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A Study on Paradigm shifts of Tourism Industry in India

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ABSTRACT

Background: The Indian tourism industry has undergone significant transformation between 1990 and 2023, shaped by economic liberalization, global outreach, policy reforms, and digital innovations. This period witnessed a transition from a relatively closed, heritage-centric model to a diversified, technology-integrated tourism economy.

Methods: This study adopts a comprehensive review methodology, relying on secondary data from credible national sources such as the Ministry of Tourism and the Reserve Bank of India, and international organizations including the UNWTO, WTTC, and the World Bank. Analytical tools such as trend analysis, CAGR computation, and policy content review were employed to assess the evolution of Foreign Tourist Arrivals (FTA), Foreign Exchange Earnings (FEE), and the impact of government interventions.

Results: The findings highlight three key developmental phases, including 1990-2000 (post-liberalization restructuring), 2001-2010 (global marketing and branding through campaigns like Incredible India), and 2011-2023 (digital transformation and post-COVID resilience). FTA and FEE have grown substantially over these years, with minor setbacks during global crises. Government initiatives, visa reforms, and public-private partnerships have positively influenced growth. Simultaneously, the sector faces challenges including infrastructure limitations, sustainability issues, and seasonal dependence.

Conclusion: India's tourism sector holds immense potential. With continued focus on smart tourism, niche offerings, and inclusive policies, the industry is poised for sustained and resilient expansion in the coming years.

Keywords: Indian tourism, Foreign tourist arrivals, Tourism policy, Foreign exchange earnings, Sustainable travel, Digital innovation, COVID-19 recovery

1. Introduction

Tourism has been a key player in increasing employment opportunities, promoting income diversification, and cultural exchange, as well as foreign exchange earnings, due to its high dynamism, one of the most energetic fields internationally (Matthew et al., 2021). Travel connections with transport, hospitality, entertainment, and heritage conservancy make it vital for promoting inclusive development and international integration (Tripathi & Shukla, 2024). Apart from the economic benefits, tourism promotes cross-cultural exchange and it helps preserve cultural and natural heritage, thereby strengthening social unity and international collaboration (Wasela, 2023).

For India, tourism is hardwired into its development strategy, exploiting its varied geography and ancient history, as well as dynamic cultural customs as major assets. In India, tourists can appreciate a wide variety of travel opportunities, including Himalayan conservation tours, Rajasthan's historical routes, health vacations in Kerala, and sacred paths all over the Gangetic domain (Singh & Rana, 2022). Unlike the support by the Indian government for tourism, successive administrations have acknowledged the potential of tourism to generate employment, to improve rural areas, and attract foreign investments (Gupta, 2015). India's tourism sector contributed 6.9% of its GDP in 2019, and also supported approximately 40 million job positions (Khan, 2022).

India's pattern of tourism development has not followed the linear model. Instead, it has experienced a series of meaningful changes instigated by global trends, technology, and policy change, often referred to as paradigm shifts.

Utilizing the work of Kuhn in scientific philosophy (1962), the term "paradigm shift" has been used more generally to refer to major changes in thinking, organizational (Aniko, 2016). A paradigm shift in tourism means radical changes in industry's structure and operations, including impacts on drivers of demand, provision of services, marketing methods, and management of organizations (Jamrozy, 2007). Over the last three decades, the Indian tourism sector has experienced significant paradigm shifts due to the result of globalization and technological advancements, deregulation, and adoption of consumer preferences (Ramar & Ilavenil, 2024).

Several global disturbances have become trigger factors to alter the patterns of tourism travel and organizational practices. The September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks, the 2008 global financial crisis, and the COVID-19 outbreak in 2020 each constituted key inflection points that saw steep drops in foreign tourist arrivals (FTA) and foreign exchange earnings (FEE), followed by structural changes to build resilience (Gössling et al., 2020).

