

A Case of Ujjain on Religious Tourism: Challenges for Sustainability

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Abstract : Tourism has grown into one of the world's largest industries in the last two decades all over the world. It is an important sector of Indian economy as it contributes substantially to the foreign exchange earnings of the country. The tourism policies of India aim to position tourism as a major engine of economic growth. These policies work towards utilizing tourism's direct and multiplier effect on employment and poverty eradication in a sustainable manner. India is blessed with a great ancient and living civilization that gave rise to four of the world's great religions and philosophies. Diverse religions, castes, languages, culture of India build a tremendous potential for religious tourism in India. Religious Tourism facilitates development of basic infrastructural facilities, generates income for the local community as well as the government, balances regional development, and fosters peace and socio-cultural harmony. However, tourism development needs to be regulated to prevent the negative impacts. The main challenge towards Sustainable Tourism development is to balance limits and usage of natural resources. The uncontrollable growth of tourism should not lead to resource degradation. Since tourism growth is inevitable, the challenge is to manage it sustainably within environmental, social and economic constraints. This paper tries to explore both the benefits and costs of Religious Tourism Development, using the example of Simhasth Kumbh Mahaparv at Ujjain. Finally it concludes by putting forth the notion that heavy investments for temporary infrastructure development incurred during these large spiritual gatherings need to be sustainable in the long run.

Keywords : challenges, religious, sustainable, tourism

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