

## GREEN INITIATIVES FOR SUSTAINABLE INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT: A BRIEF ANALYSIS OF TOURISM INDUSTRY

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Dr. Sumita Sharda\*  
Ms. Akanksha Bhardwaj\*\*

### ABSTRACT

*An Inclusive Sustainable Industrialization is one of the major factors in the “2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development”. A great challenge for manifesting Sustainable Industrial Growth reflects the innovations and Implementation of the green initiatives, especially in the tourism industry, being one of the most promising drivers of the world’s economic growth and having a close impact on various other economic and social sectors. Despite, facing significant sustainability-related challenges, the Tourism industry is one amongst all, seeking out proactive efforts to conserving unique and natural resources, decreasing carbon emissions, preserving social and cultural assets, and also increasing investments in both the public and private sector for improving tourism sustainability. Many previous kinds of research done in this area have not illuminated the green initiatives, their implementation, and the major hurdles being faced by the Tourism Industries. This paper attempts to demonstrate the major green transitions and their overall impact on sustainable growth, by analyzing the qualitative data of some of the world’s top tourism companies, for which a theoretical framework has been adopted.*

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**Keywords:** *Sustainable Industrialization, Green Initiatives, Tourism & Related Sectors, Environment & Economy.*

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### Introduction

In the present era, the overall development of a country is completely based on its industrial growth potentials while no industry can last longer without carrying out relative sustainability. As the natural resources are scarce on the planet and their overexploitation is leading the world towards life having the drastic dearth of basic needs where nothing much will remain to survive appropriately.

Considering the severity, several initiatives have been put forward on a global level in the form of numerous researches, Government policies & regulations, and social organizations to bring out the balance between environmental sustainability and prosperous economic growth. On that account a quantum leap has been made by the International community UNIDO, including sustainable industrialization as one of the major goals (SDG 9) featured strongly in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. To build a bouncy infrastructure and promote inclusive sustainable industrialization, fostering green innovation and environmental progress can pave the way for a more ambitious inclusive and universal development.

The hospitality & tourism industry is one of the major players, contributing a greater proportion to the economic development of a country and also having a significant impact on environmental sustainability due to having a direct connection with biodiversity, green forest reserves, carbon emissions, water & other natural resource consumption and the respective local community’s well being, etc.

### Industry of Tourism

In the past few years, the Tourism sector has become the most prominent source of accelerating the GDP of a country. Tourism is a huge, vibrant, dynamic, and growth-oriented industry. It comprises a combination of interconnected activities of tourists while traveling to a place. Therefore it is

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\* Assistant Professor, Maheshwari Girls P.G. College, Jaipur, Rajasthan, India.

\*\* Assistant Professor, Maheshwari Girls P.G. College, Jaipur, Rajasthan, India.

closely interlinked with the different sectors or sub-industries providing the products and services at different levels of travel & tourism and serving the various needs of the visitors. Sustainable tourism simply means a set of accountable conducts by the people involved, nurturing the environment, society, and economy together by way of minimizing the negative impacts and achieving optimality.

Among all the other industries, our study puts a light on the positive and negative environmental, social and economical effects laid down by the tourism sector and also the required green initiatives by way of technological & non-technological innovations to ensure a greater sustainable growth in the sector.

### **Tourism has a Significant Influence on Economic, Environmental, and Social Sustainability**

- **Impact on Economy**

Countries such as the Maldives, British Virgin Islands, China, and Seychelles including many others across the world, depend highly on the tourism sector as a source of income generation.

India has always been observed a remarkable spectrum in the tourism industry, owning the rich cultural and historical heritage, ecological diversity, terrains, and places of natural beauty spread across the country. As per the latest report in December 2020, the Tourism sector has created around 39 million jobs in India, reflecting 8.0% of the total employment in the country. According to WTTC, India holds 10th position amongst 185 countries in terms of travel & tourism's total contribution to GDP in 2019 while it globally became the third largest with an inflow of US\$ 45.7 billion in 2018, accounting for 5.9% of the total investment in the country (IBEF, 2020). On the other hand, the tourism sector in Canada is booming globally, observing an incredible spike approximately three to four times faster than population, and was being expected to set a trend about 1.5 times faster than global GDP until the drastic exposure of COVID Pandemic in mid-2020, expected to be subdued soon. It has been observed that this sector has outpaced global GDP growth for the seventh successive year, even as the world observed the strongest GDP growth in a decade. (Destination Canada , 2018). Tourism is the main source of foreign exchange for one-third of developing countries and one-half of less economically developed countries (LEDCs).

