

ANALYSIS REPORT on

World Heritage Sites of India

UNESCO World Heritage Sites in India



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Overview of India's World Heritage

World Heritage Sites (WHS) are exceptional places that are unique because of their unseen cultural, historical, or physical importance. India has a tremendously rich collection of such places, sites, or nature-gifted elements of utmost significance having a high possibility of becoming one of **the WHS from the country to keep its place intact in the top six countries with the highest UNESCO WHSs.**



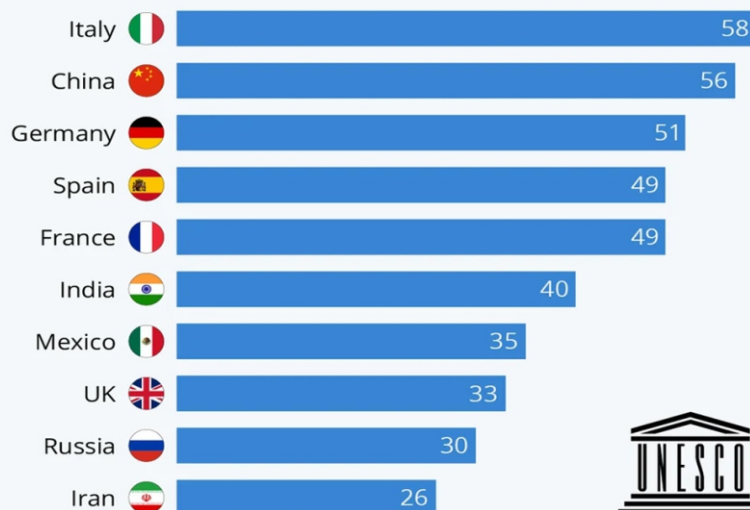
unesco

World Heritage Convention

Source: <https://www.nationalgeographic.com/travel/article/here-is-how-world-heritage-status-helps-destinations-around-the-world>

Where UNESCO World Heritage is Located

Countries with the highest number of UNESCO world heritage sites



As of August 2021
Source: UNESCO

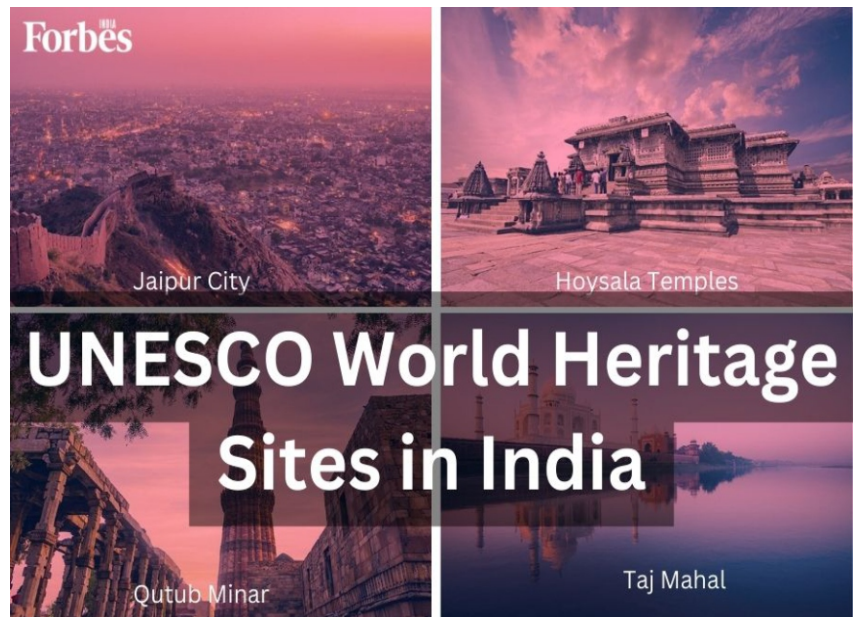


These sites are managed by the UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization) and give a country diverse opportunity for the tourism and hospitality sector. **The recent new additions for India in 2023 are Shantiniketan and Sacred Ensembles from Hoysalas,** giving impetus to Indian startups dealing in the tourism sector.

