

International Conference on
**RECENT TRENDS IN GLOBAL
SUSTAINABLE TOURISM RESEARCH**

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Recent Trends in Global Sustainable Tourism Research

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SUSTAINABLE TOURISM IN INDIA: POLICIES, PRACTICES AND RANKING

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Abstract

This research stresses the presence of sustainability in the tourism industry because of the involvement of the natural resources. This study is descriptive in nature as it is specific to the Indian tourism industry. The study began with a review of research literature. The literature was primarily based on international research studies specific to the Indian tourism industry and also on taxonomical researches. It was identified that sustainability leads to community development. This is also evident in the various Five-Year plans and National Tourism policies. The Government of India regards sustainable tourism as an essential for the tourism industry, which leads to host community development through infrastructural developments, employment generation and poverty reduction. Thus, the present research study is based on secondary data analysis including the review of relevant literature, analysis of five-year plans and national tourism policies.
Keywords: *Sustainability, Indian Tourism, Five Year Plan, Policies, Practices*

1. Introduction

When the balance between natural processes is subjected to heavy pressure, the resultant damage can create positions where weather patterns and lifestyles are thrown out of gear. Burning of fossil fuels and the ensuing greenhouse effect has led to global warming while the use of non-biodegradable containers such as aerosols has dented the ozone shield, raising ultra-violet radiation.

Accommodation units, tour operators, MSME providers of visitor services, transporters and nature tour outfitters are all part of the supply chain which must balance bio-diversity conservation with the professional quality of visitor experiences. Essentially, this implies meeting the challenge to create a sustainable balance between visitor numbers without sacrificing natural and cultural heritage. For tourism service providers, this also means acceptance of sustainable service agreements, facilitated by the government and targeting sustainable visitor satisfaction. In fragile eco-systems, this takes on another crucial dimension. Local communities become the motive force for sustainable practices, especially in the preservation of cultural identities and natural heritage. While tempering the impact of the ecological footprint, this can also create the pressure point for an equitable local share in the economic benefits of tourism.

These considerations continue to be central to the Ministry of Tourism's priorities for the 12th Five Year Plan.

2. Background

The tourism sector's capability as a sustainable and inclusive development driver, especially for livelihoods, was renewed with the 10th Five Year Plan, the National Tourism Policy, the global Incredible India campaign and the Millennium Development Goals. To supplement traditional farm-based income, many rural communities have moved towards livelihood diversification. Such attempts have included out-migration or provision of visitor services on tourism circuits in various states.

Industrialization and development trends worldwide have fostered urban-centric growth, often disconnected with the rural heartland. This trend of urbanization has also dented job opportunities and income levels in rural areas, apart from an urbanization syndrome in the countryside. Conversely, the stresses of urban life have created a need for counter-urbanization, which could, for example, strengthen the bond between India and Bharat.

Sustainable tourism can provide solutions to the issues of inclusive growth. Besides, the 'return to roots' focus, in tourism, is interlinked with increased access to information, enlarged interest in heritage and culture, improved accessibility and climate change concerns.

India has taken a lead in this field. Tourism experiences across the country now provide quality time visits for participatory settings, where the takeaway includes the enduring way of life, art, culture and heritage that are community-owned, culturally expressive and environmentally sustainable. There is simultaneous benefit for local communities with the enriching connection between visitor and host. Attitudes and mindsets are transformed, imparting local pride and visitor appreciation. The visitor thus comes face to front with India's vernacular traditions as they vibrate with the present. The geographical spread and habitat diversity of India makes it a multiple-interest, all-season destination.

Sustainable visitor strategies based on art, craft, cultural & natural heritage and environment care can hence target larger tourism yields, which could contribute significantly to conservation and to the rural sector in particular. Tourism hence has the potential of being a non-polluting, sustainable, income provider. With the global emphasis on sustainability and combating climate change, this creates a major opportunity to position the Indian tourism experience as a unique visitor takeaway, in low-impact settings.

