

## Exploring The Socioeconomic and Cultural Effects of Tourism Development On Pushkar's Local Community

Shubhangi Garg<sup>1</sup>, Dr.Anjali S. Patil<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Masters of Urban Planning student, Madhav Institute of Technology & Science, Gwalior, India.

<sup>2</sup>Professor, Madhav Institute of Technology & Science, Gwalior, India.

**Emails:** shubhangigarg0501@gmail.com<sup>1</sup>, anjalipatil@mitsgwalior.in<sup>2</sup>

### Abstract

*Tourism development is one of the key factors responsible for the economic growth of the city. Also it creates impacts on the city dwellers and the urban fabric. Tourism development plays a crucial role in shaping a destination, resulting in a range of positive and negative consequences. Every aspect of tourism, including attractions, accessibility, accommodation, amenities, and activities, impacts and alters various aspects of the destination, such as physical, social, cultural, economic, and environmental aspects. [1]. This development can lead to cultural exchange, increased social interaction, and diversity within the community. Ultimately, tourism development aims to facilitate the effective and strategic utilization of resources. The present study investigates positive as well as negative impacts of tourism development on the local community of Cultural town, Pushkar. Impact of cultural tourism on the city dwellers was analyzed through field visits and surveys. After detailed study about the cultural tourism & cities, Pushkar (Rajasthan) was analyzed. It was observed that there are high positive impacts of tourism development on the local city dwellers along with negative impacts in terms of sustainable city growth.*

**Keyword:** A Cultural Impacts; Economic Growth; Social Impacts; Tourism; Urban Fabric.

### 1. Introduction

The United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) defines tourism more broadly, in terms that go “beyond the conventional notion that tourism is restricted to holiday activities”, as people who travel to and stay in places outside their home country for at least one year for leisure for business or other purposes [3]. Domestic tourism can have both inbound and outbound impacts on a country's balance of payments. Various forms of tourism include adventure tourism, beach tourism, cultural tourism, eco-tourism, medical tourism, wildlife tourism, domestic tourism, inbound tourism, outbound tourism, and more. Tourism is one of the biggest and fastest growing economic sectors in the world, accounting for 10.4% GDP in 2019 and dropping to just 5.8% in 2021 due to travel restrictions due to COVID-19. The number of tourists from across the globe to India has grown from 4.45 million in 2006 to 6.69 million in 2011. As per the report of World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC), ‘India tourism sector ranks 7th in the world in terms

of total contribution to GDP’. The sector accounts for 9.3% of the country's total jobs. With over 15 million individuals directly employed, India's Tourism industry serves as a significant source of foreign exchange. This sector has experienced remarkable growth, promoting national unity and empowering local artisans and traditional activities. Furthermore, it serves as a catalyst for fostering international understanding and showcasing the richness of our cultural heritage. The government of India has taken some major steps and increasing tourism in India out of one which is the international campaign of Incredible India. The Incredible India campaign is not the only one such campaign but in India all of the states have their own tourism campaign. These efforts by each state of the country on a different level have helped in increasing the tourism of India. India is one of the largest, most fascinating and diverse countries in the world. Its stunning cities are a testament to the rich heritage, culture, and vibrancy of life that India



is renowned for. India is the ultimate travel destination, with so much to explore from the southern states like Goa and Kerala, with their open-mindedness and freedom, to the dusty deserts of Rajasthan. There is something mysterious and magical about this big and fascinating Asian giant, a juggernaut of people power, pushing forward into the modern age, building cities that are a dizzying mix of urban innovation, technology, money, poverty, and ancient structures. There are old markets teeming with people and merchandise, sacred rivers that draw pilgrims from far and wide, and formidable forts that preserve maze-like old cities. India is an incredibly inviting place to visit, and there are many best cities to visit in India like Delhi, Agra, Jaipur, Udaipur, Jaisalmer, Amritsar, Varanasi, Goa, Ayodhya, Kolkata, Mumbai, Mysore, Kochi, Chennai, Madurai, Bangalore, Shimla, Kullu, Manali, etc. With more than half of the global population living in cities today, and an estimated 5 billion people will be living in urban areas by 2030, many of the world's most popular tourist destinations are cities. As centres of culture and trade, cities attract an ever-increasing number of visitors each year.. The secretary-general of the United Nations' world tourism organization, Taleb Rifai, presents a captivating notion, suggesting that if tourism is perceived as a means of socio-economic progress, it should be regarded as a means of elevating underprivileged areas within cities. This notion stems from the belief that tourists should not be isolated in a privileged environment, as it is incongruous to construct a luxurious hotel in an impoverished community. Instead, the aim should be to develop both the hotel and the surrounding community simultaneously, ensuring that a high-end hotel is established within a thriving and prosperous neighborhood. The world tourism organisation (WTO) forecasts that cities around the world will continue to experience a high demand for tourism, and the challenges associated with managing these tourists will need to be addressed more systematically by all stakeholders. Developing cities must not only cater to the overall development of a city for the benefit of its