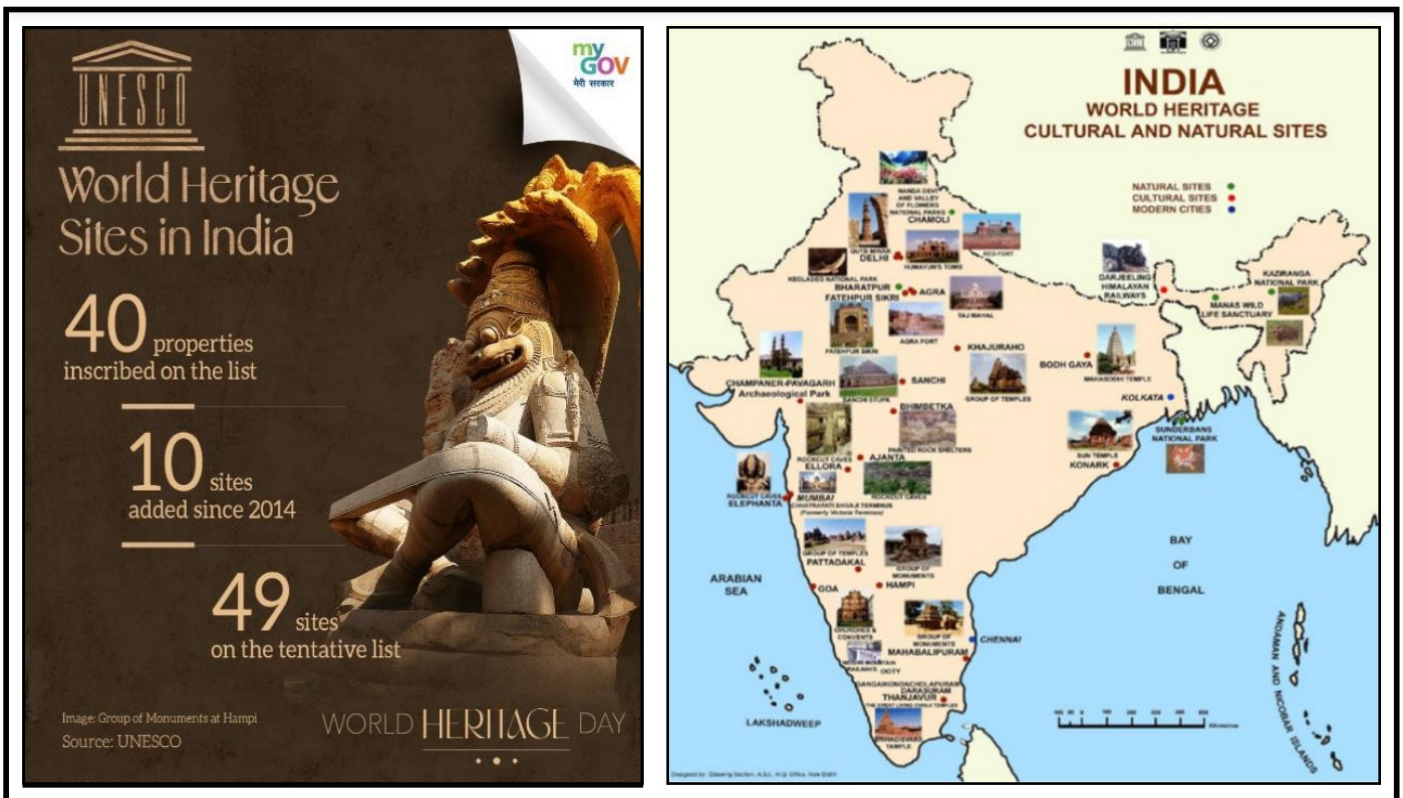
The sector the more than 1300 DPIIT-recognized startups, contributing to the estimated revenue of US\$ 7.66 billion this year and between 2023-27, the growth of the sector is expected at CAGR of 8.29%.

Source: <https://static.pib.gov.in/WriteReadData/specificdocs/documents/2022/apr/doc202241843001.pdf>

India currently has 42 WHS listed by UNESCO. They are divided into three categories respectively, 34 cultural sites, 07 natural sites, and 01 mixed type. These sites have a great impact on the tourism sector aiding to nation's economy and technological advancement has played a vital role in the conservation of these heritage sites over time. The Heritage List for India was started in 1983 when UNESCO added Agra Fort & Taj Mahal in Uttar Pradesh and Ajanta Caves and Ellora Caves in Maharashtra, the list till 2022 was depicted under the picture with its locations.



Source: <https://www.forbesindia.com/article/explainers/unesco-world-heritage-sites-india/88599/1>

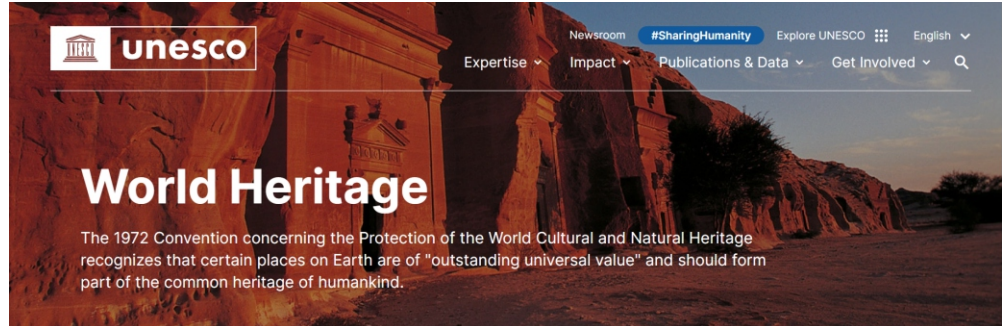


Source: <https://static.pib.gov.in/WriteReadData/specificdocs/documents/2023/apr/doc2023419182501.pdf>

These WHS showcase the hidden treasures of our ancient civilization and how they are passed on by our ancestors to the next generations by keeping their conditions intact and welcoming tremendous tourist attractions in association with emerging technologies for generations to cherish their importance and values.