The primary target segment here is low-volume but high-yield visitors, compatible with the carrying capacity of the local environment, alternate energy options, and local community acceptance and visitor satisfaction. This income route can reach the most disadvantaged, if local communities are strengthened through support to capacity building and sustainable rural infrastructure, while laying emphasis on the role of women and youth.

3. Sustainable Tourism Scenario

In India, the travel and tourism sector is estimated to create 78 jobs per million rupees of investment, compared to 45 jobs in the manufacturing sector for similar investment. Along with construction, it is one of the largest sectors of the service industry in India. Apart from providing employment to a wide spectrum of job seekers from the unskilled to the specialized, a higher proportion of tourism benefits (jobs, MSME trade opportunities), accrue to women. Moreover, emphasis would increasingly be given to organizing more short-term courses for the unskilled workforce, as well as unemployed youth, on the pattern of 'Hunar-se-Rozgar' and 'skill certification of service providers'. Besides, strategies followed during the 11th Plan may have to

be suitably recalibrated to take care of the challenges from competing countries and to harness the full potential of Indian tourism.

There are other concerns as well. A study conducted by the Ministry of Tourism, Government of India at important tourist destinations, reveals that lack of hygiene and sanitation is a major irritant for foreign and domestic tourists. Therefore, creation of awareness, as well as making the requisite facilities available, will be given high importance during 12th Five Year Plan through the following measures:

Major social awareness campaign under the 'Atithi Devo Bhavah' initiative Involving schools, NGOs, industry associations, etc. in carrying out sustained cleanliness drives at important tourist destinations. Suitable incentives and awards will be provided to all organizations and individuals involved in this initiative Top most priority will be given for sanctioning Central Financial Assistance for setting up of way-side amenities, bio-degradable toilets, etc. While making efforts for the targeted 12th Five Year Plan growth in Foreign and domestic tourists, the Ministry will Endeavour to make the growth sustainable.

Training of various stake holders under the existing plan schemes of the Ministry. Sustainable tourism development will include advancing some of the following niche tourism products or developing additional niche products such as (h) and given below:

Adventure, Medical, Wellness, Golf, Polo, Cruise, Meetings Incentives Conferences & Exhibitions (MICE), Pilgrimage/Spiritual travel, Film Tourism, Eco/ Wildlife/ Caravan

Tourism

As tourism is a multi-sectoral activity, active convergence in the resources of various sectors involved in promotion of tourism at Central and State level is necessary for achieving the optimum results. The intention is that countrywide experiential tourism attractions get developed for the socio-economic benefit of local communities, especially in order to strengthen inclusive economic growth. It is equally important to ensure that increased socio-economic well-being does not cause permanent or long-term damage to the country's physical, cultural and environmental heritage. The use of existing resources, both tangible and intangible, has to be undertaken judiciously for the well-being of the present generation, but not at the cost of depriving future generations of any part of our inheritance.

4. Motivation for the Present Research Study*

It was apparent from the literature review that studies are mainly oriented towards defining the term sustainable tourism and dealing with the negative effects on the tourism industry. The researchers demand a strong legislative approach in order to curb the situation of environmental imbalances. Therefore, the study analysed the legislative framework for sustainability of the Indian tourism industry in terms of five-year plans and national tourism policies. Thus, the research analyses one of the parameters of an index 'environmental sustainability' in detail, along with overall tourism ranking for the last decade of the Indian tourism industry. Strategic actions have also been suggested to achieve sustainability for the Indian tourism industry.

5. Literature Review

Sustainable Tourism: Indian Perspective

In an Indian context, Kapoor (2011) presented an example of community based tourism for the world famous heritage sites- the Khajuraho Temple located in Chhatarpur district of Madhya

Pradesh. It was found that local people were benefitting in terms of socio-cultural development, education, technological awareness and improvement in economic structure of the region on the account of tourism activities. The research study suggested that tourism brings educational, cultural, social and political value for the local community.

