



Tribal Tourism in India – An Overview

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Introduction:

Tribal tourism has been considered as an instrumental in creating various financial opportunities for the tribes living in the hinterlands. It has helped foster awareness about the indigenous people in India, many of whom face oppression, lack of opportunities and social exclusion. Tribal tourism is also creating social and psychological consequences for the tribals that are more detrimental than beneficial, In the past decade, many tourism companies have mushroomed offering tours of tribal areas. There are various tribal villages and tribal communities living in different parts of the country. Based on the lifestyle and the habitat of these tribes in India, the tribal tourism in India has evolved for the past few decades.

According to the last census, India has 577 tribes throughout the country, Indian tribes are unique in their own. Each of the tribes have their own rituals, beliefs, culture and tradition. The tribes are present in states like Chattisgarh, Jharkhand, Orissa, Northeastern states of India that include Assam, Tripura, Meghalaya, Arunachal Pradesh, Nagaland, Sikkim, Manipur and Mizoram. Each of the tribes of these states have their own culture and tradition which varies widely according to the tribes. The tribes have their own beliefs, festivals and lifestyles which will make Cultural & Tribal Tourism in India a most memorable one. Tourists can also enjoy the flora and fauna of tribal areas. Tribal tourism in India has been divided into four types such as;

- Tribal tourism in Central India
- Tribal tourism in Western India
- Tribal tourism in North East India
- Tribal tourism in Eastern and South India

Tribal Tourism in Central India

The Central Indian states like Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh, Chattisgarh are known for tribal tourism. Chattisgarh, is well known for its pristine natural beauty. The tribal villages and the Gond and other tribes in Chattisgarh is mainly dotted around the Bastar region. Each of the tribes in Chattisgarh have their own culture, rituals, beliefs, language and tradition. The notable tribes in this belt are Bhatra, Muria, Baiga, Abhuj Maria, Korba, Halbaa, Bisonhorn Muria and the Dhurvaa tribes.

The tribal villages and tribes of Madhya Pradesh are, Gond, Bhil, Bhilala, Kol, Patelia, Kanwar, Kaur, Cherwa, Rathia, Oraon, Sonr Tanwar, Baiga, Bharia, Bhumia, Bhuinhar,

Bhumia, Panika, Bharia, Paliha, Pando, Habla or habli, Korku, Dhanka, Dhangad, Sahariya, Sawara and Barela etc.

The Santhals of Jharkhand are the oldest tribes of India. This tribal community is known for their music, dance and colorful attire. Tribal tourism in Jharkhand includes the visit to the various Santhal villages dotted amidst the forest and plateau of Chhotanagpur area.

Tribal Tourism in North East India.

North Eastern states of India is one of the main tourist attractions of the country. The hilly states of the northeast frontier is like paradise on earth for many travelers. The northeastern states of India have been one of the greatest holiday destinations not only Indian tourists but to many foreign travellers also. Tourism industry in northeast India have developed and based on the states like Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Sikkim, Tripura and Nagaland. Each of the northeastern states is blessed with immense natural beauty. Nestled amidst the Himalayas. The rich natural flora and fauna of the states have always attracted tourists from every part of the world. Each state also has its local tribes who are unique for their lifestyle, culture and tradition.

Main tribes from the northeastern India include the Naga, Monpas, Sherdukpens, Khamtis, Khasi, Nokteys, Mishmis and Wanchoo are known for ethnic culture and the traditional rituals. The Hornbill festival of Nagaland is an excellent example of tribal tourism. This festival is an initiative of the government of Nagaland to celebrate the rich cultural heritage of Nagaland and its people. People from all over the world come together in the first week of December to take part in the celebrations. This festival is one of its kind because it opens up the areas with restricted entry into protected areas for visitors without compromising on ethics and traditions.

