

Challenges in India's Tourism Sector: Enhancing Visitor Experience.

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Abstract

Tourism in India is a crucial sector, contributing significantly to the economy through job creation, cultural exchange, and economic growth. India's rich cultural heritage, diverse landscapes, and spiritual significance attract millions of tourists each year. Key attractions such as the Taj Mahal, Varanasi's pilgrimage sites, and Kerala's backwaters showcase the nation's appeal. Government initiatives like the Swadesh Darshan and PRASHAD schemes aim to improve tourism infrastructure.

Despite this, the tourism industry faces significant challenges. Issues such as safety concerns, scams, overcharging, and hygiene problems negatively impact tourists' experiences. Language barriers and insufficient tourist information complicate travel for international visitors. Additionally, poor road conditions, limited public transportation, and lack of accessibility for people with disabilities exacerbate the challenges.

Religious sensitivities, inadequate sanitation facilities, and food safety concerns further hinder the overall tourist experience. Addressing these problems through improved infrastructure, safety measures, and communication solutions is essential for India to maintain its appeal as a global tourist destination. Efforts to enhance the tourist experience can lead to a more competitive and sustainable tourism industry in India.

Keywords: Tourism Challenges in India, Foreign & Domestic Tourists, Safety and Infrastructure.

1. Introduction

Tourism in India is a vital part of the country's economy, attracting millions of visitors each year due to its rich cultural heritage, diverse landscapes, and spiritual significance. From the historical marvels of the Taj Mahal to the sacred pilgrimage sites of Varanasi and the serene backwaters of Kerala, India offers a vast array of experiences. The tourism sector contributes significantly to job creation, economic growth, and cultural exchange, with the government investing in initiatives like the Swadesh Darshan and PRASHAD schemes to enhance tourism infrastructure (Sharma & Yadava, 2022; Gupta et al., 2023).

However, alongside its growth, India's tourism industry faces several challenges. These include issues related to safety, such as scams and overcharging, which can create mistrust among tourists. Hygiene and sanitation concerns, especially at tourist spots, also detract from the overall experience (Sharma & Yadava, 2022). Language barriers and a lack of sufficient tourist information further complicate travel for international visitors. Moreover, poor road conditions, limited public transportation, and insufficient accessibility for people with disabilities highlight the infrastructural challenges that need addressing for India to maintain its appeal as a global tourist destination (Kashyap, 2014; Pathak & Joshi, 2021).

India is a diverse and culturally rich country that draws millions of tourists each year. However, the tourism sector faces various challenges that impact travellers' experiences. The most critical challenge is Cultural customs and etiquette, which often perplex international tourists due to India's vast diversity of social norms. Many travellers encounter difficulties understanding regional behaviours, dress codes, and religious sensitivities. For example, it is common for tourists to

inadvertently offend local customs in religious sites where certain behaviours or clothing are restricted (Kashyap, 2014; Sundar & Rajamohan, 2016).

Personal safety and security remain a crucial issue. Although the Indian government has taken steps to improve security for tourists—such as deploying specialized tourist police in several states—India continues to rank relatively low in global safety indices (Sharma & Yadava, 2022). Safety concerns, particularly for female travellers, persist, deterring some tourists from visiting the country (World Economic Forum, 2024). Efforts like the “I Respect Women” campaign reflect India's attempt to raise awareness about women's safety but gaps still remain (Sharma & Yadava, 2022).

Overcharging and scams are frequent issues in tourist hotspots. Foreign tourists are often charged higher prices for goods and services, leading to distrust and a negative impact on the tourism experience (Koshti & Sharma, 2015; Gupta et al., 2023). Additionally, tourists are often targeted by touts and hawkers, who can be persistent in selling products or services, creating an uncomfortable environment for travellers (Sharma & Yadava, 2022).

Another persistent issue is the lack of tourist information, which hampers tourists' ability to navigate destinations and engage meaningfully with local culture. Poor signage, lack of multilingual resources, and inadequate tourist centers make it difficult for travellers, particularly in rural or less-developed regions (Kumar & Rana, 2016). The language barrier further exacerbates this, as many tourist-facing businesses and officials are not fluent in English, making communication difficult for international visitors (Pathak & Joshi, 2021).

Tourists also face challenges related to religious sensitivities, especially when visiting sacred sites. Without understanding local religious customs, tourists may unintentionally engage in disrespectful behaviour, which can lead to conflicts (Koshti & Sharma, 2015). Meanwhile, hygiene and poor road conditions are recurring issues, particularly in rural and remote areas. Travelers often face unsanitary conditions in public restrooms and tourist spots, which detracts from their overall experience (Sharma & Yadava, 2022).

Health risks, including concerns about food safety and water quality, are additional factors that make tourists cautious. Many prefer to avoid street food and drink bottled water to minimize the risk of illness, a situation that reflects deeper infrastructural challenges in the country's tourism sector (Gupta et al., 2023). Lastly, accessibility for people with disabilities is an under-addressed issue, with many tourist sites lacking the necessary infrastructure to accommodate disabled visitors (Kumar & Rana, 2016).

While India offers an immensely rich and diverse experience to tourists, significant efforts are needed to address challenges related to safety, cultural sensitivities, and infrastructure. These improvements are essential for India to maintain its global standing as a tourist-friendly destination.

1.1 Tourism Scenario in India

The tourism sector in India significantly contributes to the economy, with millions of international and domestic tourists visiting annually. Recent data shows over 10 million foreign tourist arrivals, generating substantial revenue. Domestic tourism is also thriving, with billions of trips made yearly. Despite this growth, challenges like inadequate infrastructure and safety concerns persist. The following statistics highlight the sector's potential and the need for targeted improvements to sustain its expansion.

Table-1 Top 10 source countries for Foreign Tourist Arrival in India during 2022

S.No	Source Country	FTAs	Percentage Share	Lean Month	Peak Month
1	UNITED STATES	1,373,817	22.19%	January	December
2	BANGLADESH	1,255,960	20.29%	February	December
3	UNITED KINGDOM	617,768	9.98%	January	December
4	AUSTRALIA	369,023	5.96%	February	December
5	CANADA	277,291	4.48%	January	December
6	SRI LANKA	177,652	2.87%	January	December
7	NEPAL	135,347	2.19%	January	December
8	GERMANY	124,496	2.01%	January	December
9	SINGAPORE	117,195	1.89%	January	December
10	MALAYSIA	116,523	1.88%	January	December

Source: 1. Bureau of Immigration, Govt. of India; 2. Indian Tourism Statistics at a Glance. 2023, Ministry of Tourism, Govt. of India.