Thryambakam (2013) provided excellent real insights of community participation for the development of tourism in the Maredumilli district of Andhra Pradesh. It was found that in this region, a community based eco-tourism model is followed, where community partnering with the forestry department takes care of ecotourism activities. Profit is even shared by the forestry department and the local community. By this model, the local community gets economic benefits and also takes care of the environment ensuring sustainable tourism for the place.

Uniyal and Sharma (2013) defined sustainable tourism as a tourism activity that aims for conservation of resources and enhancing the value of local customs, cultures and traditions. The study regarded sustainable tourism as a tool of poverty reduction and negating the negative effects on local culture and environment. This study called for the joint participation of various stakeholders of tourism industry and suggested suitable measures for every stakeholder. The various stakeholders identified in the study are local communities, environmentalists, organizations and government. The study provided a framework of sustainable tourism and called these vice-principles of sustainable tourism. These principles include 'Visitor Satisfaction', 'Industry Profitability', 'Community Acceptance' and 'Environmental Protection'.

Bhutia (2016) examined the key aspects of sustainable tourism development in India specific to West Bengal. The identified areas are environmental degradation, inadequate infrastructural development in the state and exceeding carrying capacity which hinders the way forward for tourism. The study provided measures for sustainable tourism growth in the region, which are participation of locals, public-private partnerships, increasing awareness about the sustainable tourism, integrated human resource development, increasing forest cover, providing training courses for the people working in tourism industry and carrying out research activities on sustainable tourism including seminars, workshops and conferences.

Wang and Lalrinawma (2016) highlighted the role of local communities and local areas for sustainable tourism development. The study regarded rural areas as an integral part of modern tourism experience as visitors expect to experience the local life of a place. The study presented the case of Assam Tourism Department in the development of adventure tourism facilities within the state. The department outsourced the research activity that resulted in a satisfactory solution in the form of 'hotspots' identification for adventure tourism, monitoring of the marketing environment and providing greater visibility to potential markets through tour operators. The study suggested timely research and a strong policy framework as important aspects for achieving sustainability in the tourism industry with the inclusion of rural areas in tourism development.

SK and Jain (2017) draw on the similarity between green tourism and sustainable tourism to explain their relationship. Green tourism aims towards conservation of natural resources and improvement in the livelihood of locals. While, on the other hand, sustainable tourism was defined as a tourism activity that takes care of conservation and preservation of a country's traditional and cultural resources. Sustainable tourism was regarded as tourism activity covering various facets of the tourism industry. The challenges for sustainable tourism identified in the study includes preservation of country's resources (natural and cultural), minimizing the negative effect of tourism on the tourist destinations, management of

seasonality in tourism industry, reducing the effects of tourism related transportation and bringing improvements in the lives of locals so that they can lead a good quality life based on sustainable tourism activities.

Mathew and Sreejesh (2017) examined the impact of sustainable responsible tourism on destination sustainability and quality of life of a community at a tourist destination. The study was conducted in Indian settings in the tourism state of Kerala and data were collected from the three different tourists' destinations in Kerala- Kovalam, Kumarakom and Thekkady. Through confirmatory factor analysis, the study concluded that perceived responsible sustainable tourism in terms of economic, social, cultural and environmental responsibility significantly influences perceived destination sustainability. Perceived destination sustainability was found to be impacting upon the quality of life of local residents in terms of material well-being, community well-being, emotional well-being, health and safety well-being, and quality of life in general. Material well-being was defined in terms of income and employment, cost of living and basic necessities and real estate taxes. Community well-being was related to people, tourism services and facilities, community life and environment. Emotional well-being was related to leisure time, cultural exchanges and the preservation of cultural resources including spiritual and pilgrimage service. Health and safety well-being was defined in terms of air quality level, water quality level, safety, accidents and crime rate and issues related to cleanliness. Quality of life in general was defined in terms of locals perception towards a life as a whole and the way they spend their life and their overall feeling about the life.