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Technology innovations have come to be identified as the main drivers of transformation in the sector. From website ticket reservations and smartphone apps to virtual experiences and data-driven personalisation, digitally enabled tourism services have rewritten the rules of the tourism economy (Camilleri, 2019). Digital platforms in India, IRCTC, MakeMyTrip, and Yatra, have made travel planning easy, and regulations such as e-tourist visas and QR-based monument entry have enhanced the performance of the service. Social media's entry as a major platform for destination promotion and active customer engagement has fundamentally transformed tourist expectations and behavior (Harrigan et al., 2017). Technologies such as artificial intelligence, IoT, and virtual reality are increasingly shaping destination management, opening the door for the creation of "smart tourism" ecosystems (Lukita et al., 2023).

Regulatory measures by the government have transformed India's tourism industry. Actions, such as drafts of the National Tourism Policy in 2002 and 2015 and such campaigns as Incredible India, Swadesh Darshan, PRASAD, and Dekho Apna Desh have been used to target the introduction of e-Tourist Visa together with strategic development in such areas as transport, hospitality and heritage has made travel for visitors easy and improved national ranking in terms of tourism preparedness (Parashar & Indolia, 2024). With the help of Public-private partnerships (PPPs) and collaboration with such major development missions as Smart Cities and Digital India, tourism has become more firmly anchored in the national economic context (Lende & Ambadkar, 2024).

Although these developments have evolved, the sector is still facing a variety of long-standing challenges. The delayed development of infrastructure, inconsistent service quality, seasonal fluctuations in tourism, safety uncertainties, and insufficient promotion of sustainability collectively have limited India's tourism sector's maximal potential (Mishra et al., 2024). The COVID-19 pandemic exposed hidden deficiencies, especially for small and medium enterprises (SMEs), and the heightened need for digital readiness as well as public health measures. But the post-pandemic era has also brought new opportunities, including domestic tourism experienced a surge while wellness, nature, and cultural tourism picked up steam, and digital nomadism is on the horizon as a potential niche market (Chakraborty, 2024).

Even though the prior research has discussed different aspects of India's tourism evolution, such as policy and marketing, cultural issues, and tourist behavior, there is still a need for detailed, long-term studies that examine the interrelated changes in the industry. Most of the prior work either focuses on a specific period or ignores the combination of economic statistics, technological changes, and policy measures. Against the background of the mentioned gaps, studying the development of the Indian tourism industry over the last three decades from a united point of view appears both relevant and needed. Therefore, the current study is anchored in three related goals:

1. Analyze trends in foreign tourist arrivals (FTA) and foreign exchange earnings (FEE) from 1990 to 2023
2. Assess the impact of technological advances
3. Examine government initiatives and policies

2. Literature Review

Changes in the technological, economic, and sociopolitical spheres in the last several decades have had a dramatic impact on the development of tourism at an international level and within India. Worldwide, the transformation from tourism from a privilege of the elite to the masses has largely been through the development of air travel, the improvement of infrastructure, and joint ventures on visa and travel policies. Over the years, this period, starting from the 1970s, has experienced unprecedented growth in international tourist movement (Hall & Page, 2014). Digital innovation, taken together with online travel services, has greatly affected the way tourists plan and take trips, making them more personalized, instant, and cost-effective (Fletcher et al., 2017).

The development of Indian tourism reflects major global change, but it has taken an independent path shaped by local alterations and identity. Getting initial traction as an instrument for national cohesion and cultural diplomacy, Indian tourism was institutionally backed by the government from the 1980s after the National Tourism Policy was enacted (Baken & Bhagavatula, 2010). The real increase in India's tourism sector only took off after 1991, when the economy reformed and opened the market to foreign investments and made India more relevant in the global arena. As air networks grew, and hotels were built, and campaigns such as Incredible India brought the country into the fore, there was a constant (Geary, 2013). By making India a sensory cultural experience instead of a destination, the Incredible India campaign brought a paradigm shift (Pillai, 2017). More recently, initiatives such as Swadesh Darshan and PRASAD have driven a thematic, decentralized approach to tourism with a destination targeted around (Malhotra, 2024).

These developments have received intense academic attention from various perspectives. Sharma et al. (2025) examined the effect of infrastructure developments on the demand for tourism. The results of these studies emphasize the development of tourism into a steady and significant part of the Indian economy. After the pandemic, the research of Akoijam et al. (2024) showed the crucial importance of domestic tourism in sustaining economic

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resilience during critical global times. The results confirm the emerging insight that domestic passengers are a crucial factor in balancing tourism and reducing dependency on unreliable global markets.

