# Chapter 10
# Critical Review of Tourism in India

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## ABSTRACT

*Tourism plays a pivotal role in socio-economic development. It fosters international understanding, trust among people and brings many social benefits. According to United Nations World Tourism Organization, travel and tourism can be part of the solution to world problems of poverty employment and sustainability. Today, tourism has grown to become a major social and economic force and it is a well-known fact. Hence, it certainly is an activity of global importance and significance. With abundant nature's gift, one of the oldest culture and civilization India as tourist destination is in an envious position to locus itself as one of the best global destination by adopting innovative and holistic tourism policies. Through exploratory and descriptive examination and in depth literature review of policy documents and reports, the aim of this chapter is review critically the tourism policies and intends to suggest new avenues and innovations in tourism.*

## INTRODUCTION

India's glorious traditions and rich cultural heritage are closely related with the development of tourism. Its magnificent monuments attract a large number of tourists from all over the world. The natural surroundings, the architectural masterpieces, the music, dance, paintings, customs and languages all these go to make India as tourist paradise (Ratti, 2007). In ancient India, there were no travel formalities and the famous Chinese pilgrim Fa Hien travelled between A.D. 401 and 410 without a passport. But in the 3rd century B.C. a passport or mudra was essential, according to Kautilya's Arthashastra, for all travelers. During the Vedic period, the tourists were accommodated at 'dhams' or holy places. The new sea route discovered by Vasco - de - Gama resulted further in a remarkable increase of the travelers to India, When Alexander the Great reached in India, he found well maintained roads lined with trees and wells, and rest houses. Along with the royal highway which is 1920 kilometers long and 19 meters wide, men travelled in chariots, palanquins, bullock - carts, etc.

India is also storehouse of art, paintings and handicrafts. Crafts appeared on pots found in the Indus valley civilization as early as the 3rd century B.C. The cave paintings of Ajanta and Ellora date back to the 1st to 5th century A.D (Khan, 2005). India, a land of geographical diversity, blessed with a long history of rich civilization and culture is a potential tourism paradise with a wide variety of attractions. Indian cuisine is as fine, rich, and diverse as its culture. In Sanskrit literature the three famous words "Aththi Devo Bhava" means "Guest is God" which is a dictum of hospitality in India. So, with one of the world's richest natural heritage, thousands of species of fauna and flora and hundreds national parks and 441 sanctuaries including some of the largest wildlife sanctuaries in Asia viz. Kanha National Park –Madhya Pradesh (Tiger project), Jim Corbett National Park (Utter Pradesh) Gir (Gujarat) (Lion), Ranthambor (Rajasthan) (Peacock), Kaziranga (Assam) (Rihnosours), Bandipore (Karnataka) etc. India is able to attract large number of tourists. Through in-depth literature review and grounded approach this chapter aims to contribute to the understanding of tourism development in India and the approaches adopted to tourism policy.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

Tourism policy is an important area for study because of its practical and theoretical importance. Tourism is of practical significance as international travel requires government cooperation in, for example, bilateral airline negotiations, decisions about provision of facilities and services, interactions with other sectors, use of publicly 'owned' resources such as national parks as attractions, the issuing of tourist visas and in the funding of marketing of particular destinations (Ahmed & Krohn, 1990). However, study of tourism policy is a herculean task for many reasons. A first reason is that tourism policy, explicitly or implicitly involves beliefs and values, about what is good and bad. Policy concerns goals and allocation of resources in situations, and to social problems, sometimes called 'wicked' problems (Rittel & Weber, 1973), where there is no clear answer. Policy is seen as complex (McDonald, 2009) requires system and complexity thinking (Farrell & Twining-Ward, 2005), and is best dealt with as a complex adaptive system. In many policy-related studies there is a 'tourism as industry' perspective that may, for example, examine how destinations can secure a competitive edge in increasingly global consumer markets (Ritchie & Crouch, 2000). According to Bramwell and Lane (2006), "as distinctly positivist and empirical in outlook; it leaves the impression that it is dealing with objective, value-free or neutral knowledge" (p. 1). The alternative is to consider tourism policy as a domain for examination of concepts such as trust, collaboration, social identity, the exercise of power, and so on; and best viewed through a variety of disciplinary and ideological 'lenses', that are becoming increasingly diverse, especially as researchers work at, and sometimes cut across, different levels (macro, meso, micro) of analysis (Jenkins, 2001). Studies of tourism public policies provide useful insights into who gets what, when, and why in the tourism policy process, and might also make a contribution to better informed government decision-making and policy-making (Hall & Jenkins, 2004).

Tourism policy making is seen by Hall (2008b) as first and foremost a political activity, influenced by the economic, social and cultural characteristics of a particular society, and by the formal structures of government and other features of the local political system. Policy involves consideration of the 'political debate about what the agenda is, what the issues are, who is involved or affected, and the alternative courses of action to address the problems' (Dredge & Jenkins, 2007, p. 10). This debate

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