inhabitants, but must also be able to meet the needs and expectations of the increasing number of tourists that may visit the city, while ensuring that the development process is carried out in a manner that is beneficial to the community as a whole. Tourism should not worsen the urban environment, but rather it should improve it; it should not become a burden on the local authorities or the residents. As a city develops, it is crucial to create its own identity in order to attract tourists. Cities are attractive to a wider audience, they are easy to reach, and if designed well, they will have plenty to offer. There are many types of tourists who visit towns, and they come in all shapes and sizes, with varying spending habits, but the common denominator is that they want to find and visit a city. Developing cities need to evaluate their products and know which of their product offerings will attract the market. Today, the volume of business generated by tourism is equal to or exceeds that of oil export, food products, or automobiles. For tourism to play a positive role in socio-economic development, it must be carefully controlled in terms of the quality and revenue of the tourism offer while tourism can have many positive effects on a developing country, certain tourism projects have more negative impacts than positive ones. Hidden expenses associated with tourism can lead to negative economic consequences for the host community, with wealthier nations generally gaining more advantages than poorer nations. Leakage occurs when the funds spent by tourists are not kept within the country. This is a serious problem that needs to be closely monitored to ensure that the gains from tourism are reinvested in the economy rather than going overseas. A comprehensive study that was conducted in Thailand, which focused on the phenomenon of 'leakage' in the tourism industry, has astoundingly uncovered an astonishing fact: an estimated 70% of the economic expenditure made by tourists eventually departs the country. This occurs through various channels, such as foreign-owned tour operators, airlines, hotels, as well as the purchase of imported food and beverages. These findings

have raised great concern about the long-term viability and sustainability of tourism as a substantial source of income for vulnerable economies. Particularly in the Caribbean, where the impact is most severe, leakage percentages have been reported as high as 80%. In contrast, India has shown comparatively better efforts to retain economic benefits, with leakage percentages as low as 40%. It is crucial to recognize the delicate balance between attracting visitors and retaining economic gains within the country, especially considering the inherently seasonal nature of tourism.

## **2. Cultural Tourism**

Consistent with the definition adopted via the UNWTO trendy assembly, at its 22nd consultation (2017), cultural tourism implies “a type of tourism pastime in which the traveler’s critical motivation is to research, find out, enjoy and eat the tangible and intangible cultural attractions/products in a tourism vacation spot. These points of interest/products relate to a set of distinct material, highbrow, spiritual and emotional features of a society that encompasses arts and structure, historical and cultural historical past, culinary heritage, literature, music, creative industries and the dwelling cultures with their life, cost systems, ideals and traditions”. The UNWTO plays a crucial role in assisting its contributors in enhancing cultural tourism coverage frameworks, techniques, and product development. Furthermore, it offers valuable recommendations for the tourism sector to adopt policies and governance models that benefit all stakeholders, while simultaneously promoting and preserving cultural aspects. India's deep-rooted cultural heritage and captivating mysticism serve as a magnet for tourists seeking an immersive experience in the country. With its roots in some of the world's most significant civilizations and faiths, India nurtured and preserved these invaluable legacies. Renowned for its multitude of world heritage sites and unmatched cultural vibrancy, India stands as a favored destination for travelers. Its timeless reputation as the land of ancient history, heritage, and culture has propelled its tourism