Academics have increased focus on the role of digitalization in the Indian tourism sector. Sharma & Sharma, in a study published in 2023, explored the implementation of mobile applications, online reservation systems, and the implementation of customer service using artificial intelligence, with clear increases in operations and customer experience. It was in 2022 that Rathore & Sharma's research analyzed how the Incredible India 2.0 campaign promoted digital engagement and targeted markets such as wellness and adventure travel. Despite the extensive literature on technological improvements, the link between such innovations and more lasting changes within the industry has been largely ignored.

Theoretical models put in place can be used to understand tourism development well. Butler's (2014) Tourism Area Life Cycle (TALC) model defines stages, including exploration, growth, stagnation, and even rejuvenation or decline, through which destinations progress. Using this framework on the Indian locations like Shimla or Goa, it was observed that the tourism saturation is experienced in these places, and they are trying to rejuvenate their attraction. By analogy, Plog's psychocentric-allocentric model (1974) explains the connection between traveler personality and destination choices, explaining the appearance from an innovation point of view (Piuchan, 2018). A study described service innovation as a fragmented system that links consumer demands, technological developments, and institutional variables (Barile et al., 2017).

These views provide a lot, but the existing body of academic work fails to address some critical issues. The vast majority of existing studies thus concentrate on short time frames or are specialized in specific metrics such as turnover or number of visitors, while paying little attention to the importance of institutional and technological progress in the sector. While the importance of digital technology is acknowledged, little empirical work has examined how new technologies such as AI-driven recommendation systems or biometric check-ins are shaping tourist behavior in India. Efforts as Swadesh Darshan and PRASAD have had wide reach, but their capacity to enhance tourist satisfaction, inclusivity, and sustainability is not well understood. The international tourism discussion has broadened the resilience and sustainability agenda to become the central goal since the pandemic (Traskevich & Fontanari, 2023). In light of the radical shifts in the tourism industry, there is an obvious need for interdisciplinary research that associates economic

benchmarks, technological advances, and regulatory strategies. Despite the relative advancement made in the study of Indian tourism in isolation, a thorough study of these dimensions and their interaction over the past three decades is necessary.

3. Methodology
3.1 Data Sources
The analysis in this review is based on validated and authoritative secondary data sources drawn from national and international agencies, ensuring exact analysis and thorough context. The Ministry of Tourism, Government of India, is the primary source of data, offering detailed annual datasets on FTA, FEE, and the performance of government-led tourism schemes. The India Tourism Statistics reports from 1990 to 2023 also document notable promotional initiatives such as Incredible India, Swadesh Darshan, and PRASAD, providing a comprehensive longitudinal view of the evolution of tourism in India (Ministry of Tourism, 2022). The statistical handbooks of the Reserve Bank of India provide credible information on the contribution of tourism to macroeconomic stability and the balance of payments (RBI, 2023).

Analysis was carried out using data from the UNWTO to determine the performance of India's tourism as compared to other countries and to examine the impact of global shocks like the COVID-19 pandemic on the sector (UNWTO, 2021). Extracts on GDP growth and employment impacts of the tourism sector were taken from the World Bank's World Development Indicators (Das et al., 2024). Private sector views regarding the impact of tourism on the economy, creation of jobs, and recovery management, as offered by the World Travel & Tourism Council (WTTC), have played a significant role in the analysis (Lal, 2024).

3.2 Time Frame of Review
This research was about tourism developments in India from 1990 to the year 2023, where the travel and tourism industry in India was transforming. With this timeline, it was possible to analyse policy, economic, and technological developments over these 34 years during three phases as follows:

• *1990-2000:* Within this period that occurred after liberalization, there was preliminary reorganization of tourism policies coupled with small-scale international involvement, laying the foundation for market-oriented tourism development.

• *2001-2010:* A wave of internationalization triggered by forward-looking marketing overseas, increased air connectivity, and the launch of the Incredible India programme elevated India's attractiveness to international travellers (Goyal & Chauhan, 2010).

• *2011-2023:* Primarily due to technological improvement, varied policy changes, and the impact

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of the pandemic, this era reflects on the role of technology in providing services and the measures taken while recovering from COVID-19 (Li et al., 2022).