Mission of the Program and Criteria for Selection

Heritage is the footprint of the past that passes from one generation to another carrying its cultural, historical, and natural values of great significance. The World Heritage Program under UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural



Source: <https://www.unesco.org/en/world-heritage>

Organization) focuses on retaining the treasures of past civilizations and nature-gifted elements having exceptional values for mankind on the global platform. **UNESCO adopted an international treaty called the Convention in 1972, responsible for identifying heritage sites of global importance and accountable for their holistic conservation and continuous preservation of cultural and physical values.** The program is assisted by a selection criteria list used for adding new places or elements to the WHS.

The mission of the World Heritage Program is to encourage the entire world for the protection of cultural, historical, and natural values to be witnessed by future generations. The decision has been taken by the committee which can also issue direction in case of poor management of heritage sites. **India has been awarded the membership of the 21-nation World Heritage Committee for 2021-25** and thus plays a crucial part in the implementation of the World Heritage Convention while balancing the power equation in decision-making.

Mission of the World Heritage Programme	Inspire countries to be a part of Convention 1972 and secure the protection of their cultural and natural heritage	Assist Convention members protecting World Heritage sites by providing technical assistance and professional training
	Try to convince Convention members to nominate their national sites for inclusion on the World Heritage List	Cater emergency services for World Heritage sites in instant danger
	Motivate participation of the local population in the conservation and preservation of their cultural and natural heritage	Circulate public awareness among the Convention members so that they can support for World Heritage Conservation
	Motivate members of the Convention (1972) to establish global cooperation for the conservation of cultural and natural heritage.	Inspire Convention members to set up reporting systems for conservation of World Heritage sites

For any national property to become a part of the World Heritage List should meet the selection criteria list issued by UNESCO. These criteria are described in the Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention developed by the World Heritage Committee (WHC) for smooth implementation and offering international assistance under the World Heritage Fund. These criteria are regularly amended by the WHC adapting to the latest trends to accomplish its mission. Till 2004 the selection of WHS was based on six cultural and four natural criteria. However, in 2005 WHC modified a single list of ten criteria for selection.

Ten Criteria List For World Heritage Site Selection

Cultural Heritage:

1. Showcase exceptional pieces of work showing human creation.
2. To show a crucial exchange of human values, in a given period or within a cultural area of the world, on developments in architecture or technology, monumental arts, town-planning or landscape design.
3. To claim a special or evidence proof to a cultural tradition or to a civilization which is living, or which has disappeared.
4. To be an exceptional case of technological collection or a type of building, architecture or landscape that illustrates significant stages or stages in human civilization.
5. To be an exceptional case of a traditional human settlement, land use, or sea use which is representative of a culture (or cultures), or human interaction with the environment especially when it has become vulnerable under the impact of irreversible change.
6. To be associated directly or tangibly with events or living traditions, with ideas/beliefs, with artistic and literary works of outstanding universal significance.

Natural Heritage:

7. To have unique natural beauty and aesthetic importance and supreme natural phenomena.
8. To be a unique case representing vital stages of earth's history, including outstanding geomorphic or physiographic features, the record of life or outstanding ongoing geological processes in the development of land forms.
9. To be an outstanding case representing vital ongoing ecological and biological processes in the evolution and development of terrestrial, freshwater, coastal and marine ecosystems and communities of plants and animals.
10. To contain the most crucial and outstanding natural habitats for in-situ conservation of biological diversity, including those containing threatened species of outstanding universal value from the point of view of science or conservation.

The Selection Process for World Heritage Site Status

Step 1: The State Party's create Tentative List based on information on exceptional cultural or natural heritage for nomination.

Step 2: Once sites are selected from the Tentative List, the Convention member party decides when to present the nomination file assisted by the World Heritage Centre.

Step 3 The nominated site is assessed individually by the two Advisory Bodies namely the International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) and the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) under the World Heritage Convention.

Step 4: After the site is nominated and assessed, the final decision is with the World Heritage Committee an intergovernmental organization for the inclusion of World Heritage Sites.

