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Management of Heritage Sites in India

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ABSTRACT

Identity, a small term but conveys a lot. The scope of the term is wide. The world in which we reside is a very big place. This big place is divided in Continents then in countries. There are many countries in the world and each one is having their own competencies which help them to have a competitive edge. In the same line, our country, India is having a unique identity because of the rich and one of the oldest heritage cultures. Thousands of heritage sites and heritage places have helped India to always stand ahead of all countries in the world. Each state has their own specialty to define Indian heritage in different senses. This paper is all about the problems related with the management of these heritage places of India and the recommended solutions of these problems.

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INTRODUCTION

Identity, a small term but conveys a lot. The scope of the term is wide. The historic and cultural resources associated with people, events, or aspects of a community's past give that community its sense of identity and help tell its story.¹ The world in which we reside is a very big place. This big place is divided in Continents then in countries. There are many countries in the world and each one is having their own competencies which help them to have a competitive edge. In the same line, our country, India is having a unique identity because of the rich and one of the oldest heritage cultures. Thousands of heritage sites and heritage places have helped India to always stand ahead of all countries in the world. But there is a lack of awareness about their conservation. For too long the range of values provided by culture attributes and artifacts has not been recognized – their role in job creation, social cohesion, tourism, and so on. Cultural preservation and renewal is not a luxury good, something to be done later. It is a productive sector.² Each state has their own specialty to define Indian heritage in different senses. This can be proved by the world heritage list in which India has been represented strongly with several master pieces in the list.

The department of cultural heritage regularly publishes the detailed report related with the updated and much needed data on Heritage tourism. Some of the data are described below in the form of tables and charts:

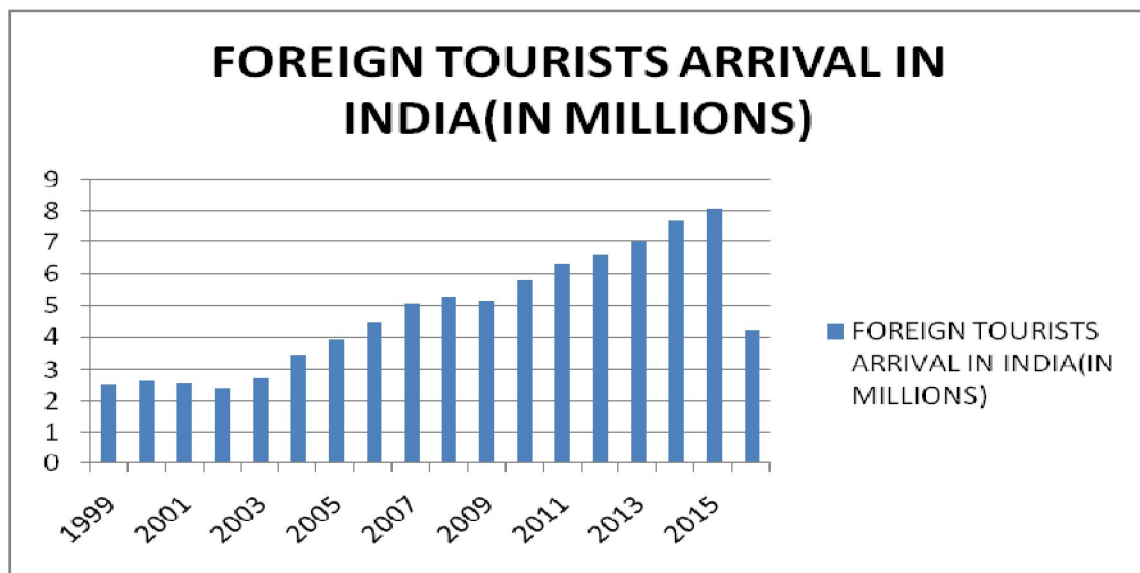


Figure 1 Foreign Tourist's Arrival in India, 1999-2016 (Till June)