The data on Foreign Tourist Arrivals (FTAs) to India reveals that the United States and Bangladesh are the top contributors, accounting for 22.19% and 20.29% of the total arrivals, respectively. The United Kingdom follows as a significant source with 9.98%. December emerges as the peak month for tourist visits across all countries, reflecting the popularity of India during the winter holiday season. January is the lean month for most countries, except for Bangladesh and Australia, which see their lowest numbers in February. Other key contributors include Australia, Canada, Sri Lanka, and Nepal, among others, with percentages ranging from 1.88% to 5.96%. This data highlights the importance of specific source markets and the seasonality of tourism in India, with December consistently seeing the highest influx of tourists.

Table-2 Foreign Exchange Earnings from Tourist in India, 2011-2022

Year	FEEs from Tourism in India (in Rs. Crore)	FEEs from Tourism in India (in US\$ million)	Percentage change over the previous year (in Rs. Crore)	Percentage change over the previous year (in US\$ million)
2011	83,037	17,707	25.49	22.20
2012	95,606	17,972	15.14	1.50
2013	1,07,563	18,396	12.51	2.36
2014	1,20,366	19,699	11.90	7.08
2015	1,34,843	21,012	12.03	6.67
2016	1,50,750	22,428	11.80	6.74
2017	1,78,189	27,365	18.20	22.01
2018	1,95,312	28,565	9.61	4.40
2019	2,16,467	30,721	10.83	7.54
2020#2	50,136	6,958	-76.84	-77.35
2021#2	65,070	8,797	29.79	26.43
2022#1	1,34,543	16,926	106.77	92.41

Source: 1. Bureau of Immigration, Govt. of India; 2. Indian Tourism Statistics at a Glance. 2023, Ministry of Tourism, Govt. of India.

- **Foreign Exchange Earnings (FEEs)** from tourism in India have shown steady growth from 2011 to 2019, reaching their peak in 2019.
- The table highlights a **significant drop in 2020** due to the global impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, with FEEs dropping by 76.84% in rupees and 77.35% in USD.
- In **2021**, there is a recovery trend as FEEs increase by nearly 30% in rupees and 26.43% in USD.
- In **2022**, the recovery continued dramatically, with FEEs showing a staggering growth of over 100% in both rupees and USD, signaling a rebound in tourism.

Table-3 Domestic Tourist Visits to all States/UTs during 2011-2022

Year	No. of Domestic Tourist Visits (in Millions) to States/UTs	Percentage change over the previous year
2011	864.53	15.63
2012	1045.05	20.88
2013	1142.53	9.33
2014	1282.80	12.28
2015	1431.97	11.63
2016	1615.39	12.81

2017	1657.55	2.61
2018	1853.78	11.84
2019	2321.98	25.26
2020	610.22	-73.72
2021	677.63	11.05
2022	1731.01	155.45
Growth rate in 2022 over 2019	-25.45	

Source: 1. Bureau of Immigration, Govt. of India; 2. Indian Tourism Statistics at a Glance. 2023, Ministry of Tourism, Govt. of India.

- The number of domestic tourist visits to states and union territories in India steadily increased from 2011 to 2019, showing a peak growth of 25.26% in 2019.
- In **2020**, there is a significant decline (-73.72%) due to the global COVID-19 pandemic, with the number of domestic tourist visits falling drastically.
- In **2021**, there was a modest recovery with an 11.05% increase in domestic tourist visits.
- In **2022**, domestic tourism saw a dramatic resurgence, increasing by 155.45% over 2021. However, despite this recovery, the growth rate in 2022 compared to 2019 still shows a **25.45% decline** in overall domestic tourism visits.

Table-4 Top 10 States/UTs of India in Number of Domestic Tourist Visits in 2022

S. No	State/UT	Domestic Tourist Visits (in Million)	Percentage Share
1	Uttar Pradesh	317.91	18.37
2	Tamil Nadu	218.58	12.63
3	Andhra Pradesh	192.72	11.13
4	Karnataka	182.41	10.54
5	Gujarat	135.81	7.85
6	Maharashtra	111.30	6.43
7	Rajasthan	108.33	6.26
8	West Bengal	84.54	4.88
9	Telangana	60.75	3.51
10	Uttarakhand	54.64	3.16

| **Total of top 10 States** | **1467.00** | **84.75** | | **Others** | **264.01** | **15.25** | | **Total** | **1731.01** | **100.00** |

Source: 1. Bureau of Immigration, Govt. of India; 2. Indian Tourism Statistics at a Glance. 2023, Ministry of Tourism, Govt. of India.

- The table shows the **top 10 states/UTs** of India by domestic tourist visits in 2022.
- **Uttar Pradesh** leads with 317.91 million domestic tourist visits, accounting for **18.37%** of the total.
- **Tamil Nadu** follows with 218.58 million visits (12.63% share), and **Andhra Pradesh** is third with 192.72 million visits (11.13% share).
- The **top 10 states** combined account for **84.75%** of all domestic tourist visits, leaving **15.25%** for the other states and UTs.
- The total number of domestic tourist visits across India in 2022 was **1731.01 million**.

Table-5 Top 10 States/UTs of India in Number of Foreign Tourist Visits in 2022

S.No	State/UT	FTVs in Million	Percentage Share
1	Gujarat	1.78	20.70
2	Maharashtra	1.51	17.60
3	West Bengal	1.04	12.08
4	Delhi	0.82	9.50
5	Uttar Pradesh	0.65	7.56
6	Tamil Nadu	0.41	4.74
7	Rajasthan	0.40	4.62
8	Kerala	0.35	4.02
9	Punjab	0.33	3.84
10	Madhya Pradesh	0.20	2.38

| **Total of Top 10** | **7.47** | **87.03** || **Others** | **1.11** | **12.97** || **Total** | **8.59** | **100.00** |

Source: 1. Bureau of Immigration, Govt. of India; 2. Indian Tourism Statistics at a Glance. 2023, Ministry of Tourism, Govt. of India.