By dividing the timeline into these periods, it was easier to follow the relationship between growth patterns and the impact of international crises (including 9/11, the financial crisis, and COVID-19) alongside the local policy change.

3.3 Analytical Tools and Techniques
Using quantitative and qualitative analytical tools, this review assesses and quantifies performance of tourism and effectiveness of policies within the stated years.

3.3.1 Trend Analysis
The evolution of FTA and FEE was studied over the years using the application of time-series methods. The use of line graphs and bar charts made it easy to present these trends as markers pointed out important points of turn. Disruptions and recoveries associated with major global events and governmental policies were also identified in the analysis.

3.3.2 Compound Annual Growth Rate (CAGR)
CAGR calculations were made for sub-periods (1990-2000, 2001-2010 2011-2019 and 2020-2023) in order to estimate the Average annual growth rate. Such calculations enabled the identification of developmental trends and the evaluation of how important initiatives, like those listed in the UNWTO Report of 2019, affected tourism advancement (UNWTO, 2019).

3.3.3 Regression and Correlation Analysis
The analysis used an elementary linear regression in attempting to find the statistical relationship between FTA and FEE. The computation of R-squared values was an operation that was used to measure model fitness; the calculation of correlation coefficients was used for investigating how tourism indicators correlated with important macroeconomic indicators such as GDP growth and exchange rates. Dummy variables were introduced for key shock years, including 2008 and 2020, to test for shifts in structural patterns.

3.3.4 Data Visualization
Graphic representations in the form of charts and graphs were added to show the findings using Microsoft Excel and SPSS. The recent period of the UN Decade of Indigenous Languages (IDIL) is a relevant moment to engage global policymakers and practitioners in reflection on accomplishments and plan for cooperation in the future. The Decade, which started in 2022, is intended to support the survival, vitality, and strengthening of indigenous languages

3.4 Policy and Content Analysis
Other than quantitative research techniques, this study explored qualitative tourism policies and government interventions to identify India's tourism sector's strategic and structural orientation. The review focused on the analysis of goals and strategies of implementation as well as the results of the main national initiatives, such as Swadesh Darshan and PRASAD, which stress themed routes of tourism and the development of infrastructure in religious and pilgrimage centers, respectively. These schemes are designed to foster closer regional links, protect cultural sites, and initiate economic development in their zones of operation (Ministry of Tourism, 2022). Dekho Apna Desh, initiated in the post-COVID-19 recovery period, aims to drive domestic tourism through awareness initiatives, webinars, and travel competitions for regional and off-the-beaten-path destinations (NITI Aayog, 2021).

The review looked at the development of visa facilitation policies, including the introduction of the e-Tourist Visa in 2014, as well as the growing availability of Visa on Arrival in some countries. Recreational officials report that these changes have significantly improved international travel and maximized incoming tourism (Agarwal, 2016). The main element of Incredible India 2.0 was the use of digital marketing, influencer networks, and niche travel promotions, instrumental in presenting India as a modern, culturally dynamic nation (Kumar, 2024). The review also explored how tourism policy is linked up with programs such as Digital India and the Smart Cities Mission, with emphasis on the integration of technology, increased safety, and infrastructure development in the tourism sector.

3.5 Validity and Scope
This was partly due to the use of official, peer-reviewed, international data sources that enhance this study's high internal validity. The examination was limited by the fact that only published data from elsewhere were used. There were no qualitative or quantitative surveys or interviews with stakeholders conducted. However, the incorporation of data from government records, international sources, and academic analyses helps to justify the research approach.

4. Analysis of Trends and Patterns (1990-2023)
4.1 Foreign Tourist Arrivals (FTA)
The rising rate of FTA from 1990 to 2023 is an illustration of how economic liberalization, external developments, governmental strategic thinking, and tourist feelings interacted to create the boom. In the early 1990s, the number of foreign tourists in India was small due to a lack of international connections, inadequate facilities, and a lack of marketing initiatives. The economic liberalization of 1991 created room for a slow transformation of India's

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image that made it a potential destination for cultural and heritage travellers (Singh, 2002). Foreign tourist arrivals began increasing from the late 1990s, although modestly (Tiwari et al., 2020).

