



American Journal of Tourism and Hospitality (AJTH)

ISSN: 2993-6519 (ONLINE)

VOLUME 4 ISSUE 2 (2026)

PUBLISHED BY
E-PALLI PUBLISHERS, DELAWARE, USA

From Silver Screen to Travel Dreams: Film Tourism in India

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Article Information

Received: October 12, 2025**Accepted:** December 01, 2025**Published:** July 20, 2026

Keywords

*Bollywood Influence, Cinematic
Travel Motivation, Destination
Branding, Film Tourism*

ABSTRACT

This theoretical study investigates the rapidly growing phenomena of film tourism in India and its impact on the travel motivations, behaviours, and destination selections of Indian travellers. The research, relying solely on secondary data, emphasises how Bollywood, regional cinema, and increasingly OTT platforms serve as significant catalysts for destination branding by influencing tourist perceptions through engaging visual tales. The results indicate that films substantially influence both domestic and international travel, elevating destinations like Ladakh, Udaipur, Spain, and Switzerland to iconic tourism status. The research highlights the economic, cultural, and social advantages of film-induced tourism, such as increased destination visibility, local job creation, and reinforced cultural identity. Nonetheless, issues like overtourism, environmental deterioration, and disproportionate regional growth deserve sustainable policy responses. The analysis confirms that film tourism presents a significant possibility for India's tourist sector, contingent upon responsible management of expansion.

INTRODUCTION

Tourism is one of the most dynamic and culturally significant industries in the world, shaping economies, societies, and identities. In recent decades, tourism has undergone notable diversification, giving rise to niche forms of travel such as adventure tourism, medical tourism, heritage tourism, and more recently, film tourism. Also referred to as “movie-induced tourism” or “screen tourism,” film tourism describes travel behavior where destinations featured in films or television productions become motivations for real-world visitation (Beeton, 2016). Unlike traditional promotional campaigns, cinematic representations convey powerful emotional and visual experiences, leaving lasting impressions on audiences and inspiring them to visit locations showcased on screen. As scholars note, films act as “destination ambassadors,” influencing tourist perception and often succeeding where conventional advertising falls short (Connell, 2012; Hudson & Ritchie, 2006).

India's relationship with film and tourism is particularly profound. The country produces over 1,800 films annually, making it the world's largest film-producing nation (UNESCO, 2020). Indian cinema, especially Bollywood, wields a unique cultural force that extends beyond entertainment into lifestyle, fashion, and even travel. Over the years, numerous locations—from the snow-capped peaks of Kashmir to the beaches of Goa—have become iconic tourist attractions due to their association with films (Biswas & Croy, 2018). For instance, Dilwale Dulhania Le Jayenge (1995) not only cemented Switzerland as a dream destination for Indian outbound tourists but also set a precedent for how Bollywood could influence travel aspirations internationally (Mitta & Anjaneyaswamy, 2013). More recently, 3 Idiots (2009) drove unprecedented footfall to Ladakh's Pangong Lake,

while Yeh Jawaani Hai Deewani (2013) popularized trekking routes in Himachal Pradesh, showcasing the powerful nexus between cinema and domestic travel demand (Travel & Tour World, 2023).

Film Tourism: A Global Phenomenon

Globally, film tourism has been recognized as an influential travel motivator. Destinations like New Zealand (The Lord of the Rings trilogy), Scotland (Braveheart), and the UK (Harry Potter) have leveraged cinematic exposure to develop sustained tourism campaigns (Croy, 2011). In some cases, visitor numbers increased by over 50% following film releases (Riley & van Doren, 1992). Such successes highlight cinema's ability to transform otherwise ordinary locations into iconic attractions. What differentiates film tourism from other forms of destination promotion is its authenticity and relatability: viewers perceive films as unbiased cultural texts, thereby fostering stronger trust and aspirational pull compared to traditional marketing (Hudson & Ritchie, 2006).

Indian Context: The Rise of Screen-Induced Travel

The phenomenon of screen-induced travel has seen a remarkable rise in India, largely driven by the cultural dominance of Bollywood and the rapid growth of regional cinema, which together play a crucial role in shaping the travel aspirations of Indian audiences. Bollywood, often described as the world's largest film industry by volume, not only entertains but also constructs imaginaries of landscapes, cities, and cultural experiences, which subsequently translate into powerful tourism motivators (Grihault, 2003; Beeton, 2016).

