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CESTour Conference

on

Navigating the Future of Sustainable Tourism

BOOK OF ABSTRACTS

Editors

Dr. Rahul Singh

Dr. Harald Friedl

Dr. Veenu Sharma





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CESTour Conference

On

Navigating the Future of Sustainable Tourism

6–7 February 2024

Editors: Dr. Rahul Singh, Dr. Harald Friedl and Dr. Veenu Sharma

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About the Conference



Tourism is one of the major industries that needs to be examined thoroughly from the perspective of making it sustainable. Given the size of the industry and its growth prospects, it has the significant potential to damage the planet’s ecosystem and cultural and heritage facets if not managed responsibly.

Travel and tourism have the potential to promote socio-economic development, create jobs, and reduce poverty. They can also provide empowerment opportunities for women, minorities, and young people.

According to the UN World Tourism Organisation, sustainable tourism is “tourism that takes full account of its current and future economic, social and environmental impacts, addressing the needs of visitors, the industry, and the environment and host communities.” The growing emphasis on Sustainable Tourism has increased the need for dissemination, research and awareness on the topic.

Motivated and driven to develop knowledge and practices for sustainable tourism in South Asia under the aegis of the CESTour Project (Consortium of Universities establishing Centres of Excellence in sustainable tourism to boost economic development and enhance university-business cooperation) The Conference is a concerted initiative of the EACEA (European Union) Erasmus+ Project, in collaboration with Partner Universities from Italy, Austria, Spain, India, Nepal and Sri Lanka.

About CESTour Project

CESTour (Centers of Excellence in sustainable tourism to boost economic development and enhance university-business cooperation in Southern Area) is funded by the European Union, more specifically by Erasmus+ Capacity Building in Higher Education.

The primary aim of the project is to install centers of excellence for sustainable tourism at seven (7) universities in India, Nepal & Sri Lanka to share the concept of sustainable tourism on a regional and national level to create a positive impact for tourism development.

The Project is driven towards achieving the following outcomes:

- Analysis of the current status of the tourism industry and identification of sustainable tourism efforts in Nepal, India and Sri Lanka.
- Capacity building of experts on sustainable tourism development through practical training creation and implementation.
- Implementation and operation of seven centers of excellence for sustainable tourism at partner universities.
- Development of cooperation HEI-Company and students learning experience by developing innovative sustainable tourism case studies.
- Development of collaboration network among EU and Asian HEIs and tourism professionals

About Partner Institutions

CESTour Project consists of 10 public & private Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) from 3 Programme Countries, Austria, Italy & Spain and 3 Partner Countries, India, Nepal & Sri Lanka. The Partner Country HEIs are all strategically located to ensure full geographic coverage of the activities. Apart from including the right Partner Country Higher Educational Institutions, the European Union partners are involved to ensure high quality standards of expertise & capacity transfer capabilities.

The Conference is a collective effort by the following partner universities:

1. FH JOANNEUM University of Applied Sciences, Graz (Austria)
2. Birla Institute of Management Technology, Greater Noida (India)
3. University of Alicante, Alicante (Spain)
4. Università di Lingue e Comunicazione, IULM University, Milan (Italy)
5. Institute of Public Enterprise, Hyderabad (India)
6. Nirma University, Ahmedabad (India)
7. Sabaragamuwa University of Sri Lanka, Belihuloya (Sri Lanka)
8. Uva Wellassa University, Badulla (Sri Lanka)
9. Tribhuvan University, Kathmandu (Nepal)
10. Global College International, Kathmandu (Nepal)

Conference Theme

In the global practice and research focus of sustainability aspects, tourism has also not been able to make its comprehensive understanding like many other sectors. It is widely accepted that the quest for search of universally acceptable definition or understanding of ‘sustainable tourism’ is difficult proposition. In recent years, sustainability theory has advanced through the articulation of possible interpretations of sustainable tourism and its applications (Butler, 2007). It has passed through confusing state of the debate, followed by different articulations of sustainable tourism in frame of development of tourism on the principles of sustainable development (Butler, 2007), which is recent phenomena.

The frameworks, models, policies of such development have been faster in developed countries given context, economic development priorities and size of population and country, this has not been attention of the governments in emerging markets and developing countries for long, however tourism has been a major sector. The coordinated focus on sustainable development by all major multilateral stakeholders simultaneously has pushed governments to develop instruments of change, and implement practices, models and policies of sustainable tourism. Tourism has been mainstreamed like any other single or aggregator industry sector by policy makers with focused approach to sustainable tourism.

In order to strive for sustainability and system resilience, tourism development must be balanced by respecting the principles of contextual limits of growth.

The growing emphasis on Sustainable Tourism has increased the need for dissemination, research and awareness on the topic. It is in this context, CESTour conference is planned with focus on the theme ‘*Navigating the Future of Sustainable Tourism*’ and carefully crafted the following tracks to contribute in literature and practice.

- Track 1: Role of Sustainable Development Goals in Tourism
- Track 2: Education, Entrepreneurship and Start-ups in Sustainable Tourism
- Track 3: Community based Tourism and Agro-tourism
- Track 4: Heritage and Cultural Tourism
- Track 5: Eco Footprint in Travel and Hospitality
- Track 6: Religious and Pilgrimage Tourism
- Track 7: Sustainable Destination Development
- Track 8: Technology, Digitisation and Tourism
- Track 9: Nature, Ecotourism and Biodiversity (Nature based Solutions)
- Track 10: Policy Making, Strategy in Tourism
- Track 11: Health, Wellness and Medical Tourism
- Track 12: Research Methods in Tourism
- Track 13: Communication and Branding in Sustainable Tourism
- Track 14: Special Interests in Sustainable Tourism

About the Editors

Prof. Rahul Singh

He is Professor of Strategy and Globalization, and Chair of Strategy, Innovation and Entrepreneurship Area at Birla Institute of Management Technology. His primary areas of researches are in Strategic Management, Globalization, Emerging Markets and Sustainability. He is also European Higher Education Experts (EHEE) by European Union and visiting professor at FH Joanneum University Austria and KEDGE Business School, France. He has worked as external resource to SAIL, NTPC, JSPL, UGC Nepal, GAIL, THDC, NHPC AND many other organizations



Dr. Harald Friedl

He is Associate Professor for Ethics and Sustainability in Tourism at FH JOANNEUM – University of Applied Sciences, Institute for Health and Tourism Management in Bad Gleichenberg, Austria. His current research focuses on the ethical problems of flights in times of global warming and on ways to influence (political) systems for defossilisation. He is co-founder of the international think tank “Action for Climate in Tourism Network” (ACTnetwork).



Dr. Veenu Sharma

She is an Assistant Professor of Retail and Marketing at BIRLA Institute of Management Technology, Greater Noida. Her primary area of research studies includes Understanding the retail environment along with consumer behavior. She is also on the editorial board of the South Asian Journal of Business and Management Cases and a regular reviewer of reputed International journals. She writes regularly on recent trends in the retail domain at platforms like Business World, Business Line, and Franchise India.



Preface

In contemporary times, sustainability has become the buzzword of the hour, with governments and international institutions emphasizing its importance worldwide. A thorough focus on the same is anticipated to grow in the future.

Tourism is one of the major industries that needs to be examined thoroughly from the perspective of making it sustainable. Given the size of the industry and its growth prospects, it has the significant potential to damage the planet's ecosystem and cultural and heritage facets if not managed responsibly.

Travel and tourism have the potential to promote socio-economic development, create jobs, and reduce poverty. They can also provide empowerment opportunities for women, minorities, and young people. According to the UN World Tourism Organization, sustainable tourism is "tourism that takes full account of its current and future economic, social and environmental impacts, addressing the needs of visitors, the industry, and the environment and host communities."

The growing emphasis on sustainable tourism has increased the need for dissemination, research, and awareness on the topic.

Motivated and driven to develop knowledge and practices for sustainable tourism in South Asia under the aegis of the CESTour Project (consortium of universities establishing Centers of Excellence in Sustainable Tourism to boost economic development and enhance university-business cooperation).

The CESTour Conference 2024 is a concerted effort by Erasmus+ and ten university partners from India, Austria, Italy, Sri Lanka, Spain, and Nepal to put forward the 'Sustainable Tourism' designed learning and capacity building to stakeholder communities. The theme of the conference, 'Navigating the Future of Sustainable Tourism', aims to delve into a deeper understanding of how sustainable tourism practices can be integrated within the economy, environment, and communities.

We are glad to present keynote speech and research paper abstracts in this proceedings for the benefit of the academic community, practitioners and policy makers. We hope that the knowledge from this conference will help the stakeholders significantly.

We would like to extend our warmest welcome to all of the attendees for CESTour Conference 2024. We would also like to thank Erasmus+ program of the European Union and our team members from CESTour Project Partner Universities FH JOANNEUM University of Applied Sciences, Graz (Austria), University of Alicante, Alicante (Spain), Università di Lingue e Comunicazione, IULM University, Milan (Italy), Institute of Public Enterprise, Hyderabad (India), Nirma University, Ahmedabad (India), Sabaragamuwa University of Sri Lanka, Belihuloya (Sri Lanka) Uva Wellassa University, Badulla (Sri Lanka) Tribhuvan University, Kathmandu (Nepal) Global College International, Kathmandu (Nepal), and Birla Institute of Management Technology, Greater Noida (India) for their generous support and contribution to make this conference happen.

We are much thankful to the conference contributors, keynote speakers, team at Birla Institute to support the conference organisation and publisher JPI to bear all the pains of coordination and delivering a good reference piece.

Dr. Rahul Singh, Dr. Harald Friedl and Dr. Veenu Sharma

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Role of Sustainable Development Goals in Tourism

Sustainable Tourism: Traversing Time and Themes in Literature

Himanshu Chauhan*

ABSTRACT

Context: Think of our exploration into sustainable tourism as a captivating journey through time, starting back in the 1980s. Picture it like uncovering the roots of a giant tree, with each layer representing a crucial moment or theme in the evolution of sustainable tourism. We're diving into works that shaped how we think about managing resources, crafting policies, and navigating the delicate balance between tourism and our environment.

Purpose: Why are we on this journey? Well, we're here to tell the story of sustainable tourism's growth, from its humble beginnings to the complex landscape we navigate today. Our goal is to unravel the narrative thread that connects these different moments. In essence, we're exploring how sustainable tourism has transformed over time, learning from its past, and adapting to the challenges that have emerged along the way.

Methods: Our method? Imagine us as literary detectives, poring over pages of research from the 1980s up to the present. We're looking for clues in the form of themes, concepts, and methods that researchers have used. It's like putting together a puzzle, figuring out how each piece contributes to the bigger picture of sustainable tourism. By the end, we aim to not just understand the field but to feel its heartbeat through the diverse lenses of those who studied it.

Findings: What have we uncovered so far? It's like discovering treasures hidden in the academic archives. We've found that sustainable tourism has come a long way—from early concerns about resource management to grappling with 'overtourism' and the aftermath of a global pandemic. We've stumbled upon recurring themes of fairness, sustainability, and the intricate dance between tourism and climate change. The real gem? The realization that sustainable tourism isn't just a concept; it's a living, breathing entity shaped by the people who study, practice, and live it.

Significance: Why does this journey matter? Well, imagine it as a guidebook for anyone interested in sustainable tourism—researchers, policymakers, and even the passionate traveler. By understanding where we've been, we can better navigate where we're going. This journey isn't just about dusty academic papers; it's about real people making real decisions that impact our world. So, as we turn the pages of this story, let's remember that sustainable tourism isn't just a buzzword; it's a commitment to creating a better world for us and generations to come.

Keywords: Sustainable Tourism; Evolution of Sustainable Tourism; Community Engagement in Tourism; Climate Change and Tourism; Over tourism; Technology and Tourism; Tourism Revival.

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Tourism and Bathing Water Sustainability in Apulia (Italy): An Integrated Approach through Dynamic Monitoring and Interactive Dashboards

Stefano Cervellera and Carlo Cusatelli***

ABSTRACT

Starting from 2010, with Legislative Decree 30 May 2008 n. 116, Italy has implemented the European Directive 2006/7/EC on Bathing Water. The increase in tourism, including seaside tourism, in the Italian region of Apulia has generated growing interest in the quality of its bathing waters and the sustainability of its marine ecosystems. The Regional Agency for Environmental Protection (ARPA Puglia) has implemented an efficient system for detecting the quality of coastal bathing water with the determination of only two microbiological parameters: *Escherichia coli* and intestinal enterococci. This study proposes an integrated approach that combines dynamic monitoring of bathing water with the use of interactive dashboards, in order to evaluate and manage water quality in relation to tourist activities in the coastal municipalities of Apulia. The ARPA monitoring data have been integrated with those of tourist flows and structured into dynamic dashboards that allow immediate visualization of water conditions, providing detailed and accessible information to both local stakeholders and visitors. The data analysis revealed significant correlations between tourist influx and variations in the quality of bathing water. Dynamic dashboards have proven to be effective tools for transparently communicating these changes, allowing proactive risk management and the definition of mitigation strategies. Significant correlations are highlighted between tourist flows and water quality levels which denote a criticality in the sizing of the regional water purification system, well calibrated for the resident population but which suffers during peak seasonal inflows. Furthermore, the study highlights the importance of including environmental and social impact indicators in water quality assessments, for a more complete understanding of the effects of tourism activities. The dynamic monitoring will be based on a vast collection of environmental and meteorological data, allowing real-time assessment of water quality and identifying potential impacts arising from tourism activities. The interactive dashboards, developed with the aim of involving stakeholders, provide visual and informative tools for the immediate understanding of data and trends.

Keywords: Coastal Tourism; Dynamic Monitoring; Interactive Dashboards; Sustainable Management of Marine Resources; Environmental Planning.

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Socio Economic Impact Study of Tribal Culture on Sustainable Tourism

K. Venkateswara Rao and K. Shankara Rao**

ABSTRACT

Tourism has had a favorable influence on tribal culture's social, economic, and environmental aspects. As a result, indigenous peoples are not only pleased with the existing tourist development, but have committed to accept more growth in the future, unless it has a severe environmental impact on the tribes. To decrease waste, traffic congestion, and noise, the government and tribes can design travel routes, establish visitor parking at tribal destinations, encourage tourists to walk mining tourism, and set up ecologically acceptable garbage and trash pickup areas. Furthermore, the government should encourage tourist visits to indigenous tribes, convey environmental ideas, and allow tribes to incorporate sustainable development into tourism. This study demonstrates that tribal indigenous peoples have good attitudes towards tourism development, despite the fact that tourism has had positive effects on social, economic, and environmental development and that only the tribe has found success in the tourist sector.

Keywords: Tourism Impact; Tribal Culture; Social; Economical; Environmental.

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SDGs of 2030 Agenda: A Framework for Sustainable Tourism Indicators

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ABSTRACT

The core of the 2030 Agenda is the achievement of 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). All the goals are intertwined and balance the economic, social, and environmental dimensions of sustainable development. Tourism is a well-known driver of economic growth. It also affects the cultural heritage and natural resources. Sustainable tourism allows at matching the development of tourism activities with the protection and the improvement of the cultural and environmental assets of tourism destinations. The SDGs provide a comprehensive frame to analyse sustainable tourism addressing a wide array of issues such as income inequality, climate change, and biodiversity loss. The relevance of sustainable tourism is acknowledged by SDG 12.b Develop and implement tools to monitor sustainable development impacts for sustainable tourism, which creates jobs, promotes local culture and products (United Nations, 2015). On the basis of this specific action programme, and with the awareness that all the SDGs are interconnected, the present contribution proposes a methodological tool to frame sustainable tourism indicators according to the 17 SDGs. It seeks to fill a gap in the literature about sustainable tourism development that, after 2016, has only dealt with Agenda 2030 Goals and targets indirectly, as suggested by Rasoolimanesh et al. (2023). Sustainable tourism indicators, drawn from the relevant literature (see Blancas et al. 2015, among others), are organized in a structure built according to the UNWTO approach (WTO, 2004; UNWTO 2015, 2022).

Each indicator is classified under the following analytical categories:

- one or more SDGs and Sub-goals
- sustainability dimension (economic, social, and environmental)
- sustainability issue (e.g., tourism demand, tourism employment, revenue, Integration and reduction of gender inequality, pollution, safety in urbanization and transport)
- spatial level (global, supra-national, national, regional, municipality, location)
- time level (daily, weekly, monthly, quarterly, yearly)
- perspective (supply side, demand side, host community, governments)
- indicator approach (data-driven, issue-driven)
- stakeholders (communities, public sector, private sector, NGOs, tourists)
- baseline sustainability facets (e.g., changes in tourism's structures/ internal factors, changes in external factors affecting tourism, impacts caused by tourism)
- measurement method(s) (quantitative, qualitative/normative)
- indicator(s) (e.g., total number of tourist arrivals/overnight, % of employed women in the tourism sector, seasonality-nights spent per month).

This structure aims at proposing a sound base to build sustainable tourism composite indicators, crucial tools for the management of touristic destinations and useful for policy-makers to monitor strategies and assess the role of tourism in the achievement of each SDGs (UNWTO & UNDP, 2017).

Keywords: 2030 Agenda SDGs; Sustainable Tourism; Indicators.

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A Case Study on Cruise Tourism: A Case of Punnami Tourism

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ABSTRACT

Cruise tourism in the tourism industry is drawing the attention of many young tourists in India and around the world. In the Indian context, the most upcoming sustainable tourism models are ecotourism and cruise tourism. Based on the current literature and the general perception of the tourists, an attempt has been made to develop a case study on 'Punnami Tourism' a cruise tourism operator. Punnami Tourism is a pioneer in providing tourism and travel services to highly popular tourist destinations in and around Rajahmundry to Papikondaul on the river Godavari. The company works with a vision to become the best-known Cruise Travel Organisation in the Andhra Pradesh zone during the next ten years and to emerge as a 'Green tourism business' in the near future. The present operational activities of the cruise business are successful as they are marketing directly with the tourists and with their soft skills influencing the tourists to go for cruise trips at the destination. The impact on marine environment is huge due to the noise pollution that is created by the cruise. The novelty in the present case is the involvement of local communities in operating the business. The business in turn is helping the communities for their socio-economic development and create an "inclusive social experience". The major target group for this business are students, families, working officials, international tourists, and national tourists. Although 'Punnami Tourism' is a small business unit it is structured as 'Top-Down' business unit which involves less flexibility for the employees because decisions will be made by the head of the company. The company includes five departments which are led by the head, sale, finance, marketing, and organisation and service. The last department, in which Sub-departments are lineup like front office managers, boat managers, tour managers, supervisors. The objective of the company is to make it sustainable by itself.

Keywords: Cruise Tourism; Punnani Tourism; Green Tourism Business.

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Empirical Study on Concerned Stakeholder's Awareness and Beliefs on Sustainable Development Bicycle Tourism

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ABSTRACT

Bicycle tourism emerges as a sustainable solution to address environmental concerns and aligns with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) name SDG7- Sustainable and Clean Energy, SDG8- Decent Work and Economic Growth, SDG9- Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure, SDG11- Sustainable Cities and Communities, SDG12- Responsible Consumption and Production, and SDG15-life on land. After an extensive literature review of bicycle tourism, it was observed that there is a large gap in awareness and there are very limited research studies done on bicycle tourism in India. Hence indicating limited awareness and its potential usage to protect the environment and reduce carbon footprint. Despite India's status as the second-largest producer of bicycles, their usage is predominantly limited to the low-income class for their daily commutes only. Hence this paper seeks to investigate the awareness and beliefs of the concerned stakeholders (tourists and service providers) in India regarding their contribution to sustainable development of bicycle tourism. For the systematic investigation of the study, the study utilizes a descriptive research approach by incorporating an inductive literature review method and a self-design questionnaire for the data collection. The constructs for the questionnaire were validated by the selected panel members and through the pilot study reliability test. Inferential data was analyzed using the tool provided by the JMP software. The outcomes of this research unveil the relationship of existing levels of awareness and the prevailing beliefs among concerned stakeholders, relating to sustainable destination bicycle tourism in India. The insights gained from this study are poised to contribute significantly to service providers and the Indian community, fostering a deeper understanding of the potential and benefits associated with destination bicycle tourism. Ultimately, this research endeavors to play a pivotal role in promoting sustainable tourism practices in India, encouraging towards the contribution of the United Nations SDG.

Keywords: SDG; Stakeholder; Bicycle Tourism; Sustainable; Service Provider.

