


"STUDY ON SUSTAINING TOURISM POST COVID-19 PANDEMIC IN INDIA"

Mr. Nikhil Wankhede

Assistant Professor,

Department of Hotel Management

Sahyog College of Management Studies, Thane

Abstract

In the context of globalized processes, the importance of the sustainable development concept in solving the problems of local tourism systems development is growing. Unprecedented challenges caused by the COVID-19 crisis in the tourism sector, on the one hand, questioned the possibility of fulfilling the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the goals of sustainable tourism. On the other hand, they emphasized the need for balance between three pillars of sustainability, both as an urgency tool to cope with the pandemic crisis and as a solid basis for long-term development in the post-pandemic period. The study presented in the paper discusses sustainability issues in rural tourism as one of the most promising sectors for the development of domestic tourism.



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Introduction:

Government of India has planned and implemented many drives like Beti Bachao- Beti Padhao, Swachha Bharat, Make In India and many more for the welfare indian citizens and Digital of India is one of ongoing drive. Digital India was launched on 1st July 2015 by Prime Minister Shri. Narendra Modi. There were many objectives behind this Digital India. Tourism is an important contributor to the world economy. The tourism industry not only generates revenues for a country, but it is also one of the most important engines for economic growth and development. This sector simultaneously offers the opportunity for economies to grow and people to earn income, while tourism spending is associated with improvements in well-being for consumers of tourism services. As a labour-intensive sector, tourism generates employment, while fostering skills development and local entrepreneurship. Its connectivity and mobility features play a key role in regional integration and economic inclusion.

The growing influence of the tourism sector as an economic powerhouse and its potential as a tool for development are irrefutable. Not only does the tourism sector spearhead growth, it also improves the quality of people's lives with its capacity to create large scale employment of diverse kind. It supports environmental protection, champions the diverse cultural heritage and strengthens peace in the world. As the ultimate cross-cutting sector, tourism contributes directly or indirectly to all of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Impact of the Covid 19 Pandemic-

The World Health Organization (WHO) on March 11, 2020, declared the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak a global pandemic.³ Tourism was one of the first sectors to be deeply impacted by the pandemic, as measures introduced to contain the virus led to a near-complete cessation of tourism activities around the world. The COVID-19 pandemic has hit the tourism economy hard with unprecedented effects on jobs and businesses. Destinations that rely heavily on



international, business and events tourism are struggling. This sector also risks being among one of the last to recover with the ongoing travel restrictions and the global recession. This has consequences beyond the tourism economy, with many other sectors that support and are supported by tourism also significantly impacted. The impacts of COVID-19 on tourism threaten to increase poverty (SDG 1) and inequality (SDG 10) and reverse nature and cultural conservation efforts. The pandemic also risks slowing down progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Tourism is directly referenced in three goals: SDG 8 on —decent work and economic growth, SDG 12 —responsible consumption and production and SDG 14 —life below water.

Challenges-

Historically, tourism has shown a strong ability to adapt, innovate and recover from adversity. However, this unprecedented situation requires new approaches and strong multi-level response and partnerships. The COVID-19 global crisis is unprecedented. The uncertain lifecycle, geographical and temporal distribution and intensity of the pandemic make it impossible at this time to predict the actual timing and path of recovery. However, one thing is certain - the global travel and tourism industry is already facing and is likely to continue to face extraordinary challenges. The five biggest of these are i) increasing focus on health and hygiene standards; ii) understanding how demand is changing (including the role of domestic and regional tourism); iii) interpreting changing business models due to consolidation and corporate restructuring; iv) mobilizing innovation and technology solutions impacting distribution and market access; and v) guiding public investments in destinations to position them for a more sustainable and resilient tourism industry post COVID-19.

Recovery will require phased actions and creative policies enabling all stakeholders to adapt to a new business landscape. The public and private sectors along with destination communities will need to work together to create solutions. Historically, demand is known to rebound after a crisis, though the recovery time may vary. In this instance, the tourism sector can expect substantial change in supply and demand patterns emerging from this crisis. There will likely be a downturn in disposable income leading to less travel for some groups and renewed travel for higher-end market segments. Corporations are likely to experience consolidation as Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) face extended distress and even bankruptcy.

The COVID-19 pandemic will undoubtedly leave a deep imprint on the structure of the travel and tourism industry. Collapsing consumer demand, low cash reserves, and a lack of access to flexible lines of credit has forced many smaller travel and tourism operators to close. At the same time, while the larger firms are better positioned to withstand this crisis, they are also facing significant challenges as demand is not recovering anytime soon.