The National Tourism Policy 1982: The major policy objective was to preserve and conserve the natural and cultural heritage resources of the country. Policy apparently indicated the negative effects of tourism like plundering of natural resources, disturbance to ecological environment, weakening of the traditional and cultural ethos of the nation and secret selling of valuable antiques. The ministry called for maintaining the balance between development and conservation of country's resources and suggested appropriate measures in terms of educating the people and increasing their awareness towards the conservation and preservation of cultural and natural heritage.

The National Tourism Policy of 2002: In this policy, Sustainability was regarded as the guiding star of the policy document. The policy aimed to make tourism a 'smokeless' industry by ensuring that no one is exploiting the natural resources to have short term gains. Exceeding tourists' carrying capacity at the destination should never be ignored. The policy aimed to utilize the relationship between cultural assets and the tourism industry for environmental upgrading, monuments' protection and protection of the areas around the monuments. The protection of the environment and the heritage sites were considered as essential for the tourism industry.

The National Tourism Policy of 2016: In terms of sustainable tourism, the policy planned to develop and promote India as a safe and welcoming sustainable tourism destination. The policy aimed at inter-ministerial coordination and coordination between the public and private sectors. The policy aims to benefit local communities living in natural environments. Another objective of the policy is to create safe, secure, clean and thus hygienic tourism environment. Progress of infrastructural development has always been a prime concern in policymaking. The major objective of the policy is to "position India as a global brand and preferred tourism destination in overseas markets".

6. Research Methodology

The research began with the review of research literature. Research studies specific to sustainability and tourism policy planning were thoroughly reviewed. The literature review included studies from an international perspective and also the Indian perspective grounded on the concept of sustainable tourism. Gaps suggested that there is a lack of research studies comparing the policy planning framework and rankings of Travel and Tourism Competitiveness Index provided by World Economic Forum for any country. Thus, to fill the gap, the review of policy frameworks in terms of National Tourism Policies and Five Year plans was conducted. After that, the analysis of overall tourism rankings of the Indian tourism industry and environmental sustainability rankings was presented. The analysis presented a surprising finding that sustainability has gained significant attention in the planning process; however there is a continuous decline in the environmental sustainability rankings provided by the competitiveness index. Thus, the paper concludes with suggesting that there be more effective marketing strategies to progress up the environmental sustainability rankings of the Indian tourism industry. The last section of the paper concludes with the findings followed by a brief discussion.

7. Sustainable Tourism Criteria for India Committee

In 1988, the United Nations World Tourism organization (UNWTO) defined sustainable tourism as 'leading to management of all resources in such a way that economic, social and aesthetic needs can be fulfilled while maintaining cultural integrity, essential ecological processes, biological diversity and life support systems'. Later in 1992, the 'Earth Summit' in Rio established the triple principles of environmental, economic and social sustainability. Since then, the principles of sustainable tourism have been adopted by the tourism industry worldwide.

8. Role of Agencies in Sustainable Tourism in India

- i) The Government will aim to achieve necessary linkages and synergies in the policies and programs of all concerned Departments/agencies by establishing effective co-ordination mechanisms at Central, State and District levels. The focus of national policy, therefore, will also be to develop tourism as a common endeavor of all the agencies vitally concerned with it at the Central and State levels, public sector undertakings and the private sector.
 - (a) It will be the policy of government to encourage people's participation in tourism development including Panchayati Raj institutions, local bodies, Co-operatives, nongovernmental organizations and enterprising local youth to create public awareness and to achieve a wider spread of tourist facilities. However, focused attention will be given for the integrated development of identified centers with well directed public participation.
 - (b) Public and Private Sector Partnership: A constructive and mutually beneficial partnership between the public and the private sectors through all feasible means is an absolute necessity for the sustained growth of tourism. It is, therefore, the policy of the Government to encourage emergence of such a partnership. This will be achieved by creating a Tourism Development Authority consisting of senior officials of the Government and tourism experts and professionals from the private sector.

