arrivals are below pre-September 11 levels. Tourism growth depends on safety and international traveler convenience. Agra, Jaipur, Kerala, and the northeast are important tourist attractions that contribute to tourism development, making safety and security studies important.



12.3. Ecotourism in Kerala

Kerala, 'God's own country,' attracts tourists. The state ranks ninth for foreign tourists and fourteenth for domestic tourists in India. The state's tourism business has contributed to infrastructure development and regional growth by increasing investment, income, and employment for 40 years. Services including tourism, finance, real estate, and consultancy are increasing. The UN World Tourism Organisation claims that tourism directly or indirectly employs 6–7% of the world's population. Tourism contributed 31% more to employability in 2007–08 than in 2006–07. Wellness and health tourism packages continue to cater to travellers seeking relief from work-related stress and relaxation in nature, despite the financial crisis's decrease in all industries. While work hours rise, outdoor leisure time and wellness tourism information are scarce. Many Europeans are discovering the benefits of Indian wellness travel. In addition, Switzerland, France, Austria, Greece, Italy, and Spain have become strong competitors to India by giving wellness tourists good infrastructure and facilities [10].

13. Travel agencies and tour operators

Travel agencies and tour operators help destinations succeed by providing tourist services of all kinds. Small guided holiday package firms serve a specialised market, whereas larger tour operators offer entire trip packages that include transport, hotel, and destination services. These companies traditionally sell to customers, travel agents, tour operators, and season-ticket holders through wholesale channels.

The Internet as a business medium has changed travel agencies and tour operators, bringing opportunities and challenges [11]. After a disaster, the public wants to know what happened, expects rapid answers, wants protection guidance, and wants to help. Tourists may visit impacted areas to help or show solidarity and may ask travel agents and tour operators about route accessibility and hazard. Travel companies may adjust itineraries and offers to meet needs. If the agency cannot or will not meet such demands, it risks losing the customer to a competitor. If a calamity has affected countries or places not originally planned for the flight, consumers can expect access and safety advice from travel agencies and tour operators.

After 2001, traditional travel agencies and operators were especially vulnerable to negative opinions. The events have far-reaching implications, and international studies show that consumers are still apprehensive about safety, thus they may lose relevance in travel markets as visitors self-organise [6].



Despite their economic challenges, tour operators and agencies benefit from aircraft cancellations, which harm them only. Accommodation providers and attractions that rely on domestic or self-organised tourist markets are more resilient to 11 September, therefore they may be insulated.

The fact that most economic sectors—agriculture, manufacture, transport, trading, services, etc.—are tied to India's travel industry shows its importance. Tour operators can quickly and cheaply supply products and services through it. A well-designed travel industry motivates buyers, facilitates easy financial transactions, defines communication methods, and provides after-sales care. Travel firms and tour operators help establish tourist locations where tourists are picked up. India is a growing tourist destination. It has great potential to grow the travel industry. Increased travel tourism facilities and inbound tour operator incentives have been launched. Thus, India has seen a huge growth in tourists and revenue.

14. Demographics and Tourist Tastes

India was the 16th most popular inbound tourist destination in 2007 [2]. In the 1980s, friends and family outnumbered leisure tourists, and the data collection system was inefficient. Thus, precise numbers were unavailable until the early 1990s, before the 1991 catastrophes. Foreign tourists (FTAs) rose 10.7% annually from 2000 to 2007. Except for Nepal, a bordering country accessible by land, most arrivals were by plane from the UK, US, Germany, and France [12]. Domestic and foreign travellers are also drawn to dharma tourism, which includes pilgrimages, totemism, astrology, spiritual experiences, and tantra. Demand, notably from the West, grew in the second half of the 1990s [4].

