



# CRIMES AGAINST TOURISTS IN INDIA: AN OVERVIEW

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## Abstract

*Tourism is one of the largest and a rapid growing industry worldwide. For many people touring is one of the most desirable activities. . The increasing rate of tourist arrival, force the policy makers and other allied departments to ponder on safety and security aspects of tourists. Literatures had documented victimization of tourists in different places. The rising rate of crimes against tourists poses threats to their safe visits and annoyance for the destination. The negative image results in hindering the process of development of the nation. This paper is with the help of secondary literature is aimed to understand forms of crimes occurring against tourist in India, discuss the assistance required for tourists or victims of crime, offer some workable suggestions for preventing and controlling the occurrence of such crimes against tourists.*

**Key words:** Crimes, Safety Tourism, Tourists, Victimization

## Abstract

*Tourism is one of the largest and a rapid growing industry worldwide. For many people touring is one of the most desirable activities. It introduces them to new areas, cultures, communities and on the whole a complete new lifestyle. Touring is not only preferred for leisure but, it also serves as hub of knowledge and gives an opportunity for exploration to various interest of tourists. The potential of tourism industries to develop any nation is irrefutable.*

*In India, during 2018 the foreign tourists' arrivals were 10.56 million (provisional) with a growth of 5.2% over the previous year. The increasing rate of tourist arrival, force the policy makers and other allied departments to ponder on safety and security aspects of tourists. Literatures had documented victimization of tourists in different places. The rising rate of crimes against tourists poses threats to their safe visits and annoyance for the destination. The negative image results in hindering the process of development of the nation. This paper is with the help of secondary literature is aimed to understand forms of crimes occurring against tourist in India, discuss the assistance required for tourists or victims of crime, offer some workable suggestions for preventing and controlling the occurrence of such crimes against tourists.*

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## 1. Introduction

Globally among varied sectors, the Tourism sector is identified as a potential income generator. (Selvakumar & Thangaraju, 2016). Mass tourism has resulted in large-scale goods, services, and people (Garcia & Nicholls, 1995).

Tourism provide a diverse collection of niche tourism products like: cruises, wellness, sports, etc. India Brand Equity Foundation, on its official website, cited data regarding Indian tourism: In 2019, considering travel and tourism contribution to GDP ,India ranked 20th among 185 countries ,World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC, 2019).

Viewing a growth in the tourist arrival during the pre-pandemic, it becomes essential to give the tourists the best services. In their article, Chiu & Lin (2011) expressed that tourists usually travel to places with a good impression. Out of many, safety is a significant aspect that contributes in creating a good impression. Concerning the safety, tourists prefer visiting the places that are known to them and exclude places with high crime rate or political instability. The results of a study entitled 'Fatal Attraction: How Security Threats Hurt Tourism' revealed that tourist have a preference list of visiting different places. They compare the levels of safety and security of the destination place to the situation existing in their own country and plan visit accordingly. The article also mentioned that tourists from stable countries plan trips to the places with the same condition of stability, rather the tourists from unstable countries are more tolerant of insecurity at the destination country (Fourie, Nadal & Gallego, 2019).

In their book chapter entitled *Tourism Destination Competitiveness of India and China*, Kumar, Phuong-Dung & Duc-Thang (2016) mentioned that India represents a unique and fascinating cultural landscape. However, the country does not appear to be tourists friendly or welcoming country. Negative news regarding heinous crimes splashed in media and other sources deters tourists from touring for a particular destination and dismays them.

A guide on Crime against tourists by Glensor & Peak (2004) identifies various crimes occurring against tourists, that include but not limited to: crimes against elderly & children, different types of frauds, , gang activities, offenses relating to casino gambling, robberies at bars, terrorism against tourists and mass-transit crimes. Basak, Ghosh, Sarkar & Chaudhuri (2015) in their study regarding the need of tourist protection in India mentioned that tourist had been victimized with rape, sexual harassment offenses for years.