Contemplating the above data, it's quite evident that the Tourism industry is the one rapidly accelerating its pace all over the world hence become the most prominent one from an economic perspective.

- **Impact on Environment**

As observing the emergence of the tourism industry, its impact on the natural resources and local communities are significant. The growth of the tourism sector can be both positively & negatively correlated with environmental behavior. The word tourism has received an unfairly tarnished reputation. Most of the researches mainly highlighted its negative impacts while this paper primarily focuses to indicate the positive sides, demonstrating to those, who still have much chaos in planning and implementing the green initiatives, so that more and more endeavors in the targeted sector can be geared up in the direction of the overall sustainability.

#### **Positive Aspects**

- **Increasing Environmental Awareness:** The tourism sector has paved the way for those who want to have close belongings to nature and its beauty and seek in-depth knowledge which could increase the awareness of the value of nature and lead to environmentally conscious behaviors.
- **Protection and Preservation:** Considerable efforts have been put in place, protecting the environment, conserving and restoring the biodiversity, cultural heritage, and accessing the natural resources consciously by the creation of National parks and Wildlife sanctuaries.
- **Employment for Local Communities:** One of the most favorable aspects of Tourism is, involving the local community in developing their business by way of providing them a better-earning opportunity, participating them in the major operations of the business, and paving a promising way for their upcoming generations.
- **Global Competence:** Many visitors from all over the world keen on visiting the domestic country's tourism places, this leads to adding on much amount of foreign reserves rapidly and brings the country's global competence and image to its fullest extent.
- **Sense of belongingness & Cohesion:** Exploring the diverse cultural & historical heritage, the visitors around the world can have a sense of belongingness and oneness which lead to nurturing respect and understanding for each other, irrespective of the country, caste, religion.

### Challenges in Tourism Sustainability

The concept of sustainable tourism has been facing many arduous challenges since the publication of Agenda 21 for the Travel and Tourism Industry. Myriad researches, Government policies & regulations have come up with the idea of benefiting the industry on an economic, Social & environmental basis but yet the practical implementation of sustainable tourism (ST) practices seems to be far beyond the planned prospective. Due to the slower pace of change, we need to move forward, illuminating the main hurdles in implementing sustainable changes.

- **Lack of sense of responsibility:** The biggest challenge while implementing green efforts is the lack of awareness & responsibility in people as most of them while exploring the destinations, don't pay the needed attention and tend to exploit the resources unconsciously. This leads to considering some careful tourism management policies & strategic awareness programs to arouse consumer's sense of responsibility concerning behavioral changes, plastic uses, accessing the natural places without distorting their ecology and biodiversity.
- **Impracticable Sustainable Solutions:** Most of the destinations, hotels, tours, cruises, ships, and airlines around the world claim themselves to be sustainable and untouched from the planet-destroying problem, but in so many studies it is found to be nearly impossible. For instance, the most promising Eco-friendly Boat tour asserted by a tourism company "Eco-Friendly Vietnam" has no longer remained the same after having huge popularity in the segment.
- **The idea of Sustainability appeals to a huge cost for the Industry:** Turning the entire structure into an eco-friendly setup might save loads of water, electricity, and other resources but it will cost a fortune to the owner which the visitors might not be sensible for. Hence, it does not contemplate sound profits and growth of the business for a longer perspective.
- **Sustainability on hold due to COVID Pandemic:** The Tourism & Food Industry go hand in hand and as far as the sustainability concern, The COVID-19 crisis has disrupted the evolving sustainability movement in both the industries. The increasing use of single-serving containers may be safer from the social distancing perspectives but it has drastically boost up the use of plastics in many ways. For instance, since the discontinuation of lockdown, many restaurants revamped into takeout operations and stocking up on single-use containers only.
- **Absence of cooperative spirit:** It was found in some studies that the cut-throat competition among the corporate players puts a restrain on the path of sustainability. The planned initiatives are not worth corroborating until the whole industry along with other sub industries act together and make some practical changes that require a sense of unity and honesty towards the achievement of sustainable goals.

