

Showcasing Incredible India Through Swachh Bharat Abhiyan: Swachh Smarak, Swachh Pakwan and Swachh Paryatan

Juhi Gupta¹, Prof. Ritu Bakshi²

¹Research Scholar, Department of Educational Studies, Central University of Jammu, Rahya-Samba, Pin code: 181143, Orchid Id-0000-0001-6052-3733, India

²Professor, Department of Educational Studies, Central University of Jammu, Rahya-Samba, Pin code: 181143, Orchid Id-0000-0001-9867-2216, India.

Abstract

India is a nation renowned for its rich and storied history, boasting one of the world's oldest and most advanced civilizations. Its diverse landscape features perennial rivers, undulating terrain, verdant mountains, evergreen rainforests, and stunning beaches in Goa, as well as the breathtaking backwaters of Kerala and the snow-capped paradise of North India. Cleanliness is crucial for travellers when selecting a destination as it greatly affects their experience and perception of the place. In order to enhance the reputation of popular tourist destinations in India as clean and secure places, a range of measures have been implemented. One of the key initiatives taken by the Indian government to enhance cleanliness in the country is the Swachh Bharat Abhiyan campaign. Swachh Bharat Abhiyan is really a magical tool if used efficiently; it will change the image of India on the world map and will positively increase the number of tourists visiting the country. Swachh Bharat Abhiyan also helps in achieving the motto of 'Incredible India' and 'Atithi Devo Bhava' programmes. Thus in this present paper, the researchers focus on the importance of Clean India Campaign for promoting Indian Tourism and also explore the various initiatives under Swachh Bharat Abhiyan: Swachh Bharat – Swachh Smarak, Swachh Bharat – Swachh Pakwan and Swachh Bharat – Swachh Paryatan as the backdrop of Incredible India.

Keywords: Incredible India, Swachh Bharat Abhiyan, Tourism, Sanitation and Cleanliness

Introduction

India, a distinctive nation within the Asian continent, embodies a rich tapestry of heritage, culture, history, flora and fauna, language, attire, cuisine, rituals, lifestyle, and ecosystem. Tourism plays an integral role in fostering the holistic development of the Indian economy. (Lim & McAleer, 2001). It is a country with a diverse geography. Snow-capped Himalayan peaks, huge rivers like the Ganges and Brahmaputra, magnificent beaches in Goa and Kerala, Thar sand dunes, mediaeval forts and palaces, architectural grandeur of sacred temples, and the allure of the Taj Mahal have all captivated visitors for centuries. These attractions, together with India's unique topography and climatic circumstances, have made it a year-round tourist destination. This is why India is referred regarded as "a land of all seasons and for all purposes," and it is truly a magnificent country.

India is working hard to transition from a developing to a developed country. Since 2014, India has moved its focus to sanitation and hygiene, which is one of the important parameters for any nation heading towards a developed stage. It is a key factor in the Travel and Tourism Competitive Index's rating of countries (Calderwood and Soshkin, 2019). In the last few years, India has made significant progress on this metric. It has risen from 65th place in 2013 to 34th place in 2019 out of 140 countries. India has made significant progress in areas such as business environment, travel and tourist policy and enabling conditions, infrastructure, and ICT readiness, but it continues to trail behind in terms of environmental sustainability (Press Trust of India, 2019). According to Yale and Columbia University's biennial report, published in partnership with the World Economic Forum, India ranks 177th out of 180 nations in the Environmental Performance Index for 2018. (Yale and Columbia University & World Economic Forum, 2018).

Cleanliness is a crucial aspect that plays a significant role in attracting tourists to a particular destination. Travelers often prioritize cleanliness when choosing a place to visit, as it directly impacts their overall experience and perception of a location. Recognizing the importance of this factor, the Indian tourism industry has wholeheartedly embraced the notion of cleanliness and utilized it as a powerful tool to promote a clean and safe image to potential visitors. To promote a clean and safe image, various measures have been implemented across popular tourist destinations in India. These include regular cleaning and maintenance of public spaces, such as parks, monuments, and beaches. Efforts have also been made to improve waste management systems, ensuring proper disposal and recycling of waste materials.

A study was undertaken to examine the effects of the Clean India Mission on four prominent Indian cities, namely Delhi, Mumbai, Chennai, Agra, and Jaipur. This initiative aimed to enhance the cleanliness, hygiene, and pollution levels within these urban areas. The findings of the study revealed that the implementation of the Clean India Mission had a favorable influence on the tourism industry within these cities (Aquino, 2021). The cleanliness of a specific destination can significantly affect a tourist's experience, leaving a lasting impression. The concept of "Atithi Devo Bhava" highlights the significance of cleanliness in welcoming guests, and we also prioritize cleanliness in our homes during festivals to create an atmosphere of purity and elegance. A clean tourist spot is crucial for visitors to feel relaxed and at ease. Moreover, the cleanliness of a tourist spot reflects positively on India's image in the global tourism market. This is something to keep in mind in 2014; the Indian government launched the 'Swachh Bharat Mission' programme, which has since been applied in every area, including the tourism business. The primary aim of the Swachh Bharat Mission is to enhance the state of sanitation and cleanliness in tourist destinations (Pradhan & Samal, 2020).