The tourist arrivals grew during the decade 2001-2010 with the help of the Incredible India campaign, which was launched in 2002 and which greatly improved the country's image in the world. Between the years of 2001 and 2007, the Indian economy recorded an average annual growth rate for FTAs of more than 10% (Sharma et al., 2012). The strengthening of the air transportation network, increased engagement by international hotel chains, and active engagement in global tourism platforms have greatly elevated the number of visitors. However, this growing trend was temporarily stalled in 2009 by the aftermath of the global financial crisis (Hall, 2010).

The FTA gained from increased digitalization and the introduction of wellness, medical, and spiritual tourism products from 2011 to 2019. The promotion of campaigns such as Incredible India 2.0 and infrastructural developments, Swadesh Darshan, helped to improve access and interaction with the culture of India. 2019 was the peak of FTA, with 10.93 million international tourists visiting India, as reported by the Ministry of Tourism (2022).

This growth was badly curtailed by the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020. With borders around the world closed and with international travel severely disrupted, India suffered a 75% decline in inbound tourism in 2020, surpassing any recent decrease in FTA numbers (Gupta et al., 2023). The recovery has been slow, but strong growth in domestic tourism has compensated for the lack of progress in attracting back international travelers.

Conventionally, the most important source markets for India's foreign tourists have been the United States, the United Kingdom, Bangladesh, Canada, and Australia (Tiwari et al., 2020). After 2015, inbound tourism from Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, and Nepal within the region increased significantly due to simpler visa policies and improved road and rail connectivity (Hall & Page, 2016). Arrivals are likely to cluster as a result of the cooler climate (October-March) and the festive period characteristic of India. The persistent FTA expansion in India demonstrates its flexibility under shocks, confirming that the effectiveness of branding, infrastructure investments, and technological improvements has a significant impact on business. However, the massive post-COVID-19 impact is a grim reminder of the sector's reliance on public health and a call for a flexible, multi-faceted, and resilient tourism strategy. The pattern of FTA in India since 1990-2022 is illustrated in Figure 1.
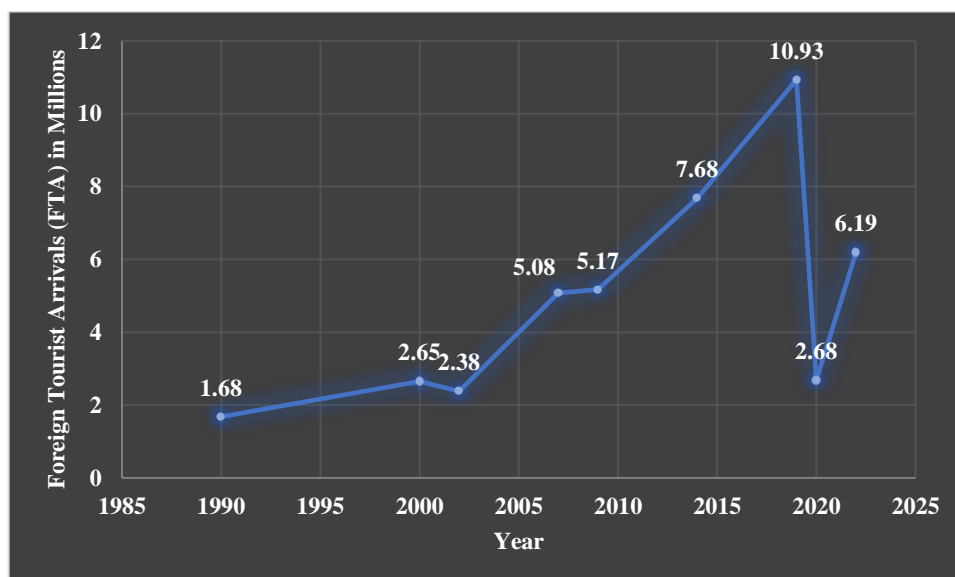

Figure 1: Foreign Tourist Arrivals (FTA) in India Across Selected Years

4.2 Foreign Exchange Earnings (FEE)

The FEE pattern produced by tourism in India between 1990 and 2023 indicates overall economic changes and gives vital data about the contribution of the tourism sector to national development. FEEs are critical indicators of tourism's economic effect, including influence on balance of payments, employment generation, and the expansion of the service sector. India collected around INR 4,318 crore (USD 1,276 million) in foreign exchange from international tourism in 1990, which launched a long-run growth phase in the post-liberalization period (Ministry of Tourism, 2022). Tourism in India increased between 2000 and 2019, at the same time as FTA was increasing, there were accelerated marketing efforts, and there was a reduction in visa requirements. At the end of the year

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2019, the FEE stood at INR 2,11,661 crore (USD 29,659 million) (Ministry of Tourism, 2020).