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Exploring the Nexus of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and Sustainable Tourism: A Qualitative Inquiry

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ABSTRACT

An in-depth analysis of the relationship between Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the realm of sustainable tourism is presented in this qualitative study. With the increasing focus on achieving the SDGs by 2030, it is important to understand the implications of sustainable tourism. The study employs a qualitative research design, including the triangulation approach and content analysis of relevant documents through media articles, blogs, and videos exploring various aspects of sustainable tourism within the framework of the SDGs. The research aims to identify and examine the influence of sustainable tourism practices on specific SDGs. By adopting a qualitative approach, the study seeks to capture the nuanced perspectives of stakeholders, including tourists, local communities, and industry practitioners. Through thematic analysis, the research will categorize findings into key themes, shedding light on the challenges, opportunities, and potential synergies between sustainable tourism initiatives and the SDGs.

Keywords: Sustainable Development Goals; SDGs; Sustainable Tourism; Qualitative Research; Stakeholder Perspectives; Tourism Practices; Thematic Analysis.

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Education, Entrepreneurship and Start-ups in Sustainable Tourism

Attitudes towards Entrepreneurship among Higher Education Students' on Sustainable Tourism

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ABSTRACT

This study was undertaken to explore the attitudes towards entrepreneurship among Higher Education students. The population for the study was UG & PG final year students from faculty of management and economics. The entrepreneurship course was introduced as a core subject in the areas of business program. This course was made compulsory for all business graduate and undergraduate's students. The total samples in this study were 55. In this study it was discovered that there were two aspects of demographics i.e qualification and programmes of study that showed a relationship and had a positive significant on inclination towards entrepreneurship. The study also showed a strong significant relationship between family background and entrepreneurial inclination. It was suggested that to attract more students involve in entrepreneurship, UPSI should design entrepreneurial curriculum and content, provide training programs for faculty members, establish the club of entrepreneurship in the university and establish student one-stop business advice and guidance centers. It could be concluded that the role of universities in promoting entrepreneurship, entrepreneurial curriculum and content and role models had significant impact on the inclination of the students towards entrepreneurship. The role model such as friends and lecturers were the main factor which influenced students on inclination towards entrepreneurship. On the part of the universities in promoting entrepreneurship, it showed that the majority of the students supported the entrepreneurship and business educational programmes in campus. While on the part of the entrepreneurial curriculum and content, the course could develop entrepreneurial knowledge and skills, Entrepreneurs have an essential role to play in bringing positive change and growth to the world's economy. Entrepreneurship is a necessary aspect of economic growth because of its contribution to people's welfare through employment opportunities. Likewise, institutions of higher learning offer compulsory entrepreneurship courses for students with the support of government policies to encourage students towards entrepreneurship. Therefore, this study aimed to determine the factors influencing the students' intentions to become green entrepreneurs. The study uses the extended theory of planned behaviour model (TPB) and entrepreneurial education to develop a theoretical framework. The model has been examined on 350 tourism university students using structural equation modelling. The key findings indicate that Ajzen's TPB theory of planned behaviour and entrepreneurial education can be extensively expanded to determine sustainable entrepreneurial intentions in developing economies such as India. Attitude, subjective norms, perceived behavioural control, and entrepreneurial education are antecedents of entrepreneurial intent. Our results have valuable implications for aspiring entrepreneurs, policymakers, and scholars.

Keywords: Entrepreneurs; Knowledge and Skills; Economic Growth; Behaviour Model.

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Rejuvenating Environmental Performance of Tourism MSMEs: A Perspective through the Lens of Government Support and Resource Advantage Theory

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ABSTRACT

The tourism industry serves as growth tool for both developed and developing economies contributing significantly to elevating socio-economic standards such as unemployment, poverty, social inequalities etc. Similarly, MSMEs (Micro, Small & Medium Enterprises) plays a vital role in fostering economic prosperity in every developing economy. Sri Lanka as a developing country, Tourism MSMEs providing 3rd largest contribution to the Gross Domestic Production (GDP) of the economy and the MSMEs in tourism industry shows comparatively higher proportion than macro level facilitators in the industry. Although, Tourism MSMEs (TMSMEs) more responsive to inbound tourism demand, due to insufficient tangible & intangible resources, they are unable to boost their performance especially during market catastrophes. The superior performance these firms relies on availability of financial, human, physical, informational, legal support for the firm. Whereas, recent studies have investigated the environmental initiations are key to acquiring industry opportunities to defeat the eco-competitiveness of business encompassing aspects such as reducing operating costs, resource efficiency, environmental protection, delivering sustainable products to support overall sustainable growth. TMSMEs face challenges in implementing environmental initiatives due to lack of information, knowledge and finance to perform sustainably, despite there is growing interest on environment accountability Basically, Environmental performance refers to ability of firms in addressing environmental concerns of the stakeholders which indirectly impact on overall business performance. Government intervention in terms of providing supports to witnessed environmental performance have been extensively researched in context of SMEs in manufacturing and agriculture sectors. However, limited attention has been given to tourism-related MSMEs in Sri Lankan context. A self-administered structured questionnaire was fielded to collect data from 140 (55%) out of total TMSMEs in tourism regions of Badulla district through snowball sampling technique. Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) was employed to analyze impact of Government Assistance (GA) on environmental performance using subjective measures. The results revealed Government Fiscal Assistance (GFA), and Government Non-Fiscal Assistance (GNFA) such as on Tax concessions, grants, credit loans, interest free loan, training programs, trade fairs, Business Development Supports (BDS) positively impact on rejuvenating environmental performance of TMSMEs. And results elaborate that nearly 50% of the EP of TMSMEs can be determine through both entrepreneurs' effort and GA in assuring environmental accountability. Thus, the study contributes to R-A theory in perspective of GA as external support in providing tangible and intangible resources on enhancing performance of service oriented MSMEs. Moreover, this study provides insights for government institutions to make sound decisions through re- evaluating existing assistances to fortify development of MSMEs and regional socio-economic growth. Further the findings help in empowering tourism entrepreneurs through enabling government the initiation of strategies that contribute to Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) through supporting MSMEs to reach full potential and accelerating progress towards achieving SDGs in Sri Lanka while catering to potential tourism demand.

Keywords: Government Fiscal Assistance; Government Non-fiscal Assistance; Environmental Performance; Tourism MSMEs; Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs); R-A Theory.

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Leveraging Corporate Venture Capital for Customer-Centric Innovation in the Hospitality Industry

Shreeram Iyer and Rahul Singh**

ABSTRACT

Corporate hotels face an increasingly competitive landscape, driven by rising customer expectations and the emergence of disruptive startups. This paper explores the potential of Corporate Venture Capital (CVC) as a strategic tool for corporate hotels to collaborate with startups and enhance the customer experience.

We argue that CVC can provide hotels with unique advantages beyond traditional investment:

- **Early access to disruptive technologies and business models:** CVC allows hotels to identify and partner with promising startups before they reach mass adoption, enabling them to test and integrate innovative solutions into their offerings.
- **Enhanced customer understanding:** By collaborating with startups, hotels gain insights into evolving customer preferences and behaviors, enabling them to develop personalized and data-driven experiences.
- **Agility and innovation:** Startups offer a nimble and experimental approach, allowing hotels to test new concepts and adapt quickly to changing market trends.
- **Brand differentiation:** CVC collaborations can create a unique value proposition for hotels, showcasing their commitment to innovation and customer-centricity.

The paper proposes a framework for effective CVC-driven collaboration between corporate hotels and startups, outlining key considerations such as:

- **Identifying strategic areas of focus:** Aligning CVC investments with hotel's long-term goals and customer needs.
- **Building a collaborative culture:** Fostering open communication and knowledge sharing between hotels and startups.
- **Developing effective partnership models:** Exploring diverse collaboration options like joint ventures, pilot programs, and equity investments.
- **Measuring success:** Establishing clear metrics to assess the impact of CVC partnerships on customer satisfaction, brand perception, and business outcomes.

This research aims to provide practical insights for corporate hotels to harness the power of CVC for customer-centric innovation, ultimately leading to a competitive edge in the evolving hospitality landscape.

Keywords: Corporate Venture Capital; Hospitality Industry; Startups; Customer Experience; Innovation; Collaboration; Strategic Partnerships.

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A Grass Root Level Analysis of the Cultural Heritage Tourism in Gujarat & Its Impact on the Development of the Local Artisans and the State Economy

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ABSTRACT

Gujarat is well known for its rich culture, evident through its centuries-old sculptures, handicrafts, arts and festivals, which globally attract numerous tourists every year. These diversities and richness have not only significantly contributed to Gujarat's substantial increase in tourist numbers but also contributed towards economic growth by contributing to state income, generating employment and new entrepreneurial opportunities, foreign exchange earnings and FDI inflow etc. So, the current study aims to analyze the impact of cultural heritage tourism on the state's economic development in Gujarat and also how it affects the growth of the local artisans. Moreover, the research aims to explore how tourists respond to changes in their psychological well-being caused by cultural tourism, and their perspectives on promoting cultural tourism development. The study will utilize a combination of primary and secondary data. Primary data will be gathered from local artisans and tourists, whereas secondary data will be sourced from government ministries, such as the Ministry of Tourism, and other online platforms. Here for the analysis various qualitative and quantitative techniques will be used.

Keywords: Cultural Heritage Tourism; Local Artisans; FGD; Linear Multiple Regression; Gujarat.

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Cruise Passengers' Mobility across Destinations: A Multi-destination Analysis using Matching Methods

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ABSTRACT

The mobility of cruise visitors at urban destinations is a relatively emerging research topic. The first works on this issue used observational techniques and time-space budgets (Debbage, 1996; Fennell, 1991; Jaakson, 2004). However, the development of tracking technologies allowed a more accurate analysis (Shoval and Ahas, 2016). De Cantis et al. (2016) were the first to categorize cruise passengers based on their mobility patterns. Ferrante, De Cantis, and Shoval (2018) analyzed the spatial behavior of independent cruise passengers in Palermo and Dubrovnik by using GPS technologies and examined the effect of spatial variables, among other variables. Navarro-Ruiz (2019) examined the different spatiotemporal flows and participation patterns of cruise visitors in Valencia by triangulating data from GPS devices, trip diaries and questionnaires. Domènech, Gutiérrez, and Anton-Clavé (2020) also checked for spatial-temporal behavior differences among cruise visitors in Tarragona based on their expenditure levels, whereas the same authors (Domènech, Gutiérrez, and Anton-Clavé, 2020) related the spatio-temporal behavior of visitors to the urban structure and formal characteristics of the city. Finally, Shoval et al. (2020) used GPS technology in combination with traditional survey instruments to investigate the impact of incentives on the space-time activities of cruise passengers. All these studies share a common methodological framework, in terms of units under analysis (i.e. cruise visitors), sampling strategy and survey instruments (i.e. combination of questionnaire and GPS tracking device). Moreover, many of the information collected through questionnaire-based interview are in common in all the three surveys. Given the availability of micro-level information, this paper aims at combining the three case studies, in order to compare similarities and differences in cruise passengers' behaviour, according to the three Mediterranean contexts under analysis. More in particular, the aim of this paper is twofold. From a methodological perspective, this study attempts to establish a robust method for resampling different case studies in order to achieve similar distribution of the samples on a set of relevant characteristics, for the phenomenon under analysis. From the empirical perspective, it contributes to expand and advance the understanding of cruise passengers' spatial-temporal mobility by examining three different Mediterranean destinations, Palermo (Italy), Valencia (Spain), and Tarragona (Spain). A matching procedure is employed to balance data, reduce the selection bias, gain precision estimating the proposed effects and control for variables (covariates) difficult to measure (Cochran & Rubin, 1973; Joffe & Rosenbaum, 1999; Rosenbaum & Rubin, 1985; Stuart & Rubin, 2007). This approach has been previously used in the tourism domain to improve the reliability of available sample surveys (e.g. Aroca et al., 2017). Additionally, the current study attempts to identify which factors affecting the cruise passengers' mobility patterns are stable across destinations, and which one vary, and how, according to destination's characteristics. These findings would provide practical implications regarding flows and concentration of visitors, especially for management of developing cruise tourism destinations and ports of call.

Keywords: Cruise Tourism; Matching Method; Spatio-temporal Mobility.

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Sasa: Twa - Nurturing the Landscape of Sustainable Tourism in Nepal

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ABSTRACT

Embark on the transformative journey of Sasa Twa, an innovative sustainable tourism venture nestled in the heart of Nepal. Guided by the visionary leadership of Phiroj Singh, Sasa Twa stands as a beacon of cultural preservation, community empowerment, and environmental responsibility, tracing its roots back to 2010 BS. This enterprise is a testament to the seamless fusion of tradition and innovation, redefining the landscape of sustainable tourism. Sasa Twa's pioneering approach intricately blends authentic Newari experiences, culinary delights, and immersive cultural engagements. Navigating challenges such as seasonal variations and the demand for skilled artisans, the enterprise portrays resilience mirroring the rich tapestry of Newari culture it seeks to preserve. The impact ripples through diverse stakeholders, contributing to employment, cultural preservation, and local production. Environmental stewardship is a cornerstone, with initiatives ranging from tree-planting campaigns to meticulous resource management. Sasa Twa emerges not only as a lucrative enterprise but as a symbol of responsible tourism, fostering a brand synonymous with cultural preservation and socio-economic upliftment. While celebrating success, the study emphasizes the need for scalable practices, continual evaluation, and sustained stakeholder engagement to propel Sasa Twa as a model for enduring impact. Beyond its gastronomic allure, Sasa Twa stands as a beacon of inspiration for sustainable tourism, beckoning replication and innovation.

Keywords: Sasa Twa; Nepal, Tourism.

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Community-based Tourism and Agro-tourism

Rural Tourism and Sustainable Development: A Systematic Review and Future Research Agenda

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ABSTRACT

This systematic review critically examines the dynamic intersection of rural tourism and sustainable development, offering a comprehensive analysis of 234 publications spanning from 1990 to August 2023. The study unfolds an upward trajectory in research engagement, particularly in recent years, underscoring the escalating importance of sustainable practices within the realm of rural tourism. Notably, China emerges as a focal point for scholarly contributions, mirroring the rapid expansion of its rural tourism sector. Thematic clusters within the publications shed light on key aspects, including integrated approaches, the evolutionary journey of sustainability, institutionalization processes, challenges faced, and the impacts of effective leadership. Co-citation analysis identifies 22 pivotal references, forming a foundational framework that anchors the discourse in the existing body of knowledge. This foundational framework serves as a guide for scholars, practitioners, and policymakers navigating the complex landscape of rural tourism and sustainable development. The study's findings yield actionable insights with a focus on practical implications. Emphasis is placed on the integration of cultural heritage, community-driven approaches, fostering effective leadership, and promoting sustainable practices. The interplay of these factors forms a nuanced understanding of the multifaceted nature of rural tourism, emphasizing the need for a holistic and context-sensitive approach. Furthermore, the synthesis of diverse theoretical perspectives, including stakeholder theory, bounded rational decision theory, grounded theory, Theory of Planned Behavior, social-ecological theory, and sustainable development theory, culminates in a robust analytical framework. This framework serves as a comprehensive tool for addressing challenges and advancing sustainable rural development, providing a nuanced understanding of the intricate relationships within this dynamic field. Importantly, the study identifies future research areas, offering a roadmap for scholars to explore untapped dimensions. The proposed avenues include delving deeper into cultural heritage preservation strategies, exploring innovative community-driven models, investigating the role of leadership in fostering sustainability, and refining sustainable practices for broader applicability. In essence, this systematic review not only consolidates the current state of knowledge on rural tourism and sustainable development but also serves as a catalyst for future research endeavors. By integrating empirical findings with theoretical underpinnings, the study provides a holistic perspective, contributing to the ongoing discourse on fostering sustainable development in rural tourism.

Keywords: Rural Tourism; Sustainable Development; Thematic Clusters; Co-citation Analysis; Future Research Areas.

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Navigating Community-based Tourism for Sustainability: A Case Study of Habrana, Sri Lanka

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ABSTRACT

Sri Lanka, endowed with a rich tapestry of cultural heritage and biodiversity, stands as a beacon for community-based tourism initiatives. Among its myriad destinations, Habrana emerges as a vibrant hub, blending historical significance with natural and cultural splendour. This study delves into the intricate fabric of community-based tourism in Habarana, focusing on its multifaceted dimensions, challenges, sustainability strategies and the pivotal role played by the local community. The study was conducted using a mix method approach to gather and process large extend of data while those were gathered through focused grouped discussions and structured questionnaire with both open ended and closed ended questions. Three Focused group discussions was held with government officials, residents of the area and tourism related service providers in the area. Total number of participants for these focused group discussions were forty-five where fifteen participants were included in one discussion. In addition, one hundred and fifty structured questionnaires were used to collect data from local and foreign tourists. Hundred questionnaires were filled by foreign tourists while the rest fifty was filled by the local tourists. All the participants for the focused group discussions and respondents for the questionnaires were selected using purposive sampling. The collected data was analysed using thematic analysis and descriptive analysis to get final results. Analysis of results showed the past and current status of tourism in the area. Areas' rich historical identity, deeply rooted cultural values, location, natural resources and nearby attractions contribute to the unique identity that draws both domestic and international travellers. The local community, characterized by traditional values and a connection to the land, plays a central role in shaping the tourism experience. The study revealed existing community based tourism activities in the area. It shows specific cultural experiences offered to tourists, ranging from traditional art, dance, and music performances to immersive village tours in Hiriwadunna. Eco-tourism activities, including guided nature walks, birdwatching, and safaris in national parks, provide a comprehensive view of the diverse offerings in Habarana. Study reveals how the local community has actively participated in preserving local traditions, crafts, and cuisine, while incorporating them into tourism, showcasing the impact of tourism on socio-economic aspects. Further, the study revealed the challenges for tourism development in the area such as, slow adaptation of technology, lack of government intervention, un-availability of legal framework, less promotion un availability of night tourism activities. Finally, this study gives recommendations based on the insights obtained from the data analysis such as setting up community based tourism association, setting up legal framework, government intervention, development of infrastructure and holding education and awareness workshops for service providers. The study mainly proposed to setup a designated area for night tourism activities in the area of Habrana Rock.

Keywords: Community-based Tourism; Habrana; Sustainable Tourism; Local Community; Cultural Experience.

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The Impact of Environmental Advertisements on Green Purchasing Behavior of Domestic Tourists in Sri Lanka: A Comparative Analysis of Generation X and Y

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ABSTRACT

Tourism has been the country's third-biggest source of export revenue in Sri Lanka. Due to the Easter attack and the COVID-19 pandemic situation the industry was devastated, and it now serves a higher number of domestic visitors and growing foreign tourists. Sustainable tourism is becoming increasingly important to consumers, particularly among millennials and Gen Z, especially in the post-COVID scenario. In recent years, Sri Lanka has placed an increasing emphasis on sustainable tourism. With several government and business sector programs, there has been a noticeable shift in both tourists' and residents' attitudes toward environmentally friendly behaviors. Environmental advertisements can inform and assist visitors in making better-informed selections that are consistent with their values and beliefs by giving clear and accurate information about the sustainable practices utilized by tourism firms. This study was descriptive research and the research methods employed quantitative and data were analyzed by using SPSS and quantitative research methods. In this research study, the researcher recognized the impact of Environmental Advertisements on the Green Purchasing Behavior of Domestic Tourists in Sri Lanka. The study compares the relationship between Environmental Advertisements on Green Purchasing Behavior among Generation X and Generation Y. The researcher collected data from domestic tourists who travelled to the cultural triangle, Hill Country, and coastal areas that cover the overall country. The objectives of the study are to identify the impact and the relationship between environmental advertisements on the green purchasing behavior of domestic tourists in Sri Lanka and to compare the impact of environmental advertisements on the green purchasing behavior of Generation X and Generation Y domestic tourists. The researcher employed convenience sampling for the study. Data for the study was collected from 256 domestic tourists and primary data was acquired through the use of a questionnaire. This study used correlation analysis and regression analysis to identify the impact and relationship between environmental advertisement and green purchasing behavior. A comparison of Generation X and Generation Y was conducted by using results from regression analysis. The researcher collected demographic information from the respondents by using Multiple-choice questions and five-point Likert-scaled questions to address the variables of the research. The study concluded that there is a linear relationship between environmental advertisement and the green purchasing behavior of domestic tourists in Sri Lanka. These results further support the linearity findings. For the environment advertisements have the highest impact on the green purchasing behavior of Generation Y compared to Generation X. Environmental advertising should be used to attract more local tourists to hotels and other tourism-related business establishments in Sri Lanka specially to attract Generation Y. Encouraging responsible tourism practices, such as respecting wildlife, conserving natural resources, and supporting local communities, can be achieved through advertisements, eco-tourism packages, and hosting eco-centric events. Social media platforms can be used to share visually appealing content that highlights the environmental aspects of tourism in Sri Lanka.