Swachh Bharat Mission

The Clean India Mission, also known as Swachh Bharat Abhiyan, was initiated by the Indian government on October 2, 2014, with the objective of eradicating open defecation and enhancing solid waste management practices. This nationwide campaign aspires to attain comprehensive sanitation coverage and promote hygienic sanitation practices. The inception of this project serves as a homage to the revered figure of Mahatma Gandhi (Parmar, 2020).

Maintaining cleanliness holds paramount importance for the advancement of the tourism sector, given its remarkable capacity to generate a ripple effect and instigate substantial economic growth. The tourism industry plays a pivotal role in India's quest to enhance employment prospects, augment individual

incomes, bolster the nation's financial reserves through foreign exchange earnings, and entice foreign direct investment. The efficacy of the Clean India initiative was pivotal in ensuring the sustained prosperity of the Indian tourism sector. This program was introduced with widespread endorsement from various stakeholders across India, encompassing commercial entities, indigenous communities, prominent multinational corporations, eminent Bollywood personalities, notable public figures, UNICEF, the Gates Foundation, and numerous non-governmental organizations.

The Swachh Bharat Abhiyan and the Incredible India campaign are perfectly aligned because cleanliness, hygiene, and sanitation are essential requirements for any tourist destination. By striving for a clean India, the tourism industry would greatly benefit and thrive. Cleanliness plays a crucial role in enhancing a country's visual appeal. Therefore, it is crucial for the tourism industry to understand and commit to implementing innovative approaches to promote a clean and environmentally friendly nation. (Yagnik and Yagnik, 2021)

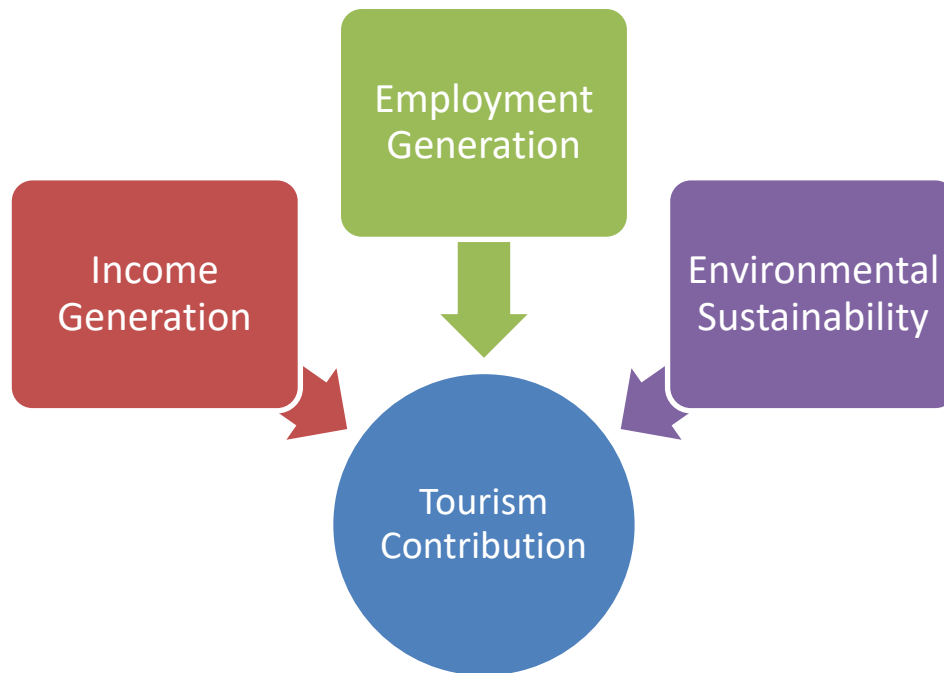
Objectives of the Study

1. To study the importance of Clean India Campaign for promoting Indian Tourism.
2. To highlight the new initiatives started by the Ministry of Tourism, Government of India.

The analysis of the current study has been conducted in accordance with the study's objectives, and a comprehensive analysis is provided below.