In India, film tourism is still an emerging but rapidly growing field of study and practice (Biswas & Croy, 2018). Surveys reveal that 94% of Indian travellers

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are influenced by films or television when choosing destinations, underscoring the medium's strong influence (Business Standard, 2023). Bollywood's global reach further amplifies its role in outbound tourism. For example, the success of films shot in Spain (*Zindagi Na Milegi Dobara*, 2011) spurred travel packages promoting Spanish locales specifically for Indian tourists (Norhidayah & Ahmad, 2024). Similarly, Indian regional cinema has begun showcasing destinations like Kerala (Malayalam cinema), Hyderabad's Ramoji Film City (Telugu cinema), and Tamil Nadu's temple towns, each of which attracts travellers intrigued by their cinematic exposure (Sinha, Dey, & Batabyal, 2025).

From the 1990s, iconic films like *Dilwale Dulhania Le Jayenge* (1995), which showcased the Swiss Alps, ignited a trend of Indian tourists flocking to Switzerland, making the country one of the first international beneficiaries of Bollywood's soft power (Bandyopadhyay, 2008). Later, films like *Kabhi Khushi Kabhie Gham* (2001) popularized London, while *Zindagi Na Milegi Dobara* (2011) significantly boosted Indian outbound tourism to Spain, highlighting how cinematic narratives act as effective promotional campaigns for global destinations without conventional advertising investments (Connell, 2012). Domestically, the Indian tourism landscape has also been reshaped by cinema, with destinations such as Ladakh gaining recognition after *3 Idiots* (2009), Manali and Gulmarg after *Yeh Jawaani Hai Deewani* (2013), and Ramoji Film City in Hyderabad establishing itself as a premier attraction due to its association with blockbuster productions like *Baahubali* (2015–2017) (Mishra, 2021). Moreover, the rise of OTT platforms during and after the COVID-19 pandemic has expanded the scope of screen-induced travel, as Indian viewers now consume a diverse range of content filmed in both domestic and international settings, further influencing their travel decisions (Singh & Kaur, 2022). Unlike traditional travel advertisements, films create emotional and cultural connections with audiences through narratives, characters, and landscapes, making them more persuasive in shaping tourist perceptions (Hudson & Ritchie, 2006). The Indian middle class, with its rising disposable incomes and increasing emphasis on leisure travel, has particularly embraced screen-inspired tourism, viewing travel not just as recreation but as an extension of their cinematic fantasies (Chakraborty, 2019). Importantly, film tourism in India has also been tied to cultural identity and nostalgia, as films showcasing heritage sites like Rajasthan's forts or Varanasi's ghats have spurred domestic tourists to explore these cultural landscapes with renewed pride (Roy & Bandyopadhyay, 2014). In this way, India's film tourism is unique, operating simultaneously on domestic and international scales—promoting both outbound travel to foreign destinations and inbound tourism to India itself. The rise of screen-induced travel in India thus highlights how films have transcended their role as entertainment to become potent vehicles for destination marketing, cultural diplomacy, and economic growth in the tourism

sector.

Indian states are beginning to acknowledge this potential. This synergy between films and tourism has been acknowledged by several state governments in India, which increasingly promote “film tourism policies” to attract productions and subsequently market the shooting locations as travel destinations (Ministry of Tourism, Government of India, 2018). States like Gujarat, Rajasthan, and Kerala have successfully used films as marketing tools, with campaigns such as “Vibrant Gujarat” leveraging cinematic exposure to enhance tourist inflow (Jain & Sharma, 2020). Meghalaya launched a Film Tourism Policy in 2025 offering subsidies to filmmakers who shoot within the state, aiming to both showcase its landscapes and stimulate visitor arrivals (Times of India, 2025a). Likewise, Chhattisgarh has proposed developing a Film City in Raipur to integrate cultural promotion with economic development (Times of India, 2025b). These policy initiatives reflect an institutional shift towards leveraging cinema as a tool for tourism growth.