9. Role of the Government Tourism is a multi-sectoral activity and the

The State has to, therefore, ensure intergovernmental linkages and co-ordination. It also has to play a pivotal role in tourism management and promotion. The specific role of the Government will be to:

- i. Provide basic infrastructural facilities including local planning and zoning arrangements.
- ii. Plan tourism development as a part of the overall area development strategy.
- iii. Create nucleus infrastructure in the initial stages of development to demonstrate the potential of the area.
- iv. Provide the required support facilities and incentives to both domestic and foreign investors to encourage private investment in the tourism sector.
- v. Rationalize taxation and land policies in the tourism sector in all the States and Union Territories and in respect of land owned by Government agencies like Railways.
- vi. Introduce regulatory measures to ensure social, cultural and environmental sustainability as well as safety and security of tourists.
- vii. Ensure that the type and scale of tourism development is compatible with the environment and socio-cultural milieu of the area.
- viii. Ensure that the local community is fully involved and the benefits of tourism accrue to them.
- ix. Facilitate availability of trained manpower particularly from amongst the local population jointly with the industry.
- x. Undertake research, prepare master plans, and facilitate formulation of marketing strategies.
- xi. Organise overseas promotion and marketing jointly with the industry.
- xii. Initiate specific measures to ensure safety and security of tourists and efficient facilitation services. Facilitate the growth of a dynamic tourism sector.

10. Role of Private Sector in India:

Tourism has emerged as the largest export industry globally and all over the globe private sector has played the lead role in this growth. The private sector has to consider investment in tourism from a long term perspective and create the required facilities including accommodation, time share, restaurants, entertainment facilities, shopping complexes, etc. in areas identified. For tourism development. Non-core activities in all airports, major stations and interstate bus terminus such as cleanliness and maintenance, luggage transportation, vehicles parking facilities, etc. should be opened up to private operators to increase efficiency and profitability. The specific role of the Private Sector will be to:

- i. Build and manage the required tourist facilities in all places of tourist interest.
- ii. Assume collective responsibility for laying down industry standards, ethics and fair practices.
- iii. Ensure preservation and protection of tourist attractions and give lead in green practices.
- iv. Sponsor maintenance of monuments, museums and parks and provision of public conveniences and facilities.
- v. Involve the local community in tourism projects and ensure that the benefits of tourism accrue to them in right measure.

ITDC (Indian Tourism Development Corporation)

The India Tourism Development Corporation Limited or ITDC as it is popularly recognized is a Public Sector Undertaking of the Government of India, Tourism Department, founded in October 1966 with its headquarters in New Delhi, the capital of India. The Corporation is multi-functional but deals primarily in various divisions and facets of the Hospitality Sector in India and also represents Indian Hospitality sector abroad. ITDC has created and owns the Ashok brand and runs 15 properties under the Ashok brand, pan India. The main purpose and mission of the Corporation was to be the leader and catalyst in the advancement of the Hospitality sector in India and enable the tourism sector to accomplish ultimate distinction in the chosen field by creating centers that are professional, efficient, give value for money and offer customer-centric services. The authorized capital of the Corporation is Rs 75 crores and the paid up capital as on 31.3.2005 was Rs 67.52 crores. 89.9748% of the paid up equity capital of the Corporation is held in the name of President of India. The Corporation has diversified into new avenues/innovative services like Full-Fledged Money Changer (FFMC) services, engineering related consultancy services etc. The Ashok Institute of Hospitality & Tourism Management of the Corporation imparts training and education in the field of tourism and hospitality. Presently, ITDC has a network of eight Ashok Group of Hotels, six Joint Venture Hotels, 2 Restaurants (including one Airport Restaurant), 12 Transport Units, one Tourist Service Station, 37 Duty Free Shops at International as well as Domestic Customs Airports, one Tax Free outlet and two Sound & Light Shows. Besides, ITDC is also managing a hotel at Bharatpur and a restaurant at Kosi on behalf of the Department of Tourism. In addition, it is also managing catering services at Western Court, Vigyan Bhawan, Hyderabad House and National Media Press Centre at Shastri Bhawan, New Delhi. Functions of ITDC Since ITDC is a Corporation that oversees many functions related to the Hospitality Sector. In its multi-functional role, ITDC aims at running all its units efficiently and productively and with improved margins of profit. As the mainstay of the Hospitality Industry in India,

