

# Assessment of Economic impact of tribal fair and festivals on tourism trade in India

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## Abstract

Tribal festivals are the reflector of the cultural heritage and historical background of the tribals. These fairs and festivals are showed linked cultural and traditional diversities. These fairs and festivals visualize tribals different customs, traditional music, dance, anticraft are the key to their social and economic development including the development of tourism trade. Tribal fairs and festivals are the foundation of tourism trade, which driving a trade ecosystem that involve handicraft, hospitality & infrastructure development. In 2026, the global tribal tourism market is projected to reach \$7.75 billion, where tribal cultural and vertiage being a primary source and travellers experience, the tribals rich cultural & heritage. Tribal fairs and festivals play a significant role in India as driver for changing cultural celebrations into income generation, new employment opportunities, new market explore. These fairs and festivals push local, regional and national economies by promoting handicraft, tourism, entrepreneurship, creating multiplier effect.

**Key words:** Tribal fairs and festivals,

## Introduction

India is widely recognized for its cultural diversity, which is reflected in the traditions, customs, and festivals celebrated across different regions of the country. Among these cultural expressions, tribal fairs and festivals hold a distinctive place as they represent the traditional heritage, social practices, and cultural identity of indigenous communities. Tribal societies have historically preserved their customs, rituals, music, dance forms, and craft traditions through these collective celebrations. Such fairs and festivals are not only important cultural events but also serve as platforms where communities interact, exchange goods, and strengthen social bonds. In recent decades, the tourism sector has emerged as a significant contributor to economic development in India. Cultural tourism, in particular, has gained increasing attention as tourists seek authentic and unique experiences related to local traditions and lifestyles. Tribal fairs and festivals offer such opportunities by showcasing indigenous cultural practices, traditional handicrafts, folk performances, and local cuisines. As a result, these events have become important attractions for both domestic and international tourists interested in exploring the cultural richness of tribal communities. The growing interest in tribal tourism has created new economic opportunities for tribal populations. During fairs and festivals,

local artisans, performers, and traders engage in the sale of handicrafts, textiles, forest-based products, and other traditional goods. The influx of tourists during these events increases demand for transportation, accommodation, food services, and local markets, thereby generating income and employment opportunities for the local population. Consequently, tribal fairs and festivals contribute not only to the preservation of cultural heritage but also to the economic development of tribal regions. However, despite their economic potential, tribal communities often face various challenges such as inadequate infrastructure, limited market access, and insufficient institutional support. These challenges can restrict the full realization of economic benefits derived from tourism activities. Therefore, it becomes important to examine the economic impact of tribal fairs and festivals in a systematic manner to understand how these events contribute to tourism trade and local economic development. In this context, the present study aims to assess the economic impact of tribal fairs and festivals on tourism trade in India. The study seeks to analyze how these cultural events influence tourism inflows, generate employment and income opportunities, and contribute to regional economic development while also highlighting the challenges faced by tribal communities in maximizing these benefits.

## Objectives of the Study

1. To understand the cultural importance of tribal fair and festivals
2. To analyse the role of these festivals in promoting tourism
3. To assess the economic benefits for tribal communities
4. To identify challenges and opportunities in tribal tourism development

## Methodology

The study is based on:

1. Secondary data collected from different tourism reports, governments publications and research articles.
2. Case studies of major festivals and fairs in India.
3. Economic analysis of tourism-related activities such as handicrafts, local markets and hospitality services.

## Literature Review

**SURABHI SRIVASTAVA (2025)** The tribal fair has great potential to develop tourism and can have a positive impact on local livelihoods. A strategic intervention is needed to ensure the commercial viability of folk cultures and traditions. It is one of the major ways to empower tribes and their artists from a socio-economic point of view. All possible efforts should be made to maintain the innate beauty, inherent quality, and core ideology of tribal/folk art and cultural forms. This is necessary to ensure their exclusive uniqueness. The general public of the wider society should be informed about the values, styles, forms of various folk performing arts. Effective campaigning and publicity of these elements are to crystallize favourable public attitudes and ideas toward folk art and culture; the pattern of presentation of these tribal/folk art and cultural forms should be revised and strategically altered to make them more vibrant to meet the recreational demand of the present generation. This chapter concludes that a tribal culture is a tool for their economic and social development, but the strongest tool for their overall development in their religious and social fairs. Through these fairs, their handicrafts, customs, dishes, dishes, and other articles can be an exhibition and sold to a large number of people. Such events are forced community participation and core involvement. That way

they will not feel commodified or awkward. They will be proud of their religious and social customs, customs, and traditions.