sector to unprecedented heights. Throughout history, the influence of numerous kings has left an indelible mark on Indian culture, shaping dance, music, celebrations, architecture, traditional customs, food, and languages. The amalgamation of these diverse cultural influences has endowed India with a richness and diversity that firmly establishes it as the pinnacle of cultural tourism. India's remarkable diversity stems from its fusion of religious and cultural traditions, resulting in a captivating blend that has attracted visitors from all corners of the globe. The diverse array of fairs and festivals in India never fails to enchant travelers, with notable events such as the Pushkar Fair in Rajasthan, Taj Mahotsav in Uttar Pradesh, and Suraj Kund Mela in Haryana. These celebrations offer just a taste of the rich cultural tapestry of the country. Additionally, India is renowned for its iconic landmarks including the Taj Mahal, Hawa Mahal, Hampi, Ajanta & Ellora caves, and Mahabalipuram. Taking center stage in the realm of cultural tourism, Rajasthan emerges as the most sought-after state in India. Its deep-rooted cultural legacy is epitomized by its magnificent palaces and forts. Furthermore, the cultural legacy of the state is evident in its traditional folk songs and music, which resonate with the state's rich heritage. This cultural vibrancy is further brought to life during festivals such as the camel festival, Marwar festival, and Pushkar festival. Rajasthan attracts numerous visitors who seek to immerse themselves in the vibrant tapestry of its culture. Similarly, Tamil Nadu is widely recognized for its cultural tourism, proudly showcasing the Dravidian customs and culture that define the state. The numerous temples in Tamil Nadu serve as remarkable symbols of India's rich heritage. Additionally, Uttar Pradesh, with its abundance of tourist attractions, also contributes significantly to the nation's cultural wealth. The Taj Mahal in Agra, an architectural masterpiece, stands as the most renowned structure in the state.. Additionally, cities like Varanasi, Allahabad, Vrindavan, and Ayodhya in Uttar Pradesh offer breathtaking glimpses into the essence of India. Uttaranchal, known for its

cultural tourism industry, is nestled in the majestic Himalayas, often referred to as the "abode of the gods. To promote cultural tourism in India, the exponential growth of India's hospitality industry owes much to its remarkable contribution. The public and commercial sectors have diligently established an array of splendid resorts and hotels, offering tourists impeccable traditional choices and mouthwatering delicacies that are simply unparalleled. Moreover, the culinary experience alone has become a compelling reason for visitors to flock to this nation, which boasts an astonishing variety of delectable treasures. To achieve this noble objective, a multitude of Indian cultural centers have been established at the national and international levels, meticulously organizing an extensive range of programs and events. These include yoga coaching, mesmerizing music and dance performances, as well as enriching language classes in hindi and sanskrit. To showcase the nation's rich cultural diversity, various activities such as grand festival celebrations and captivating art exhibitions are held. The ministry of culture also actively supports Indian culture on a global scale through its global engagement scheme, providing financial and infrastructural assistance to cultural organizations abroad while fervently promoting Indian festivals. In yet another remarkable endeavor, the Indian government has launched the Swadesh Darshan program under the auspices of the ministry of tourism. Consequently, a series of awe-inspiring infrastructure projects have been meticulously crafted to promote and preserve India's rich cultural heritage and history. From 2015 onwards, a cumulative of 27 projects, with a substantial sum of 2261.50 crores, have been sanctioned for 21 states and union territories, underscoring India's unwavering commitment to establishing world-class tourism amenities. The Indian Ministry of Tourism has diligently been advocating India as a premier travel hotspot through an all-encompassing marketing strategy and cohesive campaigns leveraging international media. Since October 2021, the synergy of all tourism offices abroad has diligently carried out