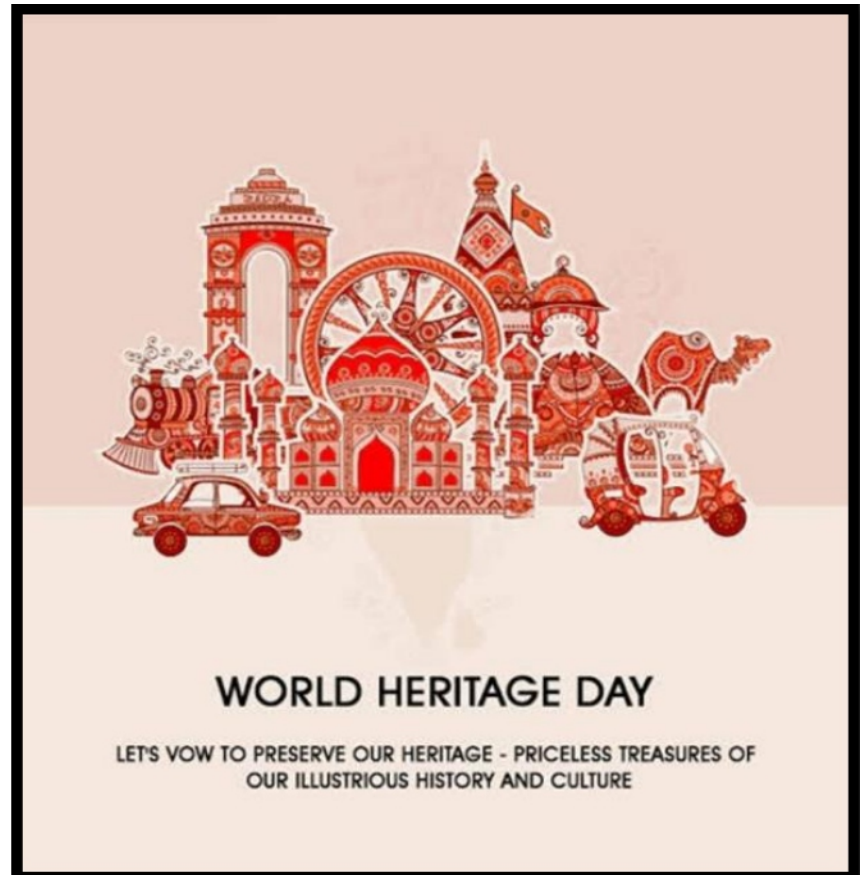
Step 5: To be part of the World Heritage List, the nominated sites should be of exceptional importance having global values for mankind and meet at least one of the selection criteria explained in the Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention.

The selection criteria and the process followed by the committee play a vital role in successfully running the agenda of the UNESCO Convention program to save world heritage and treasures. They are on a constant drive to keep motivating peer nations to join the program and support the noble cause of protecting the World's Cultural and Natural Heritage for the future of mankind.

Details of World Heritage Day and the Importance of World Heritage Preservation

World Heritage Day (WHD) also known as International Day for Monuments and Sites (IDMS) is celebrated by every member nation on 18 April annually. **The ICOMOS (International Council on Monuments and Sites) in 1982 declared 18 April as World Heritage Day, which was approved next year by the General Assembly of UNESCO.** The day is celebrated to mark the significance of retaining cultural heritage and nature-gifted elements towards World Heritage Preservation.

On this day ICOMOS announces a theme for which related activities are performed by national and international committees, working groups, and members of ICOMOS. **The theme for 2023 was 'Heritage Changes'**, which emphasizes gaining a knowledge base and effective use of cultural heritage and nature-gifted elements for safeguarding heritage concerning climate action. The target of this day is to boost awareness among local groups and individuals in the entire world to protect, conserve, and preserve ancient heritage and traditions for future generations.