**Dr. Gujjeti Thirupathi(2025)** By integrating tribal festivals, dance forms, music, and cuisines into tourism packages, visitors can experience the diversity of Telangana’s cultural landscape while ensuring that tribal communities receive recognition and benefits. State-owned hotels and resorts should incorporate tribal dance performances and local cuisines into their regular programs, thus providing a sustainable platform for showcasing cultural heritage. The marketing of indigenous goods such as handicrafts, handlooms, basketry, and forest-based products is another key aspect of tribal tourism. By linking these products with the tourism sector, tribal artisans can find wider markets for their goods, helping them become self-reliant entrepreneurs. Financial institutions and banks should extend loans and microcredit facilities to tribal communities to establish small-scale enterprises such as homestays, village hotels, and eco-tourism ventures. Policies should also be designed to encourage capacity building and skill development among tribal youth, enabling them to engage actively in the tourism economy.

**Dr. Anshu (2016)** The growth of tourists commensurate with India’s urban development scenario. The percent of urban population from 1971 onwards has been more than 20% registering growth of 38.23%, 46.14% and 36.19% in each subsequent decade. Tourism has registered phenomenal growth in the same decades with international tourist arrivals increasing from 3 lakhs in 1971 to more than 25 lakhs in 1991 and substantial growth to about 76 lakhs in 2011. Not only has the international tourist arrivals have gone up significantly, but the domestic tourism has substantially increased. This highlights the overall development of infrastructural facilities, product improvement, better accessibility, air services and innovative marketing, so important for the tourism industry and ingredients of urban landscape.

### Major Tribal Fairs and Festivals in India

Here is a state wise major tribal fairs and festivals in all 29 states, many of the are organized by the Department of Tourism, Government of India Tourism, State tribal department for promotion of tribal cultural, tradition, arts, etc. The main objective of sponsoring is to enhance tourism trade through fairs and festivals as well as to protect their heritage. India has a huge tribal population and many tribal festivals and fairs are linked with divinity, god, immortal, harvest.

Sr. No	State	Festivals and Fairs
1.	Andhra Pradesh	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sammakka Saralamma Jatara (Medaram tribal festival)</li> <li>• Bheemana Amavasya</li> </ul>
2.	Arunachal Pradesh	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Solung Festival</li> <li>• Nyokum Festival</li> <li>• Mopin Festival</li> </ul>
3.	Assam	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bohag Bihu</li> <li>• Magh Bihu</li> <li>• Ambubachi Mela</li> </ul>
4.	Bihar	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rajgir Mahotsav</li> <li>• Sonapur Cattle Fair</li> </ul>

