

# An Empirical Study of Tea Tourism Boosting the Tea Destinations for Promoting Sustainable Tourism Businesses.

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Abstract: The data used in this study came from secondary sources, such as government databases and reviews of relevant literature. Prior research has been disjointed, with an emphasis on tea tourism and the perspectives of certain stakeholders such as consumers and producers, as our study shows. This work suggests a promising avenue for future interdisciplinary research on tea tourism, which is a topic that has received very little attention thus far. This study summarises the current academic literature on the topic of tea tourism in India and offers recommendations for starting a successful business in this growing industry.

Keywords: Tea tourism, sustainability and tourist behavior.

#### 1 Introduction

Those who travel and live outside their homes for work or pleasure are crucial to the economy, and the tourism sector serves them well. Vacationers go to certain locations in search of unique experiences, or to take advantage of a variety of goods and services designed to meet their specific needs. At the same time, a developing country like India may use tourism as a tool for economic growth in its own communities. Travel to locations outside of one's home country or region for the purpose of recreation or business is known as tourism, and it encompasses economic, social, and cultural elements, according to the International Tourism Organization. Anyone participating in tourism activities, including visitors, excursionists, residents, and non-locals, may spend money.

Among the most important service industries in the world, travel and tourism provide jobs for a large number of people in many different locations and occupations. The UNWTO World Tourism Barometer reports that the number of international visitors reached 1,184 million in 2015, an increase of 4.4% over the previous year. More and more people are participating in niche tourism and other forms of unique tourism as the tourism business grows[1, 2]. The practice of catering a tourist product to certain visitor groups is known as "tea tourism," and it is a rapidly expanding niche market.

One of the world's most prominent producers of tea plants, India also happens to be home to some of the world's most popular drinks overall. Many aspects of traditional culture are embraced by tea culture, which includes people, events, technology, equipment, food, art, and artefacts [3]. To travel is to immerse oneself in culture. Culturally, touristic pursuits often become superficial and unremarkable. As a result of tensions between rising production, environmental concerns, and the need for better living conditions, a new form of tourism known as ecotourism has developed, with an emphasis on the positive effects of tourism on local ecosystems. [4] noted that several tea-producing districts began using their tea mountain environment, brewing abilities, culture, and folklore for complete tourist development as

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ecotourism became more popular. Incorporating tea culture with ecotourism improves the experience for tourists and sheds light on the significance of tourism to the environment. Implications for ecological civilization's development and cultural heritage preservation are substantial, according to the study. According to [5], it is also helpful for the growth and development of the local tea business.

The combination of the tea drinking and tourist industries has led to a new phenomenon: ecotourism centred around tea estates. One contemporary approach to tourism is tea garden ecotourism. It has the potential to encourage the expansion of the local tea culture, which in turn might benefit the economy and help the tourist industry sustainably expand. First and foremost, it has the potential to improve the local economy, society, and ecology. The importance of tea gardens as ecotourism destinations and the need to ensure their long-term viability should be further investigated [6].

tea is a must-have when cooking. Originating in China, the tea plant was exported to other countries where it became a popular drink and adopted local practices[7]. A subset of the tea business emerged to cater to those with a strong affinity for the beverage. Blending tea has become an art form and even a religion in some countries, like Japan. The historical significance, cultural significance, and sensory experience of drinking tea contribute to its widespread popularity as a pastime [8]. Seeking for one-of-a-kind tea experiences and collecting tea and related artistic artefacts like teapots and cups are additional forms of collecting. According to, tea-related tourism helps plantations by connecting them with potential customers and encouraging consumption, which in turn generates two streams of income[9]. There is a strong association between Sri Lanka's tea-growing regions and both "Ceylon Tea" and tourism, and these areas are also beautiful tourist destinations.

India, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, China, Kenya, Indonesia, Japan, Thailand, and Turkey are among the roughly 30 nations on Earth that grow tea. In 2013, China produced 1.2 million metric tonnes of tea, putting India in second place (FAO, 2015). With a 304% rise in tea output and a 160% increase in tea plantation acreage over the previous 50 years, India is widely recognised as the ideal location for tea production [11]. As a result of advantageous social and environmental conditions, tea production is on the rise in sixteen states across India. Thanks to the country's ideal physical and climatic conditions, tea trees have been cultivated in India since the late 18th century [12]. The tourist industry should prioritise developing the tea tourism area since it has a lot of untapped potential for growth. A fresh approach is required to put an emphasis on tourism profits rather than increasing visitor numbers as a result of post-conflict peace. It is possible to take steps to increase tea tourism as a distinct channel that raises the living standards of the locals and grows this niche industry. Building a tea tourist business might greatly diversify India's exports in the future.