Importance of the Clean India Campaign for Indian Tourism

India's tourism industry is a vital player in the country's economic growth. In fact, it's responsible for a whopping 10% of India's GDP and provides employment for a staggering 42 million people! To keep this industry thriving, India has implemented a range of initiatives to promote and support tourism. And one of the most successful has been the Clean India Mission. This program has had a hugely positive impact on the tourism industry, making India an even more attractive destination for visitors from all over the world (Aquino,2020). Indian tourism helped the Indian government achieve three goals: income generation, job creation, and environmental sustainability. A clean India was becoming increasingly important for stimulating tourism, which is a powerful catalyst in economic development and job creation. Public hygiene has become a major barrier to fully recognising the benefits of tourism in tackling socioeconomic difficulties, which was a critical issue affecting Indian tourism. The importance of cleanliness and public hygiene in encouraging tourism was universally acknowledged ().According to Dutta (2017), India aspires to become a desired tourist destination by focusing on public sanitation and clean environments across the country.



India has achieved a significant milestone in its Travel and Tourism Competitive Index, becoming only the third country in the world to experience double-digit growth in a single year. In 2015, India held the 52nd position in the index, but has since made remarkable progress by climbing 12 places to secure the 40th spot this year. This commendable advancement can be attributed to Prime Minister Narendra Modi's resolute efforts in promoting a Swachh Bharat (Clean India) campaign, which has not only enhanced the sanitation conditions in both rural and urban areas of the country but has also positively impacted India's standing in the Travel and Tourism Competitive Index. The rankings provided by the World Economic Forum serve as a comprehensive assessment of the long-term development of a country's travel and tourism sectors, as well as their contribution to the overall progress of the nation.

Tourism offers substantial economic opportunities for overall development. The enhancement of basic sanitation and cleanliness in tourist destinations was a key objective of a campaign aimed at promoting effective tourism. In 2016, a total of 3,686 mountains of national significance, which are under the surveillance and protection of the Archaeological Survey of India, were targeted for improvement.

Tourism presents significant economic prospects for overall growth. Effective tourism can transform a location into a desirable tourist destination, while detrimental tourism practices have the potential to undermine the integrity of the place. The maintenance of cleanliness and sanitation emerges as the foremost priority for tourists when embarking on a visit to a tourist destination. This research paper tries to highlight how the implementation of Swachh Bharat Abhiyan helps in boosting tourism in our country. Various researches have highlighted positive and negative impact of tourism on the physical environment of a place.

Bindu's (2016) study found that the Clean India campaign in Coimbatore led to a notable and positive transformation. However, in order to sustain this progress, it is crucial for both the public and government to actively engage and participate. Dutta and Baskar (2017) reported that the Clean India Mission has improved sanitation conditions in both rural and urban areas of India, and has also positively affected India's ranking in the Travel and Tourism Competitive Index. By focusing on promoting hygiene, sanitation, and cleanliness in both urban and rural areas, the implementation of the

Clean India Mission resulted in India's rise from rank 52 to 40 within a year. Prashanth (2019) emphasizes the significant role of the Clean India campaign in shaping the future of tourism. In their study, Pradhan and Samal (2020) discovered a significant disparity between the anticipated standards of conduct and the current level of awareness and engagement among citizens concerning matters of sanitation, cleanliness, and the consequential effects on the tourism industry of the nation. Aquino, Justin, and Jalagat (2021) have observed that the Clean India Mission appears to have made minimal contributions to the development of tourism in India. It is evident that the Clean India Mission has not adopted a comprehensive approach towards ensuring cleanliness in Indian cities. In their recent study, Maheshwari and Singh (2022) unveiled that the Swachh Bharat Swachh Paryatan initiatives have been effectively embraced and implemented by the local community, tourists, and stakeholders in the tourism sector. These endeavors have played a significant role in disseminating awareness regarding cleanliness and hygiene at various tourist destinations. Furthermore, the researchers noted that a substantial number of tourist sites have successfully established fundamental amenities such as washrooms, restrooms, drinking water facilities, dustbins, and spit bins.

Every campaign has its positive and negative impacts, and this campaign is no exception. However, based on a literature review, it appears that the positive impact of this campaign on tourists, stakeholders, the local community, and youth is more significant. If implemented consistently and effectively, it has the potential to become a benchmark for clean and hygienic tourist destinations in the global tourism industry. As highlighted in the research paper, the review above demonstrates that cleanliness enhances tourism, which in turn strengthens the economic condition of any country.

The Ministry of Tourism launched a series of new initiatives during the commemoration of Good Governance Day on December 26, 2014.