Tribal Tourism in Western India

Each of the tribal villages in western India have their own lifestyles, tradition and culture. One of the famous tribes in Udaipur, Rajasthan is the Rathwa tribes. This tribal community is known to be one of the most ancient tribes in this part of India. Tourists can also take a jeep ride to take a look around other nearby tribal villages like Devhat, Kol, Timla and Kharakwada. There is also a local tribal museum where get to see many tribal collectibles as well has handicraft items made by these tribes. Pithora Painting, a traditional tribal form of painting in their huts. The tribes of Rajasthan use this form of painting to decorate their huts. There is also haat or local market of the tribes. Tourists can get some souvenirs made by the locales for friends and relatives back at home. Apart from visiting the tribal villages, the forts, natural beauty and the desert of Rajasthan are added attraction to the tribal tourism in Western India.

Tribal Tourism in Eastern and South India:

The cultural life and tradition of the tribes in South India and Orissa are unique of its kind. One of the most famous tribal villages in Orissa is the Kutia tribal village located at the Baliguda area. The tribes also have their weekly mobile market, the Haat. The Dongariya Kondh is another Haat of the local tribes that also attracts tourists. Other tribal villages of Orissa include Bonda, Didayee and Gadhaba. All the tribes of Orissa excel in producing wonderful fabric and textile work. The best textile products can be bought from the Dhuruba village. The Paraja is another notable tribe in Orissa. The Sanaparoja and Mali tribes located in Kunduli have the largest Haat in the tribal belt.

South India is also famous for Tribal Tourism. The Thodas, the tribal community is found in Niligiri areas of Tamilnadu. The Soligas the notable tribal community is found in the areas like Mysore, Chamarajanagar, Kollegal, Yalandur-B.R.Hills, Hunsur and the Iruliga is another Tribe is found in Ramanagara District of Karnataka.

Tribal Art:

India had always been known as the land that portrayed cultural and traditional vibrancy through its conventional arts and crafts. Other than folk art, there is another form of traditional art practiced by several tribes, which is classified as tribal art. The folk and tribal arts of India are very ethnic and simple, to speak volumes about the country's rich cultural heritage. Some of the most famous folk/tribal painting of India Patachitra paintings from the state of Orissa. The Gond art of Madhya Pradesh, and other such folk-art forms. The famous tribal art is;

Bhil Art: The Bhils, are the second largest tribal community of India residing in the states of Madhya Pradesh, Gujarat, Rajasthan and Maharashtra. The rich cultural tradition of the Bhils manifested in their rituals, songs and dances, community deities, tattoos, myths, community art and lore. Everything connected with the Bhil life is painted-the Sun, the Moon, the animals, trees, insects, rivers, fields, mythological figures, and their gods. The Bhils, like all adivasis, live close to nature.

Gond Art: The Gonds, are the largest Adivasi Community in India. They are mainly found in Madhya Pradesh and its surrounding States. The Gond called themselves Koi or Koiture. The Gonds traditionally painted on mud walls of their houses. Starting in the early 1980s, certain talented Pardhan Gonds who traditionally serve as professional bardic priests began transforming their ritual performing arts into a new tradition of figurative and narrative visual art; using a variety of modern media (including acrylic paintings on canvas, ink drawings on paper, silkscreen prints, and animated film) they have created unprecedented depictions of their natural and mythological worlds, traditional songs and oral histories. Gond paintings bear a remarkable likeness aboriginal art from Australia as both styles use dots to create the painting.

Warli Art: The Warli tribe settlements spread all over the Thane District of the state of Maharashtra. They are inborn artists and their painting tradition is more than 1200 years old. The paintings of the walls of their huts are traditionally done by the women of the tribe and are greatly influenced by their surroundings and day to day life. These wall murals are done on red mud or cow dung layered walls and the figures are painted with a rice-flour mix, which could be washed off and re-painted every season. The traditional life of the Warli reflects their interaction, or more precisely, their co-existence with nature.

Conclusion:

There are various tribal villages and tribal communities living in different parts of the country. Based on the lifestyle and the habitat of these tribes in India, the tribal tourism in India has evolved for the past few decades. Research studies have reported the consequences of reckless tourist activities in tribal areas. These include culture-shock, exploitation, objectification, humiliation, undermining one's culture and an increase in inter-tribe conflicts etc.

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