Film Tourism as a Boon for Indian Travellers

The intersection of film and tourism offers multiple benefits for Indian travellers. Firstly, it broadens travel imagination by exposing audiences to destinations they may not have otherwise considered. Films provide “pre-visit” experiences, shaping expectations and reducing travel uncertainty (Connell, 2012). Secondly, cinematic tourism creates opportunities for affordable domestic travel. Locations like Manali, Ladakh, Chanderi, and Udaipur, when glamorized in films, become aspirational yet accessible destinations for Indian middle-class tourists (Travel & Tour World, 2023). Thirdly, film tourism provides an educational and cultural dimension. Travellers not only visit landscapes but also engage with heritage, crafts, and lifestyles associated with cinematic narratives, enriching their travel experiences.

For Indian travellers, these cinematic representations provide both a sense of familiarity and aspiration, as destinations become associated with emotions of love, adventure, and self-discovery, thereby shaping their decision-making processes. Moreover, film tourism significantly contributes to the democratization of travel in India, as it makes once-remote or lesser-known destinations accessible and attractive by embedding them into popular culture, for instance, Ladakh's Pangong Lake witnessed a surge of Indian domestic tourists after its portrayal in *3 Idiots* (2009), transforming it into a must-visit destination (Connell, 2012).

Economically, film-induced tourism has the potential to generate billions. A PHDCCI (2021) report estimated that the Indian film tourism industry could yield USD 3 billion annually, with over one million film tourists. Socially, it helps foster local pride and cultural revival, as observed in Chanderi where films like *Dangal* (2016) and *Stree* (2018) renewed interest in the town's artisanal traditions (Travel & Tour World, 2023). While film tourism offers immense opportunities, it also poses challenges such as

overcrowding, commercialization, and environmental degradation at popular sites, which need to be managed through sustainable tourism practices to ensure that the benefits for travellers are not offset by loss of authenticity and quality (Beeton, 2016).

Thus, for Indian travellers, film tourism is not only a source of leisure but also an avenue to engage with cultural heritage and contribute to local economies. Beyond the economic benefits for host destinations, film tourism provides Indian travellers with meaningful cultural engagement, enabling them to connect with the narratives, histories, and traditions that are woven into cinematic storytelling.

The Indian government and state tourism boards have increasingly recognized this potential, offering subsidies and logistical support for film shoots to boost tourism, such as the Kerala government's initiatives to attract film producers and the Madhya Pradesh Tourism Board's film promotion policy, which encourage filmmakers to capture the state's heritage and landscapes (Ministry of Tourism, Government of India, 2023). This symbiotic relationship between cinema and tourism not only fosters economic growth and infrastructural development but also allows Indian travellers to diversify their itineraries by exploring destinations beyond conventional circuits, thereby enriching their travel experiences. In addition, the growth of digital platforms and OTT services has expanded the reach of regional cinema, exposing Indian travellers to new landscapes and cultures within India itself, from the backwaters of Kerala to the hills of Himachal Pradesh, further boosting domestic travel aspirations (Hudson & Ritchie, 2006).

Significance of the Study

The study holds significance for both academia and practice. It enriches the literature on Indian tourism branding by situating cinema as a vital promotional channel. For policymakers, it highlights strategies for developing film tourism circuits and ensuring sustainable management. For the tourism industry, it provides insights into evolving consumer motivations and opportunities for packaging cinematic experiences. Ultimately, the research argues that film tourism, if strategically nurtured, can be a boon for Indian travellers, offering diversified experiences, cultural engagement, and socio-economic dividends. This paper, therefore, explores film tourism as a boon for Indian travellers, analysing its scope, drivers, opportunities, and challenges within both domestic and international contexts.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Film tourism can be defined as a branch of cultural tourism (Zimmermann, 2003, p.76) and refers to the growing interest and demand for locations which became popular due to their appearance in films and television series. In his interpretation, Zimmermann describes film tourism as all forms of travelling to destinations, which in general enable a connection with the world of

film (Zimmermann, 2003, p.76). In the research paper, Film tourism by Karolina Tomala & Florence Faber, Film Tourism can be divided into three separate sub-categories, including film promotion tourism, travel film tourism and film induced tourism. They state that there are various reasons which turn people into film tourists. The desire to:

- explore film parks, and film studios (e.g., Disneyland, Six Flags)
- visit locations that are directly associated with a particular film and have connection with this movie
- go on a film journey which offers them the possibility to descent into film worlds and uses the landscape as a recognition value

