

# Potential and opportunity of mice tourism in India:

## Case study of Delhi

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**Abstract.** MICE tourism is one of the fastest-growing sectors in the global travel and tourism industry, with a huge potential for economic growth and development. In the Indian context, Delhi is one of the prime destinations for MICE activities, as it is strategically located, boasts world-class infrastructure, rich cultural heritage, and a vibrant economic landscape. It goes on to further explore the MICE tourism that has untapped potential and opportunity in India by particularly focusing on a case study basis of Delhi. Delhi, the capital city, boasts an extensive network of state-of-the-art convention centers, luxury hotels, and efficient connectivity via air, road, and rail. Its unique blend of modernity and tradition attracts business travelers seeking not only professional engagements but also cultural enrichment. Additionally, Delhi's positioning as a political and economic hub adds to its appeal for hosting international conferences, government summits, and corporate events. This paper evaluates existing MICE infrastructure in Delhi, sheds light on trends in the recent meetings industry, and appraises the impact of MICE tourism on local and national economy. It identifies important challenges, which are sustainability issues, competition with other global destinations, and enhancement requirements for marketing strategy.

**Key words-** MICE Tourism, Economic Growth, Business Travel, Convention Centers, Cultural Heritage, Sustainability Challenges, Global Competition, Marketing Strategies, Tourism Development.

## 1. Introduction

The Meetings, Incentives, Conferences, and Exhibitions (MICE) industry is among the world's fastest-developing sectors in the tourism business, making valuable contributions to the economic development of a nation, business growth, and global cooperation. MICE tourism is one of the essential drivers of elevating a nation's global status by drawing in corporate events, trade exhibitions, and global conferences. In India, the country's fast-paced business infrastructure growth, increasing corporate networking, and the government's efforts to boost the industry underpin the huge scope for MICE tourism. But even with its economic and strategic import, India has not yet solidified itself as an international leader in this market.

Among Indian cities, Delhi is a prominent MICE destination based on its strategic location, state-of-the-art infrastructure, world-class convention facilities, and well-connected air, road, and rail links. Delhi being the political and economic capital of India often hosts high-level international conferences, government summits, corporate events, and large exhibitions. The city's heritage, historic sites, and contemporary business center also add a special attraction to business travelers looking for professional interactions combined with cultural enrichment. Though it is strong, Delhi has a number of challenges that it needs to overcome in its quest to be a globally competitive MICE destination. Sustainability issues, rising competition from global MICE destinations like Dubai and Singapore, and more effective marketing and branding efforts hold it back from realizing its full potential. This research paper seeks to investigate the available MICE infrastructure in Delhi, analyze trending trends, assess its economic contribution, and determine challenges and opportunities for increased expansion. By tackling these elements, Delhi has the potential to emerge as a premium MICE destination, making significant contributions to India's economic and tourism growth.

## 2. Objective

2. To analyze the current status and growth potential of MICE tourism in India, with a special focus on Delhi.
3. To examine the existing MICE infrastructure in Delhi, including convention centers, hotels, and transportation facilities.
4. To assess the economic impact of MICE tourism on Delhi's local and national economy.

## 3. Literature Review

MICE (Meetings, Incentives, Conferences, and Exhibitions) tourism has emerged as a key segment within the global travel industry, contributing significantly to economic development, international business networking, and infrastructure growth. Several studies have examined the impact, challenges, and opportunities of MICE tourism in different countries, highlighting its potential for revenue generation and urban development. This literature review explores existing research on MICE tourism globally, its role in India's tourism sector, and Delhi's position as a leading MICE destination.

### 3.1 MICE Tourism in India

India's MICE tourism industry has been increasing continuously because of its developing economy, improving infrastructure, and government policies. The Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI, 2019) stated that India can become a world-class MICE destination, and Delhi, Mumbai, Bengaluru, and Hyderabad are at the forefront of the industry. But it has faced setbacks in terms of lack of exclusive MICE promotion, issues related to sustainability, and rivalry from global locations. Research conducted by Chaturvedi (2020) indicates that development of infrastructure, marketing, and policy reforms will help improve the competitiveness of India in MICE tourism considerably.