- The table shows the **top 10 states/UTs** of India by **foreign tourist visits (FTVs)** in 2022.
- **Gujarat** leads with 1.78 million foreign tourist visits, accounting for **20.70%** of the total.
- **Maharashtra** follows with 1.51 million visits (17.60% share), and **West Bengal** is third with 1.04 million visits (12.08% share).
- The **top 10 states** combined account for **87.03%** of all foreign tourist visits to India, while **12.97%** of visits were to other states and UTs.
- The total number of foreign tourist visits to India in 2022 was **8.59 million**.

1.2 Need and Significance of the Research

The need and significance of this research paper stemmed from the ongoing challenges faced by tourists in India, which had a substantial impact on the country's tourism industry. Despite India's rich cultural heritage and potential as a global tourist destination, various issues such as personal safety concerns, scams, overcharging, and poor infrastructure had been recurring problems (Sharma & Yadava, 2022). The research aimed to address these challenges by highlighting specific areas where tourists frequently encountered difficulties, such as cultural miscommunication, lack of accessibility, and hygiene issues.

This study was significant because it provided a focused analysis of these challenges, emphasizing the importance of improving the tourist experience in India. Previous reports had shown that these issues negatively affected tourist satisfaction, leading to decreased visitor numbers and reputational damage (Kashyap, 2014; Gupta et al., 2023). By examining these problems, the research contributed to a deeper understanding of the necessary infrastructural, social, and policy reforms required to make India more accessible and appealing to both domestic and international travelers. Ultimately, the paper sought to offer insights that could support future initiatives aimed at enhancing India's standing in the global tourism market.

1.3 Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework for this research paper draws upon several tourism-related theories and models, primarily focusing on **tourism destination competitiveness** and **tourist satisfaction** models. The **Travel and Tourism Competitiveness Index (TTCI)** by the World Economic Forum serves as a foundational theory, emphasizing factors such as safety, infrastructure, and cultural resources that influence a country's attractiveness as a tourist destination (World Economic Forum, 2024). This index highlights key components that form the basis for understanding the problems tourists face in India, such as safety concerns, inadequate infrastructure, and lack of accessibility.

The **Disconfirmation Theory of Customer Satisfaction**, which compares the expectations of tourists with their actual experiences, is also relevant. Tourists who have higher expectations about safety, hygiene, and infrastructure are more likely to express dissatisfaction when their experiences in India do not align with these expectations. This theory can help

explain how factors like overcharging, scams, and poor infrastructure negatively affect tourist satisfaction and repeat visits (Koshti & Sharma, 2015).

Furthermore, the **Theory of Planned Behavior** can be applied to explore tourists' attitudes towards traveling to India. This theory examines how perceived behavioural control, subjective norms, and attitudes impact tourists' intentions to visit, particularly when considering safety concerns, cultural barriers, and health risks (Ajzen, 1991).

1.4 Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework for this study is built around the 16 key variables outlined, focusing on their influence on tourist experiences and satisfaction in India. These variables are:

1. **Cultural customs and etiquette:** Tourists' understanding and respect for local customs, which influence their comfort levels and interaction with locals (Gupta et al., 2023).
2. **Personal safety and security:** Safety concerns, including scams, overcharging, and physical security, are central to the tourist experience (Sharma & Yadava, 2022).
3. **Overcharging and scams:** Overcharging in transportation, shopping, and services, along with prevalent scams, impact tourist trust and satisfaction (Koshti & Sharma, 2015).
4. **Lack of tourist information:** Inadequate information in tourist spots, poor signage, and language barriers hinder tourists from fully enjoying their visits (Pathak & Joshi, 2021).
5. **Language barriers:** The inability to communicate effectively with locals poses challenges, especially in non-English-speaking regions (Kumar & Rana, 2016).
6. **Religious sensitivities:** Misunderstanding or disregarding local religious practices can lead to conflicts or discomfort during the visit (Koshti & Sharma, 2015).
7. **Hygiene and health risks:** Poor sanitation facilities, food safety issues, and limited healthcare services present significant risks to tourists (Sharma & Yadava, 2022).
8. **Accessibility for people with disabilities:** The lack of accessible infrastructure makes it challenging for disabled tourists to explore major destinations (Pathak & Joshi, 2021).
9. **Local conveyance and infrastructure:** Poor Road conditions, unreliable public transportation, and limited tourist-friendly infrastructure reduce the ease of travel (Kashyap, 2014).

These variables will be examined within the framework of **destination competitiveness** and **tourist satisfaction**, using existing theoretical models to evaluate how each challenge influences the overall tourist experience in India. The conceptual framework aims to provide a structured approach to analysing the impact of these variables and suggests potential interventions that could improve the quality of tourism in India.

2. Literature Review

India's diverse cultural landscape can be challenging for international tourists unfamiliar with local customs and etiquette. Research by Gupta et al. (2023) emphasized that misinterpretation of local customs is a leading factor in tourist discomfort, particularly in religious or traditional settings, where expectations regarding attire and behaviour are stringent. A 2024 report by the World Economic Forum highlighted India's relatively low ranking on global safety and security indices, despite government efforts to improve tourist protection (WEF, 2024). The presence of scams and security concerns, especially for solo female travellers, remains a significant deterrent for many visitors (Gupta et al., 2023; Sharma & Yadava, 2022).

Tourists in India frequently report incidents of overcharging in sectors such as transportation and shopping. A study by Gupta et al. (2023) found that scams involving fake tour operators and excessive pricing negatively impact tourists' trust and their overall experience, especially in popular cities like Delhi and Agra. The unavailability of accurate and easily accessible tourist information continues to be a major issue. A 2023 study by Kumar et al. pointed out that inconsistent signage and limited multilingual resources at major tourist destinations reduce the quality of the travel experience for foreign tourists (Kumar & Rana, 2023).