### Embracing Green Revolution In the Industry

Despite, facing many challenges, there are yet to bring some most valuable Green Initiatives into the light, taken around the world, in the direction of empowering the Sustainable Industrial Movement. This paper enlightens some of the major exertions put forward all over the world.

- The turbulent change due to COVID is not a lost cause of sustainability in the tourism sector. An article reveals that the growing use of single used plastic containers and other products can be neutralized by boosting the zero-waste movement on an individual as well as industrial level, focusing on minimizing the creation of trash, refusing to accept single-use plastics, and also trying to identify how to keep reusables, well, usable. ( Amalya Dubrovsky,2020)
- It was revealed in an Article (Bill Roth, 2009) that the U.S. hotel industry has impacted the \$90 billion of the economy by aligning the green economic revolution and bringing unique opportunities to Hoteliers and their vendors by putting forth their customers' emerging green focus to increase revenue and market. One of the hotel's motto was "Environmental consciousness in action." concerning which The hotel environment was kept free of toxic chemicals, implanted the largest hotel solar system in the continental U.S., and own planted organic fruits and vegetables were used for hotel food services and to the local food banks.
- One of the prime players, "Green Destination" a Non-profit organization that has been working for years, in upgrading the sustainable endeavors through initiating 'Assessment & Certification programs'. It provides an online platform based upon GSTC-Recognised standards and a database with data from 2000 destinations to help destinations in improving sustainability management and performance.

- **Proximity** Hotel in America has been rewarded as the first LEED Platinum “green hotel” that runs around 70 sustainable practices in place, including 100 solar panels for power and Elevators producing Geothermal energy for the refrigerator. Additionally, the overall energy consumption is 39.2% less than a standard hotel. LEED is an Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) Green Building Rating System, the nationally accepted benchmark for the design, construction, and operation of high-performance green buildings, initiated by the U.S. Green Building Council. The system provides an immediate and measurable tool to the building owners and operators that analyze the impact on their buildings’ performance.
- **EcoCamp** Patagonia is one of the world’s Eco-friendly Tourism company, located in Torres del Paine National Park, **England**, opened in 2001. The company offers fully sustainable geodesic hotel accommodation and trip services ensuring a positive eco-friendly attitude towards their guests and the Environment. The company emphasizes employing mainly the locals as guides, who are environmentally-conscious trekking enthusiasts.
- **Bardesseno** in California specializes in using natural heating and energy sources and organic materials for their cleaning supplies.
- **Green House** Hotel in the U.K. mainly focuses on sourcing local products to reduce energy waste in transportation and support local community business and follow the principle of Reduce, Reuse, and Recycle to minimize waste, landfills, and the unnecessary production of food.

### Suggestions

Though, based on the above findings, it is quite evident that an enormous amount of Green initiatives are being put forth by the big giants of the tourism industry, setting up great milestones of reaping sustainable benefits to others in the world. Nevertheless, there is still a large part of the sector especially the small & medium businesses who, due to the high restructuring cost, hesitate to step forward and remain unenlightened by the evolving idea of sustainability. However, as per the World Travel and Tourism Council’s estimation, due to COVID 19 crisis In 2020, up to 198 million tourism jobs are at risk with a drastic loss of up to US\$5.5 trillion in GDP, nonetheless, this drastic disruption in tourism activity can be assumed as an opportunity for businesses and the Governments to reconsider their Green measures and redirecting the sector’s path towards a more socially inclusive and environmentally sustainable future.

### Conclusion

Conclusively, it can be stated that tourism and its sub-sectors yet to have many aspects to unfold in sustainable business development and become a possibility as a testing ground for sustainable management solutions where recourses can be learned to guide the other areas of the world.

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