By analyzing trends in FEE and FTA, a strong positive relationship comes through more visitors mean, respectively, proportional revenue increases. For instance, FTA increased from 5.78 million to 10.93 million during this period, FEE increasing from USD 14,193 million to 29,659 million, as the visitor number and expenditure per tourist both grew. Tourist visas, better airport facilities, and focused strategies for niche tourism were some of the reforms that were effective in causing this upward trend (Soonthodu et al., 2021).

The surge was stopped in 2020 when FEE fell to USD 6,763 million, which was about a 76% contraction due to the COVID-19 pandemic and travel restrictions worldwide (WTTC, 2023). Recoveries by 2022 were partial, with earnings below pre-pandemic levels, exposing the long-term effects on international travel and spending habits.

FEE trends have important economic consequences. Tourism foreign exchange helps to prop up the rupee, sustain imports, and stimulate services-based economic output. Furthermore, increased FEE points to India's development of specialized tourism products, including medical, heritage, and eco-tourism, that target premium travelers. As shown in Figure 2, FEE in USD increased steadily until 2019, sharply dropped, and partially recovered in 2022.
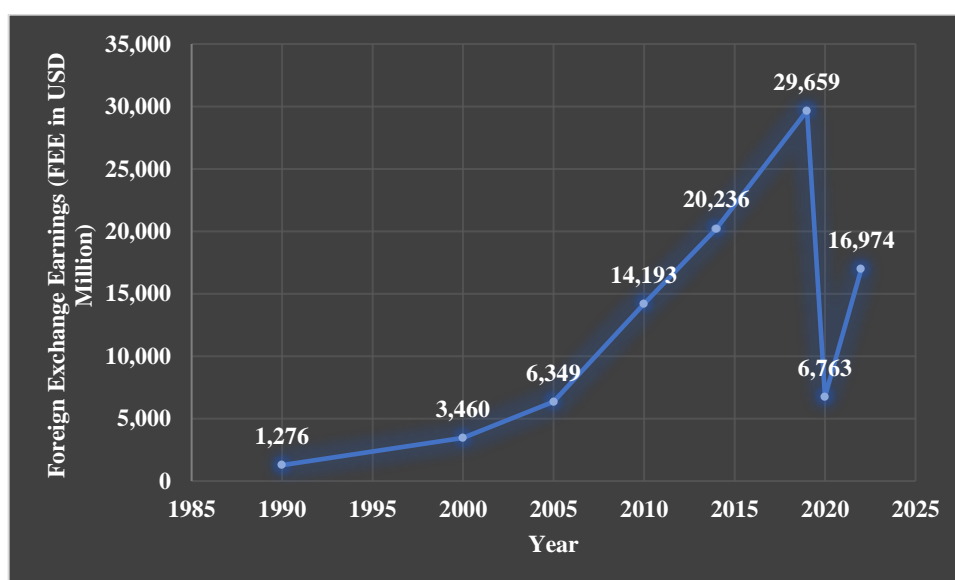

Figure 2: Foreign Exchange Earnings (FEE) from Tourism in India (USD Million)

5. Technological Advances and Their Impacts

The tourism industry in India has witnessed significant changes owing to technological advances; this has enhanced efficiency, provided the opportunity of customized services, and made the industry more appealing in the global arena. The digitization of technology of services such as online ticketing, mobile platforms, and real-time itinerary updates has highly enhanced the ease of booking travel arrangements. IRCTC is a perfect example of how large-scale online ticketing platforms can make traveling a more pleasant experience, as millions of electronic bookings are made every day (Khare et al., 2020). Private digital marketplaces such as MakeMyTrip and Yatra have revolutionised travel planning through dynamic fares, traveller feedback, and mobile accessibility (Chakraborty & Mitra, 2025).