Source: Indian Tourism Book

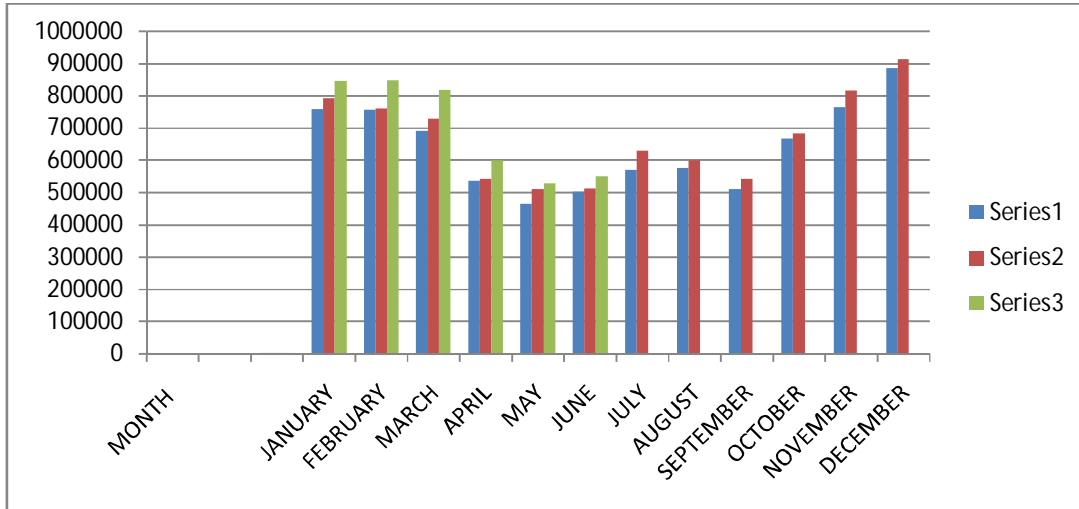


Figure 2: Month-wise Foreign Tourist Arrivals in India, 2014-2016 (till June)

Source: Indian Tourism Book

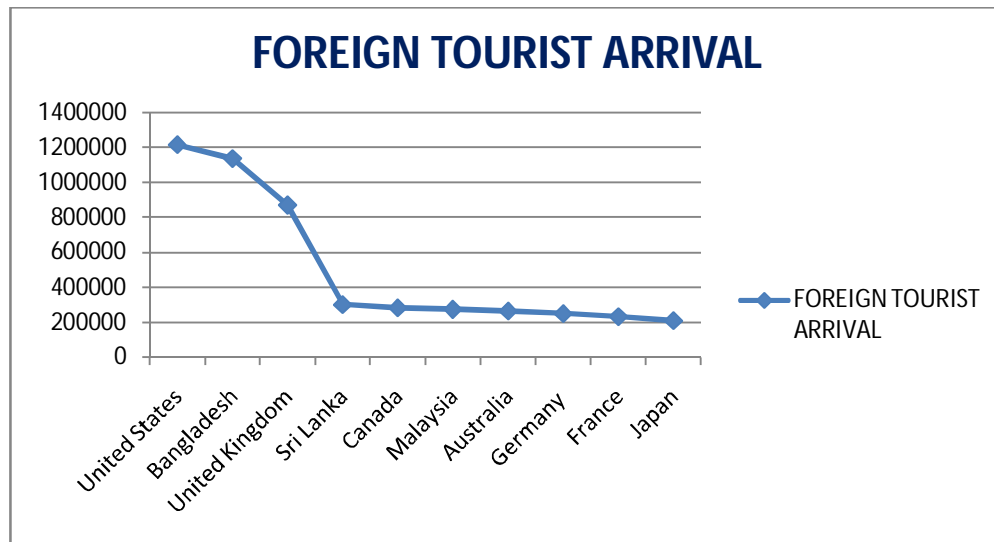


Figure 3: Top 10 Source Countries for Foreign Tourist Arrivals (FTAs) in India in 2015