5.	Chhattisgarh	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bastar Dussehra</li> <li>• National Tribal Festival</li> </ul>
6.	Goa	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Shigmo Festival</li> <li>• Goa Carnival</li> </ul>
7.	Gujarat	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Chitra Vichitra Fair</li> <li>• Dang Darbar Festival</li> </ul>
8.	Haryana	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Surajkund International Crafts Mela</li> </ul>
9.	Himachal Pradesh	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tribal Festival Keylong</li> <li>• Minjar Fair</li> </ul>
10.	Jammu & Kashmir	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hemis Festival</li> </ul>
11.	Jharkhand	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sarhul Festival</li> <li>• Karma Festival</li> <li>• Bandna Festival</li> </ul>
12.	Karnataka	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Karaga Festival</li> </ul>
13.	Kerala	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Onam (includes tribal cultural events)</li> </ul>
14.	Madhya Pradesh	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bhagoria Festival</li> <li>• Lokrang Festival</li> </ul>
15.	Maharashtra	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bhimthadi Jatra</li> <li>• Warli Tribal Festival</li> </ul>
16.	Manipur	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lui Ngai Ni Festival</li> </ul>
17.	Meghalaya	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wangala Festival</li> <li>• Behdienkhlam Festival</li> </ul>
18.	Mizoram	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Chapchar Kut</li> </ul>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mim Kut</li> </ul>
19.	Nagaland	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hornbill Festival</li> <li>• Moatsu Festival</li> </ul>
20.	Odisha	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Chaiti Festival</li> <li>• Parab Tribal Festival</li> </ul>
21.	Punjab	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hola Mohalla</li> </ul>
22.	Rajasthan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Baneshwar Fair</li> <li>• Bhagoria Haat Festival</li> </ul>
23.	Sikkim	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Losar Festival</li> </ul>
24.	Tamil Nadu	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pongal Festival (tribal harvest celebrations)</li> </ul>
25.	Telangana	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Nagoba Jatara</li> <li>• Sammakka Saralamma Jatara</li> </ul>
26.	Tripura	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Garia Puja</li> <li>• Ganga Puja</li> </ul>
27.	Uttar Pradesh	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Magh Mela</li> </ul>
28.	Uttarakhand	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Harela Festival</li> </ul>
29.	West Bengal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tusu Festival</li> <li>• Karam Festival</li> </ul>

Sources: Made by Me

## Role in Tourism Development

Tribal fairs and festivals are foremost cultural events which is celebrated by tribals communities. These fairs and festivals are reflecting the lifestyle of tribal communities, music, dance, handicrafts, etc. These festivals and fair are major attraction for cultural tourism which can support development in different aspects are as follows:

### 1. Cultural tourism Promotion

Cultural tourism promotion active tourism trade by prompting traditional arts, local heritage. Festivals and fairs allow tribal communities to highlight their unique traditions, music, dance, and art, increasing appreciation of their culture and tradition breaking down social stereotypes.

## 2. Economic Benefits

Tribal fairs and festivals in India are influential economic development transform traditional celebrational into unique market place. Different fairs and festivals like Aadi Mahotsav provide direct platform to tribal artisans to show their skill and traditional craft. These fairs and festivals foster the entrepreneurship and preserve cultural heritage that drive the income generation through tourism and the sale of local products.

## 3. Employment Opportunities

Tribal festivals and fairs play an important role for tribals to transforming their cultural heritage into sustainable employment and entrepreneurship. These events fill the gap between demand and supply of tribal production it generates both direct and indirect employment opportunities. Tribals fairs provide a new market place for traditional goods. The government initiatives to long term capacity building for tribal youth.

Tribal fairs and festivals contribute significantly to regional development by stimulating economic activities and improving infrastructure in tribal-dominated areas. These cultural events attract tourists from different regions, which increases demand for transportation, accommodation, food services, and local markets. As a result, local businesses and small-scale enterprises experience growth, creating employment opportunities for the surrounding communities. The increased economic activity during such festivals encourages government authorities and private investors to develop basic infrastructure such as roads, communication networks, and tourism facilities in these regions. Improved connectivity and infrastructure not only support tourism but also enhance overall economic development by facilitating trade and access to markets. Furthermore, tribal fairs provide opportunities for local producers and artisans to expand their market reach, which helps strengthen regional economies. In this way, tribal festivals act as catalysts for balanced regional development by integrating cultural heritage with tourism-led economic growth.

## 4. Preservation of Culture

Tribal fairs and festivals play a significant role in preserving and promoting the cultural heritage of indigenous communities. These cultural events provide a platform for tribal groups to maintain their traditional customs, rituals, music, dance forms, and social practices that have been passed down through generations. Through active participation in such celebrations, younger members of the community learn about their traditions, thereby ensuring the continuity of cultural knowledge and identity. Tribal fairs also encourage the preservation of traditional crafts and indigenous art forms, as artisans display and sell handicrafts, textiles, and other locally produced goods that reflect their cultural heritage. In addition, performances of folk music and dance during these festivals help sustain the artistic traditions that form an integral part of tribal life. The growing interest in tribal tourism has further increased recognition of these cultural expressions at regional and national levels. However, it is important to ensure that the promotion of tribal festivals does not lead to excessive commercialization or distortion of cultural practices. Therefore, sustainable management and community participation are essential to ensure that tribal fairs and festivals continue to serve as important instruments for the preservation of tribal culture and heritage.