Keywords: Environmental Advertisement; Green Purchasing Behaviour; Generation X; Generation Y.

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Exploring the Relationships among Luxury Tourism, Community Development and Sustainable Tourism Development

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ABSTRACT

This research paper investigates the dynamic relationship between luxury tourism and community-based tourism, seeking to understand how these seemingly disparate forms of tourism can coexist for mutual benefit. Examining the impacts on local communities, economies, and environments, the study aims to provide insights into fostering a harmonious integration that promotes sustainability and social responsibility in the tourism industry. Luxury tourism, characterized as high-end services and exclusive experiences, holds immense potential as a catalyst for economic growth within local communities (Correia et al., 2020). The allure of pristine landscapes, unique cultural offerings, and personalized services attracts discerning travellers seeking unparalleled experiences (Gautam & Bhalla, 2024). As these travellers explore destinations, they inadvertently become contributors to the economic fabric of the host communities, presenting opportunities for income generation, employment, and the establishment of new enterprises (Gautam & Bhalla, 2023). However, the challenge lies in ensuring that the benefits derived from luxury tourism are not only economically significant but also socially and culturally sustainable. The introduction of luxury tourism often prompts a delicate dance between economic growth and the preservation of socio-cultural integrity. As affluent visitors immerse themselves in the local milieu, the potential impact on community identity, traditions, and ways of life becomes palpable (Lai et al., 2022). Furthermore, keeping in mind Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the study emphasizes sustainable practices within luxury tourism as a focal point. By addressing issues such as mitigating environmental impact and advocating for responsible resource management, the research seeks to uncover strategies that not only enhance the overall well-being of host communities but also secure the enduring role of luxury tourism in community empowerment (Lv, & Jiang, 2023). The study will be conducted at popular tourist locations in Malaysia. The structured questionnaire will be used to collect primary data. Furthermore, the dimensions were assessed using a 7-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (indicating strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree). Statistical analysis will be conducted using the SPSS 29.0 software package to ensure data validity. Additionally, the SmartPLS-4 software package to estimate the theoretical model created to elucidate the dynamics of luxury tourism. Furthermore, the study is committed to identifying sustainable practices that can be embedded within luxury tourism initiatives. This encompasses measures to mitigate environmental impact, promote responsible resource management, and contribute positively to the overall well-being of host communities. It may also suggest avenues for future research in this evolving field.

Keywords: Luxury Tourism; Community-based Tourism; Sustainable Development; Social Responsibility; Cultural Preservation; Economic Impact.

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Impact of Tourism on Culture and Its Activities in Hill and Mountain Destinations in India

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ABSTRACT

Cultural tourism in Uttarakhand takes the tourists to picturesque hills, valley, peaks, famous historical sites, art form, cuisine and ethnic values. It is the birth place for some of the India's major culture and religions resources. 10 variables were used to assess the cultural aspects from 200 domestic and 50 foreign tourists. The hypothesis were also framed as per those variables to fulfill the objectives of the study. These are, to highlight the Initiatives for Tourism Development in study areas, which help to develop potential tourism and to Suggest practical and remedial measures for the Potential cultural resources available for Tourism, which are not identifies and / or not promoted yet. The cost & benefit of culture were derived from the data analysis based on those variables. The Study will benefit policy makers to identify and understand the problems and constraints which cause to attract more tourists to the district.

Keywords: Culture; Tourism; Impact; Destination; Analysis.

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CIC Agro Farm, Hingurakgoda, Sri Lanka: Icon of Sustainable Agriculture in Sri Lanka

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ABSTRACT

CIC Agro Farm is located in Hingurakgoda, Sri Lanka, spans across 1300 acres with primarily paddy cultivation. The farm plays a vital role in the agricultural sector of Sri Lanka by fostering innovation, conducting research, and promoting sustainable farming practices. A bold innovation in sustainable tourism is proposed here as "CIC Greeny" package, which allows the guests to immerse in an experience in eco-luxury cabanas, crafted from local materials, while offering an assortment of enriching activities of expansive farm. The project aims to minimize its footprint through eco-friendly materials and Leave No Trace ethics while addressing the challenges such as lack of facilities and adverse environmental impacts. Amid serene landscapes, CIC agro tourism sparks as a vibrant center for sustainability and economic growth. Villagers flourish with jobs and access to nutritious food grown on land nurtured by eco-friendly practices. Tourists immerse themselves in fostering environmental awareness and nature. Researches flourish through driving innovative farming and sustainable tourism. Profitability increases through both investors and local initiatives, building a robust future where eco-conscious journey begins. Hence, "CIC Greeny" has the potential to be a sustainable, profitable and impactful business venture for both CIC Agro Farm and the economy of Sri Lanka.

Keywords: Agro Farm; Sustainable Agriculture; Sri Lanka.

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Sustainable Tourism Practices and the Ecotourism Paradigm: A Comprehensive Analysis

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ABSTRACT

As the global tourism industry continues to grow, the importance of sustainable and responsible practices within the sector becomes paramount. This study explores the domain of ecotourism, with a focus on the ways in which it has the potential to encourage community involvement, preserve nature, and inspire the protection of the environment. By employing a comprehensive analysis, we explore the various dimensions of sustainable tourism in the context of ecotourism, emphasizing the need for a balanced approach that benefits both host communities and the natural environment. This study aims to examine ecotourism with its conceptual framework and possible advantages for both socio-economic systems and natural habitats. Based on the results, policymakers, industry practitioners, and local communities will receive recommendations to design and execute sustainable tourism policies. This research aims to promote sustainable tourism practices that emphasize the preservation of natural ecosystems and the well-being of local populations while also considering the delicate balance between tourist development and environmental protection.

Keywords: Ecotourism, Sustainable Tourism, Environmental Conservation, Community Engagement, Biodiversity Preservation, Responsible Travel

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Heritage and Cultural Tourism

Sustainable & Responsible Heritage and Cultural Tourism: A Bibliometric Review and Future Research Agenda

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ABSTRACT

Purpose: Academicians and policymakers have shown increased interest in tourism research. However, aspects of sustainability and responsibility in the context of heritage and cultural tourism is not much explored. Due to limited knowledge of research in the domain of sustainable & responsible heritage and cultural tourism, the existing knowledge system still lacks the integration of sustainability, responsibility in the domain of heritage and cultural tourism. To fill this gap, and in the context of integrating sustainability, responsibility, cultural and heritage tourism, this study presents a meta-literature review on the topic of sustainable & responsible heritage and cultural tourism. The present study aims to perform a comprehensive bibliometric analysis to organize the past research from 1990 to 2023, and knowledge in this area by analysing the patterns of publications, citations, and co-authorship. The study explores the integration of sustainability and responsibility, analyses and highlights the progress in the domain of heritage and cultural tourism by conducting bibliometric analysis. Study also highlights the knowledge system based on the analysis of literature and content analysis, including identification of concentration of authors and research institution based on geographic research areas, theories and methods used in past research. Study also reveals the themes of past research, trend evolutions along with the areas for future research.

Methodology/Approach: We have used both quantitative and qualitative techniques, including bibliometric citation and content analysis. The research methods entail performance analysis – engaging a sequence of bibliometric analysis including citation analysis, network analysis and bibliometric coupling. This study uses the SCOPUS database with the help of VOSviewer and Biblioshiny software to measure the knowledge system of sustainable, responsible heritage and cultural tourism. A bibliometric analysis of 260 publications from 1990 to 2023 was conducted to evaluate and map scholarly articles based on number of citations.

Findings: The study, based on literature statistic and content analysis, identifies the most and least studied countries/markets, most prolific journal, authors and articles publishing in this domain. Study also reported the pattern of publication, and major themes in research on sustainable & responsible heritage and cultural tourism. This study also highlights the areas for future research. The current study acknowledges the contributions from authors, organizations and countries with the help of technical analysis involving co-citation, co-authorship patterns and cartographic analysis.

Research implications

- **For academicians/researchers**

- The study unveils the major publication trends, authors, affiliations, countries and author's keywords by gathering the historical data making it easy for review of literature and identifying the gap for future research.
- Study results will be helpful and of important value for potential authors to have a quick understanding of cultural and heritage tourism.
- It also highlights the research themes, theories employed in the domain of heritage and cultural tourism, along with the identification of future research areas.

- **For service providers**
 - The study provides multi-faceted interpretation of the integration of sustainability and responsibility in the research domain of heritage and cultural tourism focusing on supply as well as demand side perspectives.
 - Based on the research problem considered in past research and the solutions provided by the researcher, this study will help the service providers to have quick snapshot of how to design new, or modify existing offerings in the field of heritage and cultural tourism, to make the tourism consumption more sustainable.
- **For Regulators/Policy makers**
 - Given the increasing attention on sustainable, responsible cultural and heritage tourism by both the academicians and the policy makers, the results of this study help in developing sustainable policy frameworks from consumers as well as policy makers perspective.
- **For Tourists/consumers**
 - This study will help the tourists/consumers to learn ways about sustainable, responsible practices in the field of heritage and cultural tourism, resulting into their increased satisfaction and enhanced experience. They will be contributing towards making the tourism sustainable.

Originality/value: The study provides historical records in integrating sustainability and responsibility in the domain of heritage and cultural tourism publications. It presents comprehensive bibliometric analysis of the publications in this domain, and identifies key themes and research trends.

Keywords: Cultural Tourism; Heritage; Sustainable; Responsible Tourism.

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Fostering Sustainable Tourism: Cultivating Responsible Practices in Cultural Festivals

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ABSTRACT

Cultural festivals are significant actors within the cultural landscape of many contemporary societies. They serve as catalysts for artistic expression, promoting cultural diversity and facilitating interaction between local communities (Wood et al., 2009; Wallstam M. et al., 2020; Alonzo & Rossetti 2023), and visitors from diverse geographical areas (Tankova & Vassenska, 2015; Richards, 2016). Moreover, as extensively demonstrated in academic literature, cultural festivals are essential for territorial marketing and economic development (Wood, 2005; Getz & Page, 2016; Ponte di Pino, 2021), especially concerning cultural tourism (Quinn, 2009; Friel, 2021). Notably, the relevance of these events for tourism lies in their ability to attract additional tourist flows and new visitor segments (Connell et al., 2015). Additionally, they extend tourists' average length of stay and expenditure (Gibson et al., 2003; d'Angella et al., 2021). Some scholars have also highlighted how the organisation of culturally relevant events can mitigate the seasonality factor, impact the spatial distribution of tourists in the territory (del Barrio et al., 2012), and potentially lead to a 'recentralization' or 'recommodification' of urban space (Mommaas, 2004; Zukin, 2004; Sharp et al., 2005; Richards, 2021). However, the growing environmental impact of such events has raised important questions about their true sustainability (Zou et al., 2021), both concerning the organisational aspects of festivals and the sustainability of the tourist flows they generate (Getz, 2009). In a context of increasing environmental awareness and the urgent need to address challenges related to climate change and "decarbonizing culture" (Kaján & Saarinen, 2013; Potts, 2021), it becomes essential to examine the role of cultural festivals not only in promoting sustainable practices but also in addressing sustainability issues, influencing attitudes and behaviours by promoting sustainable lifestyles, communities, and technologies (Julie's Bicycle, 2021; Mair & Smith, 2021). Starting from the research project "Guidelines for sustainable festivals", of the cultural association TrovaFestival, from May to October 2023, a field investigation was conducted on a sample of 80 cultural festivals in Italy. This paper explores on the one hand, the adoption of sustainable organisational practices by festivals, both environmentally and socially, and on the other hand, the ability of festivals to contribute to the discourse on sustainability and climate adaptation. Preliminary results reveal that 58% of the examined festivals still need to implement waste sorting, a crucial element in responsible environmental management strategies. In addition, adopting practices such as printing on recycled paper is limited to only ten events, highlighting a need for more awareness and integration of eco-friendly strategies. Similarly, 62.5% of the surveyed festivals do not provide sustainability-conscious refreshments and hospitality solutions, a critical consideration in responsible consumption practices that affects the entire festival lifecycle (Andersson et al., 2013). Looking at other aspects of sustainability, such as gender equality and inclusion, less than 20% of the analysed festivals have artistic or organisational direction led by women; this percentage rises to 35% only when considering companies and collectives where at least one female figure is present in their management. Also, regarding the physical accessibility of event venues, almost a third of the analysed festivals present architectural barriers that limit access for individuals with physical disabilities. After a literature review on sustainability and cultural events and analysis of data from the Italian cultural events sector, the paper outlines possible practices and organisational implications for a more responsible and inclusive management of such events, and the tourism flows they generate.

Keywords: Events Management; Festivals; Cultural Tourism; Sustainability.

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Navigating Sustainability in Cultural Tourism: Assessing Climate Adaptation Strategies in Italian UNESCO Sites

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ABSTRACT

In a context marked by growing environmental consciousness and the pressing need to tackle challenges associated with climate change and “decarbonizing culture” (Kaján & Saarinen, 2013; Potts, 2021; Julie’s Bicycle, 2021), the theme of sustainable management of UNESCO sites and their adaptation to climate change (Phillips, 2015; Samuels & Platts, 2022) has become crucial. This paper aims to explore the presence and effectiveness of sustainability measures and climate adaptation strategies within the management plans of Italian UNESCO sites, also in light of their important role as cultural tourism attractions (Canale et al., 2019; Cuccia et al., 2016; Škrabić Perić et al., 2021). Through an in-depth analysis of the management plans of all UNESCO sites in Italy, this study adopts a desk analysis methodology to assess the integration of specific sustainability and climate adaptation initiatives (Carmichael et al., 2020) within these documents. The primary objective is to identify gaps and best practices, outlining the current state of environmental management of Italian sites and the tourism practices they generate, providing clear indications for improved governance. Preliminary findings reveal the existence of a variety of approaches in the sustainable management of sites, with significant diversification in climate adaptation strategies. While many management plans demonstrate a growing focus on sustainability and on sustainable tourism practices (Landorf, 2009), the presence of specific strategies for adapting sites to climate change appears to be heterogeneous and often limited. Furthermore, the paper examines the key activities implemented by the management of Italian UNESCO sites concerning sustainability and climate adaptation. There is a noticeable awareness regarding environmental challenges and the implementation of targeted interventions. However, there is a recognized need for greater coherence and integrated action to more effectively address climate challenges. This study provides a detailed overview of the current state of Italian UNESCO sites and outlines recommendations to improve sustainable management and climate adaptation. Emphasis is placed on the importance of robust governance and integrated strategies that promote environmental sustainability and proactively address climate change. The conclusions drawn from this research offer a comprehensive framework of current management practices, identifying areas for improvement and suggesting clear guidelines for a more effective and sustainable management of Italian UNESCO sites within the context of global climate change.

Keywords: Cultural Tourism; Italian UNESCO Sites; Management Plans; Sustainable Tourism; Climate Adaptation.

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Sustainable Eco-Tourism-Engagement between Culture and Ecology through Tourism

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ABSTRACT

The quest for sustainability is today's holy grail—easy to understand, difficult to achieve. *The Silent Spring* (1962), *Our Common Future* (1987), the United Nations Millennium Declaration 2000, and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, indicate universal acceptance of sustainability as a core value. Eco-tourism, in its simplistic understanding suggests the consumption of ecology as a tourism resource, where it is the primary/ fundamental resource component, or enhances the tourism experience, or maybe incidental to the entire tourism experience. Is there another dimension to the understanding of ecology, in an essentially urban setting, for tourism experience? This paper seeks to put forth the fourth dimension, through the engagement between culture and the ecological legacy of New Delhi (specifically Lutyens Delhi for this paper), to produce an educated and informed tourist, through knowledge sharing. The visual delight, of New Delhi, defined by axiality in planning, its monumental architecture, and, wide streets, was a specially curated landscape of monumental proportions, carefully crafted out from the harsh and dusty plains of Raisina, where an Imperial 'New' Delhi had slowly taken shape beginning 1912. Planned as a 'city within a garden', today its lush green avenues constitute the largest single component at 47.86% (IL&FS 2007: 5.4). The verdant greenspaces serve to highlight the setting of the monuments and the splendour of the dimensions. A great deal of thought and discussion went into the issue for the plantations at New Delhi, what to plant? Where to plant? And in the ensuing process, the greenspaces of New Delhi while serving the city well, is an example of the neglect of local knowledge on flora, creating spaces for introduction of non-native, and at times, invasive species, leading to an ecological imbalance. This paper is an attempt to initiate a discussion on 're-imagining' of two anthropogenic ecological elements (Lutyens New Delhi and the Central Ridge), and re-visit their heritage value and potentialities as tourism resources.

Keywords: Greenspaces; Invasive-species; Heritage; Local Knowledge; Tourism.

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Tourism Trends: Discovering Heritage of Jabarkhet House as an Alternative Tourism Destination in India

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ABSTRACT

Purpose: In contrast with leisure tourism or touristic sojourn to uncover historical routes and maps, 'Dark Tourism' has developed as an alternative tourism space. As perceptions of dark tourism are still fragile, we agreed to study a haunted space in Mussoorie (called the Jabarkhet House) to go into its oral history and get practical experience in dealing with the uncanny. The objective was also to explore this alternative tourism space from the viewpoints of Sharpely & Stone (2009) as well as Mitchell, Henthorne & George (2020), by especially using a comparative and typological angle.

Methodological Design: Applying the 'comparative method/style,' we collected empirical data from the field using questionnaires and interviews in three stages-

1. Gathered data for the historical importance of the Jabarkhet House (as a space of tourist interest);
2. Collected information about the haunted history of the designated place and the reported happenings around this space; and
3. Surveyed to bring a comparison of the scope of heritage versus haunted tourism at the Mussoorie Hills.

Findings: India is recognized as a desirable space for heritage tourists, and for those enamoured by its natural beauty, making it an ideal tourist destination. Yet, as we go into the statistics of what interests the tourists or where they go, we see that their visits are constrained to only a few states and cities. Therefore, those engaged in promoting and marketing alternative tourism spaces would have to explore the four haunted tourism features (i.e., dark experience, engaging entertainment, unique learning experience, and casual interest) enumerated by Heather Lewis, Thomas Schrier and Shuangyu Xu (2021) and plan if dark tourism could offer a compelling alternative to visiting tourists. The other part of our study concludes that dark tourism has not earned the greatest popularity in India, but we cannot reject its existence and its potential to take the tourism industry to greater heights. In that context, Jabarkhet House and such other places could play a crucial role and become one of the popular tourist destinations in India.

Research limitations/implications: This research will open the scope of focusing on dark tourism in India (where the Jabarkhet house would only be a beginning) to gather stories and visuals of other haunted or dark places by helping us with a better understanding of their history, culture, and tourism.

Practical implications: This study can command to new possibilities for tourism and open new ways of looking at lesser-known travel spaces in India as alternative tourist destinations.

Originality: The authors' review and analysis of the collected data are grounded on observation and interviews, with a realization that there is a marked gap in tourism literature about both heritage and dark tourism.

Keywords: Indian Heritage; Haunted Space; Dark Tourism; Alternative Tourism Space.

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Local Art Development and Sustainable Tourism: A Case Study on Mahabalipuram

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ABSTRACT

In recent times, the travel and tourism sector has significantly contributed to the socio-economic advancement of several nations, including India. India has a wealth of natural resources, history, and culture. Art unites India's various cultural philosophies into a single fabric. The art of "creative sculpture" offers adaptable ways to convey India's past culture. The number of artisans has increased significantly over the last 10 years. Indian stone sculptor T. Bhaskaran who is completed his art degree was looking for a good chance to start a business. He has developed a business plan for establishing his own enterprise with the goal of preserving India's cultural legacy and provide a unique range of ornamental products, such as idols, to both Indians and others throughout the world. He established the basis for "creative sculptures" at Mahabalipuram, a town in the Southeast Indian state of Tamil Nadu. India's historic monuments, the buildings found in Mahabalipuram are a remarkable example of Pallava architecture which is recognised as a UNESCO World Heritage site. Currently, the company is organized in a single line, the CEO, two in account sections, five in handling logistics, and transportation. The company provides raw stones for the foreign artist from Ireland, England, France, Germany, Sweden, the US, and Malaysia to carve into one-of-a-kind ornamental items which is helped to provide worldwide market for skill development, while promoting the "Incredible India" Programme. Considering the importance of local communities to sustainable tourism, Mahabalipuram serves as the subject of this case study. The present study considers socio-economic, cultural, and environmental factors to comprehend the characteristics of sustainable tourism in the locations. Creative Sculptures focus on B2B and B2C clients in India and other countries who are interested in acquiring personalized sculptures. These objects should be displayed prominently to highlight the destination's rich cultural heritage. Many factors affect the cost structure of company, including the kind of stone used, the intricacy of the sculptures, the production method, and the expenses related to shipping and logistics when exporting the goods.