Social media networks are also important in influencing tourism marketing initiatives. Travelers can now view promotional material, share travel experiences, and find uncommon spots via Instagram, Facebook, and YouTube channels. The Incredible India 2.0 campaign encouraged digital engagement and influencer marketing as part of virtual tours, which helped reach out to the millennial and Gen Z audience successfully (Babu & Barik, 2024).

The use of Virtual Reality (VR) and Augmented Reality (AR) is changing the way that heritage sites and museums interact with tourists. The Archaeological Survey of India has placed AR-based guides at places such as the Taj Mahal, allowing visitors to enjoy real-time digital reconstructions (Kumar et al., 2024). Smart tourism developments using AI, IoT, and digital payment modes also accelerate tourism growth (Sharma & Rishi, 2024). These innovations bring service delivery modern era and help make India's part of the digital tourism ecosystem sustainable and inclusive.

6. Government Policies and Initiatives

India's government has made major strides in many tourism policies and initiatives to promote the industry's contribution to economic growth, the creation of jobs, and cultural diplomacy. The National

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Tourism Policy was introduced in 1982 and revised in 2002, and a draft was released in 2015 to determine the fundamental guidelines for the promotion of sustainable tourism, with the emphasis on private sector engagement, the enhancement of infrastructure, and the protection of historic landmarks. The Incredible India campaign that was started in 2002 has been very instrumental in changing the image of India as a cultural and experiential international tourism hot spot (Edwards & Ramamurthy, 2017). Digital marketing, concentration on niche travel, and influencer promotion are some of the areas that played a major role during Incredible India 2.0, the second phase of the initiative (Kumar, 2024).

To increase domestic tourism and spiritual connection, the government launched Swadesh Darshan (for developing theme-based circuits) and PRASAD (for improving pilgrimage sites), leading to the development of infrastructure in various states (Malhotra, 2024). Dekho Apna Desh seeks to encourage domestic tourism and intra-regional tourism as a part of India's post-COVID-19 recovery strategy. Reforms like the e-Tourist Visa and Visa on Arrival have simplified travel for international guests significantly, thereby, increasing arrivals from 160 countries (Anyasor et al., 2021).

In addition, airports, improved road connectivity, and heritage sites have been the main targets in such infrastructure schemes as UDAN and Smart Cities, PPPs being critical (Jose & Ram, 2019). The programs emphasize an integrated approach to the development of tourism that combines technological development, appreciation of culture, and economic policies. The government policies and initiatives to transform India are illustrated in Figure 3.
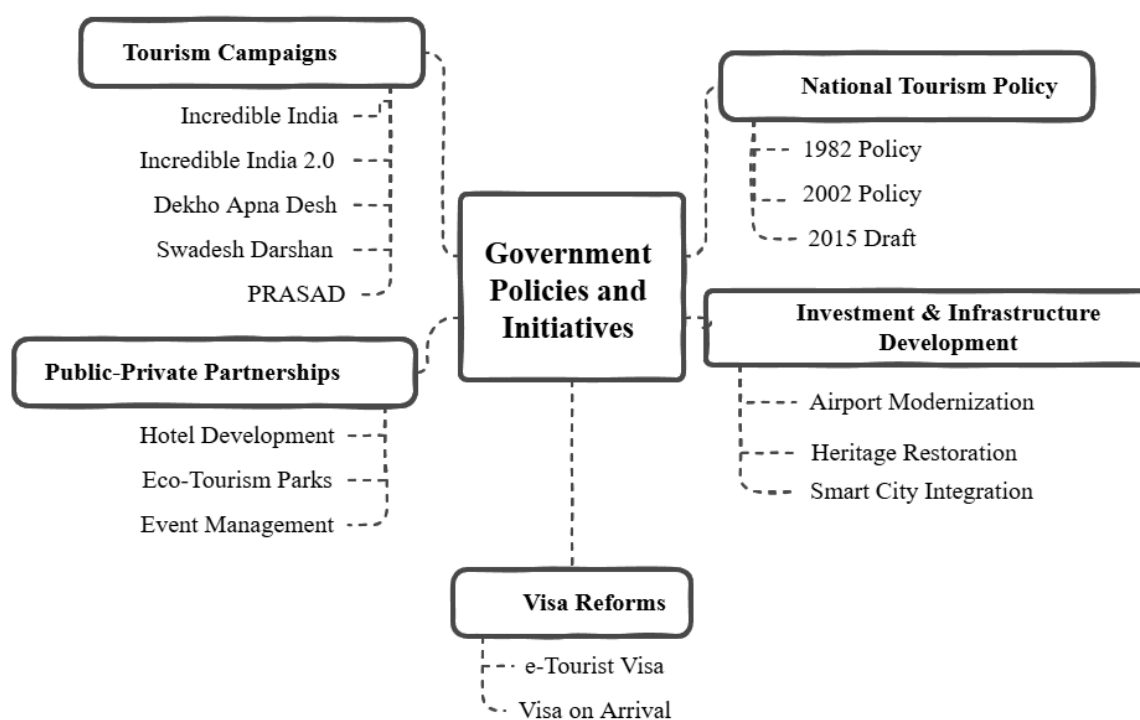