The U.K. government, on its official website (Foreign Travel Advice, India), while advising the tourists, mentioned that women travelers should be cautious when traveling in India even though they are in groups. Women are becoming victims of sexual assault verbal and physical harassment by individuals or groups of men, posing a high risk to their safety. This aspect indicates the risk perceived regarding the safety of tourists by foreign countries about India. The lower the risk factor, the higher will be the overall development of the nation. A 5 point Likert scale study found that Goa is popularizing western culture through Rave parties, Sunburn festivals, casinos, massage centers, spas, etc. The article discusses the negative impact of this culture on

some crimes spreading like the drug trade, sex trade, drug peddling, pedophilia rackets, rapes, molestation of female tourists (**Gokhale, Sawant & Ugavekar, 2014**).

The occurrence of various crimes against tourists in India poses a negative destination impression and hinders the country's development. The risks that tourists face need to be analyzed most appropriately, and appropriate steps need to be executed.

## 2. Objectives

- To list different forms of crimes against foreign tourists in India.
- To discuss types of assistance required for foreign tourists.
- To offer some workable suggestions for preventing and controlling the occurrence of such crimes against tourists.

### **AS PER THE OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY THE PAPER IS ORGANIZED UNDER CERTAIN SUBTITLES**

- a) Tourist and Destination Image
- b) Statistics and some News items relating to criminal activities against Foreign tourists
- c) Deterring factors for Foreign tourists in India
- d) Reasons behind the occurrence of crimes against foreign tourists
- e) Assistance required by Foreign tourists

#### **a) Tourist and Destination Image**

Tourism is a common phenomenon and had contributed to developing regions and countries across the globe (**Lisowska, 2017**). **Altindag (2013)** mentioned tourism as a significant and desirable industry in many countries, as it is relatively low in energy consumption and pollution. Any tourists, before touring, deeply analyze the destination and make a destination image.

Destination image described by **Tasci (2009)** is a mental picture of a destination composed of how people visualize, think, and feel about the destination, ultimately determining people's attitudes, intentions, and predispositions. **Brunt (2008)** Tourism is particularly vulnerable to outside forces, with it being so strongly linked to advertising. It would not be wrong saying that Advertising and media play a vital role in making the destination image.

The one potentially important factor that may influence destination image is not much discussed by literature, 'safety of the destination.' It would not be wrong to mention here *Maslow's theory* of psychology, in which safety needs were one of the basic among the hierarchy of other needs (**McLeod, 2020**).

#### ***Criminal Activities and their impacts***

Results of some cross-border studies found that on tourist arrivals there exist a significant and positive impact on the crime against property & person (**Montolio & Struse, 2013**). Similarly, majorly crimes like murder and theft were responsible for listing the preferences for tourist visits (**Chhabra & Bhattacharjee, 2019**). Another study at Malawai mentioned that criminal activities on tourists disrupt economic success and constructs an undesirable destination image for tourists who invest massive amounts on trips. They added that high poverty levels in developing countries had been frequently associated with criminal behavior (**Njoloma & Kamanga, 2019**).

**Criminal Activities**



**Undesirable Destination Image**



**Disrupted Success/Development of nation**

These findings are from other countries and not India, but they can be generalized to many destination places, including India. Thus, more criminal activities and disorder would lead to the formation of an undesirable image, further reducing the tourist's arrivals and hampering the development.

***Statistics And Some News Items Relating To Criminal Activities Against Foreign Tourists***

Total of 409 crimes were registered for crime against foreigners compared to 517 cases in 2018, showing a decrease of 20.9%. Most of the cases registered were under Theft (142) and Cheating (41). Delhi cemented to be on 1<sup>st</sup> place with highest number (123) of crimes against foreigners followed by Maharashtra (48), Karnataka(46), Tamil Nadu (23)& Uttar Pradesh(21) (Crime In India,2019).

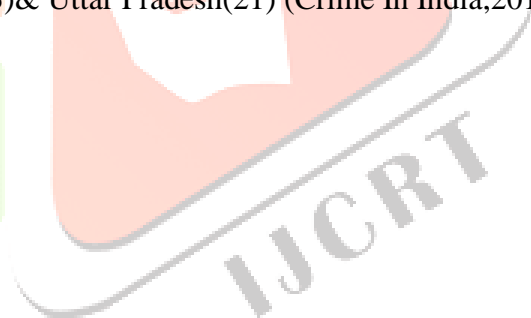
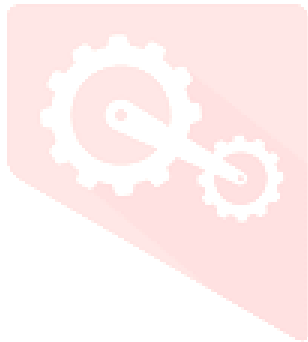


