

Role of Tourism in The Economic Development of Purba Medinipur District, West Bengal

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ABSTRACT

The present study examines the economic benefits of tourism in Purba Medinipur district, West Bengal, from the perspective of various tourism stakeholders. A descriptive and analytical research design was adopted, and primary data was collected from 210 respondents. The ANOVA results indicate statistically significant differences in perceptions among the respondent groups ($F = 4.236$, $p = 0.001$). The study concludes that tourism plays a vital role in strengthening the local economy and promoting sustainable regional development in Purba Medinipur district. Tourism contributes to GDP growth, job creation, and cultural exchange, and it fosters development by improving infrastructure, stimulating local businesses, and encouraging sustainable practices.

Keywords: *Economic Development, Employment, Income, Infrastructure, Economy.*

1. INTRODUCTION

India, the seventh biggest nation globally, is encompassed by both mountains and the ocean. The nation encompasses an area of 3,287,263 square kilometres. It spans from the Himalayas in the north to the tropical jungles in the south. Tourism occupies a vital position in India's socio-economic framework, significantly contributing to economic growth, facilitating cultural interchange, and enhancing regional development. India, characterised by its varied natural landscapes, extensive historical legacy, and dynamic cultural traditions, has established itself as a premier global tourism destination. India has a rich array of experiences, from the grand monuments of ancient civilisations to the tranquil backwaters of Kerala, drawing millions of domestic and foreign tourists annually. The tourist sector in India has seen consistent development throughout the years, making a substantial contribution to the nation's economy. Reports indicate that India received over 6 million international tourists in 2022, with this figure on an upward trajectory.

Tourism is a crucial component in the advancement of the global economy and serves as a primary source of revenue for both developed and developing nations. Tourism has emerged as a robust foundation for sustainable development in both established and emerging countries, providing a diverse array of cultural, social, technical, experiential, and natural offerings for leisure and commercial purposes. The World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC 2021) disclosed that travel and tourism significantly contribute to job creation, encompassing direct, indirect, and induced effects; it estimated that 1 in 4 jobs globally, approximately 334 million or 10.6% of total

employment, generated USD 9.2 trillion, representing 10.4% of global GDP. In 2019, overseas visitor expenditure constituted 6.8% of overall exports and 27.4% of global services exports, amounting to USD 1.7 trillion. Consequently, tourism is regarded as a crucial component of international service commerce and has emerged as a major and expanding business.

Tourism contributes to a nation's growth and development by generating economic assets and advantages and enhancing brand value, image, and identity within the region. The tourist sector, a vital driver of economic growth, extends beyond merely appealing places. It significantly contributes to a nation's economic growth. In several regions of the country, tourism is anticipated to be the primary catalyst for regional growth, propelling current economic activity. It positively influences revenue growth, employment opportunities, gross income, and output; however, it may adversely affect the environment due to factors such as traffic congestion, pollution, and ecological degradation. Tourism attracts international visitors, thereby generating foreign exchange earnings that lead to employment, enhanced infrastructure, and improved quality of life, all of which contribute to the nation's sustainable economic growth, as tourists increase local sales, profits, wages, tax revenues, and exports. The most immediate impacts are observed in sectors such as hospitality, dining, transportation, entertainment, and retail.

2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Pantovic, Danijela et al., (2024). The objective of the study is to examine the interaction between essential variables pertaining to tourism's impact on economic growth. These statistics include Total Contribution to Employment, Direct Contribution to Employment, Total Contribution to GDP, Direct Contribution to GDP, Capital Investment, and Visitor Exports - Foreign Spending. A cluster analysis of the 30 examined nations was conducted based on the entropy results as an indicator of equality. The study is based on data from the 2019 TTDI Index, as released by the World Economic Forum. The Kruskal-Wallis test elucidated the disparities among the clusters. The entropy results corroborate the cluster analysis, since the coastal nations have the greatest values of these variables. The role of tourism in the European economy is crucial for nations to formulate policies for the use of natural and cultural resources. The practical consequences underscore the necessity for increased investment and foreign expenditure.