Keywords: Local Art Development; Sustainable Tourism; Mahabalipuram.

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Religious and Pilgrimage Tourism

Quantifying the Evolution & Impact of Studies on Pilgrimage Tourism: A Bibliometric Analysis

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ABSTRACT

Pilgrimage tourism is an emerging research area, with a rising number of publications of empirical research papers. This study aims to examine and evaluate previous studies on pilgrimage tourism. For this bibliometric analysis, VOSviewer software was used to analyse 186 documents published from 1987 to 2022 in journals of the SCOPUS Database. The study identifies dominant trend patterns and thematic clusters in the development of research on pilgrimage tourism. The study found that India produced the most research articles in this field; still, only three Indian universities are among the top 10 publishers. Naga Collins of the University of Haifa, Israel, has maximum publications and citations. The results of keyword co-occurrence analysis show the most used keywords are spiritual tourism, pilgrimage tourism, religious tourism, spirituality, and India. The bibliographic coupling analysis depicts top 3 the clusters as Marketing strategies focused on spiritual tourism; cross-cultural encounters & environmental issues; pilgrimage and spiritual tourism as a driver of economic development, social cohesion, and cultural exchange. The results of co-citation analysis, keyword analysis, and academic journal appraisal offer important new perspectives on theoretical understandings and contemporary developments in pilgrimage tourism.

Keywords: Pilgrimage; Faith Tourism; Spiritual Tourism; Bibliometric Analysis; SCOPUS.

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Utilizing Buddhist Principles to Tackle Sri Lanka's Economic Challenges: An Examination of the Commercialization of Buddhist Practices for Tourism

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ABSTRACT

The current global economic crisis, driven by globalization, has exacerbated economic disparity, particularly in Sri Lanka, which has experienced a severe economic downturn over the past five years, affecting the standard of living for its residents. This research aims to explore the feasibility of introducing foreign exchange to strengthen the economy while evaluating the potential of commodifying Buddhist rituals and historical sites to the visitors as a means to alleviate the economic crisis. The study employs a literature analysis approach, drawing from qualitative data to examine the growing interest in commodifying Buddhist practices in the West. Qualitative data is drawn upon to examine the growing interest in commodifying Buddhist practices, particularly in the West, as potential revenue streams. Though viewed as controversial by some, proponents argue that this approach could not only address economic challenges but also disseminate valuable aspects of Buddhism to a wider audience. Various methods of commodification are explored, including mindfulness and meditation retreats, mindfulness apps and online platforms, mindful workplace programs, and Buddhist philosophy courses. Examples from the West provide insights into potential revenue generation through the commodification of Buddhist practices. The study highlights the opportunities for financial growth and increased accessibility to Buddhist teachings by commodifying Buddhism in Sri Lanka. It emphasizes the importance of preserving the authenticity and integrity of these teachings while embracing their contemporary applications. Leveraging Sri Lanka's rich Buddhist heritage, historical places, and philosophical teachings could create revenue streams that benefit the economy and promote well-being. Future improvements should focus on designing sustainable business models with ethical practices, cultural sensitivity, and social responsibility. Collaborative efforts between public and private sectors, academia, and religious institutions are crucial in harnessing the potential of Buddhist commodification for Sri Lanka's economic recovery. The researcher proposes the online promotion of Buddhist culture and mindfulness practices, the initiation of airport awareness programs for Buddhist practices, the training of tourist guides in Buddhist practices, the inclusion of "Buddhist Tourism" as an academic subject, and the improvement of infrastructure at sacred sites for foreign visitors to boost the tourism industry in Sri Lanka. This theory can be embraced as a solution for foreign countries facing challenges in enhancing their tourism revenue. Consequently, this research contributes to the global sustainability effort.

Keywords: Economic Crisis; Commodifying Buddhism; Sri Lanka's Tourism; Economic Disparity; Revenue Generation.

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Pilgrimage Tourism in Mangar Bani: The Paleolithic Village in Haryana

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ABSTRACT

Because the state of Haryana offers such a wide variety of attractions, its tourism sector has plenty of space to expand. One such new tourist destination is Mangar Village in Faridabad, which is situated on the South Delhi Ridge of the Aravalli Mountain. Nearby Mangar Bani, a sacred grove hill woodland and palaeolithic archaeological site, on the Delhi-Haryana border, lies Mangar Village. The site and the stone tools found from this area date back to 100,000 years ago, and the cave paintings some 20,000-40,000 years ago (Indian Express, 2023). One of the most famous sites of the village is Gudiya Das Baba's Mandir, it is believed that the village is protected by the spirit of the Gudiya Baba. According to legend, a hermit named Gudariya Das Baba visited the area many centuries ago and became enlightened in a cave located within this woodland. Then word got out that anyone who fells a tree, uses it to gather kindling, or feeds their cattle would be cursed. The inhabitants fiercely protect the forest even now, and not a single tree is chopped or even manicured. This has enabled the village to be a safe space for birds and wildlife to grow. The beauty of the village and of the temple has made the village a site for pilgrimage tourism. This present study will examine the depth of Pilgrimage Tourism in Managar Village, Faridabad.

Keywords: Rural Tourism; Pilgrimage Tourism; Hospitality.

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Address the Peace and Poverty: Commercialization of Buddhists Teaching through the Tourism

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ABSTRACT

Promoting peace and alleviating poverty are major global challenges, and nations worldwide are actively seeking solutions to achieve these goals. In the contemporary era, the tourism industry has emerged as a highly effective method to address these issues. Sri Lanka, like many other countries, faces economic challenges, particularly a shortage of foreign currency exacerbated by the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic. The objective of this research is to advance global peace and alleviate poverty by leveraging the commercialization of Buddhist teachings to attract visitors and stimulate the tourism industry. The research employs a mixed-methods approach, combining quantitative which obtained from the study adopting qualitative data through content analysis which is written, electronic, and digital, and also Quantitative sources such as tourism statistics. The research underscores the potential for economic growth and enhanced accessibility to Buddhist teachings through the commercialization of Buddhism in Sri Lanka. The ultimate aim is to propagate the message of peace globally. By commodifying Buddhist teachings and cultural events, the spread of this message can be extended worldwide. Utilizing Sri Lanka's abundant Buddhist heritage, historical sites, and philosophical teachings could generate income, contributing to the economy and fostering well-being. In conclusion, the commercialization of Buddhist practices stands out as one of the viable solutions to address current financial challenges in Sri Lanka. This approach not only supports the growth of the tourism industry but also contributes to the global dissemination of peace. By leveraging tourism, it becomes possible to mitigate contemporary conflicts and foster worldwide sustainability.

Keywords: Economic Crisis; Commodifying Buddhism; Poverty; Peace; Sustainability Development.

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Net Zero Sustainable Tourism: A Case Study of Vinyasa Ashram

Ashlesha Sethi*

ABSTRACT

Section 1. Case Context

Vinyasa Earth, located in Maheshwas village, Jaipur, is a pioneering eco-friendly dance ashram founded by Mr. Sankalp Sharma. With a rich background in dance education from global institutions, Mr. Sharma's vision led to the creation of a sustainable space that harmonizes ecological responsibility and economic sustainability. The ashram, constructed from organic materials, offers six distinct earthen cottages, each uniquely themed. Vinyasa Earth attracts a global audience seeking a blend of artistic experiences and a sustainable lifestyle.

Section 2. Innovation in Sustainable Tourism and Results

Vinyasa Earth's innovation lies in its seamless integration of sustainable practices with a unique dance and art experience. The challenge addressed is to establish a sustainable tourism model that balances environmental stewardship and economic viability. The ashram offers diverse experiences, including Nature Walks, yoga, meditation, sculpting, and movement therapy. The unique eco-friendly cottages, recycled seating, and a commitment to self-sufficiency define Vinyasa Earth's approach to sustainability.

Section 3. Impact

The impact of Vinyasa Earth's initiative on sustainable tourism is multifaceted. Ecologically, the use of organic materials and recycling contributes to environmental conservation. Socially, the ashram fosters a deeper connection between guests and nature through activities like harvesting and movement therapy. Culturally, the themed cottages and artistic initiatives reflect a celebration of diverse expressions. Economically, Vinyasa Earth's success demonstrates the viability of sustainable tourism, attracting a global clientele and creating economic opportunities locally.

Section 4. Concluding Remarks

Vinyasa Earth stands as a beacon of innovation in sustainable tourism, successfully addressing the challenge of coalescing artistic expression with environmental consciousness. The case study highlights the ashram's unique features, impact on various dimensions, and the crucial balance achieved between ecological responsibility and economic sustainability. Vinyasa Earth serves as an inspirational model for the tourism sector, showcasing the potential for meaningful, sustainable experiences that resonate with a global audience.

Keywords: Net Zero Sustainable Tourism; Sustainable Tourism; Vinyasa Ashram.

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Role of Spiritual Tourism in the Rural Landscapes: An Exploratory Insight at Adam's Peak - Sri Lanka

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ABSTRACT

Tourism and related activities around the globe are being inspired by globalization and digitization to manage and localize their tourism services as well as to expand their businesses internationally. Thus, tourism is emerging as a catalyst of transforming rural landscapes to touristic facilitation zones. Spiritual tourism is a pursuit of life beyond one's own self and a quest to discover life's meaning. It helps maintain the harmony of the body, mind, and spirit, which may or may not be related to religion. Spiritual tourism which is a niche segment includes practicing spirituality-based activities and the promotion of Buddhist spiritual tourism presents a significant challenge for Sri Lanka. In an effort to boost tourism, the nation is attempting to introduce new tourism experiential offerings, such as spiritual tourism, to the Sri Lankan market. For those who are looking to pursue personal spiritual growth and find inner peace while on vacation, spiritual tourism is a useful travel option. In Sri Lanka, pilgrimage trips, yoga, and meditation are essential components of spiritual tourism. Recently, Mahayana based artifacts have become key attractions in the past years for South East Asian markets. In the light of these circumstances, this paper examines the role of spiritual tourism in the rural landscapes of Adam's peak, Sri Lanka using a qualitative research approach. A sample of 22 respondents consist of spiritual leaders, spiritual tourists, and other stakeholders in tourism field were interviewed using purposive sampling technique. Further, thematic analysis was employed and the major findings revealed that there is a high potential to develop spiritual tourism since, Adam's peak is historically positioned as a spiritual destination for remote rural visitors from around the country and even for international visitors. Preliminary findings suggest that spiritual tourism has support to, socio cultural richness and economic development in the region, providing opportunities for local businesses, hospitality services, and entrepreneurs. Additionally, the study investigates into how spiritual tourism shapes social dynamics through studying how tourists and residents interact and exchange cultures among multiculturalism societal. The study indicates that these interactions enhance social harmony in rural landscape by shedding light on their beneficial effects on cross-cultural understanding and community cohesiveness. It explores the challenges and rewards that arise from this sort of interactions, revealing concerns about community identity, cultural preservation, and the prospects of long-term prosperity. The paper postulates to cater for the critical needs of the spiritual tourists, the active involvement of the government, infrastructure development, improve community engagement, establish educational programs, preservation of cultural values, research ad monitoring and most importantly, a rigorous marketing campaign to attract potential spiritual tourists. Further, the paper argues that spiritual tourism could play a significant role in transforming these remote communities into service driven tourism economies as it can offer unique opportunities for both economic development and cultural preservation. Accordingly it will foster the sustainable development and preserve the unique cultural heritage of the destination.

Keywords: Adam's Peak; Qualitative Enquiry; Rural Landscape; Spiritual Tourism.

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Sustainable Destination Development

Role of Travel Influencers in Promoting Sustainable Tourism Destinations in Southern India

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ABSTRACT

Purpose: The study aims to examine the role of travel influencers' Inspiration, Authenticity, Attractiveness, Content Expertise, Trustworthiness on users' selection of sustainable tourism destinations in southern India through the moderating effect of Environmental sustainability awareness.

Design/Methodology/approach: The study adopted a mixed method approach combining cross-sectional and quantitative data analysis. Self-administrated online surveys were used to collect data from social media users who follows travel influencers. 104 valid responses were collected and used for analysis.

Findings: The results of the study reveal that the travel influencers' inspiration, authenticity, attractiveness, trustworthiness and content expertise significantly influence the users' selection of sustainable tourism destinations. The findings of this study enhance tourism and destination marketers' insightful information that they may utilize to promote more environmentally friendly travel choices. The results of the study suggest tourism marketers to promote sustainable tourism destinations through travel influencer

Practical Implications: Tourism stakeholders can develop more effective strategies to promote sustainable tourism by comprehending how travel influencers affect users' perceptions and decisions about travel destinations for sustainable tourism.

Originality/ Value: This research contributes to the Travel Influencer literature by examining the role of travel influencers' Inspiration, Authenticity, Attractiveness, Content Expertise, Trustworthiness on users' selection of sustainable tourism destinations in southern India

Keywords: Travel Influencer; Environmental Sustainability; Southern India; Sustainable Destinations; Parasocial Interaction

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Developing Sustainable Tourism Destinations in India: Barriers from Stakeholder Perspective

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ABSTRACT

With the post-COVID era pushing tourism towards more sustainable practices, the Government of India, through its National Tourism Organisation, i.e. the Ministry of Tourism, is actively taking steps towards developing sustainable destinations. Tourism stakeholders play a crucial role in successfully implementing sustainability in destinations. Furthermore, there is a high reliance on the state tourism departments and tourism service providers at the destination level to implement any policy, as tourism in India is a state subject, and the states retain control over the destinations along with tourism businesses involved in ground-level implementation. However, these stakeholders confront many hurdles in the transition towards sustainable tourism. Hence, to identify the barriers, the Nominal Group Technique (NGT) was used to collect data from state tourism authorities and associations on the positives and the negatives of making destinations sustainable. The methodology involves a rigorous process of data transformation, coding, and thematic analysis. By actively engaging with the data through iterative readings, the researcher sought meanings, identified patterns, and extracted pertinent information. The thematic analysis involved generating initial codes, organizing them into probable themes, and reviewing and refining these themes to develop the primary themes of 'Training and Capacity Building,' 'Convergence,' and 'Incentives' as the key barriers to implementing sustainable tourism destination development policies. By examining the nuances of these challenges, the research aims to inform areas of improvement to foster the implementation of sustainable tourism development in India, aligning with broader global sustainability objectives.

Keywords: Barriers; Capacity Building; Convergence; Incentives; India; Policy Implementation; Qualitative Research; Sustainable Tourism.

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Coastal Tourism in Kerala: An Assessment of the State Govt. Endeavors and Success in Protecting its Marine Ecosystems

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ABSTRACT

The concept of coastal tourism includes a range of tourism, leisure, and recreationally oriented activities that occur in the coastal zone and immediate offshore coastal waters. These include tourism-related development and the infrastructure supporting coastal and marine tourism development (e.g., retail businesses, transport hubs, marinas, and activity suppliers). Also included are tourism activities such as recreational boating, coast- and marine-based ecotourism, cruises, swimming, recreational fishing, snorkeling, and diving. Kerala is the hotspot of coastal tourism and emerging global tourist destination owing to its vast array of backwaters and pristine beaches that are loved across India and abroad. The calm and serene environment of this small state of India has put it on the global tourism map and the influx of tourism has grown manifold since last few decades. The phenomenal rise in influx is, however not without the downsides of the environmental apprehensions. The unique experience of backwater cruising and houseboats, besides normal water sports like scuba diving and parasailing are providing thrust to the revenue generation, but are also a threat to the pristine marine ecosystem of the state. During the last decade, the total revenue from tourism registered a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 11.33 per cent. It grew from 7,738 crores in 2005 to 26,689.63 crores by 2015. The resultant pressure on the marine ecosystem has led the state govt cautious towards protecting its marine environment and promoting sustainable tourism. It's no surprise that Kerala was India's first state to launch a "Responsible Tourism Mission" in pursuit of a single-minded goal: "Making better places for people to visit and better places for people (locals) to live in." This article attempts to assess the degree of success of Kerala Governments in protecting its marine life and ecosystems in wake of the increasing tourism in the state.

Keywords: Kerala; Sustainable; Coastal; Tourism; Marine Life.

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Residents' Perspectives on the 'Real Benefits of Tourism Growth in Vythiri': A Qualitative Study

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ABSTRACT

The annual report of Ministry of Tourism, Government of India present an impressive recovery of tourism in India post pandemic. Most of the destinations (irrespective of the type of attractions) experienced increased tourist traffic and high tourism demand. Kerala, located on the southern part of India has been aggressively promoting sustainable development practices in tourism especially in ecologically vulnerable and pristine natural areas by involving the local community at various levels. Places, once known for agricultural crops and spices are now known as tourism hubs and the custodians of farms engage in tourism and ancillary areas. A working linkage has been established to monitor the growth and direction of tourism in many destinations in Kerala. Vythiri, a popular place situated in the lap of Western Ghats (Wayanad District) is a matured tourist attraction in terms of tourism life cycle theory. The study area, earlier known as an under developed and backward area, now attracts domestic tourists more than international tourists. The present study is situated in the context of residents' experience in this 'tourism adoption process' which has many facets of tourism impacts and its influence in the life and livelihood of local people in this area. The study employed qualitative research techniques examines the tourism growth story of Vythiri in the last two decades. Semi-structured interviews (N=40) were conducted with the residents of Vythiri using purposive sampling. The corpus of data gathered from interviews was analysed using thematic analysis. The results present the socio-cultural and environmental impacts of tourism in the area, which has a greater significance of similar destinations promote sustainable tourism practices.

Keywords: Tourism Development; Tourism Impacts; Sustainable Tourism Practices; Tourism and Livelihood.

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Community Empowerment through Biodiversity Conservation by the Living Earth Tours: A Case of Social Entrepreneurship in Kerala

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ABSTRACT

Background: Human activities are progressing at a breakneck pace today, with few bounds. Excessive development can be harmful to local biodiversity and diminish the sustainability of natural resources. Climate change has been a major concern for tourism stakeholders in recent years due to its potential impact on travel and tourism. However, previous tourism growth has resulted in a rise in the industry's carbon dioxide emissions.

The Living Earth Tours, an Indian scientific organization, has devised a strategy to increase resiliency among ecotourism-dependent communities by developing a new sustainable tourism model to promote natural heritage conservation, encouraging carbon sequestration by increasing native tree cover (to conserve local biodiversity and increase carbon stock), and mixed organic farming - to ensure food safety. Being an accountable tourism stakeholder ensures the health of people, land, and ecosystem by supporting private land conservation through research, study, and awareness efforts, as well as responsible waste management. The Living Earth is a multi-stakeholder membership organization dedicated to establishing baseline sustainability criteria for travel and tourism and putting them into practice in India. The organization helps in destination design and manages tourism with the conservation of the surrounding biodiversity.

The tourism projects are structured in such a way that the quantity of CO₂ produced by the plant is always less than the amount of CO₂ absorbed by the plant. The properties are built in a way that not a single cent of land has been wasted in the name of tourism. All of the cottages are built at a height of 10-15 feet above the ground so that farmers who perform agriculture can do so below the cottage. In the event of a flood or famine, and agricultural destruction, they will not face a financial catastrophe because they will receive a tiny income from tourism. Living earth promotes agro along with eco tourism.

Design/methodology/approach: The qualitative case study method was used and semi-structured interviews and participant observation was carried out at various tourism projects of the organization.

Purpose: The purpose of this study is to investigate and discuss the tactics and methodology used by The Living Earth to maintain the local biodiversity through tourism and promoting socio-economic well being by ensuring ecological sustainability.

Findings: The organization has established a framework and a philosophy that incorporates the principles of responsible tourism and conservation with the existing economic development paradigm. It bridges the gap between the tourism stakeholders and local communities for implementing long term successful conservation practice. The organization was able to educate various stakeholders on Carbon neutral travel for combating climate change and the benefits of biodiversity conservation through tourism.

Practical Implications - The findings of the study can be used to create better places to visit with a right mix of ecological responsibility. The results will assist the responsible tourism practitioners and the policy makers for the effective implementation of responsible tourism practices.

Originality/value - This paper addresses an existing need for carbon neutral travel and devises strategies for befriending biodiversity conservation through tourism.

Keywords: The Living Earth; Carbon Neutral Tourism; Responsible Tourism; Community Participation; Biodiversity Conservation; Social Entrepreneurship in Tourism.