Source: Indian Tourism Book

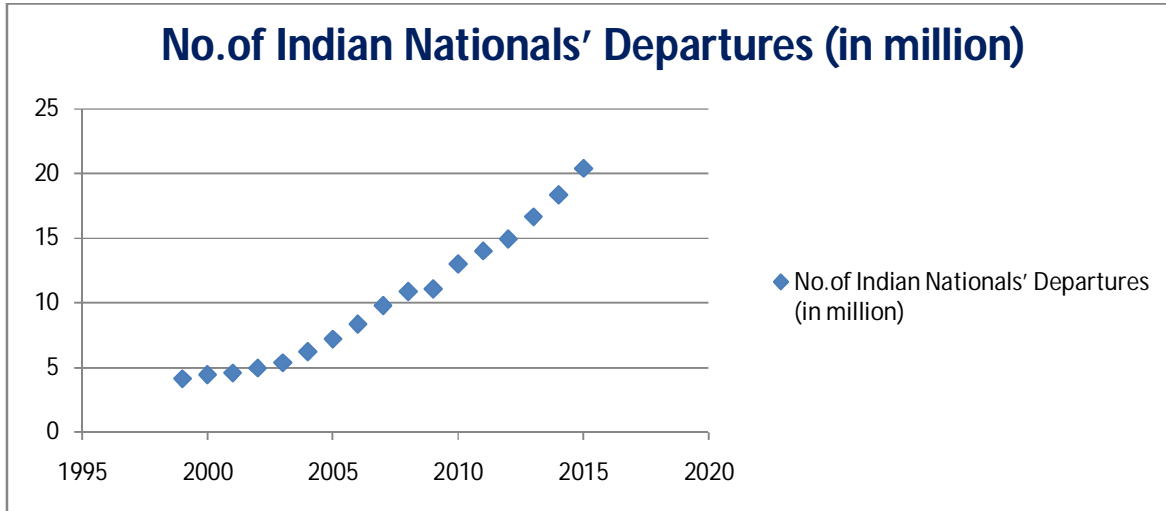


Figure 4: Number of Indian Nationals' Departures (INDs) from India 1999 - 2015

Source: Indian Tourism Book

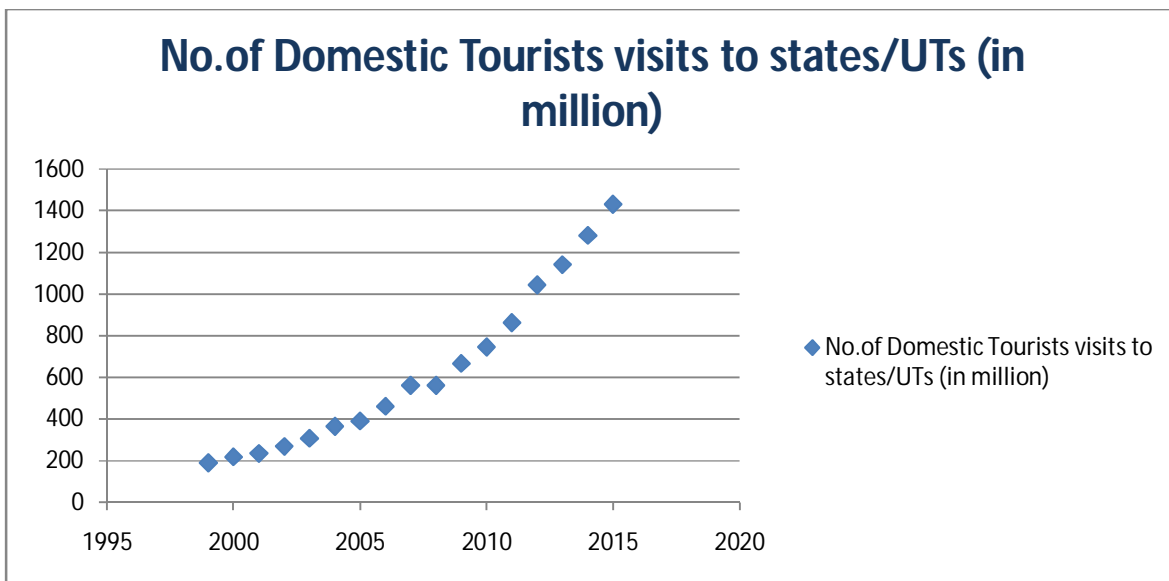


Figure 5: Number of Foreign Tourist Visits (FTVs) to all States/UTs in India, 1999-2015