Planting, harvesting, processing, tasting, and consuming tea are all parts of the tourist product that this article argues may be successfully incorporated into a given geographical area's resources. Following the suggestion of [13], this integration results in a fusion effect and provides insights on how locals in India's tea-producing districts perceive tourists. Examining the issue within the management field from an end-user viewpoint is the primary motivation for this study project.

#### 2 Literature Review

In 1994, the World Tourism Organisation (WTO) defined "temporary visitors" based on empirical investigations as those who remain in a foreign country for up to a year for reasons other than employment, whether for pleasure, business, or job-related matters. India is fortunate

to have many different types of tourism resources, which contribute to the country's appeal as a vacation spot. Scholars contend that, as a kind of specialty tourism, tea tourism cuts across other fields

Several countries rely heavily on tourism as a source of income and foreign currency [14]. When businesses work together, they boost national economies and encourage tolerance and flexibility in people's backgrounds. Contemporary tourism is a relatively young phenomenon that emerged in the region that is now Bangladesh in the 1960s. The term "tea tourism" describes vacations where the focus is on the culture, traditions, and heritage of tea. year 2007 The itinerary of most vacation packages offered by Jolliffe Travel usually include tea trails. Tea plantations, tea culture, and tea manufacturing are currently the main attractions for tourists in the nation. Since the turn of the millennium, scholars and policymakers have pondered and discussed the modern notion of tea tourism. The tea garden as a tourist attraction is a fantastic concept. Tea tourism encompasses a wide range of activities, such as seeing tea gardens, picking tea leaves, making tea, attending traditional ceremonies, and staying in tea bungalows. One hallmark of this sort of excursion is the opportunity to commune with nature.

Countries including Kenya, Sri Lanka, China, and India are popular destinations for tea tourists. Several scholars have examined the parallels between tea tourism and other types of culinary tourism, including wine tourism [17]. there are several shared historical and relational aspects between wine tourism and tea tourism. Many Chinese places, including Xinyang, Wuyuan, Hangzhou, and the Wuyi Mountain area, have effectively applied the specialised tourism approach, as shown by Shen [18].

Tourists visiting Sri Lankan tea regions, according to research by[19], were hoping for a relaxing environment in addition to seeing tea plantations. According to [19], the majority of tea tourists are between the ages of 31 and 40, and their opinions on tea tourism are greatly affected by how much tea they drink. In order to complete their SWOT analysis of Assam's tea tourism business, [20] polled tourists, government officials, tour operators, hotel owners, and other private sector members of the state. Along with it, they looked at future prospects and challenges. Based on his research, Weerasingha concludes that tour operators and travel agencies promote tea estates and goods as a means of attracting tourists.

Hoteliers provide guests with a one-of-a-kind tea experience, like high tea, in apartment settings, while travel agencies promote tea culture in their advertising. According to [21], the main reasons why Kenya has not yet adopted tea tourism are because people don't know enough about the subject, stakeholders don't work together enough, and the government doesn't support the sector enough. In their study, [21] found that in order for the Sri Lankan tea industry to build brand equity, it has to take into account six factors outlined by Keller's model, including customer happiness and loyalty. In order to increase exposure as a desirable place, the suggested model highlighted the best practices for creating and implementing marketing campaigns.

A research conducted by [22], suggested that sustainable rural tourism might improve the community's financial situation while also helping to preserve the area's distinctive nature. The expectations of tea tourists are correlated with their demographic. Marketers and segmentation experts agree that demographic information like age, gender, and culture should be central to every successful campaign. with their 2011 study, Nasir and Shamsuddoha sought to provide light on the position of Bangladeshi tea with respect to the international tea market, the import/export of tea, and the consumption of tea products abroad. Because of its rich history as a colonial site, beautiful natural scenery, and unique tea blends, Darjeeling is a popular tourist destination in India and worldwide.

Improvements in environmental cleanliness, public health awareness, dietary therapies, and overall socioeconomic situations can all contribute to better population health, according to [23]. In 2016, [24]and their colleagues identified several factors, including favorable weather and soil, existing technical infrastructure, available labour, market accessibility, and government backing. Tea is less vulnerable to climate change, crop failure, and market availability, which is why growers have chosen to plant it.

