

# Environmental Concerns in India



Although nearly all countries in the world need and rely upon tourism, it is worthy of note that tourism does not only bring much needed funds and goodness to a place, yet is also capable of causing damage to what makes it attractive in the first place.

A classic example of this phenomenon is India. The country is far from wealthy and relies upon foreign revenue for its survival. Thousands of tourists each year flock to India from all around the globe eager to see rural Indian life, the superb wildlife and golden coastline. However, these tourists have been accused of being the main reason why India's assets are under threat.

India only receives 0.4% of global tourism, at 3.88 million foreign tourists per year. Many of them come to see the tigers, elephants, leopards and other beasts exclusive to India outside of Africa. Therefore, tour organisers must make sure that these animals are available for viewing on a regular basis. This is of course, without reverting to alterior methods, almost impossible and explains why they use bait to trap the animals. This is detrimental to the well-being of the animals and has angered many animal-protection groups. Furthermore, in order to support the influx of foreign visitors, the Indians have had to build multi-storey hotels in areas such structures simply do not belong. India's heritage has been seriously challenged by sights such as a rural peasant settlement in the background of a 5-star luxury apartment block.

There are further threats to biodiversity. As tourists are willing to flash their cash by illegally buying collections of rare plants, tiger-skin products and hunting emblems, poaching and other illegal activity has been encouraged. This dark element of India's tourism industry has already put certain species on the endangered list. Far from a pleasant thought, which has in turn encouraged ecotourism. Such changes could be necessary to the survival of Indian wealth, heritage, wildlife and culture.

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