Role of ITDC in Tourism & Travel Trade

There is no doubt, that ITDC is at the four front of Indian Tourism which elaborate infrastructure of hotels, beach resorts, travel agencies, car rental services, convention and conference facility across length and breadth of the country. During the recent years, the corporation has entered into the joint venture agreement with several State Govts. to set up mid market over budget hotel. It has also offered tour packages in collaboration with Air India, State Tourism Corporation and Indian Railways as 'Enjoy India' for domestic tourist and 'Discover India' pilgrim tours and Buddhist tours etc.

Role of ITDC can be better understood in the following lines:

1. Help India as a tourist destination.
2. Help in the development of infrastructure
3. Helps in the promotion of domestic tourism in collaboration with railway.
4. Provides consultancy services.
5. Provides inbound tourist traffic. Provides training facilities

11. Data Analysis

Travel and Tourism Competitiveness Index: Analyzing India's Performance in Terms of Sustainability

A Travel and Tourism Competitiveness Index was introduced in the year 2007 by the World Economic Forum. The competitiveness index proposed 13 key competitiveness pillars to measure a country's competitiveness in terms of travel and tourism. The key pillars are 'policy rules and regulations', 'environmental regulation', 'safety and security', 'health and hygiene', 'prioritization of travel and tourism', 'airport transport infrastructure', 'ground transport infrastructure', 'tourism infrastructure', 'ICT infrastructure', 'price competitiveness in T&T industry', 'human resources', 'national and tourism perception'; and 'natural and cultural resources'. Since 2007, an index has been given for the year 2008, 2009, 2011, 2013, 2016 and 2018. The key pillars remained the same till 2013; a change was introduced in the year 2016. The 13 pillars of competitiveness index was extended to 14 pillars of travel and tourism competitiveness. Newly defined pillars are 'business environment', 'safety and security', 'health and hygiene', 'human resources and labour market', 'ICT Readiness', 'prioritization of travel and tourism', 'international openness', 'price competitiveness', '*environmental sustainability*', 'air transport infrastructure', 'ground and port infrastructure', 'tourist service infrastructure', 'natural resources'; 'cultural resources and business travel'.

Sustainability has been defined as one of the key pillars of the Travel and Tourism Competitiveness Index. The next section of the paper compares the global ranks of India on the 14 pillars of competitiveness for the year 2016 and 2018. The last two indexes were chosen because they were revised and updated in the year 2016, as 13 pillars were extended to 14 new pillars of competitiveness. There are different sub-criteria for environmental sustainability, which have also been compared for the two years.

Table 1: Global ranks of competitiveness pillars for the year 2016 & 2018

Year		2016	2018
Overall Rank		52	40
Competitiveness Pillars		Global Rank	Global Rank
1.	Business Environment	107	89
2.	Safety and Security	129	114
3.	Health and Hygiene	106	104
4.	Human Resources and Labour Market	111	87
5.	ICT Readiness	114	112
6.	Prioritization of Travel and Tourism	96	104
7.	International Openness	69	55
8.	Price Competitiveness	8	10
9.	Environmental Sustainability	139	134
10.	Air Transport Infrastructure	35	32
11.	Ground and Port Infrastructure	50	29
12.	Tourist Service Infrastructure	109	110
13.	Natural Resources	17	24
14.	Cultural Resources and Business Travel	10	9