Source: Indian Tourism Book

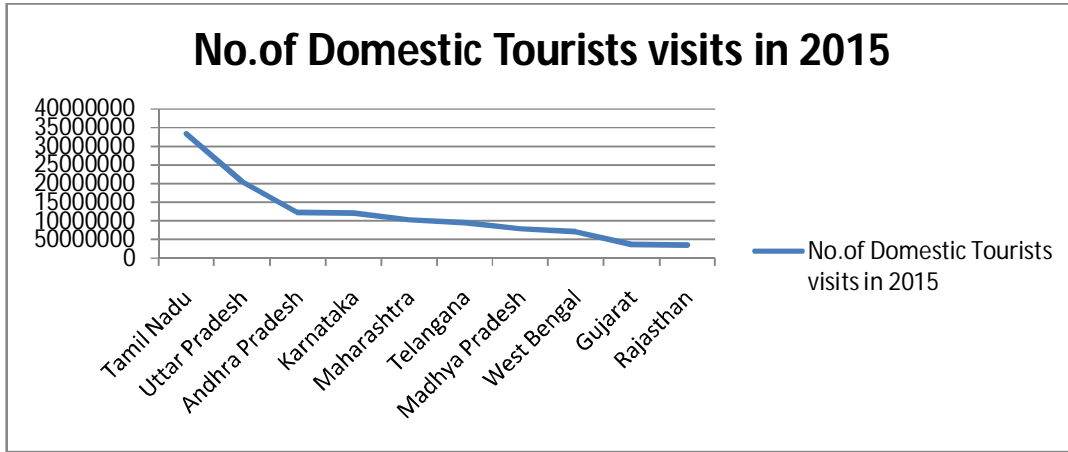


Figure 6: Share of Top 10 States/UTs of India in Number of Domestic Tourist Visits in 2015

Source: Indian Tourism Book

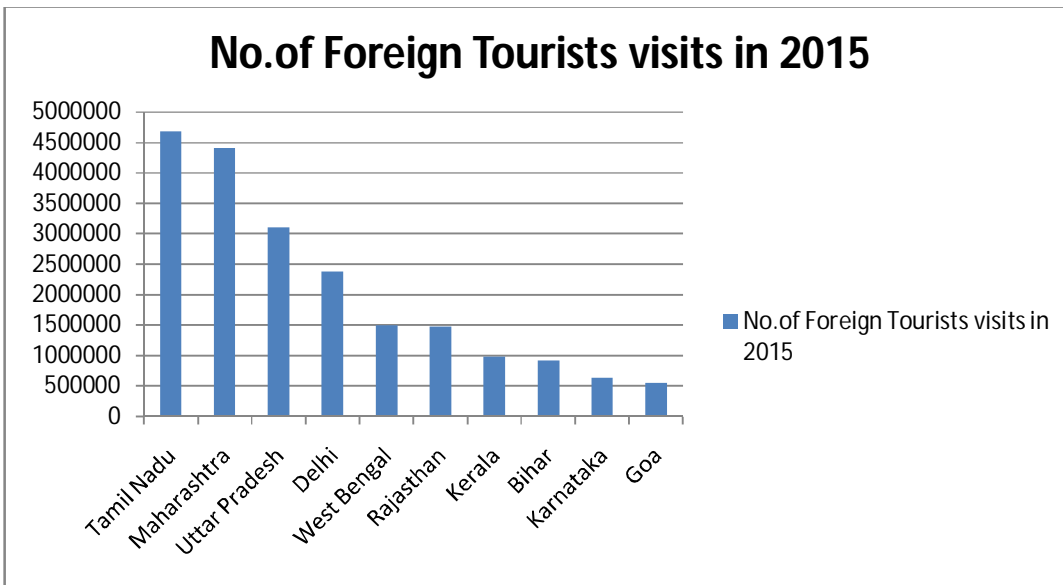


Figure 7: Share of Top 10 States/UTs of India in Number of Foreign Tourist Visits in 2015