## 5. Regional Development

Tribal fairs and festivals contribute significantly to regional development by stimulating economic activities and improving infrastructure in tribal-dominated areas. These cultural events attract tourists from different regions, which increases demand for transportation, accommodation, food services, and local markets. As a result, local businesses and small-scale enterprises experience growth, creating employment opportunities for the surrounding communities. The increased economic activity during such festivals encourages government

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## **Government Initiatives**

### **1. Swadesh Darshan Scheme (Swadesh Darshan 2.0)**

The Government of India, through the Ministry of Tourism, launched the Swadesh Darshan Scheme to develop integrated tourism circuits across the country based on specific themes such as heritage, culture, and eco-tourism. The upgraded Swadesh Darshan 2.0 emphasizes sustainable tourism development, destination management, and community participation. Several destinations located in tribal-dominated regions are being developed under this programme, which contributes to improved tourism infrastructure, increased tourist inflow, and enhanced income opportunities for local tribal communities.

### **2. Pradhan Mantri Janjatiya Vikas Mission (PMJVM)**

The Pradhan Mantri Janjatiya Vikas Mission aims to promote sustainable livelihoods for tribal populations through the establishment of Van Dhan Vikas Kendras (VDVKs). These centers support the value addition and marketing of minor forest produce and traditional tribal products. By strengthening local production systems and market access, the mission indirectly supports tribal fairs and festivals where such products are showcased and traded, thereby contributing to local economic activity.

### **3. TRIFED and the “Tribes India” Initiative**

The Tribal Cooperative Marketing Development Federation of India (TRIFED) plays a crucial role in enhancing the economic well-being of tribal communities. Through the “Tribes India” brand, TRIFED facilitates the marketing of tribal handicrafts, textiles, and forest-based products through retail outlets, exhibitions, and digital platforms. These initiatives help integrate tribal artisans into broader markets and promote cultural tourism associated with tribal fairs and festivals.

### **4. Development of Tribal Homestays under Tourism Promotion Programs**

In recent years, the Government has encouraged the development of homestay-based tourism in tribal areas to promote community-based tourism models. Financial assistance and policy support are provided for the construction and improvement of homestay infrastructure. This initiative not only enhances tourist experiences but also generates direct income for tribal households and strengthens the local tourism economy during major fairs and cultural festivals.

### **5. Special Central Assistance to Tribal Sub-Scheme (SCA to TSS)**

The Special Central Assistance to the Tribal Sub-Scheme is designed to provide financial support to states for implementing programmes aimed at the socio-economic development of Scheduled Tribes. Funds under this scheme are often utilized for infrastructure development, skill training, and livelihood enhancement in

tribal regions. Such investments create an enabling environment for tourism-related activities and improve the economic potential of tribal cultural events.

## 6. Tech for Tribal Initiative

The Tech for Tribal Initiative, implemented by TRIFED in collaboration with premier educational institutions, focuses on providing technological and entrepreneurial training to tribal artisans and forest produce gatherers. The programme aims to enhance productivity, improve product quality, and strengthen market linkages. By integrating technology with traditional practices, this initiative helps tribal communities participate more effectively in tourism-driven markets.

## 7. Promotion of Tribal Cultural Heritage through Government Cultural Programs

The Ministry of Culture and the Ministry of Tribal Affairs support various initiatives aimed at preserving and promoting tribal cultural heritage. Financial assistance is provided for organizing cultural festivals, exhibitions, and awareness programmes that highlight tribal traditions, music, dance, and crafts. These initiatives not only contribute to cultural preservation but also enhance the visibility of tribal tourism destinations.