Sahoo, Amalendu. (2023). Tourism is currently the most significant activity in society, including economic, cultural, and social dimensions. This business favourably influences the local economy, socio-cultural transformations, and the lifestyle of residents in tourist destinations, transcending mere amusement and activity. Job creation, reduction of unemployment, and the attainment of sustainable development in tourist regions are essential attributes of tourism, which also fosters economic growth. This research paper is to analyse the tourist expansion in the studied region and its impact on the daily lives of residents. The study has exclusively utilised primary sources of information. The primary data collected was via interviews utilising questionnaires. The selection of owners and visitors was conducted by a simple random sampling method. An investigation of the subject field provides an overview of Lataguri's tourism sector, which contributes to sustainable development in socioeconomic, cultural, and environmental domains.

Dasmahapatra, Debasish. (2023). The 60 km of coastline of Purba Medinipur, which begins in Digha and extends to the western bank of the Hooghly river, is characterised by sand dunes, beaches, longshore currents, and limited vegetation. With gentle inclines and declines, Midnapore's fine sand beaches are ideal for walking, playing, and swimming. Digha-Sankarpur, a holiday resort in southwestern West Bengal, is the most popular beach in the state. In order to kick off our inquiry, we combed through secondary sources and existing data. The purpose of this research is to shed light on the demographics, trajectory, and intensity of the tourist boom in coastal West Bengal; catalogue the opportunities and threats now facing the region's ecotourism industry; and finally, offer some conclusions. This article uses the Tourism Quality Index Method and the SWOT analysis to highlight ecotourism development initiatives. Managing coastal tourism and resorts in a manner that does not impair the coastal ecology is currently a priority, thanks to the emergence of eco-friendly tourism.

Saha, Jayanta & Paul, Suman. (2020). Beginning in Digha and reaching the western bank of the Hooghly river, the 60 km of coastline of Purba Medinipur is defined by sand dunes, beaches, longshore currents, and sparse vegetation. You can stroll, play, and swim on Midnapore's fine sand beaches because of the mild slopes and inclines. The state's most famous beach is Digha-Sankarpur, located in southern West Bengal and popular among tourists. We started by searching through secondary sources and the material that was already out there. This study aims to provide a better understanding of the demography, course, and magnitude of the coastal West Bengal tourist boom; to list the advantages and disadvantages that the ecotourism business in the area is currently experiencing; and to draw some conclusions. This article showcases ecotourism development activities using the Tourism Quality Index Method and the SWOT analysis. The rise of eco-friendly tourism has made it a top concern to manage coastal resorts and tourists in a way that doesn't harm the coastal environment.

Bode, Oana et al., (2020). For many nations, tourism is a lifeblood of their economy. The main purpose of this study is to compare and contrast the tourist industries' effects on the economies of three countries: Romania, Spain, and Turkey from the years 2000 to 2018. Therefore, this study has a triple purpose. The first step is to figure out how much of an impact travel and tourism have on these nations' gross domestic product (GDP), both directly and indirectly. The second one is to find out how GDP growth is affected by internal T&T consumption. Thirdly, we need to find ways to quantify the tourism efficiency and multiplier.

Ramachandran, Rema & N. (2018) . Ecotourism is one of the most active segments of the tourist sector. It offers entertainment to tourists while preserving the cultural and natural integrity of the world. It promotes the preservation of natural habitats and wildlife for the benefit of future generations. Numerous local enterprises, beyond only travel operators, profited from ecotourism. Tourists can utilise the services provided by craftsmen, innkeepers, and restaurateurs to discover the region's distinctive features. Ecotourism may exert the most significant and enduring influence by enhancing public awareness and providing education. Ecotourists who interact with natives living simpler lifestyles may find encouragement to adopt similar practices. Simultaneously, residents are better equipped to comprehend global issues such as environment due to enhanced access to education and financial resources.

Dwyer, Larry et al., (2015). Developing nations are progressively using international tourism as a catalyst for economic expansion. Tourism constitutes one of the most significant economic activity globally. It is the predominant industry in several nations and a significant source of global employment. In recent years, three analytical tools have emerged to assist destination managers and planners in tourism policy-making: the Tourism and Travel Competitiveness Index, Tourism Satellite Accounts, and Computable General Equilibrium models. These techniques serve several purposes that collectively yield insights into a destination's competitive advantages and disadvantages, the economic impact of tourism, and the broader economic effects of fluctuations in tourism demand. Regrettably, places that might benefit most from such instruments are not necessarily the ones who have utilised them in policy development. Simultaneously, tourism researchers have not consistently recognised the diverse applications of these instruments. The report examines the characteristics of each instrument and their significance for policy, planning, and tourist development, with a specific focus on less developed economies.