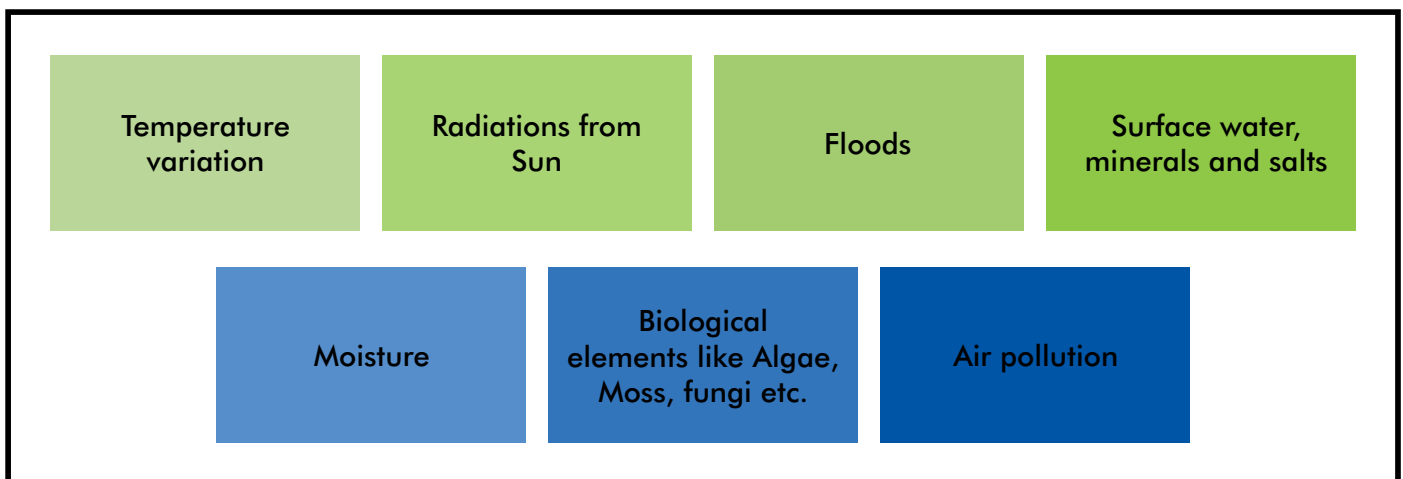
Source: <https://static.pib.gov.in/WriteReadData/specificdocs/documents/2022/apr/doc202241843001.pdf>



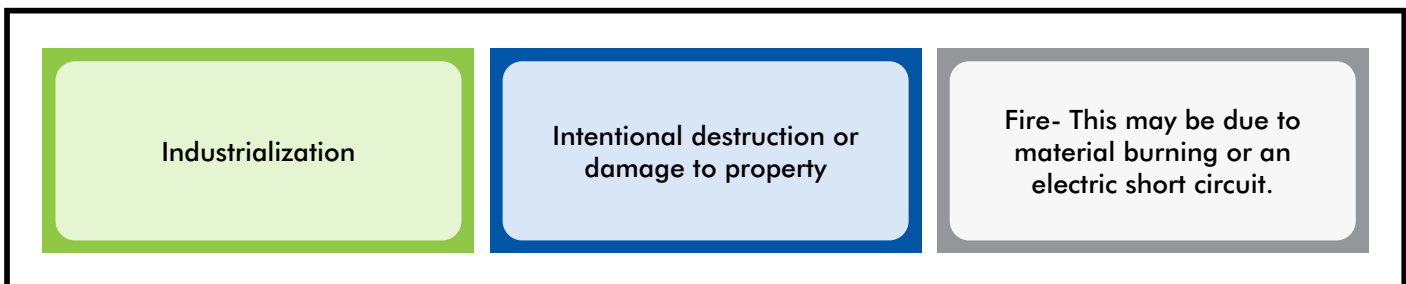
Source: <https://www.icomos.org/en/focus/18-april-international-day-for-monuments-and-sites>

Preservation of World Heritage Sites (WHS) is of great importance and significance because it carries the identity of our past civilization which will showcase an emotional boost to the local and endangered groups to associate them with social and cultural life while preserving the history of that place in diverse dimensions. The policies and awareness are needed because the heritage degrades with time or circumstances, mainly because of nature-driven and/or human-induced reasons. **The GoI is working to preserve India's world heritage sites on the theme of 'Vikas Bhi Virasat Bhi'** meaning development and preservation of culture go simultaneously.

Natural Hazards



Human Hazards



The motto of this day carries a tremendous responsibility to bring all the Convention members together on the global platform, raise awareness, and salvage world heritage by protecting, preserving, and conserving ancient treasures worldwide.

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Cultural Heritage List of India

- | | | |
|---|---|---|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Agra Fort (1983) 2. Ajanta Caves (1983) 3. Archaeological Site of Nalanda Mahavihara at Nalanda, Bihar (2016) 4. Buddhist Monuments at Sanchi (1989) 5. Champaner-Pavagadh Archaeological Park (2004) | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 6. Chhatrapati Shivaji Terminus (formerly Victoria Terminus) (2004) 7. Churches and Convents of Goa (1986) 8. Dholavira: a Harappan City (2021) 9. Elephanta Caves (1987) 10. Ellora Caves (1983) | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 11. Fatehpur Sikri (1986) 12. Great Living Chola Temples (1987, 2004) 13. Group of Monuments at Hampi (1986) 14. Group of Monuments at Mahabalipuram (1984) 15. Group of Monuments at Pattadakal (1987) |
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 16. Hill Forts of Rajasthan (2013) 17. Historic City of Ahmadabad (2017) 18. Humayun's Tomb, Delhi (1993) 19. Jaipur City, Rajasthan (2019) 20. Kakatiya Rudreshwara (Ramappa) Temple, Telangana (2021) | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 21. Khajuraho Group of Monuments (1986) 22. Mahabodhi Temple Complex at Bodh Gaya (2002) 23. Mountain Railways of India (1999, 2005, 2008) 24. Qutb Minar and its Monuments, Delhi (1993) 25. Rani-ki-Vav (the Queen's Stepwell) at Patan, Gujarat (2014) | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 26. Red Fort Complex (2007) 27. Rock Shelters of Bhimbetka (2003) 28. Sacred Ensembles of the Hoysalas (2023) 29. Santiniketan (2023) 30. Sun Temple, Konârak (1984) |
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 31. Taj Mahal (1983) 32. The Architectural Work of Le Corbusier, an Outstanding Contribution to the Modern Movement (2016) 33. The Jantar Mantar, Jaipur (2010) 34. Victorian Gothic and Art Deco Ensembles of Mumbai (2018) | | |