# 3. Objectives

- 1. The benefits and downsides of Indian tea tourism are the focus of this study.
- 2. To provide some strategies for the industry's future growth.
- 3. To provide recommendations to the Govt. Organizations as well as local bodies for the further development of tea tourism.

# 4 Research Ouestions

- Q1.) What is the correlation among attitudes, expectations, and destination attributes?
- Q2.) Evaluate the current status of tea tourism in India and determine its potential for promotion in the country.

# 5 Research Methodology

This study's methodology is qualitative research, and it uses a variety of data collection techniques. The research primarily relies on secondary data and intellectual notions. Secondary data for the study came from a literature review of pertinent academic journals, websites, and books.

## 6 Limitations of the study

Only secondary sources of data were employed in this investigation. This study uses author thoughts and notions in addition to some secondary data. Interviews with prospective tea tourists or current tea tourism professionals might provide valuable primary data for future research.

## 7 Results and discussions

The study highlights numerous aspects of tea tourism in India (Table 1) including tea garden visit, factory of tea site visit, staying in tea estate, expansion of village life and tea sampling at their facilities. The foundation for this is a survey of the literature and an empirical inquiry.

Table 1: Product attributes

Product Attributes		
Sl. No.	Offerings	
1	Tea garden visit	
2	Factory of tea site visit	
3	Staying in tea estate	
4	Expansion of village life	
5	Testing of tea	

Based on earlier literature, the study completely assimilates the pertinent concerns. The study's primary findings focused on consumer attitudes regarding attitude of consumer, shoddy marketing and planning, Participation of locals, collaboration, Economic and social inequality. The contribution factors are divided into five concerns and challenges in Table 2.

Table 2: Contributing factors

Contributing factors		
Sl. No.	Challenges and issues	
1	Attitude of consumer	
2	Shoddy marketing and planning	
3	Participation of locals	
4	Collaboration	
5	Economic and social inequality	

Although having its roots in China and Japan, journeys to India for tea has advanced immensely. The Indian the tourist industry with tea established itself as one of the largest and most significant among the emerging nations. Any studies relating to the development or marketing of tea tourism will serve as a model for others because India has a sizable and diverse consumer base. In a developing nation like India, tea tourism plays a huge role in expanding the regional tea market and opening up new employment opportunities. Social connectedness is made possible by getting along with the locals, experiencing outside of cities throughout the historical events. Although other studies divided tea attractions into three categories, we detect and suggest an extra category here called "social and cultural interactions," which is shown in Table 3

Category	Example
Based on nature	Tea industries, plantations, and gardens
Artificially created	Tea displays and tea museums
Special events	Tea festivals and tours are available
Cultural and social relationships	Utilizing local cultural programmes and village life

Table 3: Typology of tea attractions

Tea plantations have to find new ways to make money due to declining revenues, rising costs, strict labour rules, and issues with worker unions. As a result, they began to engage in commercial tea tourism. Tea-estates aim to give visitors a remarkable experience by utilizing the already-existing infrastructure, capitalizing on the expansive natural setting, and hiring locals in partnership with tour operators. Large-scale employment is impossible because the increase is confined to a small number of larger tea estates. Also, the tea estates have a shortage of high-quality rooms and workers that lack proper training. Tour operators believe that for tea tourism to succeed, there needs to be more coordination, ongoing assistance, and effective staff management. To encourage the growth of tourism, they wanted additional tea fairs, museums, tasting rooms, and strong marketing campaigns. Since they are more choosy and value quality over quantity, modern travellers choose their vacations and destinations based on deliverables and features. Visitors look for a modern lifestyle as well as a nostalgic experience when they travel to a tea plantation in a remote, natural setting such as wi-fi connections. The rise of tea tourism is being hampered, according visitors, by poor planning, untrained employees, language barriers, and a lack of promotional or marketing measures.

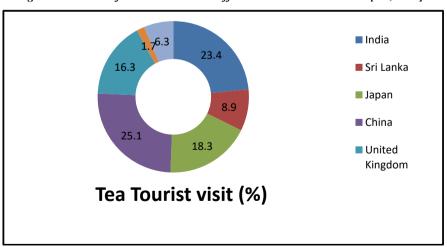


Figure 1: Number of Tea tourist visited different countries in the world [Xu, 2022]

According to the respondents' perceptions of tea tourist destinations (by countries) [Xu, 2022], China, India, Japan, the United Kingdom, Sri Lanka, and Canada are in that order. China and India are among them, with a nearly equal leading proportion each. Since the British Empire's colonial era, Sri Lanka and India have both supplied the United Kingdom with raw materials. From the eighth century, Japanese monks have imported tea from China, adopted Chinese tea customs, and created a mutually exclusive yet comparable tea culture. Japan is widely regarded due to its influence on the west. Then, in addition to being major tea-consuming nations, Canada and the United Kingdom are also major tea-producing nations. The findings suggest that tea and tea culture have their roots in China, international visitors have not received enough information on tea tourism destinations.