Cárdenas-García, Pablo & Pulido-Fernández, Juan. (2013). Most international organisations have started to claim that an increase in tourism may impact a society's economic and sociocultural development in addition to its economic growth, after realising the relevance of tourism to economic growth. On the other hand, a fresh perspective has emerged that questions the inherent connection between the two dimensions, implying that it is not an inevitable one. Within this framework, the objective of this research is to ascertain if the improved economic situation in some nations over the past 20 years is attributable to the growth in tourism or some other factor. Using a sample of 144 nations, the researchers confirmed the existence of this relationship, particularly in wealthier nations; this casts doubt on the idea that tourism can propel economic development in developing nations and the least developed.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The present study adopted a descriptive and analytical research design.

Data Collection

The research relied mostly on primary data gathered via a standardised questionnaire distributed directly to participants during field surveys. The survey had two segments. The initial section gathered demographic and occupational data, whilst the subsequent section assessed respondents' opinions of the economic advantages of tourism using statements evaluated on a five-point Likert scale, with 1 representing Strongly Disagree and 5 representing Strongly Agree. Secondary data were obtained from reports of the Ministry of Tourism, Government of India, West Bengal Tourism Department, Census of India, District Statistical Handbook, scholarly journals, publications, and other pertinent published sources.

Sampling Technique

A purposive sampling technique was adopted to select respondents.

Sample Size

A total of 210 respondents were selected from Purba Medinipur district of West Bengal.

Data Analysis and Statistical Techniques

The gathered data were encoded, categorised, and evaluated utilising suitable statistical methods. Descriptive statistics, encompassing frequency, percentage, and mean, were employed to summarise the characteristics and perspectives of respondents. One-Way ANOVA was utilised to assess major disparities in the perceived economic advantages of tourism across various respondent categories.

4. DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

Table 1: Distribution of Respondents

Particulars	Frequency	Percentage
Local Residents	80	38.1
Hotel Owners	30	14.3
Shopkeepers	40	19.0
Tourist Guides	15	7.1
Transport Operators	20	9.5
Tourists	25	12.0
Total	210	100.0

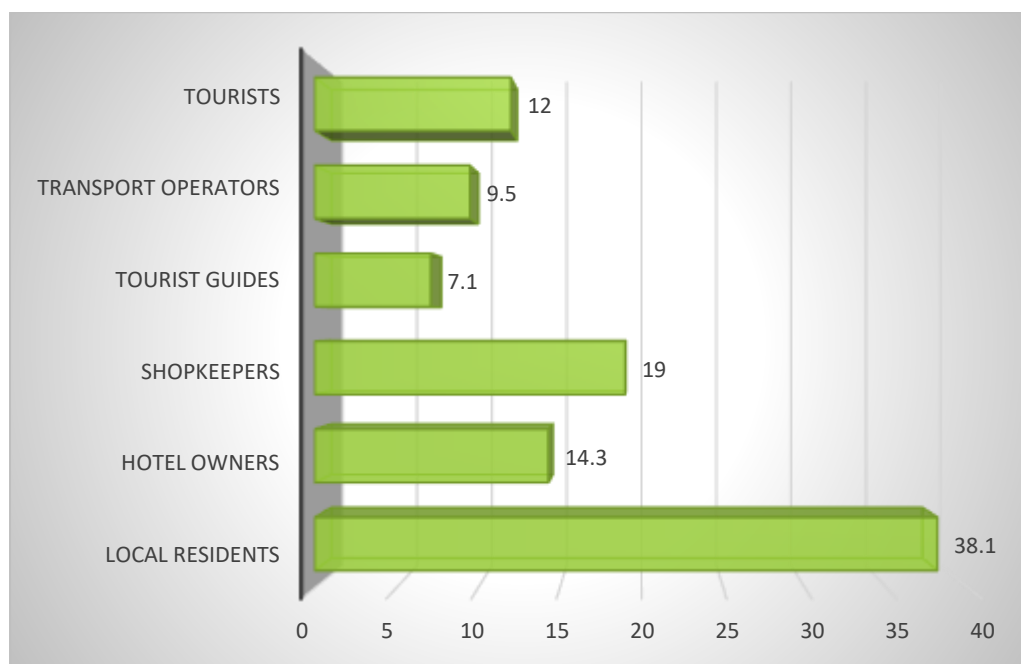
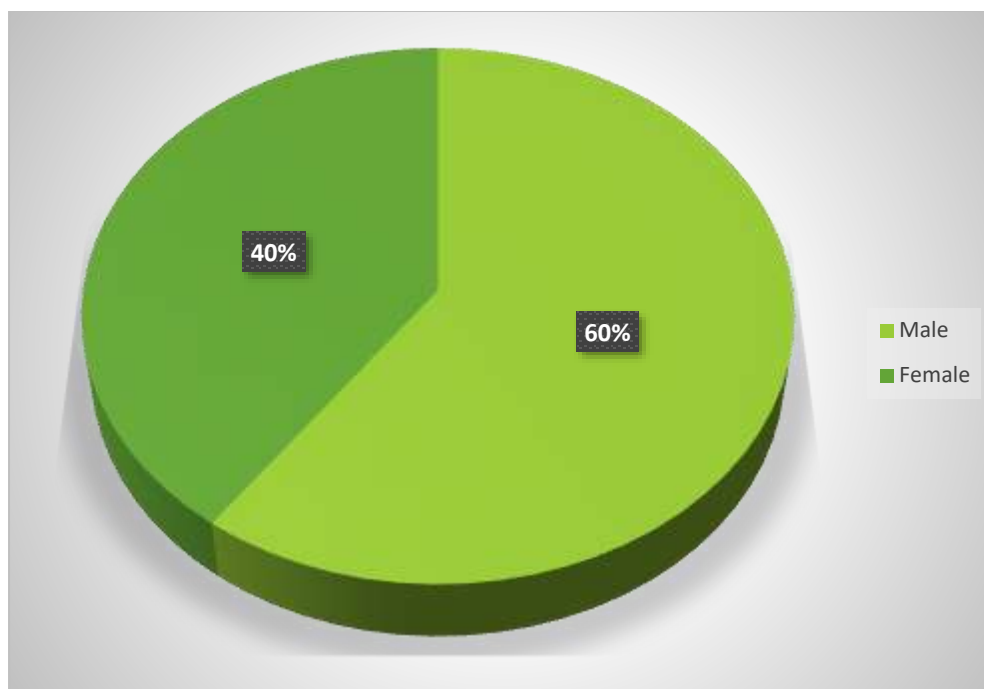