Source: Indian Tourism Book

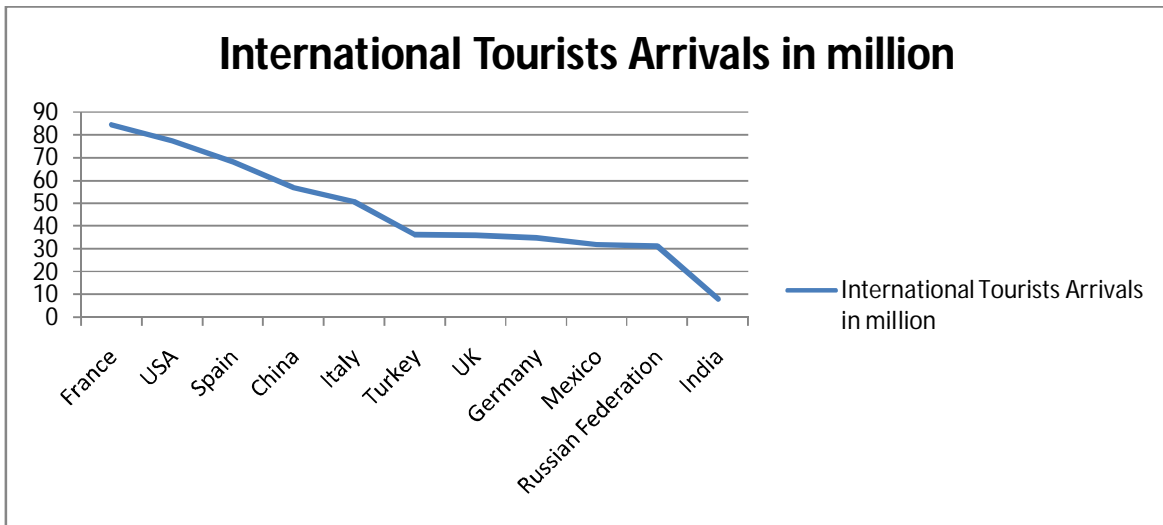


Figure 8: Share of Top 10 Countries of the World and India in International Tourist Arrivals in 2015