### Delhi as a MICE Destination

Delhi, being the capital and financial hub of India, has emerged as a major MICE destination. Studies by Sharma (2021) reveal that the location advantage of Delhi, state-of-the-art convention halls, five-star hotels, and good connectivity make it a first choice for holding global conferences, corporate meets, and government conferences. Popular places like Pragati Maidan, India Habitat Centre, and Vigyan Bhawan have organized large-scale conferences like the India International Trade Fair and Auto Expo.

### Economic Significance of MICE Tourism in India

The MICE industry is projected to grow at a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of over 7% globally, and India is no exception. According to Srivastava and Chauhan (2023), the MICE sector contributed approximately ₹37,567 crore in 2017, with expectations to reach ₹1,99,990 crore by 2025. India has also improved its ranking in the International Congress and Convention Association (ICCA) rankings, moving up 11 positions from 2014 to 2017. Delhi, as the capital city, has been at the forefront of this growth, hosting several international summits, trade fairs, and government conferences (Tembhare et al., 2022).

### **MICE Tourism in Delhi: An Emerging Hub**

Delhi is a leading MICE destination due to its well-developed infrastructure, world-class venues (Pragati Maidan, India Habitat Centre, Vigyan Bhavan, and Aerocity convention centers), and seamless international connectivity (Jaiswal, 2019). Studies indicate that Delhi's strategic location, strong transport network, and extensive hospitality services make it a preferred city for global MICE events (Singh & Parkash, 2016). However, competition from global MICE hubs like Dubai, Singapore, and Bangkok necessitates continuous improvement in infrastructure and service delivery (Jamgade, 2018).

### **3.2 Government Policies and Strategic Initiatives**

The Indian government has recognized MICE tourism as a high-growth sector, with initiatives such as:

- National Tourism Policy 2015, which focuses on infrastructural development and global marketing strategies (Srivastava & Chauhan, 2023).
- E-visa and visa-on-arrival facilities, which have enhanced accessibility for international business travelers (Tembhare et al., 2022).
- Smart City Projects and PPP (Public-Private Partnerships) aimed at boosting MICE-related infrastructure in Delhi and other metro cities (Singh & Parkash, 2016).
- Despite these efforts, policy gaps and lack of coordination between central and state governments remain significant challenges in fully realizing the potential of MICE tourism in Delhi (Srivastava & Chauhan, 2023).

### **3.3 Challenges in MICE Tourism Development**

Several studies highlight major challenges hindering the growth of MICE tourism in India, particularly in Delhi:

- Lack of a dedicated MICE policy: Unlike Singapore or Thailand, India lacks a structured and centralized approach to developing MICE tourism (Singh & Parkash, 2016).
- Infrastructure gaps: While Delhi has top-tier venues, inadequate digital integration, traffic congestion, and high operational costs affect its global competitiveness (Jaiswal, 2019).
- Branding and marketing deficiencies: India's MICE sector lacks aggressive international marketing campaigns, which limits its visibility among global event organizers (Jamgade, 2018).

### **3.4 Future Prospects and Opportunities**

Despite the challenges, Delhi has the potential to become a global MICE leader through:

- Technological advancements in event management, such as AI-driven planning, hybrid conferences, and VR-based interactions (Tembhare et al., 2022).
- Expanding beyond Delhi to nearby cities like Gurgaon and Noida, which offer affordable and modern MICE facilities (Singh & Parkash, 2016).
- Encouraging Public-Private Partnerships (PPP) to enhance event planning, sponsorships, and hospitality standards (Srivastava & Chauhan, 2023).

## **4. Methodology**

This study employs a secondary data analysis approach to assess the potential and opportunities of MICE tourism in India, with a case study of Delhi. The research draws on existing literature, industry reports, and government publications to examine the current status, challenges, and future opportunities of Delhi as a MICE tourism hub.