these promotional activities in the top 20 source markets. Notably, proposals have been forwarded to the Indian government to organize events with themes like spirit of Gujarat in nations with a Gujarati diaspora, with a primary focus on Gujarat's rich culture and heritage. Furthermore, the Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav Festival, commemorating India's Independence Day and republic day, will be passionately promoted to instill a profound sense of pride in one's country and highlight the significant contributions of its people to India's freedom struggle. Another remarkable endeavor is the biennial international Buddhist conclave, a grand celebration of the magnificent Buddhist heritage. Additionally, the government of India has undertaken various initiatives, including issuing tourist e-visas to select nations, participating in noteworthy travel shows and international tourism expos, and hosting numerous roadshows to showcase India's allure as a tourist destination. In addition, the government is proactively establishing training courses and workshops to attract competent individuals to this profession, all with the ultimate aim of providing an unrivaled and unforgettable experience. The introduction of the Swachh Paryatan mobile application by the Indian tourism ministry in February 2016 has empowered citizens to report sanitation and hygiene issues at national tourist sites. This signifies a remarkable advancement towards creating a sustainable system that not only draws new participants to the cultural tourism sector but also enhances the performance of existing ones. Yet, there remains a vast potential in India's cultural tourism sector that is yet to be fully explored. If harnessed effectively, this industry has the power to significantly boost India's GDP and generate abundant employment opportunities.

### **3. Impact of Cultural Tourism On the Host Community**

The interconnection between culture, tourism, and society is undeniable. A harmonious and united society has the potential to boost tourism, while tourism itself facilitates interactions between individuals and communities. This mutual



relationship leads to the advancement of local culture and subsequently improves the overall quality of life. United Nations World Tourism Organisation Defines Pushkar as the Cultural & Temple Town Of India. The entire Pushkar region or Tirth Kshetra, has evolved as a major pilgrim destination in last few centuries with Pushkar, Budha Pushkar and Madhya Pushkar being the nodes of cultural heritage. Besides these, the major nodes of important religious and historic heritage buildings include Nand with Nanda Prachi Saraswati Sangam, Kakreshwar and Makreshwar Mahadev Mandir, Ajaysar with Ajaipal Ji, and hill between Khor and Hokran with Makrol Mata Mandir, Lomesh Rishi/ Rojodi Mata Mandir, Vaidyanath Mahadev Mandir etc. Pushkar holds overall population of 30,500 with sex ratio of 907 females per 1000 males. The local or national tourists come and visit Pushkar majorly for its spiritual and religious values, however, the international or foreign tourists get attracted to the location of the city with its serene landscape with flower fields and orchards and the diversity of architectural heritage besides the temples and other religious sites. The local residents of Pushkar express their dissatisfaction with the current state of tourism development in the area, particularly in terms of sustainability. [1] According to IGNCA (Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts) listing, there are 362 heritage building identified. INTACH have marked 15 heritage sites in Pushkar. There are two heritage sites marked by & protected under the Archeological Survey of India, namely Brahma Mandir and Jahangir Mahal. Pushkar attracts a large number of visitors annually, with an average daily tourist count ranging from 3000 to 4000. The town hosts a cattle fair every November, organized by the government of Rajasthan, with 4,50,000 domestic tourists and 10,000 foreign tourists attending. The majority of foreign tourists come from Spain, France, and Israel. Tourism plays a crucial role in the town's economy, driving sectors like trade, commerce, transportation, and household industries. Pushkar boasts over 300 temples, primarily managed by Brahmins engaged

in religious and economic activities. However, due to the influx of foreign tourists, many young Brahmins have started their own businesses. The local trade is centered around temple necessities, serving pilgrims and tourists, with no wholesale activities in town. The cattle fair remains a significant economic source for the residents, with 80% of their annual income generated during this event. However, the gradual drop in the number of animals visiting and being traded in the Pushkar fair according to the statistical data of last few decades is a major cause downfall of the economy of Pushkar. This, in turn, has led to people of Pushkar getting more and more involved in the hotel business and hence in conversion of green lands into non-agricultural usage which is one of the major issues employing roughly 5000 individuals, garment manufacturing serves as the predominant industrial sector in the area, with a significant number of workers recruited from surrounding villages. In addition to this, the fair features a range of cultural performances like plays, folk dances, and music, as well as recreational activities such as cricket and tug of war, all aimed at attracting tourists. Rose cultivation and fruit farming are one of the traditional practices of Pushkar region and also one of the most important factors contributing to the economy of the region as these fruits are exported out Rajasthan and the roses are exported out of India as well. However, these practices are might be discontinued as water table has reduced and the increasing demand of tourist infrastructure has resulted in conversion of green lands into concrete jungles. The main bazaar street is the main commercial street of Pushkar and it also coincides with the Parikrama Marg. Household activity is rapidly increasing as the production of handmade materials like clothes, bags, carpets etc. for sale and export has bloomed. Also, there is a lack of policies for conservation of the age old traditional practices and lands which is an issue. In Pushkar, people lifestyle is focused more on and around religious activities. Improving heritage and infrastructure for tourist will help improving the experiences of the tourist. Heritage plays an