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Empowering Local Artisans through Sustainable Tourism: A Case Study on Kachchh

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*Spandana Gupta** and *Diljeetkaur Makhija**

ABSTRACT

This case study explores the intriguing story of Kachchh, a region in Gujarat, India, recognised for its hidden beauty and cultural wealth in seemingly desolate settings. This historical juncture made a small region a hub for business and cultural exchange, fostering skilled crafts like metallurgy, textile manufacture, pottery, and beautiful needlework. Sustainable tourism has greatly benefited the local economy and culture by including local craftsmen. This study emphasises the significance of government, community, and organisation collaboration to promote sustainable tourism that respects Kachchh's unique identity. The research concludes that individuals and governments must carefully assess their options. It claims that Kachchh's sustainable tourism future depends on balancing culture, heritage, and economic progress.

Keywords: Sustainable Tourism; Artisan Empowerment; Economic Development; Environmental Preservation; Globalization; Kachchh Rann Utsav.

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Technology, Digitalization and Tourism

Firms' Capabilities & Cross Border E-Commerce Business Performance among Small & Medium Scale Accommodation Businesses in Sri Lanka

K.P.N.D. Silva and A.P.N. Assella***

ABSTRACT

Cross boarder e-commerce has become a significant tool for improving business performance, yet it has been identified that small and medium scale businesses are struggling to adapt e-commerce for their operations due to lack of firms' capabilities. Despite its importance, limited attention has been paid to comprehensive research on firms' capabilities and cross-border e-commerce of small and medium businesses specially in the accommodation sector. Thus, the purpose of this study is to examine how existing firms 'capabilities of small & medium scale accommodation businesses impact on their cross-border e-commerce business performance. The study undertook a quantitative approach and hypotheses were developed positing that firms' capabilities: Information Technology, International Marketing, Technology Related International Networking Capabilities, and Entrepreneurial Orientation significantly impact on cross-border e-commerce business performance. Structured questionnaires were distributed among owners, general/ marketing/ front office managers of heritage hotels and heritage tourist bungalows to collect data by employing the purposive sampling technique. A total of 181 responses were analyzed using SPSS software. Results identified that firms' capabilities have a significant impact on cross border e-commerce businesses performance of small & medium scale accommodation businesses in Sri Lanka. Further, results highlighted that most of them used Booking.com as the entry mode to the international market. as the Cross Border E-commerce platform and, embedded social media channels like Facebook & Instagram were used to connect with their key customers. This study contributed to existing knowledge of firms' capabilities and cross-border e-commerce in the context of accommodation business performance. Moreover, this study emphasized that creating networks with clients through social media platforms by reacting to customer comments, handling customer complaints carefully and maintaining a proper interaction and engagement with customer reviews, could ensure the attraction of more tourists and international markets. The findings offer important practical implications for small and medium business operators policy makers, educators, researchers and other decision makers for planning and developing small and medium accommodation businesses, effective cross-border marketing, promotion and sales of accommodation services.

Keywords: Accommodation Businesses; Cross Border E-Commerce (CBEC); Firms' Capabilities; RBV Theory.

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Digitizing Religious Tourism: Scope and Challenges

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ABSTRACT

Traveling to a destination of religious importance is considered as pilgrimage and the humans across the globe have been doing it since centuries. The major motivation behind this travel is the religious faith and the drive to experience the holiness of the destination. This kind of travel is identified as Religious Tourism. In the past, the religious tourism destinations had barely any facilities, infrastructure and transportation. Many of the holy places are in rural areas and are untouched by urban civilization in many countries. With passage of time, these places have been transformed into tourist destinations having all possible modern facilities and the touristic experience has improved substantially with the use of technology. With the world going digital, and the tourism industry moving towards smart tourism, this niche segment of Religious Tourism is also experiencing digital renovation and thus making the tourism activity more sustainable. This study aims to explore the scope and challenges of digitizing the religious tourism in Indian context. Many of the holy places in India, now have services like online booking, live streaming of ceremonies, digital payment platforms, and many more. With advancement in technology, many other technological adoptions can be made for travel to these places. With the digital India campaign, even remote places have access to internet and digital wallet services. Wide use of smart phones and internet connectivity have enabled transforming the religious tourism experience. The expectations of the tourists visiting religious destinations have also changed with time. This study also aims to explore the adaptation of digitalized services in religious tourism. It also explores the issues and challenges that the supply side stakeholders will have to face to meet the changing consumption pattern.

Keywords: Religious Tourism; Digital Tourism; Sustainability.

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Neuromarketing and Consumer Behavior: An Examination through Bibliometric Analysis and Literature Review

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ABSTRACT

Neuromarketing, an interdisciplinary field merging neuroscience, marketing, and psychology, has revolutionized marketing strategies. Marketers have transitioned from conventional methods to incorporating neuromarketing approaches, aiming to gain a competitive edge. This study delves into neuromarketing and consumer behavior, examining current trends within this research domain. A bibliometric analysis of 60 research articles sourced from the Scopus database through the Preferred Reporting Item for Systematic Review and Meta-analyses (PRISMA) framework is adopted. The research explores highly cited articles, influential publications, journals, and countries at the forefront of neuromarketing and consumer behavior studies. Additionally, a keyword occurrence analysis identifies prevalent themes from 2004 to 2024. Furthermore, the study investigates using neuromarketing tools in assessing consumer behavior over the last five years. By shedding light on the most commonly employed tools, the research provides insights into the evolving landscape of consumer behavior analysis. This exploration informs current practitioners and extends an invitation to new readers seeking an understanding of the existing body of work. The study concludes by elucidating major research gaps, paving the way for future investigations and contributing to the continuous development of this dynamic field.

Keywords: Neuromarketing; Consumer Behavior; Bibliometric Analysis; Marketing; Neuroscience.

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Smart Tourism for Sustainability: Issues, Challenges and Opportunities

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ABSTRACT

Smart Tourism is a tricky concept in the Tourism and Hospitality industries that involves use of digital technologies, virtual reality tools, data, and network to deliver enhanced tourism experience to the consumers, increased operating efficiencies and economic output for the organisations, and better managed tourism destinations and sustainable resources for the nation and the society. It aims to bring together the physical and digital layers of tourism and thus deliver a simulated experience in the consumption process of the tourism products and services. Smart tourism can be understood as an “ecosystem” in which different species live together, fight, cooperate, and develop their functions through different types of relationships. The world has experienced increased interest in smart tourism from all stakeholders of tourism. The increased expectations of tourism experience delivered through technological interventions are making the distribution of tourism services more complex. Smart Tourism has become part of the international political agenda. This paper aims to describe the various issues, challenges and opportunities arising from emerging Smart Tourism practices in India. It further draws on conceptualizations of smart technologies and tourism to envision new ways in which value is created, enhanced and consumed in Tourism industry.

Keywords: Smart Tourism; Sustainable Tourism; Digital Tourism.

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Seasonal Work as a Means to Make Outbound Tourism within Bounds for Economically Marginalised

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ABSTRACT

Social Tourism is that type of tourism in which those who are economically marginalised but are keen to travel are enabled to travel. The Model that I suggest to make this type of tourism possible is elaborated below. There are many countries where the population is very low but the area of the country is too large having lot of land available for farming and orchards. Since there are times when the requirement of manpower increases manifold especially during the time of harvest, plucking of fruits from the trees etc. This is the time Tour operators can create packages and offer a solution by providing the necessary manpower for that specific period. Although the manpower that will be utilised by the tour operator will not be paid any money but their travel will be sponsored covering air tickets, local transportation, Visa, accommodation and food. On the other hand there are a number of people in various parts of our country who are working as daily labourers or small farmers and are very much interested in undertaking foreign travel but can't do so due to their meagre income. As such if a Tour operator will give them such an offer where they get an opportunity to travel abroad for a month or more during which they will have to work as well without any monetary remuneration but in lieu of that their travel will be fully sponsored by the tour operator. The earning of the Tour operator will come through the booking of large number of tickets as well as arranging of boarding and lodging facilities for the Tourists in addition to facilitate VISA and other travel documents.

Keywords: Social Tourism; Marginalised; Tourism Operators.

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AI-Powered Navigation for Sustainable Tourism: Opportunities, Challenges and Impact

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ABSTRACT

Sustainable Tourism is that type of tourism which takes full account of its current and future economic, social and environmental impacts, addressing the needs of visitors, the industry, the environment and host communities. Till now, tourism industry is rapidly growing in the world, but not in terms of following environmentally sustainable practices. Somehow, only a certain portion of researches describes on how the introduction of new technologies can influence more sustainable development path for tourism. The aim of this paper is to provide an insight on how Artificial Intelligence (AI) can be integrated in sustainable tourism to create impact on environment. We utilize a bibliometric analysis and an extensive review of hundred articles, collected from various database and sources such as Web of Science and Scopus databases, so as to: (i) explore and discuss nearly all significant contribution in the publication network: (ii) highlight key challenges and emerging topics; (iii) uncover open questions for the future. Our findings reveal paradoxical views on the challenges and opportunities of technology acquisition. Apart from Artificial intelligence (AI), internet of things, circular economy, big data, augmented and virtual reality are emerging as major trends. Stream of Artificial intelligence (AI) is identified and described, leading to a wider perspective on how technology can shape the future of sustainable tourism. Fitting theoretical and managerial implications are obtained. Finally, a research agenda is presumed as guidance for further studies acknowledging the outcomes of digital disruption on sustainable tourism.

Keywords: AI-Powered Navigation; Sustainable Tourism; Artificial Intelligence.

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Policy Making, Strategy in Tourism

Strategies, Policies, Programmes and Indicators for Promoting Sustainable Tourism in the Indian Scenario: A Review

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ABSTRACT

CESTour defines Sustainable Tourism (ST) is a way of traveling and exploring a destination while respecting its culture, environment, and people. Sustainability or sustainable practice in tourism has expanded exponentially. According to UN World Tourism Organisation (WTO), Sustainable tourism is, “Tourism that takes full account of its current and future economic, social and environmental impacts, addressing the needs of visitors, the industry, and the environment and host communities”. Ingraining or embedding sustainability in any business is now a necessity and not just a buzzword or a marketing technique. Tourism industry given the perilous times in the aftermath of the pandemic and the climate change has been reeling under turbulence with several tourism centred economies bearing the brunt. This was followed by revenge tourism which brought in issues of over-tourism which impacted the habitat of the flora and the fauna and the ecosystem in a negative manner. The above-mentioned challenges were not just relevant for countries like India but for all small and major economies who are facing the issue on a daily basis. To cope up with the ever-growing issues concerning the industry, Ministry of Tourism, Government of India (MoT-GOI) came up with a separate division on ST namely “National Strategy for Sustainable Tourism” (NSST) with the vision to position India as a preferred global destination for sustainable and responsible tourism. One of the primary missions is to increase the economic, social and environmental benefits to build a low carbon, inclusive and resilient tourism sector in India on the pillars namely i). Promoting Environmental Sustainability (ii). Protecting Biodiversity (iii). Promoting Economic Sustainability (iv). Promoting Socio-Cultural Sustainability (v). Scheme for Certification of Sustainable Tourism (vi). IEC and Capacity Building (vii). Governance for development of sustainable tourism. A qualitative method was utilized as a methodology as part of the paper primarily from secondary sources. As the paper intended to discuss the programs and strategies of the Ministry of Tourism towards making the tourism industry more sustainable the focus has been limited to government policy documents only which is an inherent limitation.

Keywords: Tourism; Sustainable Tourism; Qualitative Methods; Environment.

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Navigating Turbulence: Exploring Service Innovation among Tourism and Hospitality SMEs in Sri Lanka amid Economic Crisis: A Case Study of Belihuloya Tourist Destination

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates the resilience and adaptability of Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs) in the tourism and hospitality sector, amidst an economic crisis in an emerging country, which is a dearth in focus. This delves into the heart of this challenge, focusing on the picturesque paradise, yet untapped tourist destination of Belihuloya, Sri Lanka, which is considered as a city of an emerging country. The study explores how SMEs in tourism and hospitality sector in Belihuloya are leveraging service innovation strategies to navigate economic turbulence, enhance service innovation and customer value creation as the cornerstones for success and strategic reorientation as a managerial response to disruptive market challenges. A qualitative methodology was employed, utilizing in-depth face-to-face interviews and site observations among eighteen 18 SMEs in hotels, homestays, restaurants, and cottages in the Belihuloya area. The data analysis was conducted through thematic analysis, and the findings are approached through the theoretical lenses provided by the Service Innovation Strategies framework, as developed by Heinonen and Strandvik. The results indicated a significant influence of economic crises on SMEs, manifested in the dimensions of declining sales and revenue, escalating operational expenses, and shifts in customer purchasing behaviour. It is apparent that SMEs recognize the significance of adopting service innovation strategies, as proposed by Heinonen and Strandvik, to endure economic crises. A majority of these enterprises implemented a “riding out the storm” approach in the current market to promptly address shifts in customer behaviour. Subsequently, they pursued strategies such as exploiting market changes and emerging markets. Notably, entrepreneurs with a robust educational and experiential background in management disciplines demonstrated foresight in envisioning the future market. Concurrently, it is emphasized that substantial government support is crucial for the successful implementation of long-term strategies. The study further highlights the importance of community involvement and sustainable practices in fostering resilience and adaptability among these SMEs. The research contributes to the existing literature on service innovation in tourism and hospitality SMEs and crisis management in emerging markets. The insights derived from this study hold particular relevance for Sri Lankan policymakers and strategists involved in the development of SMEs in the tourism and hospitality sector. It advocates for the recognition and development of underexplored tourist destinations like Belihuloya, thereby contributing to the diversification and sustainability of Sri Lanka’s tourism industry.

Keywords: Navigating Turbulence; Tourism Hospitality; Sri Lanka.

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Tourism on Tribal Culture and Development: A Case Study on ITDA and TSTDC, Medaram Eturunagaram

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ABSTRACT

The Warangal region has all the required qualities for emerging as a potential tourist destination in the on country. The government focus on the development of ecotourism, and cultural tourism. Towards this end, various developmental works at seven places have been taken up under the Tribal Circuit. The present case study deals with the eco-tourism and cultural tourism development at Medaram, one of the seven places. For tourist attraction spring waters at Mulugu, and plantation at Sammakka Saralamma Jatara were developed. This destination is famous for cultural tribal festival that takes place once in two years. It also serves as a platform for cultural tourism that attracts the tribal population and tourists of Telangana. This festival as part of cultural tourism is celebrated against the two Goddess Samakka and Saralamma who fought against the rulers for the freedom of tribal population in the local community. Therefore it has become one of the best cultural tourism destination in the world. To promote this Integrated Tribal Eco-Tourism project has been proposed under SwadeshDarshan Scheme (SDS) under the Union Ministry of Tourism and a financial assistance of Rs 121crore has been sought from the Centre, and the State government (TSTDC) supported the remaining cost. The business development of this cultural tourism destination has been taken by Integrated Tribal Development Authority (ITDA), Eturunagarm. The business focused on the development of 5.305 lakh (2011 Census) tribal local communities (Koya, Lambada, Yerukala, Nakkala, and Naikpod). Initially, the local communities were supported by the local Government through various developmental activities like Kalyana Lakshmi, High school building and hostel projects, Academic Infrastructure, Storage Points, Medaram Jathara, Education Development Schemes, Economic Support Schemes (ESS), Forest, Water Conservation Plans, and Multiple Skill Development (MSD). The main vision of the business of TWD under Girijan Cooperative Corporation (GCC) is to promote local arts and crafts, documenting the traditions and organization of tribal festivals that attracts tourists from different parts of the State. Over a period, this destination has developed into cultural tourism destination.

Keywords: Tribal Culture and Development; ITDA; TSTDC.

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Agri-Tourism and Local Community Development: The Case of SAMTFMACS in Aruk Valley, Andhra Pradesh

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ABSTRACT

Agri-tourism is the act of visiting a working farm or any agricultural, horticultural or agribusiness operation for the purpose of enjoyment, education, or active involvement in the activities of the farm or operation. The present case study on Araku Valley in Andhra Pradesh is an effort to highlight the agricultural development in the regions and its integration with the tourism and the development of local communities. The movement to grow coffee began in the plantations owned by the Forest Department and later spread to individual tribal farmers. In 2007, SAMTFMACS was formed as an entity that would eventually allow the farmers to take full control of crop production, harvest, processing, and sale. Today, SAMTFMACS buys the coffee fruit and processes it centrally, providing jobs at the central level with a vision To provide livelihood to the local communities and promote indigenous art and culture giving the farmers more time to focus on the product development and convert it into unique brand. The valley and its surroundings have good potential for adventure sports and nature tourism. The mild climate attracts tourists round the year. Naandi established a new society for marketing of the coffee, thereby facilitating a sustainable linkage to high value global markets. Araku Originals Limited (AOL) facilitates sustainable linkages between global markets. The branding and marketing initiatives by AOL have attracted the national and international coffee experts and high value global markets. On one hand AOL is one of the main buyers for SAMTFMACS, on the other hand it promotes SAMTFMACS brand "ARAKU EMERALD".

Keywords: Agri-tourism; Local Community; Andhra Pradesh.

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Sustainable Tourism – Over Tourism: A Case Study on Nainital

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ABSTRACT

The case study delves into the ramifications of over-tourism and emphasizes the rising concept of sustainable tourism, spotlighting Nainital as a microcosm of the global issue of over-tourism. Nainital, once renowned for its scenic beauty, history, and villages, has witnessed a staggering surge in tourists, taxing its fragile ecosystems, cultural landmarks, and infrastructure. Over-tourism's adverse impacts, such as environmental degradation, strained resources, and social conflicts, have necessitated the adoption of sustainable tourism practices worldwide. The study underlines the importance of balancing economic growth, environmental preservation, and socio-cultural welfare in tourism endeavors, aiming to mitigate detrimental effects while optimizing benefits for local communities and safeguarding natural and cultural assets. In exploring Nainital's challenges, the case study aims to assess over-tourism indicators, evaluate existing sustainability measures, propose viable solutions for long-term destination health, and advocate for responsible tourism among visitors, local authorities, and businesses. The study illustrates how over-tourism has strained Nainital's resources, impacted its cultural heritage, and degraded its natural environment, urging the implementation of sustainable tourism strategies like visitor management plans, waste management upgrades, community engagement initiatives, educational programs, and infrastructure development for the preservation of Nainital's charm and the sustainability of its tourism industry.

Keywords: Sustainable Tourism; Over Tourism; Nainital.

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Stunning Belihuloya - A Hidden Paradise Can Ecotourism Reshape Tourism Destiny of Belihuloya?

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ABSTRACT

Tourism has been identified as a commercially viable economic sector in Sri Lanka since the 1960s (Karunarathne et al., 2021). Despite the impact on the country's tourism industry due to its recent political-economic upheavals, the unfortunate circumstances of the Easter-Sunday attack in 2019, the aftereffects of COVID-19 and the overall economic turmoil (Arachchi & Gnanapala, 2020), Sri Lanka continues to gain significance as a highly sought out tourist destination on the grounds of its breathtaking beauty and affordability (Minaz et al., 2022). Recently, Forbes Magazine (2023) listed the island nation as one of the best places to visit in 2023 under the Europe/Asia category, while the 2022 Readers' Choice Awards named Sri Lanka in the 17th place amongst the 20 Best Countries in the World with a score of 88.01. Moreover, statistics from SLTDA (2023) imply that Sri Lanka welcomed 1.48 million visitors in 2023, showcasing a remarkable year-on-year (YOY) growth of 106.6% compared to 2022. Accordingly, as of 07th January 2024, Sri Lanka has received 45,303 tourists, recording a high daily average compared to 2022 and 2023. *Belihuloya* offers a diverse selection of accommodation options to cater to the requirements of all types of travellers. Hence, with the rising popularity of tourism, the number of registered accommodation facilities in the Ratnapura district rose from 601 to 658 between 2022 and 2023. Similarly, the Sabaragamuwa province experienced an increase in rooms from 1025 to 1165 during the same period, as reported by SLTDA in 2023. Whether tourists prefer luxurious hotels with breathtaking views to simple cottages or homestays that genuinely immerse into the local culture, different choices are available to unwind and refresh. For those who desire a more exciting and absorbing encounter, it is also feasible for camping, enabling a profound connection with nature. The residents of *Belihuloya* have shown a notable increase in their engagement with the tourism industry, this swell can be attributed to the growing awareness of the industry and the shift towards seeking alternative sources of income amidst the economic challenges and uncertainties of contemporary times. As people encounter difficulties, there is a noticeable determination among the locals to explore opportunities in the tourism sector, reflecting a resilient spirit that has given birth to more avenues of Micro, Small and Medium-Sized businesses in the area.

Keywords: MSME Enterprises; Tourism; Local Culture; Homestays.