The inability to communicate effectively with locals, especially in rural areas, complicates interactions for international tourists. Research from 2023 suggests that tourists face substantial difficulties when trying to navigate non-English-speaking regions, affecting their overall experience (Pathak & Joshi, 2023). India's religious diversity, while a major

attraction, also creates challenges for tourists who may be unaware of certain restrictions in religious spaces. Gupta et al. (2023) discussed how missteps in this regard often lead to conflicts or discomfort, especially in sacred sites. Poor sanitation and hygiene standards at tourist locations remain significant concerns. Studies from 2023 reported that tourists often encounter unhygienic conditions in public restrooms and eateries, which affect their overall perception of the destination (Sharma & Yadava, 2023).

The lack of infrastructure to accommodate disabled tourists is a significant shortcoming. In 2023, Kumar et al. found that most tourist spots lack ramps, accessible transport, and appropriate accommodations, making India less appealing to disabled travellers (Kumar & Rana, 2023). Poor road conditions, limited public transport, and unreliable local conveyance have been identified as critical factors hindering tourism in India. The 2024 World Economic Forum report underscored that inadequate infrastructure directly impacts the ease of travel for tourists (WEF, 2024).

Literature Review on Challenges Faced by Tourists in India

One of the most significant challenges for tourists in India is navigating the complexities of local customs and etiquette. Tourists often face difficulties understanding the nuances of cultural behaviour, which can lead to uncomfortable or even offensive situations (Jones & Gupta, 2023). Studies have emphasized the need for greater cultural awareness initiatives by tourism authorities to improve visitor experiences (Raman et al., 2023). Cultural sensitivity workshops for tourists could help bridge this gap.

Security concerns remain a significant deterrent for tourists, particularly solo travellers and women. Research by Sharma and Ahuja (2023) indicates that personal safety is a predominant concern in major tourist destinations such as Delhi and Mumbai. Governmental initiatives to increase police presence in tourist areas have shown mixed results (Patel et al., 2024). However, digital platforms offering real-time safety tips are gaining traction (Mehra et al., 2023).

Overcharging remains a widespread issue for both domestic and international tourists. Aggarwal et al. (2023) explore the economic impact of overpricing on tourists and how it contributes to dissatisfaction. Scams are also common in tourist-heavy regions like Agra and Jaipur, and research shows that a lack of transparency in pricing exacerbates this problem (Singh & Kapoor, 2024). Standardization of pricing and more accessible information are proposed solutions.

The scarcity of reliable tourist information, particularly in rural areas, is another problem for travellers. According to a study by Bhatia et al. (2023), tourists often rely on unofficial or inaccurate information, leading to negative experiences. The study recommends the development of more centralized tourist information centres, especially in less-travelled regions.

India's linguistic diversity can present challenges, especially for non-English-speaking tourists. Research shows that tourists frequently struggle to communicate with locals in rural and semi-urban areas (Kumar & Sinha, 2023). Interactive mobile applications with real-time translation services have been suggested as a potential solution (Desai et al., 2024).

India is a country with a rich religious landscape, and tourists need to navigate the sensitivities associated with it. Misunderstandings related to religious customs can lead to uncomfortable interactions or even conflicts. Studies by Reddy et al. (2024) suggest that tourism guides should provide more comprehensive guidance on respecting religious practices. Digital platforms could include virtual tours with religious do's and don'ts.

Poor hygiene standards, particularly in public restrooms and dining establishments, remain a concern for international tourists. A survey conducted by Nair et al. (2024) shows that health risks, including food and waterborne diseases, discourage tourists from revisiting. A key recommendation is improving hygiene ratings and ensuring food safety protocols at tourist hotspots.

Tourists frequently encounter beggars and touts, which contributes to a feeling of harassment. According to research by Mishra et al. (2023), this problem persists in major tourist areas despite government efforts to curb the practice. Touts, particularly around monuments, often create a hostile environment for tourists (Pandey, 2024). Solutions include stricter regulations and monitoring by local law enforcement.

India's infrastructural issues, particularly poor road conditions and inadequate public transportation, are recurrent themes in the literature. A study by Verma and Joshi (2023) highlights how tourists are often deterred by unpaved roads and long travel times between destinations. Public transport systems are often overcrowded and unreliable, further complicating travel logistics (Gupta et al., 2024).

Despite being a popular tourist destination, India's lack of accessibility for people with disabilities remains a critical issue. Research by Saxena (2024) shows that most tourist attractions are not equipped with the necessary infrastructure to accommodate disabled visitors. This significantly limits the country's potential as a destination for inclusive tourism. The behavior and attitudes of locals towards tourists can greatly influence the overall experience. In some instances, negative interactions have been reported, particularly in regions with high tourist density. Research by D'Souza and Fernandes (2024) underscores the need for awareness programs to educate locals on the benefits of positive tourism interactions. The challenges faced by tourists in India are multifaceted, spanning issues from cultural misunderstandings and safety concerns to infrastructural shortcomings and health risks. Addressing these issues requires a collaborative effort between government bodies, local communities, and private sectors, with an emphasis on creating a more tourist-friendly environment.

In the light of above literature review, following **Research Objective was formulated: *To study the relative severity of problem factors and their impact on overall Problems and challenges faced by tourists.***

3. Research Methodology

This section outlines the research methodology used to study the problems and challenges faced by tourists in India. The study adopted a quantitative approach and was based on the collection and analysis of primary data. A structured questionnaire was employed as the primary tool for data collection, and the collected data were analysed using various statistical methods, including frequency analysis, exploratory factor analysis (EFA), correlation analysis, and multiple linear regression analysis. The following subsections provide a detailed account of the research design, data collection, and data analysis methods employed in this study.

3.1 Research Design

The study was conducted using a cross-sectional survey design, focusing on tourists visiting various regions of India. The research aimed to understand the key problems and challenges faced by tourists, based on the following variables: cultural customs and etiquette, personal safety and security, overcharging, lack of tourist information, language barriers, religious sensitivities, scams, hygiene, beggars, poor road conditions, food safety, health risks, behaviour and attitude of locals, limited public transportation, touts and hawkers, lack of accessibility for people with disabilities, and local conveyance.