Natural heritage refers to the diverse terrain, diversity of life, and natural environment whose existence is natural like rivers, seas, lakes, oceans, mountains, hills, vegetation, wild animals, deserts, etc. They serve as natural assets for the essential biosphere maintaining ecological balance and assisting in scientific studies for the future.

Natural Heritage List of India



unesco
World Heritage Sites (Natural)

1



Great Himalayan National Park Conservation Area
2014

2



Kaziranga National Park
1985

3



Keoladeo National Park
1985

4



Manas Wildlife Sanctuary
1985

5



Nanda Devi and Valley of Flowers National Parks
1988, 2005

6



Sundarbans National Park
1987

7



Western Ghats
2012

The Mixed heritage showcases the significance of both the cultural and natural heritage.

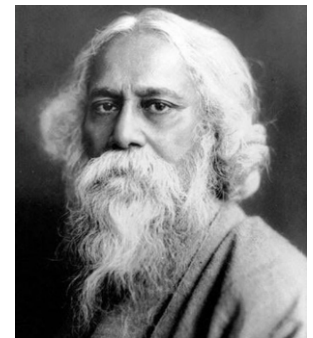
The latest addition to India's World Heritage list in September 2023 is Santiniketan in West Bengal founded by Rabindranath Tagore in 1921 and Sacred Ensembles of the Hoysalas in South India.

Mixed Heritage List of India

Khangchendzonga National Park



SANTINIKETAN



Source: <https://pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=1958855>

India expects to witness many more Indian places or natural elements, nominated in the Tentative List becoming part of the World Heritage List over time to increase the count beyond forty-two sites for the country and occupying a higher position on the global ladder of the World Heritage Sites in the time to come.



Positive Impacts and Concerns of India's Tourism Sector



India is a developing country and vertical like the Tourism Sector that boosts the country's economy is actively encouraged by the government and tourism stakeholders. **Our country has the ancient belief of 'ATITHI DEVO BHAVA' meaning guest is like God which shows the deep-rooted hospitality nature to the whole world.**

Source: <https://www.zeebiz.com/india/news-foreign-tourist-arrivals-hit-new-high-us-top-contributor-indias-rank-improves-from-65-to-34-details-202221>

As of date, with forty-two UNESCO World Heritage Sites, India is expected to achieve higher tourist attraction for both domestic as well as foreign travelers. Each time the World Heritage List for India gets bigger the tourist influx grows impacting the Tourism sector based on the diverse circumstances and situations.

List of Positive Impacts

International recognition for the protection, conservation and preservation

Increase in economic growth and GDP.

Increases investment in the infrastructure.

Boost Tourism-related employment in the service sector.