Figure 1: Distribution of Respondents

In all, 210 participants representing various stakeholder groups in the tourist industry participated in the survey (Table 1). With 80 responders (38.1%), locals made up the biggest group, followed by entrepreneurs with 40 (19.0%), hotel owners with 30 (14.3%), visitors with 25 (12.0%), transport operators with 20 (9.5%), and tour guides with 15 (7.1%).

Table 2: Gender of The Respondents

Particulars	Frequency	Percentage
Male	126	60.0
Female	84	40.0
Total	210	100.0

**Figure 2: Gender of The Respondents**

The results show that 84 out of 126 respondents (40.0%) were female and 126 were male (60.0%).

Table 3: Perception on the Economic Benefits of Tourism

Particulars	Strongly Agree (%)	Agree (%)	Neutral (%)	Disagree (%)	Strongly Disagree (%)	Mean
Tourism creates employment	51.4	33.8	8.6	4.3	1.9	4.29
Tourism increases household income	45.7	35.2	11.0	5.2	2.9	4.16
Tourism promotes local business	48.6	32.4	9.9	6.2	2.9	4.18
Tourism improves infrastructure	43.3	34.8	12.9	5.7	3.3	4.09
Tourism supports local entrepreneurship	40.0	38.6	11.4	7.1	2.9	4.06
Tourism improves living standards	42.4	36.2	12.4	6.2	2.8	4.09