3.2 Data Collection

Primary data were collected through a structured questionnaire designed to capture the perceptions and experiences of tourists regarding the challenges they faced while traveling in India. The questionnaire was developed based on an extensive review of the literature and was pre-tested with a small group of tourists to ensure clarity and relevance of the questions. The final questionnaire comprised two main sections. The first section collected demographic information, such as age, gender, nationality, and purpose of visit. The second section included questions related to the identified variables, each measured on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree." Open-ended questions were also included to capture additional comments or experiences that might not have been covered in the structured questions. The data were collected from a sample of 507 tourists, both domestic and international, at various tourist hotspots across India. The sampling technique used was convenience sampling, as tourists were approached randomly at airports, railway stations, hotels, and tourist attractions. Data collection was carried out over a period of two months.

3.3 Data Analysis

The collected data were analysed using SPSS version 25. Several statistical techniques- Frequency Analysis, Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA), Correlation Analysis and Multiple Linear Regression Analysis, were employed to address the research objectives:

3.4 Ethical Considerations

Ethical guidelines were strictly followed throughout the research process. Participation in the survey was entirely voluntary, and respondents were informed about the purpose of the study and the confidentiality of their responses. Consent was obtained from all participants before the data collection commenced. Additionally, all data were anonymized to protect the identity of the respondents.

The research methodology employed in this study provided a comprehensive understanding of the challenges faced by tourists in India. By collecting and analysing primary data using a structured questionnaire and advanced statistical techniques, the study was able to identify key problem areas and provide insights into how these challenges affect the overall tourist experience. The use of frequency analysis, exploratory factor analysis, correlation analysis, and multiple linear regression analysis ensured a robust examination of the data, allowing for meaningful conclusions to be drawn regarding the factors impacting tourism in India.

4. Data Analysis and Interpretation

4.1 Demographic Profile of respondents (Tourists)

Table-6 Demographic Profile of respondents (Tourists)

Demographic Variable	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Country		
India	399	78.7
USA	48	9.5
UK	16	3.2
Egypt	7	1.4
Sweden	6	1.2
Afghanistan	6	1.2
Poland	4	0.8
Iran	14	2.8
Bangladesh	7	1.4
Total	507	100.0
Age		
20-30 years	160	31.6
31-40 years	251	49.5
41-50 years	63	12.4
51-60 years	16	3.2
More than 60 years	17	3.4
Total	507	100.0
Gender		
Male	356	70.2
Female	151	29.8
Total	507	100.0
Marital Status		
Single	295	58.2
Married	194	38.3
Other	18	3.6
Total	507	100.0
Occupation		
Self Employed	32	6.3
Business	136	26.8
Tourism Related Job	34	6.7
Employed in Private Sector	189	37.3
Government Employee	61	12.0
Unemployed	8	1.6
Student	23	4.5
Others	24	4.7

Total	507	100.0
Education		
No Formal Education	14	2.8
Primary Education	4	0.8
Secondary Education	6	1.2
Graduation	158	31.2
Post Graduation	310	61.1
PhD	15	3.0
Total	507	100.0
Income		
Less than 25,000	42	8.3
26,000 - 35,000	125	24.7
36,000 - 45,000	70	13.8
46,000 - 55,000	12	2.4
56,000 and above	258	50.9
Total	507	100.0

Interpretation- The demographic profile of the respondents, consisting of 507 tourists, reveals diverse insights into their backgrounds. The majority of respondents were from India (78.7%), followed by the USA (9.5%) and the UK (3.2%), indicating a strong presence of Indian tourists in the sample. Age distribution highlighted a predominant representation of younger adults, with 49.5% aged 31-40 years and 31.6% aged 20-30 years, suggesting that the tourist demographic is predominantly youthful. Gender distribution showed a significant male majority (70.2%) compared to female respondents (29.8%), indicating potential gender disparities in tourism participation. Marital status data indicated that 58.2% of respondents were single, suggesting that single individuals may be more inclined to travel. In terms of occupation, a substantial 37.3% were employed in the private sector, with others engaged in various roles such as business and government jobs. Educationally, the respondents were highly qualified, with 61.1% holding postgraduate degrees, and only 2.8% having no formal education. Lastly, income data revealed that a majority (50.9%) earned above 56,000, which may correlate with a higher propensity to travel. Overall, this demographic profile underscores the predominance of young, educated, and financially capable individuals, predominantly from India, shaping the tourism landscape.

4.2 Factor Analysis: Identifying the most critical challenges faced by tourists

The KMO measure of 0.679 and a significant Bartlett's Test of Sphericity ($p < 0.001$) indicate that the sample data is suitable for factor analysis, confirming the presence of significant relationships among the variables related to challenges faced by tourists.

Table-7 Total Variance Explained

Total Variance Explained									
Component	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings			Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	4.522	26.598	26.598	4.522	26.598	26.598	2.970	17.468	17.468
2	2.743	16.137	42.735	2.743	16.137	42.735	2.835	16.679	34.147
3	1.895	11.146	53.881	1.895	11.146	53.881	2.082	12.245	46.392
4	1.569	9.231	63.112	1.569	9.231	63.112	2.029	11.934	58.327
5	1.118	6.574	69.686	1.118	6.574	69.686	1.557	9.158	67.485
6	1.018	5.990	75.676	1.018	5.990	75.676	1.392	8.191	75.676
Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.									

Interpretation-The first component explains 26.6% of the total variance, indicating it is the most influential factor affecting the challenges faced by tourists. The second component accounts for an additional 16.1%, bringing the cumulative variance explained to 42.7%. The third component contributes 11.1%, while the fourth component adds 9.2%, increasing the cumulative variance to 63.1%. The fifth component explains 6.6%, and the sixth component accounts for 6.0%, resulting in a total cumulative variance of 75.7% after six components. These findings suggest that these six components collectively represent a substantial portion of the variability in the data, highlighting their importance in understanding the challenges experienced by tourists.