Measures taken by India-

The Ministry of Tourism has taken the following initiatives for the development and promotion of domestic tourism in the country:

- **Dekho Apna Desh:** The Ministry had launched the Dekho Apna Desh (DAD) initiative in line with the appeal of the Hon'ble Prime Minister asking every citizen to visit at least 15 destinations by the year 2022 to promote domestic tourism. DAD is promoted extensively on social media accounts and the website of the Ministry and by the Domestic India Tourism offices. Under this initiative ministry carries out a series of webinars showcasing the diverse culture, heritage, destinations and tourism products of the country. As on date 52 webinars have been organised with a viewership of more than 2 lakhs. To create a mass awareness, the Ministry has also launched an



online pledge and Quiz on DAD on the MyGov.in platform.

- **Bharat Parv and Paryatan Parv:** The Ministry has been organizing the Bharat Parv and Paryatan Parv in collaboration with the States/ UTs and other central ministries / Departments for the last four years to showcase the rich culture, history and heritage of India to the citizens. The objective of these events is to draw focus on the benefits of Tourism and reinforcing the principle of tourism for all.
- **Domestic Tourism campaigns and promotion on Social Media and website:** Promotion campaigns are carried out through DAVP in Domestic market on Electronic and print media promoting domestic tourism. Ministry also carries out promotion of destinations, products, festivals, cuisines etc. of the country on its social media handles.
- **Development of Tourism Infrastructure:** The Ministry of Tourism under its Swadesh Darshan and PRASHAD schemes have sanctioned projects worth approx. Rs. 6500 crores for the development of the tourism infrastructure to provide a better experience and facilities to the visitors.
- **Social awareness campaigns:** The Ministry runs campaigns under the brand line Atithi Devo Bhava on sensitizing the citizens on social issues like respect towards women, cleanliness, graffiti etc.
- **Quiz / Essay Competitions at Schools and institutions:** The Ministry through its field offices organises quiz programmes, poster making and essay competitions at institutes of hotel management (IHMs), Indian institutes of tourism and travel management (ITTMs), Schools to create awareness about history, heritage, tourism products and destinations in the country.
- **Promotion of Fairs/ festivals/Events** – To create awareness among the masses the Ministry celebrates special events / days with citizen's participation like International Day of Yoga, World Tourism Day, Constitution Day, Independence day and other regional festivals.
- **Aerial Photography:** The Ministry of Tourism has commissioned serial photography of key cities and cultural assets (Delhi, Chennai, Kolkata, Mumbai, Bengaluru, Udupi, Aurangabad, Iconic Tourist sites) across the country during lockdown.
- **Communication with Industry Stake Holders:** The Ministry and the Regional offices are regularly communicating with the Travel Industry and other stakeholders on issues related to opening up of Tourism sector, handling of tourists, protocols of safety and security, service standards etc.
- **SAATHI Initiative:** To rebuild the trust of the domestic and international traveler in terms of India being a safe destination to travel in the post COVID scenario, the Ministry of Tourism launched the System for Assessment, Awareness and Training for Hospitality Industry (SAATHI). As India opens up for tourism, hotel owners can easily get themselves trained and certified through the SAATHI website following three easy steps. The First step involves Self Certification in which users will be informed about the key elements and a certification will be generated. Following, this a participation certificate will be awarded to owners enrolling for a free webinar. The final step involves site assessment (paid), certifying the ground preparedness of the hotels, and homestays.

Conclusion-

Tourism is at a crossroads and the measures put in place today will shape the tourism of tomorrow. The survival of businesses throughout the tourism ecosystem is at risk without the continued government support. While addressing the immediate socio-economic impacts of COVID-19 on tourism and accelerating recovery to protect millions of livelihoods, this crisis is an opportunity to rethink the tourism sector and its contribution to the SDGs, nature, and the



Paris Agreement on climate change, an opportunity to work towards a more sustainable, inclusive and resilient tourism. The COVID-19 crisis is a watershed moment to align the effort of sustaining livelihoods dependent on tourism to the SDGs. There is a need to consider the long-term implications of this crisis while capitalising on digitalisation, supporting the low carbon transition, and promoting the structural transformation needed to build a stronger and a resource efficient future. Only through collective action and international cooperation will we be able to transform tourism, advance its contribution to the 2030 Agenda and its shift towards an inclusive and carbon neutral sector that harnesses innovation and digitalization, embraces local values and communities and creates decent job opportunities for all, leaving no one behind.

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