## Economic Impact Assessment

The economic impact of tribal fairs and festivals can be understood through their contribution to local income generation, employment creation, and the expansion of tourism-related economic activities. These cultural events attract both domestic and international tourists, leading to increased demand for goods and services within the host regions. Local communities benefit economically through the sale of handicrafts, traditional textiles, forest-based products, and local food items during these events. Additionally, tourism associated with tribal festivals stimulates the growth of related sectors such as transportation, accommodation, hospitality, and small-scale retail markets. This creates a multiplier effect in the local economy, where spending by tourists circulates through various economic activities and supports multiple livelihood opportunities for tribal households. Furthermore, such festivals provide platforms for tribal artisans and performers to commercialize their cultural products and skills, thereby strengthening local entrepreneurship. However, the magnitude of economic benefits depends largely on factors such as infrastructure availability, effective market access, institutional support, and sustainable tourism management. Therefore, a systematic assessment of these economic impacts is essential for understanding the role of tribal fairs and festivals in promoting regional development and improving the socio-economic conditions of tribal communities.

## Challenges

One of the major challenges faced by tribal communities during fairs and festivals is the lack of adequate infrastructure in tribal-dominated areas. Poor road connectivity, insufficient transportation facilities, and limited accommodation options reduce tourist accessibility to these events. As a result, the potential economic benefits of tribal tourism remain underutilized.

## **1. Limited Market Access for Tribal Products**

Tribal artisans often face difficulties in accessing broader markets for their handicrafts, textiles, and traditional products. During fairs and festivals, middlemen frequently dominate trade activities, leading to lower profit margins for tribal producers. This limits the economic gains that tribal communities could otherwise obtain from tourism-related markets.

## **2. Lack of Financial Resources and Institutional Support**

Many tribal communities operate with limited financial capital and lack access to credit facilities. This restricts their ability to invest in better production techniques, stalls, or promotional activities during festivals and fairs. Insufficient institutional support further constrains their participation in tourism-driven economic activities.

## **3. Commercialization and Cultural Dilution**

With the increasing popularity of tribal tourism, there is a growing risk of commercialization of tribal culture. Traditional rituals, dances, and cultural expressions may sometimes be modified or simplified to suit tourist expectations. This process can lead to the gradual dilution of authentic cultural practices.

## **4. Low Level of Education and Awareness**

Limited access to education and training in many tribal regions reduces awareness about tourism management, marketing strategies, and entrepreneurship. This knowledge gap prevents tribal communities from fully benefiting from the economic opportunities associated with fairs and festivals.

## **5. Seasonal Nature of Festivals and Tourism Income**

Tribal fairs and festivals are generally seasonal events that occur only during specific periods of the year. As a result, the income generated from these events is irregular and insufficient to ensure long-term economic stability for tribal households.

## **6. Environmental and Resource Pressures**

Large tourist gatherings during festivals can create environmental pressures such as waste generation, resource depletion, and ecological disturbances. Tribal communities often lack the resources and institutional support needed to manage such environmental impacts effectively.

## **7. Weak Policy Implementation and Coordination**

Although several government programmes exist to support tribal development and tourism, implementation at the local level often remains weak. Lack of coordination between tourism authorities, local governments, and tribal communities can reduce the effectiveness of development initiatives.

## Conclusion

Tribal fairs and festivals play an important role in promoting tourism and contributing to the economic development of tribal regions. These cultural events not only preserve the rich traditions, customs, and heritage of tribal communities but also create opportunities for income generation, employment, and market expansion. Through the participation of tourists, local artisans, performers, and traders benefit economically from the sale of handicrafts, traditional products, and cultural performances. The increased tourism activity during these festivals also stimulates related sectors such as transportation, hospitality, and local trade, thereby generating a multiplier effect within the regional economy. Furthermore, tribal fairs contribute to regional development by encouraging improvements in infrastructure, connectivity, and tourism facilities in tribal-dominated areas. They also strengthen cultural identity and promote awareness of indigenous traditions at national and international levels. However, despite these benefits, tribal communities continue to face several challenges such as limited infrastructure, lack of market access, and the risk of cultural commercialization. Therefore, effective government support, sustainable tourism policies, and community participation are essential to ensure that the economic benefits of tribal fairs and festivals are distributed equitably while preserving the authenticity of tribal culture. Overall, tribal fairs and festivals represent an important intersection of culture, tourism, and economic development, making them a valuable resource for inclusive and sustainable regional growth.

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