Source: Indian Tourism Book

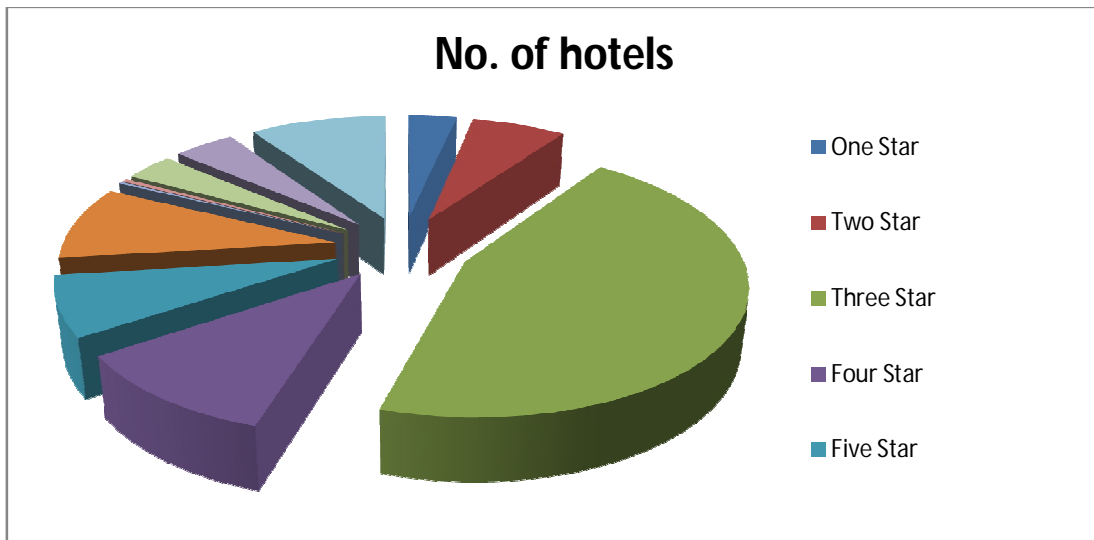


Figure 9: Number of Approved Hotels in the Country, as on 31st December, 2014

Source: Indian Tourism Book

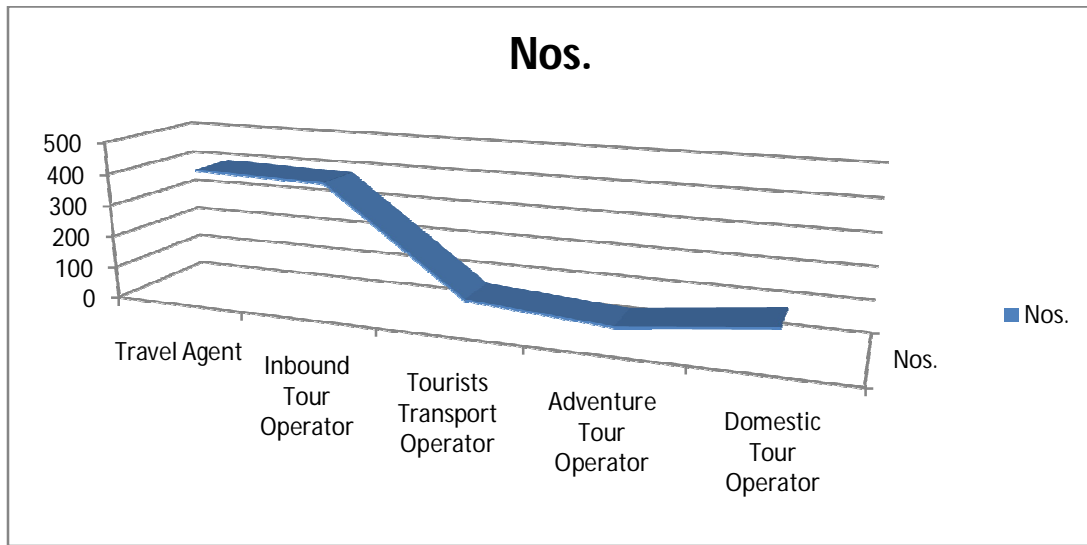


Figure 10: Number of Operators Recognized by the Ministry of Tourism, in the country, as on 31st December 2015

Source: Indian Tourism Book

KEY RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- How to manage the heritage sites successfully?
- What are the reasons that only some major foreign country's tourists visit heritage sites in India?
- Some heritage sites in India are more preferred by foreign tourists as compared to Indian tourists. Why?
- A noticeable difference has been spotted in the number of tourists (both domestic and foreign) in the months of May to July. What can be the possible reasons behind it?
- East India is as much beautiful as rest of the India then why it is ignored by the tourists?
- The domestic tourists who goes to other countries as tourists, isn't it necessary for them first to visit their own country?
- The artists available for restoration (especially Fresco) are very limited in comparison with the heritage sites which need restoration on urgency basis. What needs to be done to diminish this difference?
- Is there a need of heritage based sustainable development in India?
- The number of institutes providing education in art conservation is very less in India. For example National Museum Institute. What can be done to improve this number?
- There are several heritage sites which are not open for tourists because of which the tourists are unhappy as they are not able to explore these places. Why is it so?

These are some key research problems which needs immediate attention for better management of heritage sites of India. There are various reasons which are responsible for these problems and these are

1. ***Lack of Master Plan*** – It seems that Indian lack the concept of master plan. Except the world heritage sites e.g. Taj Mahal, Humayun’s Tomb, Ajanta, Ellora, Bodh Gaya etc. other heritage sites are facing negligence of local or state administrations. They are victims of haphazard growth. In the absence of any proper planning several beautiful structures have lost their charms.
2. ***Encroachment*** – Whenever and wherever visitors start to visit a place, several types of encroachment develops. These growths are very haphazard. These encroachments are done by local shopkeepers, souvenir sellers, local residents or government. These structures can be wooden – brick & stone built temporary or permanent structures which are not fit with architecture of monument or environment. They are soaring to eyes.
3. ***Irresponsible Visitors:*** The heritage sites are great attractions for tourists; both, Indian and foreigners. Some of them are very popular, e.g. WH properties of Delhi- Agra sector, while several other are not so crowded. In such case the ill effects of mass tourism are evident. The biggest problem is the lack of civic sense among Indian visitors who try to inscribe their names on historical monuments.
4. ***Environmental Pollution*** – There are several types of environmental pollutions which are killing the heritage properties. These pollutions are creations of natural reasons such as sand & soil deposits, rainfall and humus formation etc. but, maximum pollutions are created by visitors and locals, who due to their apathy, negligence and lack of civic sense throw several types of biodegradable and non-biodegradable materials everywhere. The authorities also do not care proper disposal due to lack of interest, fund or priority.
5. ***Light & Sound Shows*** – The India Tourism Development Corporation started light and sound programmes at several places. Its main purpose was to highlight the historical glory through light and sound medium. Such programmes became very popular among the tourists wherever it was introduced – from Shalimar Bagh in Kashmir to Port Blair in Andaman & Nicobar. However, its physical execution has become a controversy. It needs fixture of high voltage lightings, sounds systems. Most of the old monuments are houses of bats, birds several animals which are disturbed by intense light, high pitch sound system. The vibrations create cracks. The heat by light also harms the plaster works and colors of monuments.