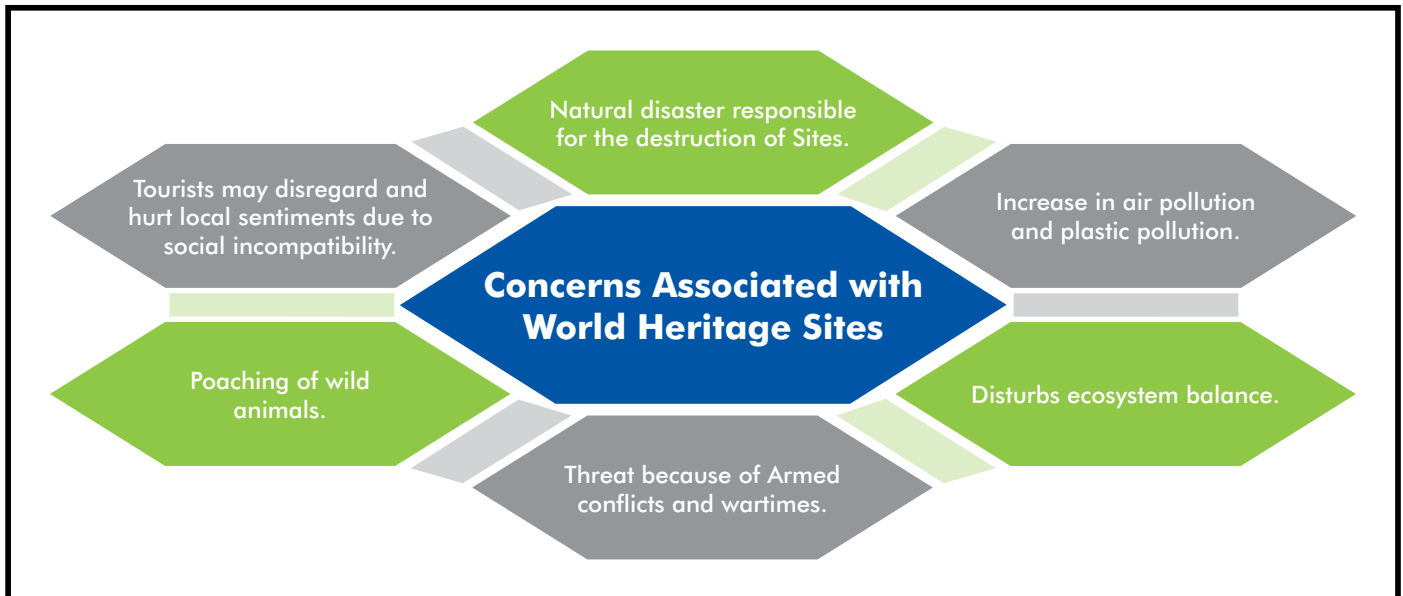
Access to World Heritage Fund and International Assistance from UNESCO.

Access to project management resources.

Protection under the Geneva Convention for demolition or misuse.

Establish bonds and relationships with the United Nations system.

There are various factors concerning the protection of WHSs to retain a positive influx for the Tourism and Hospitality sector. For which to address the concerns is of utmost importance and needs high-priority attention.



We witnessed that the Sites' based tourism has both positive and negative impacts on a nation's economy. So, it's very important to do efficient planning and integrated infrastructure development for achieving sustainable tourism to safeguard nations' treasures and well-organized tourism operations with the help of local groups and communities.



Role of ICT in India's World Heritage Conservation

In today's digital world, ICT (Information and Communication Technologies) is playing a significant role across sectors, Tourism is also one of them. Implementation of ICT to govern and protect the World Heritage of our country which is a niche segment of the tourism sector has a vital need. It will help in passing these gems of India on to future generations in sound condition while retaining its cultural, traditional, and natural importance.



Source: <https://iitj.ac.in/schools/blog/blog4/index.html>

The collaboration of ICT in world heritage management has completely changed the outlook by extending support in conserving ancient heritage information with the help of the latest advancements in technical, information, and communication tools. This has given rise to digital heritage and applications for conducting management and marketing of heritage sites, academic research, and data interpretation for physical preservation. ICT enables us to store data related to endangered cultural assets in digital form as digital archives to preserve it. The extensive use of web-based applications and technical tools enables us to share ancient assets globally. ICT has diverse tools that can gather and refine ancient data and create 3D views of different landforms, environments, and ancient structures to preserve it physically. With ICT we can create a digital library preserving data and information related to museums called museology, specific places or sites, and many more, and fetch the information via a user-friendly interface.

ICT applications Assisting World Heritage Management

01	E-destination facility by software catering needs and services required by consumers and tourism segment.	09	ICT and E-Travel agencies to boost costing margins and efficiency.
02	ICT applications assist in social filtering in the tourism industry by web or data mining.	10	Refining tourism-related data for optimal use by visitors like search engines, multimedia and feedback.
03	Making the payment system seamless by the introduction of an E-payment system.	11	Assist in promoting tourism through social media, video-conferencing, webcasting and virtual reality.
04	Computerized Reservations Systems (CRS) introduced by ICT for easing E-reservation.	12	Tourists can make travel plans and reservations by themselves using the web world.
05	Implementation of a Geographical Information System for tourism planning.	13	The Internet acts as a bridge between consumers, intermediaries and tourist suppliers.
06	ICT tool merges SCM with management relations to facilitate single window operations.	14	ICT allows masses to access useful information and reservation facilities simultaneously globally at a very lost cost.
07	Usability of complex products is made easy through ICT.	15	It gives an awful experience to the end user, low operating cost and increase efficiency using ICT applications.
08	Property Management Systems (PMSs) in tourism is introduced to help the front office, sales, planning and operation functions.		