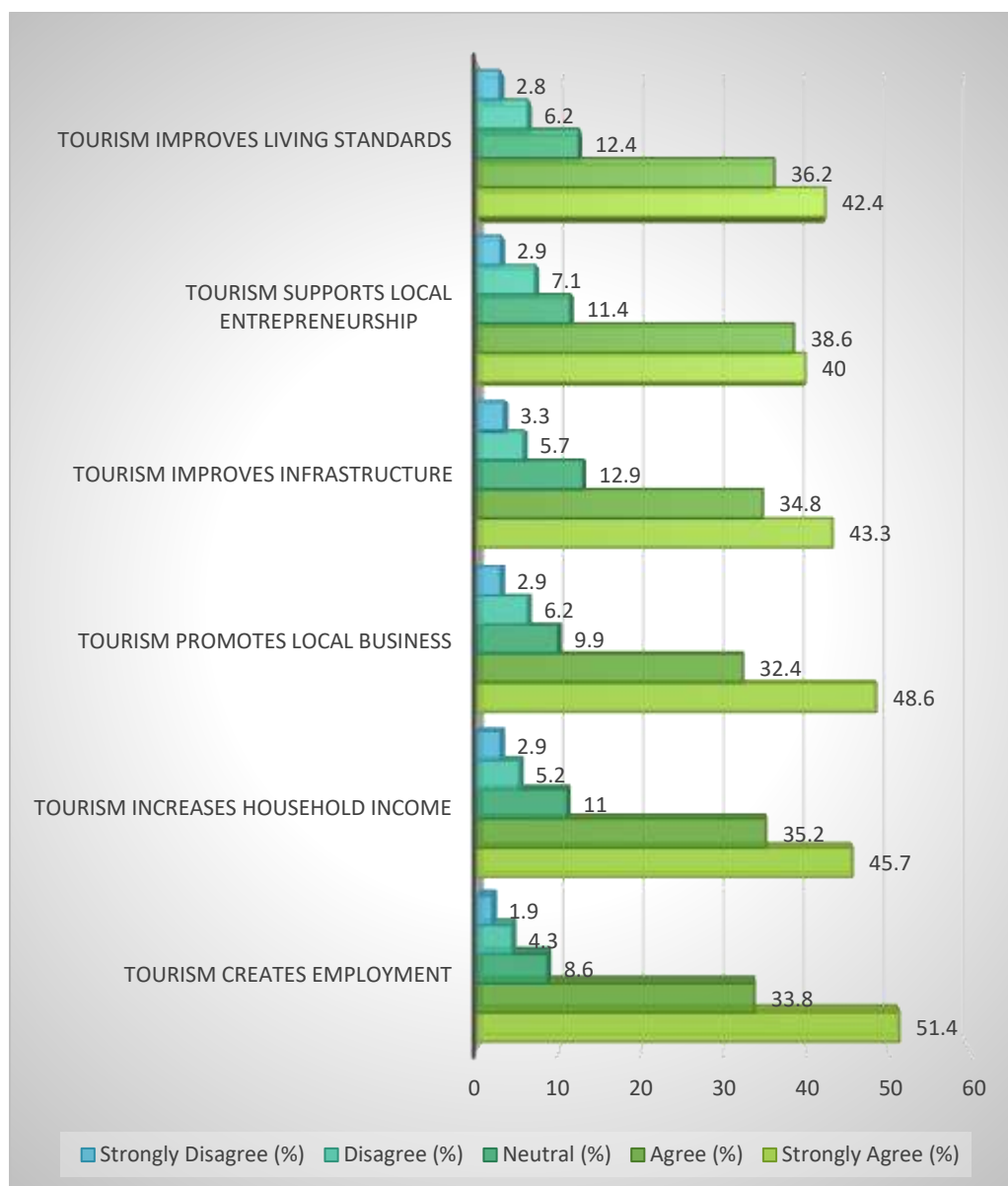
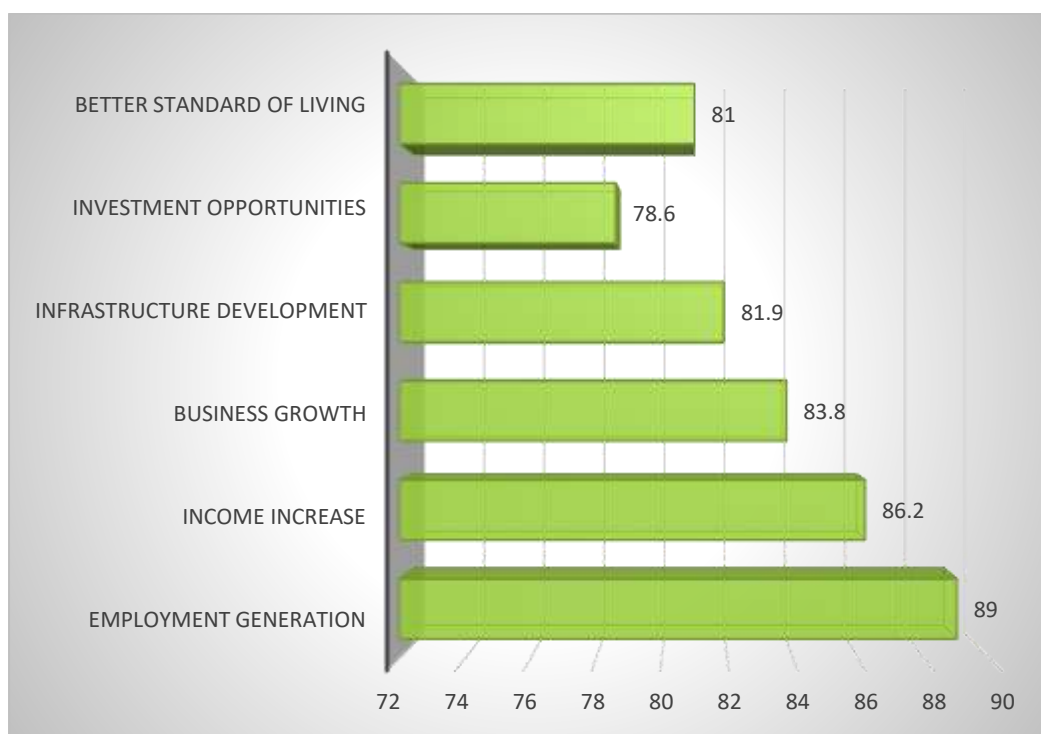