15. Social Media for Tourism Promotion

Social media is a key communication channel in the globalised tourist market due to its mass reach, real-time response, ease of use, and direct interaction with tourists. This platform allows tourists to share crucial information throughout their travel and is essential for effective tourism advertising, sales promotion, and market research [13]. Collaboration, dynamic communication, and information representation make social media a powerful tourism promotion tool. Tourism organisations' social media material falls into four categories. event promotion, destination information, advertising, and marketing. After 2010, smartphone adoption accelerated India's internet revolution, which began in 2000. India has the most Android smartphone users, spending over 70% of their mobile internet time on social media. The most popular social media platforms are Facebook (84%), Instagram, and WhatsApp. Facebook is the most



prominent tourism marketing social media in India with 217 million monthly active users. The successful Kerala tourism social media model relies on Facebook. The official page has 1,330 Facebook likes, 72,981 Twitter followers, and 1010 YouTube subscribers, making it popular in India.

16. Future Inbound Tourism Trends

Technology-enabled international ticket purchase, automated visa processing, and easy international communication are projected to boost travel and tourism. Interacting with diverse cultures helps people understand each other and promote peace consciously. An increase in money and leisure in either partner nation should boost tourism. A government that wants more foreign tourists can create policies and maintain order. Typically, administrative heads of services like passport and visa, transport, public comprehension, post and telegraph, hospitality, border checks, safety and security, and hygiene/sanitation interact with tourists upon arrival and during their stay.

Inbound tourism has great potential to create jobs, end-use revenue, foreign exchange, and reduce India's balance of payment deficit. Tourism creates 22.8 jobs per US\$ million invested. Italy, Spain, France, and Greece have seen strong tourism expansion, creating many jobs. Tourism accounts for 12% of EU jobs. The September 11 attacks momentarily slowed transport, causing sector issues. As India is considered hazardous, travellers are hesitant to visit. Thus, proactive government policy, safety, and destination marketing are essential. This demands a sensible and balanced mix of visitor influx to ensure fact growth, develop tourism-related jobs, cover the balance of payment shortfall, and boost the national economy.

17. Sustainable tourism practices

Tourism thrives on strong, increasing, and accessible resources locally and internationally, making sustainability essential. Tourism supply and demand were connected, making resource control difficult for long-term sustainability. Thus, appropriate sustainable development measures promoted growth and acceptance. Legislation should then give local governments the control they need to make reforms. Conurbation has also helped manage expansion by creating enclaves in the main region and outlying areas. Tourism growth, especially in old towns, can boost the economy if local governments manage it wisely. This little technique is the minimum needed to revive, but it enables time for new industry and its benefits. The lack of an integrated approach to consolidated growth and long-term advantages makes such development difficult. Tourism boosts the economy with well-planned, coordinated



implementation. A tourism plan should be part of national development and evaluated regularly to minimise discordant effects on critical economic sectors [2].

Sustainable tourism has revived in energy-exhausted Goa, Kerala, and the North-West Himalayas. These places managed numbers to maintain 'balance'. All desired market openness, but most destinations were swiftly gobbled up by market entry and divergence powers, threatening the product and factor's destiny. Kerala, Himachal Pradesh, and Sikkim have already suffered environmental and resource impacts. Snow retreat and erosion only affected peak regions, but the uphill influx of peoples had the logic to expand frost retreat and environmental alterations predicted. Over time, desertification, afforestation, and resource depletion limit expansion and sustainability [14].

18. Compare to Other Countries

India's inbound tourism is similar to other countries but also unique, especially compared to countries with bigger international tourist quantities. The group accounts for a much lesser fraction of total arrivals in India, yet tourism is a major source of foreign exchange. Comparing India's inbound tourist pattern to others shows several trends:

International tourism has been affected by the global trend towards increased security post-September 11. After the attacks, international immigration, especially military visitors, surged, but security and border controls remain a big worry for a large source region like the Middle East.

Additional research supports these claims. India received 0.64 percent of Asia-Pacific tourism arrivals in 2001, compared to 2.04 percent in 2000. India's South Asian share was 23.85 percent in 2001, and domestic travel protected the sector from international tourism decrease [2].

India's size and big expatriate community benefit inbound tourism, while the fast-growing health sector and conference and exhibition circuit are more important after 9/11 [4].