important role in city like Pushkar as they are connected to them in spiritual way. The city basic economy also revolves around it. Improving Heritage of the city will lead to more tourist visits and will generate more economy and results in better lifestyle of the local communities. Tourist arrival time in Pushkar is influenced by its climatic condition. Maximum tourists coming to Pushkar are from September to March. It is said that taking dip in Pushkar Sarovar during Kartik Purnima is considered as the most auspicious ritual. Last year, the number of domestic tourists during the cattle fair on Kartik Purnima reached a record high of 830,550 in the month of November. This influx of tourists in November surpasses the numbers seen in other months, making it the peak period for domestic tourism. However, this significant increase in tourist activity also brings about various socio-cultural challenges. These challenges include cultural clashes, the demonstration effect, drug abuse, racism, crime, robberies, prostitution, cheating on tourists, and incidents of rape. Moreover, the environmental consequences of this surge in tourism cannot be ignored. Issues such as congestion, pollution, noise pollution, degradation of natural resources, damage to temples, ghats, and the lake, waste and sewage management problems, carrying capacity limitations, and scarcity of drinking water are all impacted. On the other hand, the arrival of foreign tourists is at its highest during the months of March and November. In March, Pushkar organizes world famous Holi called "Kapda Fadd Holi". Tourist arrival during Pushkar Mela is 14 % of total tourist visiting Pushkar. Pushkar offers a wide range of accommodation options to cater to the needs of tourists. There are a total of 43 dharamshalas, 185 hotels, 39 ashrams, 37 guest houses, and 7 resorts available in the town, providing a capacity to accommodate 9,730 individuals. However, during the Cattle Fair, the number of tourists visiting the town exceeds its accommodation capacity. In such cases, residential houses are converted into guest houses to accommodate the additional influx of tourists. In recent years, there has been a significant increase in

the number of new hotels, restaurants, and dharamshalas in Pushkar. However, it is worth noting that none of these establishments have been regularized, and they operate without adhering to any rules or regulations. During events like the annual Pushkar Festival, the Rajasthan Tourism Development Corporation (RTDC) and other hotel chains such as the Taj, Oberoi, and Welcome Heritage provide tented accommodations. For instance, during the festival, RTDC sets up a temporary tourist village consisting of 32 huts, 150 Swiss tents, 50 standard tents, and 25 dormitories. This village also includes a coffee shop and a dining hall, capable of catering to 1,500 guests simultaneously. Private hotels also contribute to the accommodation options by setting up over 500 tents during the same period. Tented accommodation is currently offered in Pushkar, Jaisalmer, and Nagaur during their respective fairs and festivals, attracting a large number of tourists. After conducting field visits and engaging in discussions with officials and stakeholders, several key issues have been identified out of first one is that the town suffers from a lack of directional and descriptive signage, which poses challenges for tourist and navigating and exploring the area. Also the existing tourist infrastructure in the town is an efficient to accommodate the increasing number of visitors, there is a pressing need for legislative framework to regulate hotels, restaurants, Dharamshala in the town, the absence of connectivity between Ghats creator, universal accessibility issue, hindering the seamless movement and experience for visitors. Some of the inappropriate activities are being promoted on Ghats and abandon buildings, negatively impacting the overall appearance and maintenance of these areas Out of 52 guards, only a few are utilised on a daily basis, while the majority remain unused throughout the year, leading to neglect and poor upkeep. On Parallel Lines, UNESCO has listed Temple of tooth relic as one of the World heritage site In Kandy. Kandy city boasts a prominent highlight, the renowned Asala Perahera, famously referred to as The Festival of the Tooth, held during