Conceptual foundations and theoretical perspectives

Film tourism (also called movie- or screen-induced tourism) refers to travel motivated—either wholly or partly—by the desire to visit locations featured in films, television series or other screen media (Beeton, 2005). The phenomenon draws on several tourism theories: destination image formation (how media shapes perceptions), place attachment (emotional bonds formed via narrative), and the motivation literature explaining why travellers seek “vicarious” or “transformational” experiences (Macdonis & Sparks, as cited in Mittal & Anjaneyaswamy, 2013). Early research emphasized the potential of films to function as powerful place marketers because they combine visual spectacle, narrative meaning and celebrity presence—factors that together can change both cognitive and affective images of places and therefore influence travel decisions (Tooke & Baker, 1996; Busby & Klug, 2001).

Global evidence: economics, image and experience

International case studies constitute the backbone of classical film-tourism literature. The New Zealand–Lord of the Rings example is perhaps the most frequently cited empirical demonstration of film tourism's macroeconomic potential: post-release, certain regions reported large increases in visitation and tourist spending, prompting extensive industry and government efforts to leverage the film's image (New Zealand Institute of Economic Research, 2002; Beeton, 2005). Broader reviews show that film exposure can increase short-term searches and visits to featured locales and sometimes produce long-term destination repositioning—though effects vary by film genre, market reach and destination readiness (Connell, 2012; Hudson & Ritchie, 2006). Research also stresses the heterogeneity of “film tourists”: some are casual visitors inspired by a single scene, while others are highly motivated fans seeking pilgrimage-style experiences (Roesch, 2009).

Several studies highlight measurement challenges: isolating the causal effect of films from other marketing activities, dealing with seasonality, and accounting for the differential appeal of film types (Busby & Klug, 2001). Nonetheless, the global literature converges on two

core points: (1) film exposure can positively influence destination image and visitation; (2) proactive destination management (packaged tours, interpretive material, site protection) converts cinematic interest into sustainable tourism benefits (Beeton, 2005; Tooke & Baker, 1996).

Film tourism in India: emergence and empirical findings

India occupies a special place in film-tourism scholarship because of its large domestic cinema industry and highly media-engaged population. Biswas and Croy (2018) argue that India's prolific production systems (Bollywood plus regional cinemas) create abundant opportunities for screen locations to influence travel behaviour; yet the phenomenon is still "emergent" because systematic destination development and cross-sector coordination remain uneven. Empirical Indian studies corroborate that exposure to films both domestic and foreign (e.g., Bollywood shots of Switzerland) changes destination awareness and, in many cases, contributes to inflows (Mittal & Anjaneyaswamy, 2013; Biswas & Croy, 2018). Recent industry and survey evidence suggests the influence is large and growing. A major consumer travel survey (Skyscanner/OnePoll) reported that an overwhelming proportion of Indian respondents—reported across multiple news and industry outlets—say they are inspired by on-screen locations when choosing travel destinations (Skyscanner, 2023). Country-level industry analyses and consultancy reports (e.g., KPMG, 2024) also document concrete examples where films such as *Yeh Jawaani Hai Deewani*, *3 Idiots*, *Bajirao Mastani* and *Padmaavat* correlated with spikes in search-activity and tourist arrivals for Manali/Gulmarg, Ladakh, Udaipur and Chittorgarh, respectively. These works emphasize that film-induced demand can translate into measurable economic benefits (hotel occupancy, guide services, local retail), provided destinations are prepared to capture the interest (KPMG, 2024).

Scholars focused on India highlight additional socio-cultural dynamics: Bollywood cinema often creates highly affective narratives of homeland, diaspora and aspiration that stimulate both domestic and outbound travel—making film tourism in India a hybrid of inbound, domestic, and outbound drivers (Mittal & Anjaneyaswamy, 2013; Biswas & Croy, 2018). Case studies of specific towns (for example, Chanderi and Udaipur) show how cinematic visibility can rekindle heritage interest and revive local crafts, but also can encourage commodification if not managed responsibly (KPMG, 2024).