19. Impact of Natural Disasters on Tourism

Given tourists' security concerns after large-scale disasters, research suggests that tourism flows may be disrupted. Studies showed that terrorism affects travel flows, with nations that repeat terrorism not recovering for a decade [15].



Disasters damage destination image and tourism demand. Visitors, spending, and opinion of the affected area decrease during crises and disasters [16]. As political instability and terrorism increase, travellers adapt their behaviour. Between 1992 and 1995, the Egyptian government increased security and created marketing campaigns after terrorist attacks on visitors. September 11, the SARS pandemic, and the West Nile outbreak on the east coast of the US are more examples of natural disasters that demonstrate their severity and the need for tourism companies to establish crisis management plans. The September 11 attacks lowered tourism worldwide. The US welcomes roughly 44 million tourists yearly, and September 11 had a major impact on the tourism industry domestically and internationally. Unrest and calamities can have localised consequences, but significant earthquakes can have far-reaching effects on countries not directly affected and lengthy recovery periods [17].

20. Health Crisis Impacts Travel

Health crises affect travel decisions more than any other and are the tourism sector's biggest challenges [15]. An outbreak of the Middle East respiratory syndrome (MERS) Coronavirus in South Korea in 2015 closed many hotels there, and the 2013–2016 Ebola scare deterred mostly U.S. and European travellers from visiting west and southern Africa, despite the geographic separation [8].

21. Development of Tourism Infrastructure

The lack of infrastructure—air seat capacity, accessibility to tourist locations, housing, and skilled manpower—is the biggest barrier to tourism development in India. Poor infrastructure, hygiene, and hawking and harassment worsen visitor experiences [2]. As tourism has grown, infrastructure upgrades have followed. Government and foreign direct investment in tourism have increased due to rising spending. Due to increasing demand for locally produced goods, these impacts also boost GDP and import spending [7]. Infrastructure, transportation, communication, and tourism promotion reforms (especially “Incredible India”) have increased tourism and foreign money influx.

22. Public View of Tourism Safety

Any tourism destination's success depends on public safety perception. Tourists avoid hazardous areas. Foreign tourists must take safety much more seriously than domestic travellers. Terrorism and crime at the destination are more concerning than the likelihood of injury [18]. Making tourists feel protected boosts their opinion that the destination is safe, improving their enjoyment.



Researchers have devised tourism-oriented enforcement and protection services to improve tourist safety [19]. When similar concerns occur elsewhere, tourists may select safer areas. Thus, controlling and advertising destination safety is crucial to maintaining and increasing visitor numbers because perceptions and conflicting opinions strongly affect travel decisions [20].

23. How to recover from pandemic

After the COVID-19 epidemic, tourism businesses faced new issues with seasonality and perishability. After reviewing numerous revival studies, Sharma et al. (2021) established a resilience-based paradigm that includes government reaction, technical innovation, local community belonging, and consumer and staff confidence as major enablers of tourist resurrection. To sustain inbound tourism in India, government support in the form of financial aid, smart policy initiatives, and improved airport-to-destination connection is needed. Therefore, any full analysis of incoming tourism after September 11, 2001 must include a detailed review of COVID-19 recovery measures.

24. Conclusion

The report examined inbound tourism to India and growth prospects after September 11, 2001, a tourism industry milestone.

Inbound tourism is essential to India's economic growth. Tourism grew after India's economic liberalisation. The progressive growth in inbound tourism since 1991 is positive, but the Kargil conflict, Indian Airlines hijack, parliament attack, and other terrorist activity in the past decade raise concerns. India struggled to handle the massive tourist influx and opened up to foreign participation. Furthermore, breaking prejudices boosted tourism in the country.

Tourism and hospitality require total safety. It ensures uninterrupted expansion of inbound tourism to India and should be given structural priority. Future inbound tourism possibilities depend on India's rising markets—West Asia, GCC, Malaysia, Singapore, Korea, Africa, and Japan. Publicity, depictions of India as a ‘attractive/exciting’ destination, safety improvements, and new cooperative efforts can boost growth in these emerging markets. Inbound tourism to India faces many obstacles that must be addressed to maintain its pace. [9]

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