the months of July and August. Situated on a plateau, Kandy is encompassed by majestic mountains that house tea plantations and a richly diverse rainforest. At the core of the city lies Kandy Lake (Bogambara Lake), offering students a picturesque setting, while the central shopping district provides a pedestrian-friendly environment with a blend of local markets and a contemporary multistory mall. The tourism sector in Kandy of Sri Lanka has experienced a remarkable growth rate following the resolution of the thirty-year-long terrorism issue in 2009. The number of tourists visiting the country and the city has witnessed a substantial surge, escalating from 447,890 in 2009 to 1,527,153 in 2014. This surge in tourism has made a significant contribution to Sri Lanka's economy, with the industry expected to directly contribute 3.0% and a total of 7.9% to the national gross domestic product in 2011. The tourism sector directly contributed to 3.5% of total employment in 2014, and it is projected to create support for 804,000 jobs by 2024, making up 9.5% of the country's total employment. The local community is highly interested in engaging with the tourism industry, either by establishing their own small-scale businesses or working for existing tourism establishments. [2] However, there are significant obstacles preventing the community from fully benefiting from tourism, such as inadequate government planning, policies, and regulations within the tourism industry, as well as a lack of knowledge and skills among tour operators. These challenges impede the delivery of anticipated benefits to the local community. Fortunately, both the villagers and tourists in this region demonstrate a strong sensitivity towards indigenous cultures, which helps minimize negative socio-cultural impacts.[2] In order to ensure that the local community can benefit from the development of tourism, it is crucial for the government to adopt appropriate policies and planning strategies. This includes raising community awareness and providing education, empowering the community, and enhancing the locals' capacity to take advantage of the available benefits and advantages

of tourism. The active involvement of the local community is essential for the establishment of a sustainable tourism industry that is economically, socio-culturally, and environmentally viable. To achieve this, it is proposed that small-scale tourism projects be implemented through community participation, with the government providing necessary monitoring and support. Additionally, the government and other responsible organizations should empower the community to form community-based organizations (CBOs). For larger-scale development projects, it is recommended to establish public and private partnerships (PPP projects). This approach allows the government to effectively manage the interests of both the business sector and the local community in the destination.[2] By involving the community and implementing appropriate strategies, the tourism industry can thrive while ensuring the well-being and preservation of the local community and its cultural heritage.

### **Conclusion**

From the above case study, it can be stated that there are positive as well as negative impacts of tourism development on Pushkar. It is observed that in Pushkar, the employment opportunities with better infrastructure development, quality of services, and preservation of local art, culture & heritage impacts the society in a positive manner. On the other hand, it is analyzed that there are rise in prices of goods & services along with import of foreign tourism production, lack of sustainable tourism, & inadequate government planning, policies & regulations which impacts the host community in negative manner. To promote sustainable tourism, it is essential to ensure balanced and suitable progress in the socio-cultural, environmental, and economic dimensions of a destination. In order to foster community participation, the implementation of small-scale tourism projects, coupled with government oversight and the establishment of community-based organizations, is crucial. The government should prioritize the adoption of appropriate policies and comprehensive planning, while also



actively promoting community awareness and education. Furthermore, it is important to highlight and support indigenous products, culture, heritage, and handicrafts, as well as empower the community and enhance the capabilities of local residents to fully leverage the advantages and opportunities presented by tourism development.

### References

- [1]. Tiwari S, Tomczewska-Popowycz N, Gupta SK, Swart MP., Local Community Satisfaction toward Tourism Development in Pushkar Region of Rajasthan, India., Sustainability. 2021; 13(23):13468.
- [2]. Gnanapala W.K Athula, Sandaruwani J.A.R.C, Socio-economic Impacts of Tourism Development and Their Implications on Local Communities, International Journal of Economics and Business Administration, Vol. 2, No. 5, Pages: 59-67
- [3]. Myintzu Tun K, 2019, Challenges and opportunities of tourism development in Myanmar among CLMV countries, Yangon University of Economics, Master of Development Studies Programme.