Table:1 , Some Criminal Victimization of Foreign Tourists in India

Serial No.	Published Date of news	Brief description of the news	State/UTs
1.	The Hindu :2014, January 15	<p>Near the New Delhi railway station a 51-year-old Danish woman was robbed and raped by a group of men.</p> <p>The lady went to visit museum but lost her way to her hotel in Paharganj near the New Delhi Railway Station. Around 4 p.m. a group of men lured her to an isolated spot where she was robbed of her iPad and cash and then raped by six men. She was kept hostage for more than three hours, and somehow reached her hotel after 4-5 hours.</p> <p>She was highly traumatized after the incident. She was bruised on her face and neck( Sharma,2014).</p>	New Delhi
2.	Times of India: 2017, October 26	A couple from Switzerland was chased and attacked with stones and sticks by group of youth in Fatehpur Sikri, leaving them with grievous hurt. The youth initially started abusing and passing lewd comments on them as the foreign tourists were not able to understand the language but eventually they understood the ill intentions. The youth also forced them for selfies. The couple was severely injured (Jaiswal, 2017).	Agra,UP
3.	The Hindu : 2019, February 6	A 30-year-old man was allegedly involved in harassing a Belgian woman who visited India. He along with his brother cheated the lady by selling a package for a cheap hotel and made her believe that her earlier booking had been cancelled because of protests. The lady left the country within 24 hours of arrival after harrowing experience (Bhandari,2019).	New Delhi
4.	Times of India:2019,July 24	A Canadian woman claimed to have been physically touched without her consent by unidentified persons who requested her for a selfie (Chauhan,2019).	Agra,UP
5	Times of India: 2019, November 16	A 49-year-old woman from New Zealand who had come to India with her Australian boyfriend to get married in an Indian style was found dead in mysterious circumstances at hotel in Delhi. (Bhattacharya,2019)	Delhi

Source: Online Newspapers



Foreign tourist fear becoming a victim of crime. Unpublished work of **Choudhary & Rufus(2019)** found that the tourist respondents did not felt safe in going alone at evening. They preferred traveling in group and during day time. The status given to the tourist is the sole thing that will define the feedback for our country and if these heinous crimes continue to prevail and increase then the progress of the nation will be badly hampered.

### **b) Deterring Factors for the Foreign Tourists**

Statistics and news items have confirmed the existence of the most heinous crimes against foreign tourists. These threats and several risks pose the biggest challenge to the tourist industry and nation on the whole. Elaborating on the concept of fear of crime victimization, (**Chockalingam & Murugesan,2009**) explain that fear of victimization is not the only result of a single factor. Instead, it involves multiple factors. These factors include age, gender, race, income, neighborhood variables, prior victimization, and so on.

Besides terrorism and wars, criminal activities at the destination spots is a potential risk for tourists (**Altindag, 2013; Parida, Bhardwaj & Roy Chowdhury,2017**). Another literature considering the relationship between tourism, crime and disorder mentioned that anything that deters tourists causes a threat to the tourist industry and economy to a broader extent (**Mawby, 2014**). Irritants like cheating, begging, unhygienic conditions, lack of safety dampen the spirits of tourists degrading the image of India. **Chaudhary,2000**).

An unpublished study by **Choudhary & Rufus(2019)** conducted in Jodhpur reveals that many factors deter foreign tourists. Their deterrence is linguistic problems, fear of being cheated, fear of being misguided, traveling alone, the crowd and noise that serves as a fertile ground of physical harassment in the form of intentional touch, fear of being victimized, etc. The results also reveal that all the female respondents had undergone victimization in one or the other form that poses a big question on the safety concerns and deters the foreign tourists. The rising level of sexual violence against female foreign tourists is a major deterring factor for the foreign tourists (**Advani,2013; Jha & Sarangi,2014**).

A study on Pilgrimage destinations found that they attract mass tourism. These places generally remain crowded and thus pose an increased risk of criminal activities. Many pilgrims tend to spend time and money in the name of deity that sometimes make them highly vulnerable to being getting victimized by criminal activities (**Khajuria & Khanna,2014**).