Industry, policy, and infrastructural response

The rising attention from policy makers and tourism bodies is a notable recent development. Several Indian states and central agencies now recognize film production as an instrument of destination marketing and have begun to offer incentives, simplify permits, and propose film-city development as part of regional growth strategies

(KPMG, 2024). Parallely, industry actors—studios, tour operators and destination management organizations—are creating film tours, museum exhibits and "set visits" (for example, Ramoji Film City in Hyderabad functions both as a production hub and a major tourist attraction), which institutionalizes film tourism as a packaged product (Ramoji Film City, n.d.; IJCRT, 2024).

Critical issues and research gaps

Despite promising evidence, the literature identifies persistent gaps and risks. Measurement problems (attribution of visitation to films), the uneven spatial distribution of benefits, and concerns about environmental carrying capacity are widely noted (Busby & Klug, 2001; Beeton, 2005). Indian researchers emphasize that much of the evidence is anecdotal or media-driven, calling for systematic longitudinal and mixed-methods studies to quantify socio-economic impacts and to design regulatory frameworks that balance growth with heritage and environmental conservation (Biswas & Croy, 2018; Mittal & Anjaneyaswamy, 2013).

In summary, the literature indicates that film tourism holds substantial potential for India—economically, culturally and as a branding tool—but converting cinematic exposure into sustainable benefits requires coordinated planning, rigorous impact assessment, and community engagement. Future empirical work should prioritize causal designs, tourist segmentation studies, and evaluations of policy interventions to guide evidence-based film tourism development.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The present study adopts an exploratory research design to investigate the role of film tourism in shaping the travel motivations and behaviors of Indian tourists. Exploratory designs help researchers build an understanding of phenomena by analyzing previously published works, reports, and statistical data rather than testing predetermined hypotheses (Stebbins, 2001). Given the dynamic and emerging nature of film tourism, this design enables the researcher to investigate patterns, linkages, and insights from a wide range of available literature. This design enables the researcher to examine emerging trends, perceptions, and experiences without being constrained by rigid hypotheses.

The study exclusively utilizes secondary data, which are data already collected, analyzed, or published by other researchers, organizations, and institutions. Secondary sources are considered useful in tourism research because they allow the researcher to access extensive datasets, historical trends, and theoretical perspectives without the time and resource constraints of primary data collection (Smith, 2008). Secondary data were drawn from scholarly journals, government reports, tourism board publications, and film industry databases (Connell, 2012; Hudson & Ritchie, 2006).

The analysis of secondary data followed a thematic analysis approach. Relevant literature and reports were

coded into thematic categories such as film tourism as a global phenomenon, Bollywood's role in shaping travel behavior, regional cinema, and domestic tourism & economic and socio-cultural impacts of film-induced travel. Through comparison and synthesis of existing findings, common patterns were identified, and divergent viewpoints were critically examined. This approach allowed the study to develop a comprehensive narrative on the opportunities and challenges of film tourism in India without primary fieldwork.

However, there were some limitations in the research process. The study is limited to secondary data due to resource and time constraints, and does not include fieldwork or primary data collection. Since the study is based entirely on secondary data, it does not capture the first-hand perceptions of Indian travellers or destination managers. Furthermore, the dynamic nature of tourism, particularly film-induced tourism influenced by changing media consumption patterns and OTT platforms, means that secondary data may not always reflect real-time trends. Despite these limitations, secondary data analysis provides a strong foundation for exploratory insights, which can guide future empirical research.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Film tourism, or film-induced tourism, has emerged as a significant driver of global travel behavior, creating opportunities for destinations to leverage cinema as a marketing and branding tool. Drawing from the review of secondary sources—academic literature, government reports, industry data, and media insights—several findings have been identified regarding the role of film tourism in India. These findings are discussed thematically to capture the multidimensional impact of films on Indian travellers.

Influence of Films on Travel Decisions

One of the key findings from the secondary literature is that films exert a strong influence on the travel decisions of Indian tourists. Studies show that audiences develop a desire to visit places they have seen on screen, a phenomenon commonly referred to as the “cinematic pull” (Beeton, 2016). For example, Bollywood blockbusters such as *Dilwale Dulhania Le Jayenge* (1995) played a critical role in popularizing Switzerland among Indian tourists, while *Zindagi Na Milegi Dobara* (2011) inspired a wave of Indian travellers to Spain (Khanna, 2019). Similarly, regional films like *Bahubali* (Telugu) have boosted tourism at the Ramoji Film City in Hyderabad (Rao, 2020). These examples illustrate that cinema often serves as a “virtual brochure,” shaping travellers’ perceptions and motivating them to explore destinations. Furthermore, a UNWTO (2018) report notes that film-induced tourism not only boosts international travel but also influences domestic tourists, particularly young, urban, and middle-class Indians who associate films with aspirational lifestyles. This trend highlights the dual role of films in encouraging outbound tourism and

strengthening domestic circuits.