The cultural and natural heritage information from the past can be digitized and shared among students, professionals, researchers, scholars, etc for research aiming to find innovative ways of preserving the past by being able to recreate the destructed structures as they were in originality. Such advanced technology enables us to reproduce visuals for all such entities and preserve them using ICT and digital archives meeting international standards. The continuous development of ICT in the capacity of heritage management has produced a diverse range of products and applications whose implementation will consistently preserve the World Heritage of our country for generations to come.

How AG Group Can Be a Help

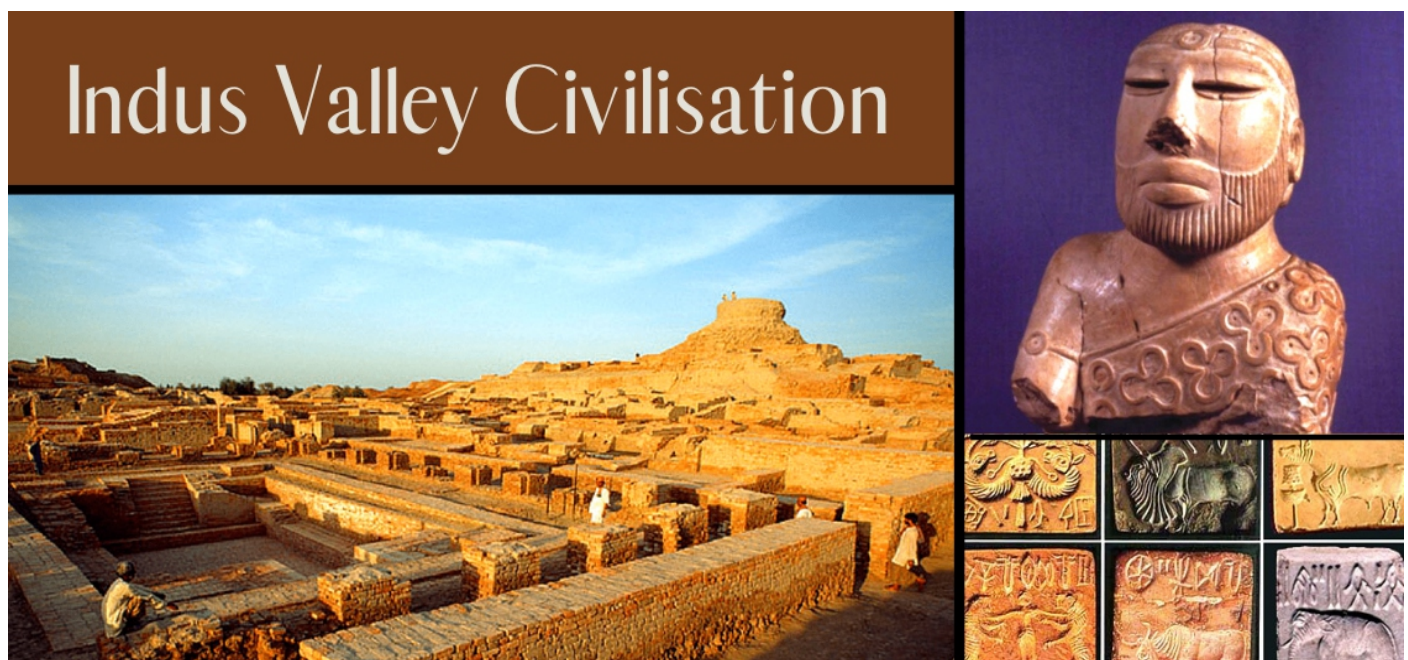
For developing need-based offerings on multifacet aspects of tourism and culture.

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Conclusion

Historically, India has been the country with the oldest human civilization famously known as the Indus Valley Civilization. The deeply-rooted ancient history of our country is a door to the world of treasure holding immortal cultural heritage, natural heritage, and traditions. Therefore, the unsaid responsibility of sharing world heritage is to retain its conservation to pass it on to future generations in perfect condition carrying the country's cultural identity intact.

These WHS are a boon to our society, as we know and learn a lot from these Sites which act as the pillars of our ancient wisdom and knowledge prevalent in their time. The Government of India, the Archaeological Survey of India, and related local government bodies as well as authorities, are responsible for the management of these heritages and traditions so that their global presence should be exceptionally acclaimed by circulating their uniqueness. This will India an unseen opportunity to tap through the tourism and hospitality sector and present the engineering and nature-gifted hidden treasures from age-old India to the 21st-century digital world.



Expert's Insight

While our national identity comes from our heritage, no one can claim exclusivity to the world heritage because world heritage is always shared. Our education system needs to be revamped. We have to teach our children the language and the alphabet of our art and culture. Every district in the country should have a heritage museum and every city should have a culture and heritage street.

Dinesh K Patnaik
Former Director General Indian
Council for Cultural Relations



Resources

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Carbon Credit
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Chennai



Delhi



Gurugram



Guwahati



Hyderabad



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