Swachh Bharat Abhiyan has been successful in improving the sanitation and cleanliness conditions of some of India's major tourist spots. The Ministry of Tourism has undertaken several initiatives to maintain cleanliness at tourist destinations across the country. The Swachhta Pakhwada campaign is one such initiative that aims to create awareness among tourists, school/college students, and tourism stakeholders about cleanliness and hygiene at tourist destinations (Ministry of Tourism, 2015). During the celebration of Good Governance Day on 26th December, 2014, Swachh Bharat - Swachh Paryatan, Swachh Bharat - Swachh Smarak, and Swachh Bharat - Swachh Pakwan initiatives were announced.

1. **Swachh Bharat Swachh Pakwan (Hunar Zaika):** Street food vendors play a substantial role in the hospitality industry and have a widespread presence throughout India. The objective of this initiative is to enhance the proficiency and sanitation standards of street food vendors, thereby establishing them as a unique component of Indian tourism. The Ministry of Tourism has collaborated with the National Association of Street Vendors of India (NASVI) to facilitate orientation, skill assessment, and certification of these vendors. Two important initiatives of the Government are merged in the initiative - 'Skill India' and 'Clean India'.
2. **Swachh Bharat Swachh Smarak :** Taking inspiration from the Swachh Bharat (Clean India) campaign, the current initiative seeks to cultivate a more immaculate environment in India, specifically in terms of protecting and preserving the revered national heritage sites. In alignment with this commendable objective, the Ministry of Tourism has unveiled a unique electronic poster, showcasing a message from the Prime Minister, encouraging both tourists and citizens to actively

- engage in upholding cleanliness in their surroundings and actively contribute to the realization of a Swachh Bharat-Swachh Smarak (Clean India-Clean Monument).
3. **'Swachh Bharat- Swachh Paryatan'** : The 'Swachh Bharat- Swachh Paryatan' program aims to promote cleanliness and hygiene in tourist destinations across India. The Swachh Paryatan mobile app allows travelers to report unclean areas, and the Ministry of Tourism has created awards to recognize efforts by State/Union Territory Governments in maintaining clean tourist attractions.
 4. **Clean Action Plan (SAP):** SAP is a medium to make Swachhta as “Everyone’s Business”. Ministry of Tourism formulates a Swachhta Action Plan (SAP) for creating awareness amongst Tourist, School/ College students and Tourism stakeholders.
 5. **Swachh Bharat Swachh Smarak E poster:** Taking inspiration from "Swachh Bharat," this is an initiative to create a cleaner India in order to maintain and preserve the sacredness of national cultural monuments. To help with this, the Ministry of Tourism has released an unique poster with the Prime Minister's message, urging tourists and citizens of the country to fully engage in the cleanliness of their surroundings and contribute to the creation of a Swachh Bharat, Swachh Smarak.
 6. **Swachh Iconic Places (SIP):** The Swachh Iconic Places (SIP) is a subsidiary initiative of the Swachh Bharat Abhiyan programme, which is implemented by the government of India. The Ministry of Jal Shakti launched the SIP in 2016, with the primary objective of undertaking a clean-up drive at select heritage and tourist sites across India. The SIP seeks to enhance the overall experience of tourists visiting these sites by improving their cleanliness and sanitation, particularly in the peripheries and approach areas.

The Clean India Mission has yielded a favorable outcome in the promotion of Indian tourism through the enhancement of sanitation and cleanliness standards at tourist destinations. This initiative has been recognized as one of the most extensive cleanliness campaigns globally, employing a workforce of three million government personnel who are either directly or indirectly affiliated with the program.

Conclusion

The Ministry of Culture and Tourism has embarked on a remarkable journey to bring the Swachh Bharat campaign to life in numerous breathtaking tourist spots across India. Their tireless efforts have not only transformed these destinations into pristine havens but have also catapulted India's global standing as a must-visit paradise for travelers. The Swachh Bharat Abhiyan has set its sights on transforming India's tourist spots into havens of cleanliness and hygiene. With a mission to improve sanitation and cleanliness conditions, this initiative has taken on the challenge of enhancing the visitor experience at some of the country's most iconic destinations.

In a groundbreaking move, all 3,686 monuments of national importance, protected by the Archeological Survey of India, were declared polythene free zones in 2016. This bold step was taken to tackle the issue of waste disposal at these sites, ensuring that they remain pristine and untarnished by litter. The timing of the Swachh Bharat Abhiyan couldn't be more perfect. As our nation's economy continues to soar to new heights, it is crucial that we invest in initiatives that will further boost our growth. The tourism industry, being one of the major sources of foreign exchange, plays a pivotal role in strengthening our reserves. By improving the sanitation and cleanliness of our tourist spots, we are not only enhancing the experience for visitors but also attracting more tourists, thereby fueling economic growth.

With the Swachh Bharat Abhiyan at the helm, we can look forward to a future where our tourist spots shine with cleanliness and radiate a sense of pride. Let us join hands in this noble endeavor and create a lasting impact on our nation's tourism industry.

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