Growth of Domestic Film Tourism

Secondary data reveal that film tourism in India is not limited to international destinations but is also driving domestic travel. States like Rajasthan, Kerala, and Jammu & Kashmir have long been favorites for Bollywood productions, and their depiction in popular films continues to attract Indian tourists (Ministry of Tourism, 2020). For example, the song sequences filmed in Udaipur for movies like *Yeh Jawaani Hai Deewani* have significantly enhanced the city’s romantic image.

Kerala has also successfully branded itself through Malayalam films, often depicting its backwaters and lush greenery. Similarly, Kashmir, often described as “paradise on earth,” has seen fluctuating tourist inflows depending on the portrayal in Bollywood films (Kaul, 2019). The revival of interest in Kashmir through films like *Haider* (2014) demonstrates how cinema can rejuvenate destinations facing image crises.

The growth of domestic film tourism suggests that Indian travellers increasingly seek experiences that connect them with cinematic narratives, a trend that has been amplified by social media platforms where fans replicate iconic film moments at shooting sites.

Bollywood’s Role in Destination Branding

Another major finding is that Bollywood plays a pivotal role in destination branding. Unlike conventional marketing strategies, films embed destinations within engaging narratives that create an emotional connection with audiences (Hudson & Ritchie, 2006). For instance, *3 Idiots* (2009) not only showcased the natural beauty of Ladakh but also created a cultural phenomenon around the Pangong Lake, where tourists flock to reenact scenes from the movie.

This form of branding is cost-effective for destinations, as films act as “soft power” tools by reaching millions of viewers worldwide without the need for direct promotional campaigns (Govers, 2018). The Indian government has recognized this potential, with initiatives such as single-window clearance for film shoots and financial incentives for producers to shoot in specific states (FICCI, 2021). The synergy between the film industry and tourism boards is crucial for maximizing the benefits of film tourism in India.

Economic Benefits of Film Tourism

The economic impact of film-induced tourism is another significant finding. Secondary sources highlight how destinations featured in films often experience a surge in visitor numbers, leading to increased revenue for local economies. For example, after the release of *Zindagi Na Milegi Dobara*, Spain reported a notable increase in Indian tourist arrivals, directly linking it to the film’s portrayal (ET Travel, 2017).

Within India, Ramoji Film City in Hyderabad is a classic example of how film production sites can be converted

into tourism attractions. Hosting millions of visitors annually, it demonstrates how film tourism can generate employment, encourage entrepreneurship, and stimulate related sectors like hospitality, transport, and handicrafts (Rao, 2020).

The multiplier effect of film tourism is evident, as increased tourist arrivals contribute not only to direct spending but also to long-term destination loyalty, with many visitors returning for extended stays.

Social and Cultural Dimensions

In addition to economic impacts, film tourism carries social and cultural significance. Secondary data suggest that films allow Indian travellers to connect emotionally with locations, often perceiving them as part of their cultural imagination (Beeton, 2016). For instance, films featuring heritage monuments, such as the Taj Mahal in *Mere Brother Ki Dulhan* (2011), strengthen the cultural pride of domestic tourists while reinforcing India's image globally.

Film tourism also fosters cross-cultural exchange when Indian travellers visit international locations showcased in Bollywood movies. This not only enhances India's image abroad but also broadens the worldview of Indian tourists, exposing them to global lifestyles and cultures (Govers, 2018). However, scholars caution that the glamorization of destinations can sometimes create unrealistic expectations, leading to tourist dissatisfaction or cultural misinterpretations (Hudson & Ritchie, 2006).

Challenges of Film Tourism

Despite its many advantages, film tourism in India faces several challenges. Over-tourism is a recurring concern at destinations that suddenly gain popularity after being featured in films. For example, Pangong Lake in Ladakh has faced environmental degradation due to heavy tourist inflows post-3 Idiots (Kaul, 2019). Similarly, unregulated tourist activity can damage fragile ecosystems and heritage sites, undermining the long-term sustainability of film tourism.