Figure 3: Strategic Framework of Government Policies and Initiatives Transforming Indian Tourism (1990-2023)

7. Challenges and Opportunities

The tourism sector in India, though with efforts whose goals were diversification and strategic progression, is riddled with major challenges that are persistent. The lack of necessary infrastructure in rural and heritage destinations is still a major problem that hampers seamless travel for tourists. Poor transportation, sanitation standards, and lack of adequate last-mile connectivity always prevent the impact of undiscovered locations (Lambrechts & Sinha, 2019). Environmental sustainability has also become a serious concern due to high tourist traffic has depleted natural resources and damaged the environment in sensitive ecosystems such as the Himalayas and coastal areas (Sundriyal et al., 2018). Such problems as guaranteeing tourists' safety, especially women, and high peaks of traveling during the winter and festivals result in the fluctuations and inefficient use of available resources during low seasons (Mishra et al., 2024).

The pandemic made these issues even more complex by stopping international travel and derailing service ecosystem operations. It also made tourism businesses pioneer digital innovations, including contactless services, health safety standards, and domestic marketing initiatives. Recovery in the sector is causing the emergence of specialized tourism niches. India's image in wellness and medical

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tourism, boosted by its Ayurveda mix with cutting-edge healthcare, is drawing a higher-end tourist clientele from around the world. Eco-tourism and heritage tourism are now increasingly becoming the interests of conscious travelers as they become popular as sustainable tourism options (Singh et al., 2021).

Hence, over the next few years, the Indian tourism industry will depend on sustainability, smart infrastructures, and inclusive development. By continuous governments' interventions, the incorporation of private sector ideas, and effective involvement of the community, India is set to become a resilient and competitive global tourism center with vibrant cultures.

CONCLUSION

Through research on the Indian tourism sector from 1990 to 2023, this review has studied key policies, economic performance, technological advancements, and global connectivity. According to the analysis, early 1990s liberalization established critical conditions for industry expansion, and fundamental measures like the Incredible India brand campaign, visa reforms, and infrastructure development boosted Foreign Tourist Arrivals (FTAs) and Foreign Exchange Earnings (FEEs). The innovations, including electronic ticketing, smart technology solutions, and online experiences that have transformed critical components of service delivery and global destination promotion. Plans such as Swadesh Darshan, PRASAD, and Dekho Apna Desh show the government's future-oriented approach in domestic and thematic tourism development. The challenges are immense, including poor infrastructure, environmental sustainability problems, and the instability in the tourist flows during the year. Although the COVID-19 crisis unveiled the fragility of the sector, it also triggered the uptake of digital technologies and increased efforts to build resilience. Incumbent industries like wellness, heritage, and eco-tourism are becoming the pillars that will accelerate tourism growth. For sustainable development, India should balance innovative strategies with supportive, inclusive policies through collaboration between public and private entities. By targeted investment, community partnerships, and the use of cutting-edge technology, India can become a world-class, environmentally sound, and culturally diverse tourism economy.

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