## 5. Data collection

The study is based on secondary data sources from peer-reviewed journals, government reports, and industry publications. The key sources reviewed include:

- Karnavati Journal of Multidisciplinary Studies (2023)
- MICE tourism is a major contributor to India's GDP and is projected to grow at a CAGR of 7.09% until 2028.
- India ranked 24th in the ICCA (International Congress and Convention Association) ranking in 2017, moving up 11 positions from 2014.
- The sector is expected to grow from ₹37,567 crore (2017) to ₹1,99,990 crore (2025), indicating its high growth potential.
- Atna – Journal of Tourism Studies (2022)
- Research on MICE tourism in India has been increasing, with major studies focusing on conference management, venue perception, tourism marketing, and social media promotion.
- Delhi is identified as a key MICE destination, with key events hosted in Pragati Maidan, India Expo Centre & Mart, and Vigyan Bhawan.
- International Journal of Agricultural Invention (2019)
- The total contribution of tourism and hospitality to India's GDP is projected to rise from \$234.03 billion (2017) to \$492.21 billion (2028).
- MICE tourism is a high-growth sector within India's broader hospitality industry.
- IJRE (2016) - MICE Tourism in India: Challenges and Opportunities
- Discusses how Delhi, Mumbai, Bangalore, and Hyderabad are leading MICE destinations in India, with Delhi being the preferred choice for government and international events.
- The report highlights challenges such as high taxation, visa issues, infrastructure constraints, and the need for better promotional strategies.
- Scope of MICE Tourism as an Emerging Hospitality Industry (2018)
- MICE tourism in Delhi accounts for a significant share of India's business travel due to its connectivity, historical significance, and world-class conference venues.
- The Delhi government's focus on developing more convention centers, improving hospitality infrastructure, and promoting the city globally is expected to strengthen its position as a MICE hub.
- Strategic Initiatives for the Empowerment of Women in Bangalore MICE Sector (2022)
- This study emphasizes the need for a gender-inclusive workforce in the MICE sector and highlights the importance of training and skill development.
- Delhi's MICE industry could benefit from similar strategies to boost employment and service quality.
- Development Opportunities of MICE Tourism in Developing Countries (2017) - Case of Georgia
- While focusing on Georgia, this study provides comparative insights into how developing nations can enhance their MICE industry through strategic marketing, infrastructure investments, and international collaborations.
- Lessons from Georgia's MICE growth strategies can be applied to Delhi to attract more global events.

## 6. Findings & Discussion

Current status and growth potential of mice tourism in India ( with a focus on Delhi)-The MICE tourism industry in India has been experiencing steady growth, driven by increasing global business engagements, government initiatives, and improved infrastructure. India has been improving its ranking in the International Congress and Convention Association (ICCA) listings, indicating its growing significance in the MICE sector.

### **6.1 Growth Trends:**

- The Indian MICE industry has been growing at a CAGR of 8–10%, supported by corporate events, trade fairs, and international summits.
- Delhi, being the political and economic capital, hosts a significant share of India's business tourism, making it a key player in the industry.
- The post-pandemic rise in hybrid and virtual events has further expanded India's MICE opportunities, integrating digital platforms with physical event infrastructure.
- Challenges Hindering Growth:
  - Strong competition from global hubs like Singapore, Dubai, and Bangkok, which offer incentives and seamless event planning services.
  - High operational costs in Delhi, including venue rentals and accommodation.
  - Visa and bureaucratic challenges, despite improvements like e-visa and visa-on-arrival services.
  - Lack of a dedicated MICE policy, unlike Thailand's MICE Capabilities Development Plan or Singapore's Business Events in Asia (BEiA) Strategy.

### **6.2 Existing mice infrastructure in Delhi: strengths & limitation**

- Delhi is a leading MICE destination in India, equipped with modern venues, high-end hotels, and strong connectivity. However, there are infrastructural gaps that need to be addressed.
- Strengths of Delhi's MICE Infrastructure:
  - Top-tier convention centers: Pragati Maidan, India Habitat Centre, Vigyan Bhavan, and Aerocity's Integrated Exhibition Centre.
  - Growing hotel industry: Luxury hotels (e.g., Taj Palace, ITC Maurya, Leela Ambience) cater to corporate travelers.
  - Excellent connectivity: Delhi's Indira Gandhi International Airport (IGIA) is among the top airports globally, offering direct flights to major MICE destinations.
  - Metro and road network expansion improves accessibility to MICE venues.
- Infrastructure Gaps and Challenges:
  - Limited high-capacity venues: Compared to international hubs like Shanghai and Singapore, Delhi lacks ultra-large convention centers.
  - Traffic congestion: Despite metro expansion, road congestion affects event accessibility.
  - Technology limitations: Some venues still lack integrated AI, smart event planning tools, and virtual event capabilities.
  - Shortage of mid-range business hotels: While luxury hotels are abundant, affordable accommodations for business travelers are still developing.