Figure 3: Perception on The Economic Benefits of Tourism

Table 3 shows how people in the Purba Medinipur district think tourism would boost the economy. With mean ratings between 4.06 and 4.29, the results show that there is a very good impression of all claims. "Tourism creates employment" had the greatest level of agreement with 51.4% strongly agreeing and 33.8% agreeing, yielding the highest mean score of 4.29. In a similar vein, 45.7% of respondents strongly agreed, and 35.2% agreed that tourism raises family income (Mean = 4.16), and 48.6% of the same respondents believed that tourism benefits local businesses (Mean = 4.18). There was a mean agreement of 34.8% and a strong agreement of 43.3% on the need to invest in infrastructure (Mean = 4.09). That tourism raises living conditions was also agreed upon by 36.2% and highly agreed upon by 42.4% (Mean = 4.09). In addition, with an average score of 4.06, 40.0% of respondents strongly agreed and 38.6% agreed that tourism helps local businesses.

Table 4: Economic Benefits Perceived by Respondents (Multiple Responses Allowed)

Particulars	Respondents	Percentage
Employment Generation	187	89.0
Income Increase	181	86.2
Business Growth	176	83.8
Infrastructure Development	172	81.9
Investment Opportunities	165	78.6
Better Standard of Living	170	81.0

**Figure 4: Economic Benefits Perceived by Respondents**

The main economic advantages of tourism, according to the respondents, are shown in Table 4. Among the benefits, 187 respondents (89.0%) ranked job creation as the most important, while 181 respondents (86.2%) ranked an increase in income as the second most important. While 172 respondents (81.9%) recognised the need for infrastructure development, 176 respondents (83.8%) saw business expansion as a significant advantage. Some 165 people (78.6% of the total) saw investment prospects, while 170 people (81.0%) said their quality of living had improved.

Table 5: One-Way ANOVA for Perceived Economic Benefits of Tourism

Source of Variation	Sum of Squares (SS)	df	Mean Square (MS)	F-value	p-value	Result
Between Groups	7.842	5	1.568	4.236	0.001	Significant
Within Groups	75.480	204	0.370			
Total	83.322	209				

The results are displayed in Table 5, which reveals that there was a between-group sum of squares of 7.842 and a within-group sum of squares of 75.480, for a total of 83.322. Assuming $p < 0.05$, the statistical significance of the computed F-value of 4.236 is supported by a p-value of 0.001.

5. CONCLUSION

Tourism has emerged as the world's largest sector, creating riches and employment while broadening tourists' perspectives on diverse lifestyles. The tourist sector is crucial in generating job possibilities in many impoverished nations at an increasing rate. It is a significant international trade enterprise that has demonstrated substantial developmental potential inside the liberalised Indian economy. To lure international tourists to India, favourable policies and reduced fees, along with a comprehensive initiative, have spurred the "Incredible India" campaign to enhance tourism significantly. India's tourism sector is undergoing significant growth, propelled by the expanding domestic market, an increase in high-spending international tourists, and government initiatives promoting "Incredible India." As tourism is a multifaceted endeavour and primarily a service industry, it is essential for all branches of the Central and State governments, the private sector, and non-governmental organisations to actively collaborate in order to achieve economic advancement in tourism, positioning India as a global contender in the industry.

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