The formation of a negative image regarding a destination place was found to be a significant impact. The impact of crime is visible at two different levels: the macro and micro levels. The macro-level impact focuses on the social community, and the micro-level focuses on the impacts of crime on individuals. The micro-level impact is visible through the influence on behavior & attitude of an individual and their preference to visit any tourist destination (**Matakovic & Matakovic,2019**).

Findings from some studies mention different things that deter foreign tourists from coming to India. One of the significant components quoted in different studies is fear of crimes that create a lousy destination image of India in foreign tourists' minds.

### **c) Reasons behind the occurrence of crimes against foreign tourists**

**Jaswal (2014)** Lack of respect & understanding for each other's culture and way of life may create tension ,suspicion and hostility between tourists and local communities. This strained situation may further lead to violence and other crimes against tourists. Similarly, the unpublished study of **Choudhary & Rufus (2019)** found that trusting an unknown person, involvement with the unknown person just for some benefits, lack of knowledge about the destination place were some of the reasons behind the occurrence of crime.

#### d) Assistance required by foreign tourists

The foreign tourist visiting various places in the nation have specific pre-framed demands and expectations from the destination. India, a country having a prosperous tourist industry, becomes accountable for assisting in different aspects. **Huete -Alcocer & Lopez -Ruiz. (2019)** forced on the aspect that any action or strategy should be tied to ensuring tourist satisfaction.

These various aspects include: **Subash(2015)** focused on the need for a Skilled and trained workforce to guide and assist the tourist in the best way, providing a secure and safe environment to tourists, increasing the health care facilities, providing a proper transportation facility. Focusing on Determinants of Tourism Demand in India, **Raghavendra, Shilpa& Reddy (2016)** focused on a trained guide, a good communicator, transport facilities to improve the tourism quality.

Incoherence with the mentioned assistance **Venkatesh& Raj(2016)** pointed that human resource to sustain growth in the tourism industry trained human resources are required at various levels such as managerial, supervisory, skilled or semi-skilled, improving amenities, improving Access and Connectivity, Safety and security of the tourist are also factors that need to be given attention. In their unpublished research, **Choudhary & Rufus(2019)** found that tourists face numerous challenges, out of which one is the food and water problem. Hence the culinary demand includes food taste, quality, dining etiquette, nutrition, and cleanliness in food preparation. With that, the study also suggested the need for surprise surveillance by the designated officials at the spots frequented by foreign tourists and the need for rigorous research and studies focusing on the crimes against foreign tourists. The various forms of support and assistance that a foreign tourist requires can be classified under various themes. Many studies had documented point that needs to be focused on is the *safety and security of tourists*.

### 3. Conclusion

The article revolves around the theme of crime against foreign tourists in India and its related aspects. The growth of the tourism industry and the growth of crimes against tourists go hand in hand. The nation becomes accountable for services provided to those foreign tourists. Therefore it becomes the sole responsibility of the nation to fulfill the demand of tourists to develop the best and desirable destination image. A positive and desirable destination image can be achieved by removing the root of the deterrence feeling and enhancing the assistance quality for the tourists. Providing a secure, safe, well-assisted environment from crime and other ill-activities will lead to the best development of the industry and country.

### 4. Suggestions

- **Need for Good surveillance:** The best surveillance may result in a crime-free tourist destination spot. Frequent visits can achieve the duplicate and surprise checking of India's most frequently visited tourist places.
- **Need for the increasing number of Law enforcement officials:** More officials can be deployed at the destination spots frequently visited in respective states and Union Territories of India.
- **Community Support:** The law enforcement officials can inculcate support of the community people to get the grass-root level information about the place and the tourists.
- **Exceptional support for female foreign tourists:** As many studies and news had highlighted crimes against females, as there are different task forces assisting tourists, a particular female tourist task force assists only female tourists in any issue.
- **Need of Campaigns & programs:** Various campaigns and awareness programs spreading the message of the need for foreign tourist arrivals for the nation's development can be conducted by students, community members, NGOs, etc.
- **Need of studies and researches:** Empirical researches and studies need to be conducted by the researchers of criminology with tourists to understand the actual demand and fear of them for improving the condition.

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