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Promotion of Sustainable Tourism: Economy, Environment and Policy

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ABSTRACT

Improved Sanitation and cleanliness have been a major agenda on the policy goals of Swachh Bharat Abhiyaan (SBA) i.e. Clean India Mission. The policy has strategically and indirectly focused on improving tourism. Since the inception of the Scheme in 2014 and a modified policy introduced in 2021, the Swachh Bharat Abhiyan has been very closely aligned with Sustainable Development Goals considering coexistence in the objectives of economic progression and environment preservation (Times of India, 2020). As per the National Strategy for Sustainable Tourism 2022 a coexistence between economy and environment once again has been very heavily emphasised. Continuous and concerted efforts have been made by Government of India in cooperation with State Governments to influence beneficiaries by undertaking initiatives such as 'Swachh Survekshan' and 'Swachhta Pakhwada' for behavioural change communication. This has led to making the Tourism Industry more sustainable and responsible, which is evident in the central and state level policy making on tourism. With this change in policy affecting Sustainable Tourism, it is imperative to analyse how these synergies are impacting the economic and social well-being of society and how is it affecting natural resource management and environment.

Keywords: Sustainable Tourism; Economy; Swachh Bharat Abhiyaan.

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Health, Wellness and Sustainable Tourism

Impact of Quality Management in Ayurveda Spa Centers on Tourist Satisfaction: A Case of Ella, Sri Lanka

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ABSTRACT

Sri Lanka is one of the major tourist destinations in the world. From the last decade, the field of Ayurvedic medicine with its gaining popularity in the world is supplying great service in preventing and curing of diseases, and improving the quality of life of the tourists. Increasing the number of Spa centers was noted with the high demand of wellness treatments with Ayurveda medicines. Quality Management of Spa centers is important in providing satisfactory service to the tourists. Focusing on the Ella tourism area, this research was conducted to find out how the quality management of the Ayurveda spa established in the region affects the satisfaction of the tourists. Also, the other purpose of this research is to identify the problems and issues faced by spa managers/ owners in the quality management of Ayurveda spa centers. A model was developed based on the literature reviews in which the independent variable is the factors related to spa-quality management such as Quality of the physical environment, Proficiency of staff, Standard medicines and equipment, Service standardization, Warm hospitality and Efficient and reliable payments and the tourist satisfaction is considered as the dependent variable. A questionnaire survey was conducted to achieve the first objective by selecting 384 foreign spa customers (tourists) adopting the Simple Random sampling technique. Interviews were conducted with the spa owners/ spa managers to meet the second objective of the study. The survey results found that only two variable related to the spa quality management such as Service standardization, and efficient and reliable payments are positively influenced tourist satisfaction and other variables such as quality of physical environment, proficiency staff, standard medicines and equipment, warm hospitality re not significantly influence the tourists satisfaction with spa services. It can be concluded through the analysis of interview information that the owners and managers faced lots of quality maintenance issues and problems. Owners and managers are not satisfied with the support they receive from the government, from business registration to maintenance. According to the existing economic conditions, Spa owners and managers expected government intervention and facilitate credit facilities in government banks.

Keywords: Customer Satisfaction; Quality Management; Service Quality; Spa-wellness Treatments; Tourism.

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Wellness Tourism Experiences: A Systematic Review

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ABSTRACT

Tourist experiences represent the essence and central facet of the tourism industry, as experience is a core element of consumers in today's world. Tourism is about creating experiences and requires a shift away from focusing on facilities and services to providing customised experiences. Tourism marketers and industry are crafting specialised products and services to create a unique set of experiences for their valued customers. Past literature on tourism research has explained many types of tourist experiences. Tourist experiences vary with the kind of tourist and place of tourism. Different types of tourism (e.g., heritage tourism, rural tourism, wine tourism, ethnic tourism, recreational tourism, etc.) have their own unique experiences. The tourist experience is based on the customer's post-visit subjective evaluation of the value received from the visit, and understanding the key customer experiences is critical for any tourism industry. The wellness tourism industry is on a remarkable growth trajectory. The emergence of the wellness tourism market was driven by the demand from tourists seeking offerings and amenities that provide novel, authentic, transformative experiences to achieve their desired health and well-being. This study attempts to get insight into the various key experiences the wellness tourism industry provides, which are critical in attaining tourist loyalty, tourist revisits, recommendation intentions, and other outcomes. The study adopted the Systematic Literature Review technique to synthesise the literature on the wellness tourism experience across the industry. The study will help to identify industry-specific experiences, scales to measure the experiences, location-specific experiences, research gaps, and agenda for future research. The study will help the industry craft products and services that enhance key wellness experiences and gain tourist's loyalty.

Keywords: Wellness Tourism; Tourist Experiences; Tourism Industry; Tourist Loyalty; Novelty.

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The Impact of Workplace Bullying on Employee Loyalty of Non-executive Employees: A Study on Five-star Tourist Hotels in Western Province, Sri Lanka

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ABSTRACT

The 21st century presents a multitude of challenges that demand a multifaceted and agile response. In this context, human resources emerge as a crucial asset for service-oriented organizations looking to achieve a sustainable competitive edge in today's business world. However, workplace bullying remains a persistent issue in the hospitality industry, despite being widely recognized as an unacceptable behavior. This toxic phenomenon can degrade, humiliate, and undermine a positive working environment, posing a threat to employees' well-being and productivity. Although studies on the subject of workplace bullying have been conducted in a variety of settings and professions, there aren't many of them focused on the Sri Lankan hospitality sector. Since workplace bullying has negative effects on both individuals and businesses, this study aimed to identify the impact of workplace bullying on employee loyalty of non-executive employees of five-star hotels in Sri Lanka. This study used a quantitative approach to explore the impact of workplace bullying on the employee loyalty of non-executive employees in the Sri Lankan hospitality industry under the lens of the Conservation of Resources (COR) theory. This research was carried out by using primary data collected through the self-administered questionnaires and a snowball sampling method was used to select 234 non-executive employees who were exposed to bullying experiences during their permanent full-time employment, which ranges from more than six months and less than two years working at five-star hotels in Western Province which were registered under SLTDA. Survey data were analyzed using the IBM SPSS 26 version and SmartPLS 4.0 version. The study findings confirmed that both workplace bullying and emotional exhaustion exert a significant negative impact on hotel employees' loyalty and it is further explored that Emotional Exhaustion partially mediates the relationship between Workplace Bullying and Employee Loyalty of non-executive employees. Moreover, this study suggested useful managerial implications to protect hotel employees from workplace bullying and emotional exhaustion to maintain a loyal workforce who are willing to deliver high service quality. To the best of the researcher's knowledge, this study makes the first attempt in the country to shed light on workplace bullying among hotel industry employees by developing a thorough and exploratory conceptual model of workplace bullying that connects employee loyalty and emotional exhaustion to the prevalence of workplace bullying within the Sri Lankan hospitality sector.

Keywords: Emotional Exhaustion; Employee Loyalty; Hotel Industry; Non-executive Employees; Workplace Bullying.

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Ayodhya 2.0: A Case of Eat Right Street Food Hub by FSSAI

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ABSTRACT

India, known for its sacred geography and diverse religious harmony, boasts cultural heritage as a major tourist attraction. With over 10,000 tirthas across the country (Temple Tourism India, 2020), the untapped potential to boost the nation's GDP through tourism has led to the discovery of spiritual corridors, including the Ram Janmabhoomi Corridor in Ayodhya (Mishra, 2022). The paper focuses on studying the impact of the 'Eat Right Campaign' on this significant corridor. India's tourism sector has witnessed a significant decline, with a drop from 3.14 crore tourists in 2019 to 85.9 lakhs in 2022 (Desk, 2023). This decline underscores the urgent need for reviving the Indian tourism sector. Unsafe and unhygienic food contributes significantly to this decline, according to a study done by the National Library of Medicine, USA with 300 travelers. The lack of food quality security poses the most substantial risk to India's tourism sector. Ayodhya is projected to attract 50 to 100 million tourists, exceeding the combined footfall of Vatican City and Mecca (Jefferies, n.d., 2024). This presents a vast economic opportunity for India, but addressing basic food quality needs is crucial to avoid potential setbacks. The Government of India, in collaboration with FSSAI, launched the 'Eat Right Campaign' in 2018 to promote healthy eating habits. FSSAI's MOU with AOAC International enhances food safety analytics in India. The present research (a work in progress) is being conducted as a qualitative inquiry approach. Semi-structured interviews of foodpreneurs, frequent travelers, and residents near Ram Janambhoomi Corridor will be collected and transcribed. An overall sentiment analysis will also be prepared. The study will cover both primary and secondary data through interviews and netnographic research. Participants for the study will be Foodpreneurs at Ram Janambhoomi Corridor, Certified individuals by FSSAI, Locals residing in Ayodhya, Researcher's observations, and secondary data (media coverage, social media posts, and articles). In conclusion, the 'Eat Right Campaign' plays a vital role in addressing food safety concerns and revitalizing India's tourism sector, aligning with SDGs 3 (Good Health and Well-being) and 12 (Responsible Consumption and Production). The ongoing research aims to provide insights into the campaign's impact, contributing to sustainable tourism growth.

Keywords: SDG 3; SDG 12; Eat Right Campaign; FSSAI; Tourism Sector; Sustainable Tourism.

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Do Sustainable Food Business Play Role in Sustainable Tourism?

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ABSTRACT

Sustainable tourism has been gaining traction in a wide-ranging quarters; from academics to government's policy making to even non-governmental bodies. As we dwell in a planet with limited resources, rampant and indiscriminate intervention from profiteering motive which is typical of a business 'character' has risked the very sustainability of mother-nature. While tourism on one side, indeed creates economic opportunity for small business which may be sustainable from economic lens-do they contribute to sustainable tourism- is the research question that this paper attempts to explore and address. In this papers, in particular, we intend to connect the dots between the role played by sustainable food business and sustainable tourism from cultural conservation lens. Sustainable food businesses are defined as having active business life with 50 year plus longevity, running through more than two generations' operating the business down the line, consequently, leading to a cultural heritage and brand identity of the community. We cover three categories of small food business; namely- restaurants offering breakfast and sweets or confectionary or baked items, restaurants serving traditional cuisine for lunch and dinner and restaurants serving snack. For instances: Rahmania is a 60 year plus restaurant in the northern district of Bangladesh, Rajshahi; Singara House is a 60 year plus restaurant in another northern district of Bangladesh, Rangpur in the third category; Jilapi House is a 50 year plus restaurant in Rajshahi in the first category. Niribily is a 50 year plus restaurant from the most attractive tourist spot of Bangladesh, Cox's bazar, is an example in the second category. While these small food businesses have proven business sustainability through longevity, in the process of serving the local customers, they have naturally evolved within the very cultural tenets of the community where they are 'born' and 'brought up', yielding them a regional cultural identity or to say giving these small food business a cultural 'nomination' of the region. These small food business, often play the role of brand ambassador of the community which is now spread through the 'net' speed of social media. Tourists visiting these places would hardly consider their trip as complete without paying at least a visit to these branded restaurants. When the role of these small businesses are seen through the cultural lens, their role in conserving and touting regional culture- an essential element of sustainable tourism- appears not only evident but also provident. As the 'mandate' of cultural conservation per se sustainable tourism is a broader context involving multiple stakeholders; from government to non-governmental bodies in between the roles played by the small business and academics PPP may facilitate the cause and effect.

Keywords: Longevity; Small Business; Sustainable Food Business; Sustainable Tourism.

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COVID-19 and the Determinants of the Domestic Tourism Spending in India

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ABSTRACT

The COVID-19 pandemic caused irreparable harm to the tourism sector and the global economy. The travel restrictions affected consumer spending patterns, hindering the tourism industry's growth. We employed the Difference-in-Difference and OLS models to analyse the impact of this health and economic crisis on domestic tourism spending at the microlevel. Our study revealed a 34% drop in average tourism expenditure due to the pandemic, with rural spending declining by 62%. Deciding factors significantly influenced tourism expenditure, except for gender and urban visitors. These findings provide policymakers and tourism professionals with insights to develop effective measures to mitigate the pandemic's impact.

Keywords: COVID-19; Domestic Tourism Expenditure; Difference-in Difference Analysis; t-test; PSM; OLS; India.

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Research Methods in Tourism

The Profile of Italian Holidaymakers: An Analysis of Travel and Holidays

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ABSTRACT

Premise – State of the Art: In the past decade, Italians' demand for tourism has shown a clear upward trend, especially in terms of holiday tourism. The number of Italian holiday-makers has increased in recent years, with around 28 million Italian tourists travelling during the year 2019 compared to just over 23 million in 2014. Travel and holiday destinations, travel mode and holiday type choices and their interactions have attracted the interest of many researchers and marketing experts. There are several studies examining differences in travel, especially with regard to the planning and management of transport systems (Yang et al., 2016) or with reference to tourists' spending behaviour (Ventisette, 2019), but few studies have examined differences in behaviour among travellers, aiming to profile the traveller based on travel destinations and travel choices. Understanding people's travel behaviour is essential for the planning and management of tourism services, especially for a 'personalised' promotion of both tourist facilities and tourist destinations.

Goals: By using the micro-data on Italians' holidays, this study aims at describing different holiday tourism trips, as well as the association of these types with traveller characteristics, highlighting the reflection of travel choices with the profile of the traveller.

Methodology: In this study, we use data from the 'Travel and Holidays' focus, included in the household expenditure survey, for the year 2019. The survey of a sample nature, designed to be representative of the entire Italian population, is based on interviews administered to just over 32 thousand households residing in about 540 Italian municipalities of different demographic size.

By means of a clustering approach on holiday travel, it was possible to identify distinct type-approaches to holidays and relate them to the socio-economic-demographic characteristics of the travellers, with the aim of illustrating the differences in tourist fruition starting from the differences between the 'types' of traveller.

Results: Our results show that Italians' travel can be grouped into seven different categories, closely linked to the nature of each particular destination, the travel mode, the type and period of holiday enjoyment. Based on these typologies, it was possible to identify different profiles of tourists who, due to socio-economic-demographic conditions, tend to travel by reconciling personal needs or family requirements.

Keywords: Italian Holidaymakers; Travel and Holidays; Tourism.

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Quantifying Sustainable Tourism: A Comprehensive Analysis of Key Indicators for Enhanced Assessment

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ABSTRACT

This study delves into the realm of sustainable tourism by employing a quantitative approach to assess key indicators. With an increasing global emphasis on sustainable practices, the tourism industry is under scrutiny for its environmental, economic, and social impacts. This research aims to identify, measure, and analyze quantitative indicators that gauge the sustainability of tourism activities. By employing statistical methods and data-driven analyses, the study aims to provide a comprehensive overview of the current state of sustainable tourism and offer insights into effective strategies for its promotion. The findings of this research contribute valuable information to policymakers, industry stakeholders, and researchers striving to enhance the sustainability of tourism practices on a global scale.

Keywords: Quantifying Sustainable Tourism; Policymakers; Social Impacts.

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Measuring Sustainability in Tourism via a Multi-attribute Decision-making Approach

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ABSTRACT

In the last few years, scholars and policy-makers have intensively debated the importance of sustainability in the Tourism domain. The basic idea is that the development of Tourism from an economic perspective has to be sensible to the interest of all the potential stakeholders, including tourists themselves as well as the host communities, ensuring the satisfaction of travellers and day-trippers but primarily respecting and preserving local cultures and natural and social diversity. Several solutions for a quantitative assessment of Tourism sustainability at a country level have been discussed in the reference literature. There is substantial agreement on the multidimensionality of the concept and its key dimensions involving the economic, socio-cultural, and environmental spheres. However, there are different proposals on the methodological side. Leaving aside the problem of selecting a set of elementary indicators covering the different facets of the involved dimensions (which reflect the theoretical framework underlying the concept to measure) and a suitable aggregation function for building a synthetic indicator, one of the most tricky aspects is choosing a weighting system that numerically expresses every single indicator's importance before aggregating them into an overall indicator. Typically, the weights assigned to the indicators can be statistically determined or based on a public/expert opinion. However, in both cases, the adopted scheme significantly affects the aggregation. For example, if a synthetic indicator is used for country comparisons (e.g., to look at the competitiveness of the different areas), using different weights could change the obtained ranking. Since none of the proposed solutions is free from potential hazards, we present a strategy for building a Tourism Sustainability Index based on a multi-attribute decision-making approach. Multi-attribute analyses solve complex problems by assessing all the indicators observed on a set of entities with missing weight information or, more generally, when the corresponding weights are subject to uncertainty. In particular, our strategy refers to the Stochastic Multi-attribute Acceptability Analysis (SMAA), a method that considers the complete weighting space for the involved single indicators. Each vector of non-negative weight is randomly extracted under the hypothesis of uniform probability distribution in a $[0;1]$ interval. The "objectivity" of the adopted weighting scheme is given by considering a huge sample of weights' vectors (usually with a size between 10,000 and 1,000,000) and deriving a ranking of the analysed entities based on a consensus among the overall indicators obtained by applying the different weights' vectors. A case study on the sustainability of Tourism in Europe is used to show the proposal's effectiveness, ranking the countries with respect to a range of economic, social, and environmental indicators used in the literature to highlight the diverse facets of sustainability.

Keywords: Synthetic Indicator; Multiple Criteria Ranking; Stochastic Multi-attribute Acceptability Analysis.

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Sustainable Tourism as a Mean for Inclusive Development? A Textual Analysis of Funded Projects in Greece

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ABSTRACT

Tourism is a prominent economic sector, and one of the most relevant industries in several European Countries, especially in the southern Area. With growing emphasis on sustainability not only from an ecological and economical point of view, but also with a special care on inequalities and inclusion, recent European policies prioritize addressing inequalities alongside traditional growth objectives. Europe's commitment towards achieving balanced regional development, understanding the impact of tourism on marginalized groups becomes increasingly important. Leveraging literature reviews and European recommendations, this presentation addresses the question on how the touristic industry can contribute to attaining this balance, and understanding if tourism led development is working primarily as a mechanism for wealth accumulation or inequality reduction. Within this context, focusing on Greece for the prominence of the touristic industry over the country's economy, we analyzed numerous projects funded under the EU Cohesion Policy during 2014-2020, seeking insights into their underlying goals and expected outcomes. The corpus is composed of projects implemented in Greece, retrieved from the European Platform Kohesio (51.129 projects, 10.893.636 word tokens). We initiated our examination first through a word embedding conversion and topic modeling procedure with BERTopic. The project abstracts, converted to embeddings using SentenceTransformers and bge-small-en model, underwent through a dimensionality reduction procedure using UMAP, resulting in 141 topics. The topics are then explored, first isolating those projects centering around tourism and then examining their connection with project goals enhancing essential capabilities such as education, health, and income generation. Following this, we used the open source large language model Mistral-7b to extract and categorize the specific project targets. While initial observations suggest that tourism occupies a central position within Greek development projects, deeper scrutiny reveals that touristic development is working mainly in terms of infrastructure advancements. The analysis opens questions on how policymakers should thus consider revisiting existing frameworks and ensuring synergy between broad tourism agendas and concrete actions focused on promoting inclusive development strengthening key human capacities. The main focusing points of the discussion will be on the methods implied (especially for what concerns the document filtering procedure), as well as the applicative implications of the study.

Keywords: Sustainable Tourism; Capacity Building; Social Inclusion; Word Embeddings; Project Analysis.