Apart from these primary reasons, there are many more reasons which are responsible for mismanagement of heritage sites of India. These are:

- Absence of national policy and legislation for heritage protection and management
- Lack of Integrated Management and Conservation Plans (or Frameworks) for most Indian WH Sites
- Lack of clear boundaries (core and buffer zones) and well defined statements of significance in many Sites
- Challenges in planning, regulating and implementing regulations in the built environment of protected monuments (responsibilities of departments, municipality etc.)
- Cleanliness is hard to found. It is just limited to about hardly 10% area of the city. Rest of the areas defames this pink city including the areas of the famous heritage places like City Palace, Ajmer Fort, and Hawa Mahal etc.
- A substantial amount of difference can be observed between the pictures of heritage places on Web world and in reality. This clearly indicates that the originality of these sites is missing somewhere.

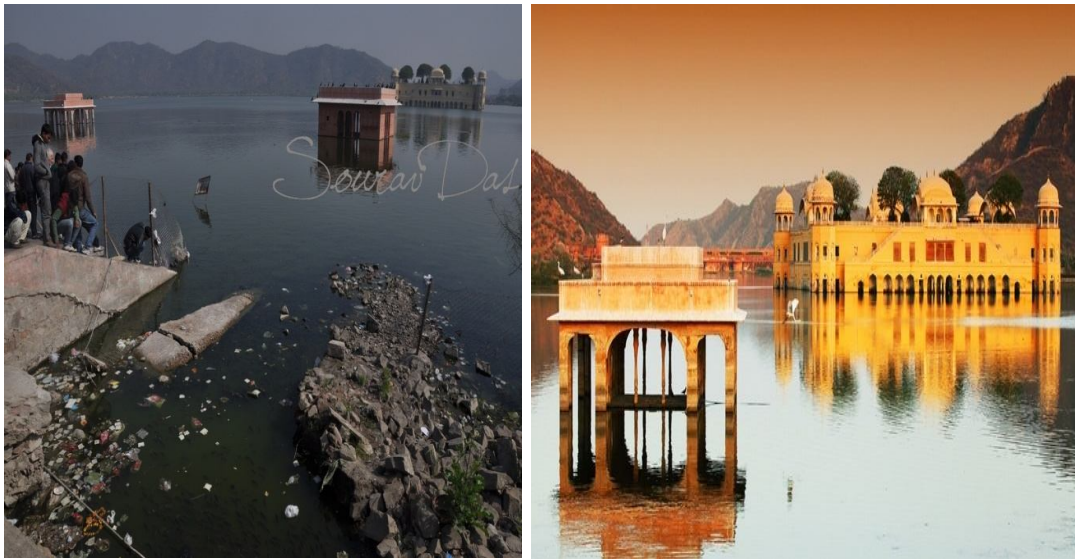


Figure 11: A picture showing difference between the real picture and picture on internet

- For Foreign tourists, it is comparatively easy to get tourist guides who speaks English but it is hard to get the same for other languages and that is also at reasonable price.
- The exterior parts of all the sites are captured by the local shopkeepers which decreases the real beauty of the site especially Jal Mahal.
- The knowledge level and way of explanation of some Tourists Guides are questionable.
- Some heritage sites are lack of public washrooms which comes under the primary need.

- Metro trains are not available for helping tourists but if the city has Metro then it is required to have this facility as this will be really helpful for tourists.
- There is a substantial amount of difference observed by tourists (both domestic and foreign) in the real prices and proposed prices of the antiques and other items which can be considered as cheating or as an offensive action.
- Unfriendliness of local people or helpless nature.

SUGGESTIONS

Here are some suggestions for better management of heritage sites of India. But these suggestions are required to be taken seriously and immediate action is required.

- Awareness campaign to educate community.
- Adopting monuments.
- Strict Government action & plan to save monuments, setting up of Archaeological departments.
- Collecting, generation of funds & donation for their renovation.
- Chemical treatments of monuments & restoration.
- Taxes/donations to preserve monuments, monument fees and other related funds from citizens and tourists.
- Volunteering for their conservation.
- Meetings, surveys, reports, heritage clubs should be set up by schools, educational institutes to make students and youth aware to save monuments.
- Devising proper Legal framework to preserve monuments at national and global level. Strict implementation of laws to save monuments.
- Save from pollution, Keeping factories and other polluters away.
- Control mobs ,acts of vandalism, terrorists attacking monuments
- Corporate, Multinational corporations should take responsibility to conserve monuments.

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