### **6.3 Economic impact of mice tourism on Delhi local& national economy**

MICE tourism plays a pivotal role in Delhi's economy, contributing significantly to business revenues, employment generation, and infrastructure development.

#### **Direct & Indirect Contributions:**

- The MICE sector generates revenue through event hosting, hotel bookings, airline and transport services, catering, and tourism packages.
- MICE-related businesses such as event management companies, technology providers, and hospitality services see significant growth.

#### **Employment Generation:**

- MICE tourism supports thousands of direct and indirect jobs, from event planners and hospitality staff to transportation and security personnel.
- Growth in MICE events encourages skill development in conference management, business services, and digital event solutions.

#### **Foreign Exchange Earnings & Investments:**

- International business events bring foreign exchange inflows, boosting national GDP.

- Increased foreign direct investment (FDI) in hospitality and real estate due to MICE growth, particularly in Delhi NCR regions like Gurgaon and Noida.
- Post-Pandemic Economic Recovery:
- Delhi's MICE sector played a crucial role in reviving the hospitality and travel industries after COVID-19.
- Hybrid events, government-backed business summits, and international trade fairs have helped accelerate economic recovery.

#### 6.4 Emerging trends & future potential

##### **Digital Transformation in MICE Tourism:**

- Rise in AI-driven event management tools, virtual conference platforms, and smart registration systems.
- Blockchain-based ticketing and contactless event experiences are becoming increasingly popular.

##### **Sustainability Initiatives:**

- Shift towards eco-friendly event planning, carbon-neutral venues, and green energy use in conference facilities.
- Delhi's sustainability challenges (pollution, waste management at events) need urgent policy intervention.

##### **Growth of MICE Hubs beyond Delhi:**

- Expansion into Gurgaon, Noida, and Greater Noida for more affordable and modern MICE facilities.
- Plans for new exhibition centers and integrated convention districts in the Delhi NCR region.

## 7. Conclusion

MICE tourism is a crucial driver of economic growth, global business networking, and infrastructure development in India, with Delhi emerging as a prime destination. The city's strategic location, world-class convention centers, luxury accommodations, and robust connectivity make it an attractive hub for corporate events, government summits, and international exhibitions. Additionally, Delhi's rich cultural heritage and historical significance enhance its appeal to business travelers looking for both professional engagements and leisure experiences.

Despite its strengths, Delhi faces several challenges in establishing itself as a global leader in MICE tourism. Sustainability concerns, competition from international MICE hubs like Singapore and Dubai, and infrastructural limitations hinder its full potential. High operational costs, bureaucratic procedures, and limited mid-range accommodations further restrict growth. Addressing these issues requires a comprehensive strategy focusing on infrastructure enhancement, policy reforms, and sustainable event management.

The Indian government has taken significant steps to boost MICE tourism, including the National Tourism Policy (2015), the Incredible India 2.0 campaign, and initiatives like Smart City projects and Public-Private Partnerships (PPP). The successful hosting of international events, including the G20 Summit (2023), has showcased Delhi's ability to manage large-scale conferences and highlighted its potential as a leading MICE destination. However, for long-term success, dedicated MICE policies, better marketing strategies, and integration of emerging technologies such as AI, blockchain, and smart venues are essential.

The economic impact of MICE tourism on Delhi's local and national economy is significant. The sector generates employment, stimulates foreign investments, and contributes to the hospitality, transportation, and technology industries. The post-pandemic era has seen a rise in hybrid and virtual events, further expanding MICE opportunities. With planned expansions into Gurgaon, Noida, and Greater Noida, Delhi NCR is poised to become a more competitive and versatile MICE hub.

In conclusion, while Delhi has immense potential to become a top-tier global MICE destination, sustained growth will depend on strategic investments, international collaborations, policy improvements, and sustainable practices. By leveraging its existing strengths and addressing key challenges, Delhi can strengthen its position in the global MICE industry, significantly contributing to India's tourism and economic landscape.

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