Tea tourism is still in its infancy, researchers concluded there was a good chance to arrange for the necessary steps to be taken in order to guarantee satisfaction and value addition. In addition, regional governments advocated for additional funding for tea tourism and foretold long-term growth that would benefit the industry, the people, and the planet. This necessitates effective direction and leadership by addressing the important problems and difficulties as well as taking use of the current chances. A public-private partnership approach is essential in order to encourage significant investment in this industry and maintain close oversight of the development process. I'm going to give it a shot, even though it's been a long. Academics and planners of the future will need to establish a long-term plan to promote tea tourism while also protecting the area's cultural and environmental treasures. Lastly, the increasing number of tourists visiting India and other tea-growing countries depends on effective marketing and promotion.

#### 8 Recommendations

#### 1. Increase exposure and promotion

Visitors are ignorant of the splendor of India's tea estates. They don't realise that anyone can readily visit these tea estates to relieve life's monotony. Other marketing strategies, such social media, magazines, and newspapers, could be employed to publicise these tea farms.

#### 2.Improving accessibility

Due to potential security risks, some tea farms are not accessible to the general public without prior authorization from the relevant authorities. Hence, accessibility can be improved by the effective implementation of security measures and methods for organising tours of these tea farms.

### 3. Create a superstructure and infrastructure

Construction and upgrades should be made to accommodations, roads, and other forms of transportation and communication. To entice tourists, it is vital to have information centres, superstructures such elegant hotel and lodging systems, maintaining clean and hygiene accommodation, retail centres, ATM s and security stations.

#### 4. Make sure the appropriate authority is on board

To promote India as an attractive destination for tea tourism, the authority should be supportive and cooperative. They can come up with a variety of plans to maintain the environmental harmony and tourism potential of these estates.

## 5. Participation of the host community and the government

To make the location a prospective tea tourist destination in India, many Organizations and other players, including tour operators, travel agencies, suppliers, and locals, can be informed of the situation and cooperative. The government ought to give this new location considerable consideration as it develops.

#### 9 Conclusion

This research set out to see if there was a correlation between the popularity of tea-producing regions in India and the place that tourists choose to visit. The goals of the trip are a major factor in shaping the expectations of each customer or traveller. According to the research, picky tourists' or clients' expectations varied among regions. When choosing a holiday place, couples prioritise natural beauty over amenities and nightlife. Cheap lodging is a major factor for young people and those on a tight budget when deciding where to travel. Our goal is to match the expectations of our customers with the places in India that produce tea. Destination expectations, attributes, and reputation are the deciding factors for travellers. Travel agencies, social media, and the internet may all play a role in boosting tourism to tea-producing areas. Tea states must provide facilities for individual travellers.

To sum up, the majority of tour guides were males who lacked the motivation to complete high school. This results in little national inequality and low levels of education. In rural regions, people encounter a number of challenges. There were a number of tea tourist spots that didn't benefit the local economy as thereweren't any shops or restaurants in the area. There was very little investment in infrastructure in tea-growing regions, but the living conditions of tourist entrepreneurs did rise as a result of increased tourism. While tea tourism did not negatively impact the environment, the lack of sustainability on the part of locals was. Natives showed less concern for the environment than tourists.

According to the evaluation studies, Assam's tea tourist industry is booming. A novel and potentially fruitful idea is tea tourism. An organised strategy is really necessary for every traveller. Hence, you need to reevaluate, strategize, manage, and take swift action. A 5,000-mile journey begins with a single step, according to a Chinese saying. Once again, the saying "One will have to go out and sell, instead of waiting for clients to come and buy" rings true in a market that is very competitive. Get the ball rolling right away to bring a fresh era of tea tourism to India's pristine eastern wilderness and the country as a whole. By implementing the aforementioned plans, tea tourism would skyrocket in popularity, opening up several opportunities for tea garden regions and India as a whole.

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