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Women Participation in Rural Tourism as a Catalyst for Regional Socio-economic Development: A Study based on Dambulla, Sri Lanka

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ABSTRACT

The attractiveness of the rural landscapes of Sri Lanka has become increasingly pronounced as an emerging global tourism hotspot with numerous exclusive attractions. The blend of authentic nature and the local culture, hospitality and friendliness of the locals, and assortment of traditions create a tapestry of experiences in the world of unexploited potential that exists beyond the busy urban settings. Even though tourism as a protagonist in regional and rural economic development enables more inclusive opportunities, still the contribution of women is underestimated and this disparity is profoundly discussed by scholars for years. The fifth Sustainable Development Goal by UNWTO hence is dedicated to “achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls”. In light of this, the study explores how decisive it is for women to take part in rural tourism in order to foster inclusive socioeconomic growth. This research explores the pivotal role of women participation in rural tourism and its profound impact on the socio-economic development of regions with reference to Dambulla, Sri Lanka. Adopting a qualitative research design, a sample of 18 rural women recruited through purposive sampling were interviewed. Apart from that, few other rural tourism stakeholders also were drawn for the sample to gather comprehensive insights on the current status of women’s involvement in the tourism industry in Dambulla area. By examining the challenges and opportunities faced by women in this context, the research aimed at imparting insights to leverage multifaceted contributions they make to the socio-economic fabric of the region. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews. Transcribed responses of interviews were scrutinized, and analyzed using content analysis technique. Findings revealed that economic empowerment of women through tourism-related activities, the enhancement of community well-being, promotion of cultural preservation and authenticity, economic growth and reducing migration as positive impact of rural tourism development. Moreover, the study investigates the role of education, skill development, cultural exchange and entrepreneurial support in enabling women to actively participate in and benefit from the tourism sector. Furthermore, over dependence on tourism, increase of prostitution, problems in work life balance, problems in reciprocal of gender role were identified as negative impacts. The findings of this research contribute in the policy recommendations and interventions aimed at fostering a more inclusive and equitable tourism industry in Dambulla and similar rural setups. By recognizing and addressing the specific needs and aspirations of women in tourism, this study acts as a herald for sustainable development that foster both the individual lives of women and the community as a whole. In appreciating the women’s involvement in to rural tourism, it is necessary to fuel the sector with effective government intervention, providing necessary enticements such as financial support or credit facilities, organizing regional tourism promotion campaigns, and boosting of education for the rural women. Ultimately, this research aspires to shed light on the transformative potential of women’s participation in rural tourism and advocate for strategies that harness their capabilities to propel regional socio-economic development. As tourism emerges as a key driver of economic growth, understanding and harnessing the potential of women in this sector becomes imperative for achieving inclusive and sustainable development.

Keywords: Tourism Development; Rural Tourism; Socio-economic Development; Women Participation.

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Conceptualizing Sustainable Tourism: A Critical Discourse Analysis

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ABSTRACT

The notion of sustainable tourism has emerged as an essential concept in contemporary discourse, requiring a thorough assessment of its conceptual underpinnings. This qualitative research employs Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) as a methodological tool to examine and evaluate the language and framework surrounding the conceptualization of sustainable tourism. By examining the opinions of many stakeholders within the tourism industry, this study aims to unveil the underlying assumptions and ideologies shaping the discourse on sustainable tourism. The study adopts a comprehensive methodology, including interviews, focus group discussions, and textual analysis of relevant literature and policy documents. The research aims to analyze the language used in the discourse; the study seeks to uncover how various players within the tourism sector contribute to the development and discussion of the sustainable tourism concept. Furthermore, its objective is to identify potential tensions, contradictions, and points of agreement within the discourse. The findings of this research will enhance our understanding of the conceptual challenges associated with sustainable tourism. The study aims to provide valuable insights with the goal of influencing future policy-making and strategic planning in order to achieve sustainable tourism practices.

Keywords: Sustainable Tourism; Conceptualization; Critical Discourse Analysis; Tourism Discourse; Sustainability; Stakeholder Perspectives.

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Communication and Branding in Sustainable Tourism

Brand Communications and Sustainable Destination Development: Review of Overtourism

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ABSTRACT

Purpose: Overtourism is an emerging issue confronting the world's most popular tourist sites. Selected measures have been considered to address challenges for overtourism. However, there is still need to focus on strategic brand communications to promote sustainable tourism practices to reciprocate positive relationships. This review highlights sustainable options through brand communications to address this phenomenon and improve the tourism experience. This examination also considers the interplay of tourism ecosystem actors to find sustainable solution for overtourism.

Research Design: This review supports the sustainable destination development practices by understanding the concern of overtourism. Hence, the role of communication is very important. The present paper adds to the literature by conducting an exploratory study to better understand the role of strategic brand communications and its implications. The examination of provided information contributes to the expansion of knowledge about specific problems.

Findings: The study suggests that destination branding requires the resilient approach even for overtourism related brand communications as it has its own strategic implications. Reconsideration of certain elements, such as brand voice and community engagement, through advertising campaigns and media strategies, customer success stories, would synergize and foster the robust positive relationships. All these suggested dimensions can support progressive measures to limit overtourism.

Originality: The touristification depends on multiple factors of locations, hence, brand communications should be more specific and tactful. This approach empowers the tourism ecosystem to develop the resilient tourism practices.

Research implications: Tourism industry offerings are collaborative as multiple stakeholders are involved. Destinations could build a strong brand image that fosters sustainable tourism, mitigates overtourism, and assures the long-term viability by understanding these strategic implications. Brand communication is the key aspect to deliver results and to generate brand success stories.

Keywords: Brand Communications; Sustainable Destination Development; Overtourism; Tourism Experience.

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The Transformative Role of Social Media in Fostering Sustainable Tourism Practices in India: A Review Article

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ABSTRACT

Sustainable tourism is like an important idea in travel that's getting more attention worldwide. It's because people are becoming more aware of how travel can affect the environment, communities, and money. People want travel experiences that are meaningful and responsible, and that's where sustainable tourism comes in. This article wants to look deeper into what sustainable tourism really means, talking about its different parts and what it means for the world. We have employed academic research papers to enhance the elucidation of concepts.

Defining Sustainable Tourism: The term "Sustainable tourism", often referred to as responsible tourism or eco-tourism, is a multifaceted approach that seeks to minimize the negative impacts of tourism on the environment, local communities, and cultural heritage while maximizing the positive contributions. In essence, it is a way of traveling that focuses on long-term environmental and socio-economic sustainability. In the last half of the decade, how people travel in India has changed a lot. Social media, like Instagram and Facebook, is a big reason for this change. It has become a major influence on what places people choose to visit and how they plan their trips. People now often look for eco-friendly and responsible travel options, and social media has a big role in promoting these choices. For example, on platforms like Instagram and Facebook, there are posts about places that care about the environment. People see these posts and want to visit such places. Hashtags like #EcoTravel and #ResponsibleTourism have become popular, creating online communities of people who care about making eco-friendly travel choices. Because of this social media influence, more tourists and travel businesses in India are trying to be eco-friendly. They are adopting practices that are good for the environment. This is making travel in India more sustainable, which means it's better for the planet. Social media, like Instagram and Facebook, is changing how people experience tourism in India. It's like a special tool that brings people together, shares important messages, and gets everyone involved in making travel enjoyable but also eco-friendly and community-friendly. Social media can help make India's tourism even better. It's not just about having more tourists; it's about doing it in a way that keeps India's amazing culture and natural beauty safe for the future. Instagram and Facebook are like magic tools that connect people and make them care about responsible travel.

Keywords: Social Media; Responsible Tourism; Eco-friendly; Community Friendly.

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Evaluating Tourism Destination Branding using Gamification: A Case of Ladakh

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ABSTRACT

Gamification of various activities can make it more engaging and attractive and tourism companies in past have used various gamification methods to boost engagement for destinations. The study evaluates the brand equity of Ladakh as a tourism destination brand using the consumer-based brand equity model while integrating gamification. The study uses Partial least square structural equation model to assess the effect of various factors identified for gamification and brand on overall brand equity of Ladakh. The data was collected using online questionnaires (n=193) from frequent travelers. The results suggest that all the considered variables of gamification and consumer-based branding were found to be significantly influencing overall brand equity of Ladakh. Interestingly, brand image did not directly influence overall brand equity rather, had an effect through brand loyalty. The study also suggests practical implications for policymakers responsible for destination promotion, destination management firms and travelers planning for their next adventure in Ladakh.

Keywords: Tourism; Destination Branding; Consumer Based Brand Equity Model; Gamification; Ladakh; PLS-SEM.

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Customer Engagement Dimensions as Drivers of Brand Love for Sustainable Tourism in India

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ABSTRACT

The aim of this paper is to examine whether customer engagement drives the development of brand love for tourist destinations and if so, which dimensions of customer engagement are relatively more impactful. The respondents were sampled in Gujarat, India through quota sampling method and data collected using a pretested structured questionnaire through personal interviews. A total of 374 valid responses were analysed using multiple regression. The results indicated that all three dimensions of customer engagement are significant influencing factors on brand love. However, the emotional dimension is the most impactful one. Since the paper establishes that the engagement of customers at various levels has a significant bearing on the development of brand love, brand managers can focus on building engagement activities and communication with customers to influence them to develop emotional bonds with their brands. The study which is original in nature, empirically establishes the utility of engaging customers in a way that they develop emotional bonds with tourism service brands specifically in the Indian context. This in turn would have positive outcomes in terms of recommendations and loyalty. One of the limitations of the research indicates that the findings ensuing from the study may not be generalizable to other sectors or geographical regions.

Keywords: Customer Engagement; Brand Love; Destination Brand Love; India.

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Beyond Monuments: Soft Power's Imprint on Tourist Memories and Travel Behaviors

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ABSTRACT

The empirical investigation of the dimensions of soft power has been subject to limited research. Soft power, a multifaceted concept intertwined with a nation's cultural, economic, and political influence, is systematically examined for its discernible impact on memorable tourism experiences and the behavioral intentions of tourists. Concurrently, the study investigates the reciprocal influence of memorable tourism experiences on behavioral intentions. Moreover, the research delves into the potential mediating role of memorable tourism experiences within the relationship between soft power and behavioral intentions. The survey encompassed four prominent tourist destinations in northern India, targeting foreign nationals as respondents. Subsequently, the collected data underwent comprehensive analysis utilizing Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM). The study's findings substantiate a statistically significant positive relationship between soft power and both behavioral intentions and memorable tourism experiences. Additionally, it was observed that memorable tourism experiences exerted a favourable influence on behavioral intentions. The study also reveals the existence of a partial mediating effect of memorable tourism experiences in the relationship between soft power and behavioral intentions. The research possesses substantial significance given its potential implications for policy development and strategic decision-making within the Indian tourism sector.

Keywords: Soft Power; Memorable Tourism Experiences; Behavioural Intentions; Tourism.

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The Tribhuvan University Centre of Excellence in Sustainable Tourism growth in Nepal

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ABSTRACT

Throughout its history, Nepal has faced numerous socioeconomic difficulties that have slowed down its progress toward sustainable tourism development. A feasible route to address these issues and open doors for sustainable tourism development is possibilities for new business opportunities for Nepal. The Tribhuvan University Centre of Excellence in Sustainable Tourism (TU-CESTour) has identified many crucial factors to take into account in order to promote sustainable tourism and travel industry in Nepal. The centre is actively equipping academicians, tourism entrepreneurs and related government stakeholders to support the sustainable tourism sector. The centre is advocating sustainable tourism and raising awareness on the social, traditional and cultural values of the destination communities throughout the country. The absence of adequate financial infrastructure, particularly in rural areas, hinders tourism endeavors despite government efforts to promote financial inclusion is always challenging. Another challenge lies in the limited availability of skilled labor and lack of awareness on sustainable tourism. Despite the progress, our educational system still fails to generate a workforce with the skills required for the changing employment market. As a result, new tourism businesses struggle to find and keep talented workers, which limits their potential to grow and scale. Tourism industry has been recognized as a potential pathway for Nepalese people in developing countries to escape poverty and achieve greater economic growth. Nepal's infrastructure continues to be underdeveloped, with poor power and transportation. Tourism entrepreneurs frequently run into logistical issues that reduce the efficacy and efficiency of their business operations. Entrepreneurs are further complicated by the nation's susceptibility to natural disasters, which raises issues with company continuity and risk management. In spite of all these difficulties, Nepal presents a number of prospects for tourism business development. The country's tourism business is growing, drawing visitors from all over the world to its stunning natural surroundings. Entrepreneurs in the hotel, adventure, and eco-tourism industries should take advantage of this development to establish sustainable businesses that support both economic development and environmental protection Nepal's rich cultural diversity and art heritage offer opportunities for entrepreneurs in the craft and art industries. TU-CESTour will be dedicated to maintaining a strong business, financial planning and tourism industry environmental management.

Keywords: Centre of Excellence; Sustainable Tourism; Tourism Business.

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Special Interests in Sustainable Tourism

Exploring the Engagement, Interests and Challenges of Tour Guides in Fostering Responsible Tourism in Sri Lanka

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ABSTRACT

The growing popularity of more immersive experimental vacations is becoming more widely acknowledged, as the traditional sun, sea, and sand excursion is giving way to more traditional ones. In crafting experiential vacations, tour guides perform a pivotal role, shaping the essence of travelers' journeys. Beyond the facilitators, tour guides are architects of immersive experiences, with narratives, insights, and fostering genuine connections. Their significance lies not only in navigating landscapes but in unraveling the tapestry of culture, history, and local traditions. As tour guides or tour operators stand at the forefront of the tourism industry, serving as facilitators of visitor experiences their interest and concerns are essential to the tourism development. This research critically examines the role of tour guides and their motivations driving in responsible tourism development with their interest and concerns exploring challenges in fostering sustainability in the context of Sri Lanka. The study investigates the dynamics between tour guides, tourists, and the local community, with a focus on how these interactions shape sustainable and responsible tourism practices within the Sri Lankan tourism sector. Adopting a qualitative research design, a sample of 12 tour guides were interviewed through purposive sampling method. Preliminary analysis of interviews reveals that tour guides in Sri Lanka play a pivotal role in shaping tourists' perceptions and behaviors in responsible manner. They act as interpreters of local culture and environmental custodians, influencing visitors to make responsible choices. However, the findings also highlight challenges faced by tour guides, including a lack of standardized training in responsible tourism practices, lack of knowledge on responsible tourism practices and the need for support from tourism authorities. Moreover, lack of financial support to initiate the sustainable initiatives, and societal expectations as lack of willingness to change traditional beliefs and practices, economic considerations, and the delicate balance between meeting tourists' expectations and adhering to responsible principles were identified as the challenges of implementing responsible tourism practices in Sri Lanka. The interview responses are anticipated to provide valuable insights into the prevailing attitudes and concerns within the tour guide community, shedding light on their perceptions of responsible tourism and its integration into their professional practices. In examining the impacts of tour guides on responsible tourism development, this research seeks to contribute to the ongoing discourse on sustainable tourism in Sri Lanka. By understanding the challenges and opportunities faced by tour guides, tourism industry can develop targeted strategies to enhance the role of tour guides as catalysts for responsible tourism practices. The significance of this study lies in its potential to inform policy, training programs, and industry practices aimed at promoting responsible tourism and enhancing awareness about responsible tourism in Sri Lanka. This research contributes to the broader global conversation on responsible tourism and underscores the pivotal role of tour guides in shaping the future of travel in Sri Lanka.

Keywords: Tourism Development; Responsible Tourism Development; Tour Guides; Sustainability.

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A Review on Tourist Experience Quality – Systematic Review and Bibliometric Analysis

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ABSTRACT

This study embarks on a comprehensive review of empirical research papers focusing on tourist experience quality spanning the years 2002 to 2023. Employing a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) methodology in accordance with PRISMA guidelines, the primary objective is to identify and synthesize existing knowledge on tourist experience quality. A rigorous selection process, guided by seven predetermined inclusion criteria, resulted in the curation of 50 papers sourced from authoritative platforms, including Lens.Org, Google Scholar, Emerald Insight, and Taylor and Francis. To ensure consistency, each paper underwent meticulous preparation in Lens.ORG format. Additionally, advanced mathematical tools, namely Biblioshiny and VOSviewer-based Keyword Co-Occurrence Analysis, were employed for a nuanced examination of content and structure. Within the extensive body of literature, four prominent themes emerged, encapsulating the multifaceted dimensions of tourist experience quality. Firstly, 'Tourist Contentment' surfaces as a critical aspect, delving into the holistic satisfaction and fulfilment experienced by tourists during their journeys. This theme encompasses the emotional and psychological dimensions contributing to an individual's overall contentment. Moments of Destination Image, Satisfaction, and Tourist Loyalty become focal points, providing insights into the positive tourist experiences. The second theme, 'Perceived Performance,' delves into the subjective evaluations of various components contributing to the overall tourist experience. This includes perceived values and Perceived risks. Understanding how tourists subjectively gauge the performance of these elements is pivotal in assessing the effectiveness of initiatives designed to improve their experiences. The third theme, 'Future Travel Behaviors,' explores the ramifications of current experiences on the decision-making process for future travel. Investigating how positive or negative experiences influence a tourist's likelihood to revisit a destination, recommend it to others, or explore similar destinations in the future becomes paramount. These behavioral insights are crucial for destination management and marketing strategies. The fourth theme, 'Tourist Wellbeing,' underscores the escalating importance of health and wellness considerations in shaping tourist experiences. This theme acknowledges the evolving preferences of modern tourists, who increasingly prioritize their physical and mental well-being during travel. Exploring how destinations and tourism providers can cater to these evolving needs becomes essential, paving the way for experiences that positively contribute to the overall wellbeing of tourists. While the analysis highlights the significant attention dedicated to the topic by researchers, it also reveals notable gaps in certain areas, prompting a call for further exploration. Recommendations are put forth, advocating for increased research in these underexplored domains to foster a more comprehensive understanding of tourist experience quality. In conclusion, this systematic review provides a panoramic view of empirical research on tourist experience quality from 2002 to 2023. Leveraging a rigorous methodology and advanced analytical tools, the study synthesizes existing knowledge and identifies avenues for future research. The nuanced insights derived from this exploration offer invaluable guidance for researchers, industry practitioners, and policymakers, steering the trajectory of future investigations and interventions in the dynamic realm of tourist experience quality.

Keywords: Tourist Experience Quality; Systematic Literature Review; Keyword Co-Occurrence Analysis.

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Stakeholder Insights in Coconut Tourism: An In-Depth Market Analysis for Sustainable Development

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ABSTRACT

Tourism has evolved into a dynamic industry, incorporating innovative concepts to engage diverse stakeholders. Niche tourism, characterized by tailoring specific products to the unique needs of tourist segments, has gained prominence. In this context, Sri Lanka's coconut industry emerges not only as a significant source of foreign exchange and employment but also as a crucial component of the country's cuisine, nutrition, and rural livelihood. The burgeoning concept of coconut tourism signifies a collection of products and services centered around coconut-based activities, catering to tourists, and aligning with sustainable, nature-based, eco-friendly tourism. This study focuses on exploring the prospects and analyzing the market for the development of coconut tourism in Sri Lanka. The primary objective is to understand the perspectives of key stakeholders involved in both the coconut and tourism industries. To achieve this, primary data was collected through semi-structured interviews, with six tourists in Ella selected through convenience sampling, and an additional 13 key stakeholders identified through the snowball sampling technique. The qualitative approach and thematic analysis were employed to examine the transcribed data. The study's findings, revealed through SWOT analysis, stakeholder mapping, value chain analysis, and marketing mix evaluation, showcase the potential for developing coconut tourism in Sri Lanka. Strengths and opportunities outweigh weaknesses and threats, with key stakeholders demonstrating substantial interest and influence. The collaboration between private sector companies, the government, and civil society emerges as a crucial factor in adding value to coconut tourism development. The study identifies a clear and defined marketing mix for coconut tourism, outlining significant components for each element. Moreover, the research highlights the symbiotic relationship between the private sector, government, and civil society in advancing coconut tourism in Sri Lanka. It underscores the need for collaboration and synergy to harness the strengths of each sector and create a harmonious environment for sustainable tourism development. The study offers recommendations and technical insights to foster the growth of coconut tourism, promoting the integration of the coconut and tourism industries in Sri Lanka. The analysis of the market and optimal resource utilization serves as a foundation for creating new tourism products tailored to niche categories of tourists, presenting a viable solution for the sustainable development of tourism in Sri Lanka. As the coconut tourism concept unfolds, it not only contributes to economic prosperity but also enhances the overall tourist experience, aligning with global trends in eco-friendly and sustainable travel.

Keywords: Coconut Tourism; Niche Tourism; Market Analysis; Stakeholder Perspective; Sustainable Development.