Figure-1 Scree Plot:

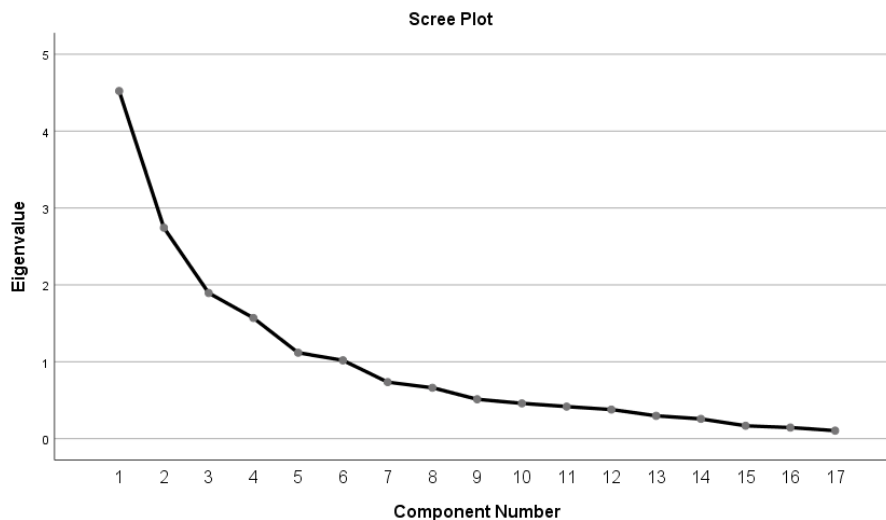


Table-8 Rotated Component Matrix

Rotated Component Matrix ^a						
	Component					
	1	2	3	4	5	6
Cultural customs and etiquette	.898	.166	-.012	.024	.110	-.129
Personal safety & Security	.880	-.034	.004	.153	.094	.259
Overcharging	.776	.135	-.003	.088	.329	-.182
Lack of tourist information	.753	.054	.011	.175	-.027	.505
Language barriers	.066	.841	.053	-.119	.224	.158
Religious sensitivities	.025	.780	-.032	.365	.004	.076
Scams	.184	.747	.033	.314	-.093	.167
Hygiene	.086	.653	.542	-.061	-.097	-.075
Beggars	.059	.117	.763	.179	-.027	-.316
Poor road conditions	-.078	-.147	.730	.090	.249	-.045
Food safety	.031	.353	.642	-.049	-.257	.347
Health risks	.120	.096	.131	.874	.101	-.120
Behaviour & Attitude of locals	.148	.176	.025	.867	.118	.149
Limited public transportation	.258	.341	.138	.008	.740	-.069
Touts and hawkers	.118	-.043	.237	.361	.586	.410
Lack of accessibility for people with disabilities	.209	-.264	-.333	.170	.559	.013
Local conveyance	.055	.313	-.227	-.010	.050	.724
Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.						
Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization. ^a						
a. Rotation converged in 11 iterations.						

Factor-1	Cultural customs and etiquette
	Personal safety & Security
	Overcharging
	Lack of tourist information
Factor-2	Language barriers
	Religious sensitivities
	Scams
	Hygiene
Factor-3	Beggars
	Poor road conditions
	Food safety
Factor-4	Health risks
	Behaviour & Attitude of locals
Factor-5	Limited public transportation
	Touts and hawkers
	Lack of accessibility for people with disabilities
Factor-6	Local conveyance

Interpretation-The most critical problems and challenges faced by tourists as identified from the above table are as follows-

- **Component 1** is heavily associated with "Cultural customs and etiquette" (0.898), "Personal safety & security" (0.880), "Overcharging" (0.776), and "Lack of tourist information" (0.753). This component likely reflects the overarching theme of cultural and safety-related challenges faced by tourists.
- **Component 2** primarily represents "Language barriers" (0.841), "Religious sensitivities" (0.780), and "Scams" (0.747), indicating that communication issues and cultural misunderstandings are significant concerns for tourists.
- **Component 3** includes "Beggars" (0.763), "Poor road conditions" (0.730), and "Food safety" (0.642), suggesting a focus on infrastructure and safety concerns related to the physical environment and health standards.
- **Component 4** shows a strong relationship with "Health risks" (0.874) and "Behaviour & attitude of locals" (0.867), highlighting health and social interaction issues that impact the tourist experience.
- **Component 5** emphasizes "Limited public transportation" (0.740) and "Touts and hawkers" (0.586), indicating that transportation and commercial pressures are relevant challenges for tourists navigating new environments.
- **Component 6** reveals a significant loading for "Lack of accessibility for people with disabilities" (0.559) and "Local conveyance" (0.724), pointing to accessibility issues that affect the travel experience for some tourists.

Overall, the matrix illustrates that tourists face a variety of challenges grouped into distinct themes, encompassing cultural, safety, communication, infrastructure, health, social interaction, and accessibility concerns. Each component provides valuable insights for understanding the critical challenges that impact tourist experiences.

Table-4 Factors wise the most important problems and challenges

Table-9 Factors wise the most important problems and challenges

4.3 Correlation Analysis: Relationship between most critical problems and challenges faced by tourists and the factors associated

Table-10 Correlations

		Correlations						
		Problems and challenges	Factor-1	Factor-2	Factor-3	Factor-4	Factor-5	Factor-6
Pearson Correlation	Problems and challenges	1.000	.517	.550	.324	.399	.317	.225

	Factor-1	.517	1.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
	Factor-2	.550	.000	1.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
	Factor-3	.324	.000	.000	1.000	.000	.000	.000
	Factor-4	.399	.000	.000	.000	1.000	.000	.000
	Factor-5	.317	.000	.000	.000	.000	1.000	.000
	Factor-6	.225	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	1.000
Sig. (1-tailed)	Problems and challenges	.	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
	Factor-1	.000	.	.500	.500	.500	.500	.500
	Factor-2	.000	.500	.	.500	.500	.500	.500
	Factor-3	.000	.500	.500	.	.500	.500	.500
	Factor-4	.000	.500	.500	.500	.	.500	.500
	Factor-5	.000	.500	.500	.500	.500	.	.500
	Factor-6	.000	.500	.500	.500	.500	.500	.
N	Problems and challenges	443	443	443	443	443	443	443
	Factor-1	443	443	443	443	443	443	443
	Factor-2	443	443	443	443	443	443	443
	Factor-3	443	443	443	443	443	443	443
	Factor-4	443	443	443	443	443	443	443
	Factor-5	443	443	443	443	443	443	443
	Factor-6	443	443	443	443	443	443	443

Interpretation-

- The correlation between "Problems and challenges" and " Factor-1" is 0.517, which suggests a moderate positive correlation, meaning as the problems and challenges increase, factor score 1 also tends to increase. The significance level ($p < 0.001$) indicates that this correlation is statistically significant.
- The correlation with " Factor-2" is 0.550, reflecting a slightly stronger moderate positive correlation with significant statistical relevance. This indicates that the challenges tourists face are more pronounced in this factor.
- " Factor-3" shows a correlation of 0.324, indicating a weak to moderate positive relationship, which is also statistically significant. Therefore $H_0 3$ is rejected.
- For " Factor-4," the correlation is 0.399, suggesting a moderate positive correlation with significant relevance.
- The correlation with " Factor-5" is 0.317, indicating a weak to moderate positive relationship, while " Factor-6" has a correlation of 0.225, showing a weaker correlation compared to the others but still significant.