Another challenge is the uneven distribution of benefits. While some states like Rajasthan and Maharashtra have actively promoted film tourism, others lag due to lack of infrastructure, policy support, or awareness (Ministry of Tourism, 2020). Moreover, piracy and changing viewing habits through OTT platforms mean that the traditional cinematic influence may evolve, requiring destinations to adapt their strategies accordingly.

The Role of OTT Platforms and Digital Media

A recent finding is the growing role of OTT (Over-the-Top) platforms such as Netflix, Amazon Prime, and Disney+ Hotstar in shaping travel desires. As Indian audiences increasingly consume web series and films on these platforms, locations featured in such content gain popularity. For instance, *Sacred Games* (Netflix) drew attention to Mumbai's gritty urban landscapes, while international shows like *Money Heist* have influenced

Indian outbound travel aspirations (Sharma, 2021).

Social media further amplifies the trend, with travellers sharing "film-inspired" experiences on Instagram and YouTube. This digital shift signifies that film tourism is no longer confined to big-screen Bollywood blockbusters but has expanded into digital storytelling.

Policy and Institutional Support

Secondary data highlight the growing role of government and institutions in formalizing film tourism. The Ministry of Tourism in India has identified film tourism as a priority area under its Incredible India campaign, and several state governments have launched policies to attract film shoots (FICCI, 2021). Examples include Madhya Pradesh's Film Tourism Policy and Gujarat's incentive schemes, both designed to position these states as film-friendly destinations.

Such institutional support indicates recognition of film tourism as a strategic tool for economic development, though its success depends on implementation, coordination with the film industry, and sustainable management practices.

Discussion

The findings from secondary data underline that film tourism is indeed a boon for Indian travellers as it enriches travel motivations, creates memorable experiences, and opens access to both domestic and international destinations. Bollywood's cultural dominance makes it a powerful vehicle for destination branding, while the rise of OTT platforms adds new dimensions to cinematic tourism.

However, the discussion also highlights challenges such as sustainability, over-tourism, and unequal benefits across regions. These findings suggest that for film tourism to truly serve as a long-term boon, policy frameworks must balance promotion with regulation. Community participation, sustainable practices, and diversification of film-tourism circuits are essential for inclusive growth. Overall, film tourism in India stands at a promising juncture where cinema, technology, and tourism converge, creating vast opportunities for travellers and destinations alike.

CONCLUSION

Film tourism has become a significant and impactful factor influencing modern travel trends in India. This study, based solely on secondary data, illustrates that films, television productions, and OTT content have evolved beyond simple entertainment; they significantly contribute to the construction of destination imagery, the motivation of travel aspirations, and the influence on both domestic and international tourist flows. Bollywood, due to its broad influence and emotional resonance, functions as a significant force in destination branding. In addition, regional cinema and digital platforms are progressively broadening the scope of travel inspired by screen content throughout India.

The findings indicate that cinematic representations can transform ordinary locations into iconic tourist sites, exemplified by Pangong Lake (3 Idiots), Udaipur (Yeh Jawaani Hai Deewani), and various international destinations like Switzerland and Spain. In addition to economic advantages like job creation, increased local revenues, and the expansion of associated industries, film tourism reinforces cultural identity, cultivates community pride, and enhances travelers' comprehension of varied landscapes and cultures.

The paper emphasizes the necessity for responsible and sustainable development. Issues including over-tourism, environmental degradation, regional disparities, and unrealistic tourist expectations necessitate targeted policy intervention. Although numerous Indian states have implemented film tourism policies and incentives, the establishment of a unified national framework, bolstered by infrastructure development, community engagement, and conservation-oriented strategies, is crucial for sustainable success.

The study concludes that film tourism presents a substantial opportunity for the Indian tourism sector, contingent upon thoughtful and strategic management. As cinema evolves through global exposure and digital technologies, film-induced tourism is set to become a more significant aspect of India's tourism landscape. Integrating sustainability, innovation, and cross-sector collaboration can position film tourism as a sustainable advantage for destinations, travelers, and the overall economy.

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