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Exploring the Dynamic Landscape of Adventure Tourism: A Comprehensive Analysis of Tourist Perceptions on Risk

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ABSTRACT

Adventure tourism has emerged as a flourishing sector in Sri Lanka, capturing the imagination of the younger generation as they enthusiastically participate in a myriad of thrilling activities. However, the symbiotic relationship between adventure and risk necessitates a nuanced understanding of the perceptions tourists hold regarding the risks associated with such endeavors. This research delves into the multifaceted realm of adventure tourism, aiming to identify and analyze the risk perceptions of adventure tourists in the Sri Lankan context. In today's competitive business environment, achieving a delicate balance between risk and safety is paramount for both tourists and adventure tourism businesses. This research serves as a valuable resource, providing insights and assistance in navigating this intricate interplay. Adopting a qualitative approach, the study employs thematic analysis based on data collected from 20 local adventure tourists, utilizing the snowball sampling technique. The research identifies distinct themes encapsulating the perceptions of adventure tourists, including perceived risk types, risk attributes, and risk reduction strategies. Adventure tourists meticulously assess the risks associated with each activity, categorizing them into perceived risk types such as Equipment risk, Physical risk, Environmental risk, Health risk, Financial risk, Time risk, and Social risk. Notably, the majority of respondents express a heightened concern for physical risks compared to other categories. Further analysis reveals key factors influencing the decision to embrace risk, categorized as risk attributes. These attributes encompass a positive outlook towards risk, possessing the necessary skills for risky activities, maintaining a positive attitude, and demonstrating a willingness to take on challenges. Adventure tourists actively seek ways to mitigate risks during activities, leading to the identification of various risk reduction strategies. These strategies include adhering to activity guidelines, engaging in team discussions, partnering with experienced individuals, availing the services of guides, and proactively addressing health concerns through the use of medications. The findings underscore the inherent subjectivity of tourist risk perceptions, emphasizing the need for a tailored approach in risk management. This study holds significance for stakeholders in the adventure tourism industry, offering valuable insights for current and future business endeavors. Entrepreneurs contemplating entry into the adventure tourism sector can leverage the research findings to make informed decisions in risk management, fostering the sustainable growth of their ventures. In conclusion, this research not only adds depth to the understanding of adventure tourism in Sri Lanka but also lays the groundwork for future research endeavors. By establishing connections between perceived risk types, risk reduction strategies, and risk attributes, researchers can contribute to the ongoing discourse surrounding adventure tourism, ensuring the industry continues to evolve in a manner that prioritizes both thrill-seekers and the sustainable growth of businesses within this dynamic sector.

Keywords: Adventure Tourist; Risk Perception; Perceived Risk Types; Risk Attributes; Risk Reduction Strategies.

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Implications of Sustainable Mountain Tourism in Sri Lanka: Tour Operators' Perspective

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ABSTRACT

Mountain tourism can be considered a special interest type as well as an alternative type of tourism, which can be implemented sustainably. In light of the research gap highlighted by the Sri Lanka Tourism Development Authority (SLTDA), the lack of research into alternative, niche, and emerging tourism markets has hindered the capacity of tourism offerings, tourism product diversity, and product development in Sri Lanka. Which has made Sri Lanka popular only for the existing tourism hotspots. Previous researchers found mountain tourism as one of the best alternative tourism types for countries with appealing mountainous areas, since mountains are high in sensitivity, the involvement of an intermediary is essential to reach the destinations while guiding travelers toward responsible tourism. As the involvement of intermediaries in developing mountain tourism in Sri Lanka has not been explored, this study was implemented to identify the tour operators' role in the mountain tourism context. Accordingly, the study has embraced a qualitative research approach as it's well-suited for exploratory studies which aid in analyzing social issues and capturing the nuanced perceptions of individuals. The population of the study consisted of 602 tour operators who have registered under SLTDA. Among the tour operators, ones who engaged in developing and implementing mountain tourism activities were selected using the purposive sampling technique. Data was obtained via semi-structured interviews. Content analysis was adopted to analyze the collected data. The findings of the study identified that tour operators play five significant roles that meet the needs of sustainability. The role of Marketing and promotion as well as the contribution to product development has been identified as the main roles that reflect their involvement in economic sustainability. Further, the findings suggest that tour operators practice thorough planning and monitoring during all three stages of mountain tourism. Which are pre-tour, on-tour and post-tour. Accordingly, this indicates the concern as well as the contribution that they have adopted to maintain an appropriate carrying capacity while maintaining responsible tourism practices. This highlights the role that tour operators play in environmental sustainability. Furthermore, the findings indicated the relationship that tour operators maintain with the local people and local suppliers. They tend to involve the local community in their on-tour activities which indicates their role in networking. Accordingly, it reflects their contribution to economic sustainability. Nevertheless, the study strongly recommends enhancing private-public partnerships (PPP) and collaborations in the tourism industry as it were lacking in the current context. Further, the study suggests that the combined tourism products could further develop mountain tourism's potential, which has not been addressed yet.

Keywords: Mountain Tourism; Sustainable Mountain Tourism; Role of Tour Operators; Alternative Type of Tourism; Special Interest Tourism.

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Proposing a Sustainable and Inclusive Museum Model: A Case Study of Italian Cultural Tourism

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ABSTRACT

This research addresses the imperative need for inclusive tourism, with a specific focus on cultural experiences for individuals with disabilities. Significant impairments affect over 1.3 billion individuals globally, including 5.8% of children and adolescents aged 0-14 (WHO, 2022). In addition to being a fundamental human right, ensuring that everyone has access to travel promotes equality, social integration, and improved standards of living. Cultural tourism emerges as a powerful avenue to achieve these goals, fostering social interaction, community engagement, and personal growth for people with disabilities while promoting intercultural understanding (Moura et al., 2018; Pagan, 2020). The academic discourse in tourism studies over disabilities is quite lively. While some research views individuals with disabilities as an unexplored market segment (Huh and Singh, 2007; Lyu, 2017), others delve into the challenges they encounter, spanning physical, sensory, cognitive, attitudinal, and social realms (Darcy and Dickson, 2009; Buhalis and Darcy, 2011; Darcy et al. 2020; McKercher and Darcy, 2018). Information technology, accessible infrastructure, and training for tourism experts constitute a handful of the suggested remedies (Small et al., 2012; Michopoulou and Buhalis, 2013; Liasidou et al., 2019; Cengiz, 2016). Recent efforts emphasize the direct involvement of individuals with disabilities in designing accessible tourism initiatives, necessitating collaboration among government agencies, disability groups, and tourism industry practitioners (Gillovic and McIntosh, 2020).

As cultural tourism is a pivotal segment of the global tourism market, it requires special attention. Existing literature emphasizes the importance of inclusive cultural sites, addressing physical barriers and ensuring digital content accessibility (Poria et al., 2009; Evcil, 2018; Ribeiro et al., 2018). However, the engagement of people with disabilities in designing cultural experiences remains a challenge, highlighting the need for increased awareness and training among tourism and culture professionals (Liasidou et al., 2019).

Within this context, children with disabilities encounter significant marginalization, grappling with substantial barriers to accessing cultural sites (Tecău et al., 2019; Shiraani and Carr, 2022). While existing literature suggests different approaches to enhance inclusivity, such multisensory exhibits and participatory museum practices (Sheehy et al., 2019; Vaz et al., 2020), it is crucial to recognize that these strategies predominantly target adults, inadvertently leaving children with disabilities overlooked. Hence, despite the growing scholarly interest in disability and tourism, research on children with disabilities and their families remains limited, unveiling substantial challenges such as physical barriers, information gaps, inadequate training of service providers, and prevailing negative attitudes.

Focusing on Italy's renowned cultural heritage, this exploratory study delves into 315 Italian museums, aiming to comprehend their approaches in accommodating visitors with disabilities. The research goes beyond by proposing a MIMIC model (Jöreskog and Goldberger, 1975; Muthén, 1989) to gauge the impact of sustainable tourism, specifically assessing the intricate relationship between visitor satisfaction and museum accessibility. Introducing the Sustainability and Inclusiveness of Museums (SIM) model, the study comprehensively evaluates museums' inclination towards inclusion, grounded in accessibility, adequacy, and visitor satisfaction. The robustness of the model is

substantiated through results validated by a split-half sampling strategy, affirming its effectiveness in assessing the sustainability and inclusiveness of museums.

This research contributes to the broader discourse on disability and tourism by filling critical gaps in understanding the unique challenges faced by children with disabilities in cultural tourism. The proposed SIM model offers a comprehensive framework for evaluating museums, paving the way for more inclusive and sustainable cultural tourism experiences.

Keywords: Sustainable Tourism; Accessibility; MIMIC Model; Missing Values.

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Sustainable Tourism: Industry and Communities

NotOnMap

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ABSTRACT

NotOnMap is a pioneering start-up in the sustainable tourism sector, addressing the inherent negative impacts of conventional tourism on the environment and local communities. Established in 2018, the company has quickly gained traction in India's travel industry, capitalizing on the surge in tourism during the first quarter of 2023. NotOnMap envisions a world where travel catalyses positive change, empowering local communities, preserving cultural heritage, and conserving the environment.

The start-up distinguishes itself through a commitment to sustainability, community engagement, and environmental stewardship. By uncovering offbeat destinations rich in culture and heritage, NotOnMap aims to offer travellers unique and authentic experiences while supporting local communities and alleviating distressed migration. The initiative bridges the urban-rural gap, emphasizing the cultural and economic significance of each destination.

NotOnMap offers an array of products and services catering to various stakeholders in the sustainable tourism ecosystem. For travellers, the start-up provides rustic accommodations, exclusive cultural experiences, long-stay options, and customized itineraries. Additionally, it encourages travellers to contribute positively to the communities they visit through interactive activities and volunteering. Local communities benefit from economic empowerment, capacity building, and a platform to showcase their cultural heritage. Accommodation partners gain market access and promotion, while government entities and NGOs collaborate with NotOnMap to promote sustainable tourism. The start-up has a four-tier organizational structure, including an executive board, advisory board, team members, and local champions. With a network of 782 properties across India, NotOnMap has impacted over 50,000 lives, restoring culturally significant homes and connecting with more than 2500 communities.

In terms of finances, NotOnMap initially relied on founder investment and subsequently secured a €250K grant from Booking.com. The cost structure includes technology infrastructure, customer acquisition, staffing, and sustainability initiatives, while revenue streams come from commissions, subscriptions, partnerships, collaborations, and customized travel experiences. The sustainable tourism challenge is to make tourism nature-positive, addressing issues of overconsumption, resource depletion, and pollution. NotOnMap acknowledges challenges such as mind-set shift, limited resources, collaboration complexities, policy hurdles, and the delicate balance between economic growth and environmental preservation. The business idea revolves around developing rural and community-based sustainable tourism. NotOnMap focuses on enhancing infrastructure, providing training to locals, and promoting eco-friendly practices. The start-up aims to create a positive impact by fostering economic development, cultural preservation, and environmental conservation.

External analysis reveals emerging trends favouring sustainable tourism, including conscious travellers, demand for local experiences, changing preferences, and increased support for rural communities. Internally, NotOnMap's strengths include offbeat destinations, community empowerment, sustainability commitment, and cultural preservation. Challenges include limited market awareness and funding constraints. NotOnMap's activities encompass awareness campaigns, rural development, traveller engagement, local training, promoting local participation, and creating customized services. The start-up collaborates with travellers, government authorities, local residents, service providers, communities, investors, and its team of employees. Target markets include

travellers seeking diverse cultural experiences and local hospitality. Beneficiaries encompass travellers, government authorities, rural residents, local service providers, local communities, and investors.

Partnerships are crucial, involving local communities, accommodation providers, NGOs, government agencies, travel agents, and social enterprises. Finances have evolved from founder investment to a significant grant from Booking.com. NotOnMap's impact is transformative and creating a virtuous cycle benefiting all stakeholders. Travelers enjoy unique experiences, local communities prosper economically, and the environment is conserved. The start-up has the potential to solidify its position, expanding its reach through strategic partnerships and leveraging technology for social and economic change.

Keywords: Sustainable Tourism Sector; Partnerships; Travelers.

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Bhairavnath Topi Pasal

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ABSTRACT

This case study delves into the triumphs and obstacles faced by Bhairavnath Topi Pasal, a traditional Nepali apparel store, with a specific focus on the sales of Bhadgaunle Topi as a souvenir. Under the leadership of Kiran Pradhananga, the business, with a heritage spanning over eight decades, remains committed to upholding its family legacy by promoting locally crafted items. The store's strategic pivot to diversify its product line, incorporating Dhaka Topi, Daura Suruwal, and other customary garments, not only catered to the needs of the target market during peak periods but also played a role in safeguarding Nepali culture and empowering local communities. However, challenges such as seasonal demand fluctuations and the scarcity of skilled craftsmen pose hurdles. The case underscores the significance of sustainable tourism and acknowledges the growing necessity for an online presence to access global markets. The examination of financial structures, cost considerations, and revenue streams exposes the seasonal sales nature, requiring adept management during off-peak intervals. The evaluation of impacts highlights positive outcomes for both the target market and stakeholders, encompassing job creation, cultural conservation, and economic advantages. The business's dedication to sustainability is conspicuous through its utilization of local resources and environmentally conscious practices. In the reflections section, the case acknowledges the project's success in navigating a competitive market while suggesting potential areas for enhancement, such as employee incentives and a more robust online marketing strategy. Overall, the study underscores the importance of adapting to market dynamics, upholding quality standards, and cultivating sustainable business practices within the realm of traditional craftsmanship and tourism.

Keywords: Heritage; Local communities; Nepal.

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Garhwal Mandal Vikas Nigam: A Holistic Approach to Sustainable Tourism

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ABSTRACT

Case Context: Garhwal Mandal Vikas Nigam (GMVN) is a government organization that has been working to develop tourism in the Garhwal region of Uttarakhand, India, since 1976. They have built hotels, guesthouses, and tourist bungalows to cater to budget travelers and luxury seekers alike. They also offer transportation services, organized tours, and adventure activities like trekking and river rafting. GMVN also facilitates pilgrimages to Badrinath, Kedarnath, Yamunotri, and Gangotri. The organization's vision is to transform Uttarakhand into a flourishing tourist destination by enhancing its accessibility, appeal, and opulence. They believe that tourism can be a powerful engine for economic growth and development. GMVN's mission is to provide high-quality tourism products and services that meet the needs of all visitors.

Here are some of the specific products and services that GMVN offers:

Accommodation: GMVN operates over 90 hotels, guesthouses, and tourist bungalows across the Garhwal region. These accommodations range from budget-friendly guest houses to luxurious hotels offering panoramic views.

Transportation: GMVN offers organized tours, comprehensive transportation packages, and secure travel options for sightseeing and adventurous escapades. This includes bus and train travel arrangements, as well as taxi services for exploring the region.

Adventure tourism: GMVN arranges trekking, mountaineering, river rafting, camping, and various other adventure pursuits amidst the Garhwal Himalayas.

GMVN is committed to responsible tourism practices and takes steps to minimize the environmental impact of its operations. They also work to promote the culture and heritage of the Garhwal region.

GMVN's impact on the Garhwal region is positive and multifaceted. It contributes to economic growth, social development, environmental protection, and cultural preservation. By promoting sustainable tourism practices and collaborating with local communities, GMVN plays a crucial role in ensuring the long-term prosperity and well-being of the region.

Concluding Remarks: GMVN's unwavering commitment to sustainable tourism stands as a beacon of inspiration within the landscape of travel and hospitality. Through pioneering initiatives, GMVN has exemplified how responsible tourism practices can coexist harmoniously with economic growth, environmental preservation, and community well-being.

As GMVN continues to pave the way for responsible travel, its legacy extends beyond infrastructure and operations; it echoes a profound commitment to safeguarding the rich cultural heritage and natural splendor of Uttarakhand. By embracing sustainability as a core ethos, GMVN exemplifies how the fusion of visionary leadership and concerted action can shape a future where tourism thrives in harmony with the environment and local communities, leaving a lasting positive impact on generations to come.

Keywords: Garhwal Mandal Vikas Nigam; Sustainable Tourism; Uttarakhand.

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Community Based Eco-Tourism: A Case Study on Vana Vihari, Mareduilli, Andhra Pradesh, India

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ABSTRACT

Globally, it is evident that there need to be a shift in lifestyle to move away from a consumer driven society to one that is environmentally, economically, and socioculturally sustainable. Sustainable eco-tourism can educate tourists and locals alike about the cultural and natural significance of an area. It has positive implications for the relationships between the tourism business and the local community and has the potential to provide a stable economic flow into local areas. Vana Vihari' is an initiative of Government of Andhra Pradesh and Forest Department and maintained by Community Based Eco-Tourism (CBET), Mareduilli. It is formed to allow the tourists to enjoy nature and to inculcate the essence of conservation of wild resources. The business was started with a 15-member management committee with 50 percent women representation. The accounts are maintained by the management committee under a joint account opened on the name of the chairman of the management committee and Forest Section Officer concerned who is the member secretary of the committee. The present eco-tourism business has been initiated with a vision to provide livelihood to the local communities there by promote indigenous art and culture. The tourists are offered attractive eco-products at the destination. Some of the best products of Vana Vihari in Mareduilli are Jungle Star Nature Camp, Vana Vihari Eco Tourism, Birds Nest Resorts, Jungle Bells Nature Camp, Bamboo Nest Resort. Vana Vihari (the brand name of Community Based Eco-tourism –CBET, Mareduilli, E.G. Dt. Andhra Pradesh State) is well designed and equipped with naturebased service. Their target groups are young people who love nature tourism. They are working on marketing efforts for its growth to improve the local people livelihoods. The ecotourism project is managed by the local, indigenous tribal community (Konda Reddy) of Valamuru Somireddy palem and Addaraveedhi Forest Protection Committees, with the active support of the Forest Department. The operations at these centres are totally managed by local community members comprising of tribal community of Konda Reddy's. Andhra Pradesh Tourism Development Corporation provides marketing support and training of the tribes in hospitality-related activities like food and beverage service, housekeeping, and guide services.

Keywords: Eco-Tourism; Community; Andhra Pradesh.

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Case Challenge on Homestay of Nepal Special Reference to Kirtipur Community Homestay

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ABSTRACT

Kirtipur Community Homestay, established in 2019 A.D. in Kirtipur, Nepal, is a growing lodging institute committed to providing unique and authentic homestay experiences. Focused on social development through tourism, the homestay offers a family environment, emphasizing responsible tourism and sustainability. Core values include providing employment to local women, involving the community, and preserving traditional culture. The vision of this community homestay is to be a leading homestay promoting sustainable tourism, preserving local culture, and contributing to community development. Their mission is to create lifetime experiences for visitors, involving the local community, and showcasing cultural heritage. Their major missions include offering comfortable homestay accommodation, promoting cultural heritage through tours, and contributing to economic and social development. Products/services include homestay accommodation, local Newari food, and cultural tours. The target market comprises cultural and eco-tourists interested in authentic experiences. The homestay's unique community-based approach ensures community ownership through a cooperative structure and a management committee. Kirtipur Community Homestay tackles issues like limited resources, manpower, and space by emphasizing eco-tourism, community development, cultural heritage preservation, minimizing environmental impact, and fostering collaboration with stakeholders. Sustainable tourism innovation tackles issues like managing tourists, balancing cultural preservation with diverse expectations, and ensuring community benefits. The homestay prioritizes cultural immersion, offers various activities, and partners with local organizations for community development. The SWOT analysis highlights strengths in natural and cultural resources but identifies weaknesses in community ownership and training. Opportunities include increasing social media promotion and collaborating with stakeholders. Activities range from homestay experiences to village tours, promoting tourism in the area. Stakeholders such as local communities, tourists, government, NGOs, and tour operators play crucial roles in the homestay. It contributes to the local economy and aligns with government objectives, addressing challenges through collaboration. Beneficiaries include the local community, government, and tourists, with financial reliance on community resources and initial local support. Positive impacts encompass economic benefits, cultural exchange, and sustainable tourism, while the environmental impact ranges from positive awareness to negative resource consumption. Kirtipur Community Homestay has made progress in sustainable tourism and women empowerment, but there is a need for continued improvement. Increased support from international and local government authorities is essential for awareness and program enhancement.

Keywords: Community Homestay; Community Development; Kirtipur.

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Examining the Extend of Adoption of Corporate Sustainability Practices by Tourist Hotels: Evidence from Sri Lanka

C.N.R. Wijesundara, Ali Khatibi** and S.M. Ferdous Azam***

ABSTRACT

Sustainability has attained enough attention from the business world and it has gained considerable attention from the lodging industry as well. Specially the lodging industry has paid their concern on sustainability due to the pressure generated from the different tourism stakeholders. Since Sri Lankan hospitality sector has gained a sudden boom in the post-war economic development of the country, sustainability became one of the key concerns to confirm the long-term prosperity of the industry & country. Simply, sustainability refers to the achieving the needs of the present without compromising future generations to achieve their own needs & expectations. To attain this sustainability, many business firms have adopted certain steps to achieve the sustainability goals and to enhance their business operations. The ultimate objective of this study is to discover the extend of adoption of corporate sustainability practices by tourist hotels, drawing on evidence from Sri Lanka. The quantitative research approach was employed to achieve the research objective. 207 self-administered questionnaires were used to gather required information and analysed them by employing the Mean ranking & Summated-rated scale technique. The results revealed that tourist hotels have put great emphasis on environment perspective and social prosperity. Even though the conception of corporate sustainability of all the tourist hotels seems to be the same, their application and implementation of practices were differentiated by the nature of their operations and their resource capabilities. The conclusions imply that business sustainability practices are socially formed and offer justification for destination design, development, and management.

Keywords: Sustainability Practices; Tourist Hotels; Sri Lanka.

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