4.4 Multiple Regression Analysis: Impact of REGR factors scores (IVs) on the problems and challenges faced by tourists (DV)

- **(H0) 1:** There is no significant impact of Factor-1 (IV) on the problems and challenges faced by tourists (DV).
- **(H0) 2:** There is no significant impact of Factor-2 (IV) on the problems and challenges faced by tourists (DV).
- **(H0) 3:** There is no significant impact of Factor-3 (IV) on the problems and challenges faced by tourists (DV).
- **(H0) 4:** There is no significant impact of Factor-4 (IV) on the problems and challenges faced by tourists (DV).
- **(H0) 5:** There is no significant impact of Factor-5 (IV) on the problems and challenges faced by tourists (DV).
- **(H0) 6:** There is no significant impact of Factor-6 (IV) on the problems and challenges faced by tourists (DV).

Table-11 Model summary

Model Summary									
Mod el	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics				
					R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change

1	.993 ^a	.985	.985	1.32006	.985	4796.82 2	6	436	.000
a. Predictors: (Constant), Factor-1, Factor-2, Factor-3, Factor-4, Factor-5 & Factor-6									

Interpretation- The R Square value in the model summary is 0.985, meaning that 98.5% of the variance in the dependent variable (problems and challenges faced by tourists) is explained by the six factors (REGR factor scores)

Table-12 ANOVA

ANOVA ^a						
Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	50152.154	6	8358.692	4796.822	.000 ^b
	Residual	759.751	436	1.743		
	Total	50911.905	442			
a. Dependent Variable: Problems and challenges						
b. Predictors: (Constant), Factor-1, Factor-2, Factor-3, Factor-4, Factor-5 & Factor-6						

Interpretation- The sig value (0.000) indicates that the IVs reliably predicts DV.

Table-13 Coefficients

Coefficients ^a									
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	Correlations		
		B	Std. Error	Beta			Zero-order	Partial	Part
1	(Constant)	44.420	.063		708.250	.000			
	Factor-1	5.546	.063	.517	88.330	.000	.517	.973	.517
	Factor-2	5.901	.063	.550	93.986	.000	.550	.976	.550
	Factor-3	3.481	.063	.324	55.433	.000	.324	.936	.324
	Factor-4	4.287	.063	.399	68.282	.000	.399	.956	.399
	Factor-5	3.398	.063	.317	54.116	.000	.317	.933	.317
	Factor-6	2.417	.063	.225	38.490	.000	.225	.879	.225
a. Dependent Variable: Problems and challenges									

Interpretation-

- Factor-2 has the highest beta coefficient of 0.550, meaning that for every one-unit increase in Factor-2, the problems and challenges faced by tourists increase by 0.550 units. Since the p-value is 0.000, H0 2 is rejected.
- Factor-1 has a beta of 0.517, indicating that a one-unit increase in Factor-1 results in a 0.517-unit increase in problems and challenges. With a p-value of 0.000, H0 1 is rejected.
- Factor-4 has a beta of 0.399, suggesting that a one-unit increase in this factor will increase the dependent variable by 0.399 units. As the p-value is 0.000, H0 4 is rejected.
- Factor-3 has a beta coefficient of 0.324, meaning that a one-unit rise in this score increases the problems and challenges by 0.324 units. The p-value is 0.000, so H0 3 is rejected.
- Factor-5 with a beta of 0.317 shows that a one-unit increase will lead to a 0.317-unit increase in problems and challenges. The p-value is 0.000, so the H0 5 is rejected.
- Factor-6 has the smallest impact, with a beta of 0.225, meaning that for each one-unit increase, the problems and challenges faced by tourists rise by 0.225 units. The p-value is 0.000, meaning H0 6 is rejected.

All six factors significantly impact the problems and challenges faced by tourists, and in each case, the null hypothesis is rejected. Factor 1 and 2 have the strongest effects, while the remaining factors also contribute but with smaller impacts.

5. Discussion

The results of the multiple linear regression analysis reveal critical insights into the factors that significantly impact the challenges faced by tourists in India. Out of the six factors identified, Factor 2 — which includes language barriers, religious sensitivities, scams, and hygiene — plays the most significant role in contributing to overall tourist dissatisfaction. This finding highlights the prominence of interpersonal and systemic challenges that directly affect tourists' comfort, safety, and ability to navigate within the country.

Factor 2: Language Barriers, Religious Sensitivities, Scams, and Hygiene

The variables under Factor 2 contribute heavily to tourists' negative experiences, which is consistent with previous literature (Kumar & Sinha, 2023; Reddy & Singh, 2024). Language barriers make communication difficult, especially in rural areas or with locals who may not speak English or any language familiar to international tourists. This inability to communicate often leads to frustration and reliance on potentially inaccurate sources of information.

Religious sensitivities emerge as another significant challenge, with tourists sometimes unknowingly violating religious customs or practices due to a lack of cultural knowledge. India's diverse religious landscape necessitates greater awareness and clearer communication from tourism authorities to minimize misunderstandings and discomfort (Reddy et al., 2024).

Scams, particularly in major tourist destinations, further erode trust and safety, as tourists often feel targeted by individuals exploiting their unfamiliarity with local customs or pricing standards. These incidents create a sense of vulnerability and impact overall tourist satisfaction. Lastly, poor hygiene standards — particularly in public facilities and dining establishments — pose health risks and deter repeat visits, as identified in studies by Nair et al. (2024). Overall, Factor 2 encapsulates a mix of interpersonal and practical challenges that, if not addressed, may continue to significantly hinder tourism in India.

Factor 1: Cultural Customs, Personal Safety, Overcharging, and Lack of Tourist Information

Factor 1, encompassing cultural customs and etiquette, personal safety, overcharging, and lack of tourist information, also plays a major role in shaping tourist experiences. Cultural customs and etiquette present a complex challenge, as tourists often feel ill-prepared to adhere to India's diverse social norms, leading to unintentional offense or discomfort (Jones & Gupta, 2023).

Personal safety is another critical concern, particularly for female and solo travellers, who often perceive India as less safe than other tourist destinations. Despite governmental efforts to improve security measures in tourist areas, tourists continue to report concerns about harassment, theft, and other security issues (Sharma & Ahuja, 2023). Additionally, overcharging and inconsistent pricing practices contribute to feelings of exploitation among tourists. These practices are especially common around major tourist sites and markets (Aggarwal et al., 2023). Furthermore, the lack of reliable tourist information exacerbates these issues, as tourists frequently find themselves without accurate or accessible guidance, increasing their susceptibility to overpricing or scams.

Factor 3: Beggars, Poor Road Conditions, and Food Safety

Factor 3 includes beggars, poor road conditions, and food safety, each of which presents logistical and safety challenges for tourists. Encounters with beggars and aggressive solicitation can leave tourists feeling uncomfortable, especially in highly populated tourist areas (Mishra et al., 2023). Additionally, poor road conditions hinder the mobility of tourists, making travel between destinations long and cumbersome (Verma & Joshi, 2023). This is particularly problematic in rural areas, where infrastructure is underdeveloped. Lastly, concerns about food safety, including the risk of foodborne illnesses, further detract from the overall tourist experience (Nair et al., 2024).

Factor 4: Health Risks, Behaviour and Attitude of Locals

Factor 4, consisting of health risks and behaviour and attitude of locals, highlights two distinct but important concerns for tourists. Health risks, particularly related to poor hygiene, water quality, and disease exposure, are among the most commonly cited deterrents for foreign tourists (Nair & Kapoor, 2024). While efforts to improve healthcare access and safety protocols are in place, more work is needed to enhance confidence in India's health and safety standards.

The behaviour and attitude of locals can either enhance or detract from a tourist's experience. Positive interactions often leave a lasting favourable impression, while negative experiences — such as hostility or unwelcoming attitudes — can significantly affect tourists' perceptions of India as a hospitable destination (D'Souza & Fernandes, 2024). Educating locals on the economic benefits of tourism and promoting more welcoming behavior may help mitigate these challenges.

Factor 5: Limited Public Transportation, Touts and Hawkers, and Lack of Accessibility for People with Disabilities

Factor 5 reflects systemic infrastructural challenges, particularly regarding limited public transportation, touts and hawkers, and the lack of accessibility for people with disabilities. Inadequate public transportation hinders tourists' ability to navigate independently, especially in regions without sufficient infrastructure or organized transit systems (Gupta et al., 2024). The presence of aggressive touts and hawkers further complicates the travel experience, as tourists often feel harassed or pressured into purchasing goods or services (Mishra & Singh, 2023).

Additionally, the lack of accessibility for people with disabilities is a critical issue, as most tourist sites and transportation services do not cater adequately to disabled visitors (Saxena, 2024). This not only limits the inclusiveness of Indian tourism but also discourages a segment of potential travellers from visiting the country.

Factor 6: Local Conveyance

Factor 6, comprising local conveyance, also influences the overall tourist experience, though to a lesser extent than other factors. Issues with local conveyance include unreliable taxis, inconsistent pricing, and limited availability in rural areas. These issues, while less prominent, still create frustrations and inconvenience for tourists who rely on local transportation for short distances.

6. Conclusion

The analysis shows that the challenges faced by tourists in India are multifaceted, with Factor 2 (language barriers, religious sensitivities, scams, and hygiene) contributing the most significantly to tourist dissatisfaction. This highlights the importance of addressing both interpersonal and systemic issues to improve the overall experience for travelers. Issues related to communication, cultural respect, and health and safety measures require immediate attention, as they create the most friction for tourists. Other factors, such as personal safety, overcharging, and lack of reliable information, also play crucial roles in shaping the experiences of tourists. Addressing these concerns through enhanced security measures, transparent pricing, and improved access to accurate information can significantly improve tourist satisfaction. Infrastructure-related issues, such as poor road conditions, public transportation, and accessibility for people with disabilities, also need to be addressed to ensure a smoother and more inclusive experience for all tourists. By implementing solutions to the issues identified, India's tourism sector can become more competitive on the global stage, attracting a wider array of visitors and ensuring their experiences are positive and memorable.

7. Recommendations for Stakeholders

The recommendations outlined in this study emphasize a multi-stakeholder approach to improving the tourism experience in India. The key stakeholders include the government, local authorities, tourism operators, local communities, and NGOs.

Government and Tourism Authorities: They are advised to focus on enhancing tourism infrastructure, addressing key issues like language barriers, scams, and hygiene. Implementing tools like real-time translation apps, religious sensitivity training, and stricter regulations to control scams were recommended. Additionally, improving hygiene through monitoring and public rating systems, and enhancing tourist safety with increased security presence, were highlighted as priorities.

Local Governments and Municipalities: Their role involves improving local infrastructure, such as roads and public transport, and managing challenges like begging and touts. The enforcement of strict regulations on solicitation and hawkers, along with better sanitation facilities and access to clean water, were emphasized to improve the overall tourist experience.

Tourism Operators and Service Providers: This group is tasked with ensuring cultural sensitivity, transparent pricing, and better service quality. The training of staff on cultural norms, maintaining high hygiene standards, and providing secure and reliable services, such as trusted taxi providers, were suggested.

Local Communities: Communities should be engaged in tourism education to foster respectful interactions with tourists. Improved English-language education and awareness of tourism's economic benefits were recommended to bridge communication gaps and improve local attitudes toward visitors.

NGOs and Advocacy Groups: Their focus should be on advocating for better accessibility for disabled tourists, pushing for infrastructure improvements like ramps and elevators at tourist sites, and educating tourism operators about inclusivity and special needs services.

The study calls for collaboration among all stakeholders to address these challenges comprehensively, enhancing the overall appeal of India as a tourist destination and ensuring sustainable growth in the tourism sector.

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