Source: Travel and Tourism Competitiveness Report 2016 and Travel and Tourism Competitiveness Report 2018

Table 1 compares the global rankings of India for the years 2016 and 2018 in terms of the competitiveness pillars of the Travel and Tourism Competitiveness Index provided by World Economic Forum. It can be inferred from table 1 that infrastructural development, price competitiveness and country's richness in cultural and natural resources are responsible for its improved overall global ranking in the competitiveness Index. The rankings for the said parameters are in the top 50 list. Price competitiveness is ranked 10 for the year 2018; however, it has slipped 2 places; an effort must be there to restore its position. Air transport infrastructure has improved three places and ranked 32 for the year 2018 and similarly ground and port infrastructure has significantly improved in rankings from 50 to 29 in 2018.

Rankings for natural resources is 24 for the year 2018, which has slipped 7 places in comparison to the year 2016. Still, it is in the top 30 list; therefore, continuous efforts should be made for improving the rankings. For the fourteenth pillar, the ranking for the year 2018 is 9, which has improved 1 place. The global rankings for the discussed parameters are able to make it through the top 50 list, giving a boost to the country's overall rankings, which is 40 for the year 2018.

Much infrastructural development has taken place in India post liberalization, because of privatization and this has also encouraged public-private partnerships. In terms of natural and cultural resources these are the country's wealth and heritage, which are naturally occurring in the country. Thus, minimizing the government's role in improving tourism competitiveness as other parameters are low scoring, and need to be closely monitored jointly by the Tourism Ministry and the Government of India so as to improve their rankings in the said index. Focusing on the sustainability aspects, the global ranking of India in terms of 'environmental sustainability' has moved up 5 places from 139 to 134. However, it is still far behind and has been explained in detail in the next section.

Environmental Sustainability

Table 2: Sustainability indicator ranks of India in Travel and Tourism Competitiveness Index 2018 Source: Travel and Tourism Competitiveness Report 2018

	Indicators	Rank
1.	Stringency of environmental regulations	51
2.	Enforcement of environmental regulations	43
3.	Sustainability of travel and tourism industry development	78
4.	Particulate matter (2.5) concentration $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$	135
5.	Environmental treaty ratification 0-27 (best)	31
6.	Baseline water stress 5-0 (best)	106
7.	Threatened species % total species	126
8.	Forest cover change % change	34
9.	Wastewater treatment %	93
10.	Coastal shelf fishing pressure tonnes/km ²	86

Table 2 represents the different indicators of the ninth pillar of an index. Out of 10 indicators, India lies in top 50, only in three of the indicators, which are 'enforcement of environmental regulations' (43), 'environmental treaty ratification' (31) and 'forest cover change % change' (34). Global rankings in top 50 is a good sign for environmental sustainability in Indian context. However, six other indicators reflect a different viewpoint. India is far behind in other indicators including 'sustainability of travel and tourism industry development' (78),

'particulate matter (2.5) concentration $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ ' (135), 'baseline water stress 5-0 (best)' (106), 'threatened species % total species' (126), 'wastewater treatment%' (93), 'coastal shelf fishing pressure tonnes/km²' (86). However, for one of the indicators, India is near to top 50 as it lies at number 51 for 'stringency of environmental regulations'. The authors consider the 'Sustainability of travel and tourism development' as an important issue. The Indian tourism industry has been growing and development is on its way as India has moved to place 40 in the competitiveness index. However, growth and development needs to be sustained.

The development should be accelerated in such a way that that country's resources (tourism, natural and cultural) are conserved and by ensuring optimum utilization of resources without any over-exploitation by anyone in any form. Development must ensure sustainability in every aspect of the tourism industry. However, 'Sustainability of travel and tourism development' global ranking for Indian tourism industry is at 78 for the year 2018, which is distressing for the Indian Tourism Ministry. The concerned authority needs to monitor the sustainability aspects of the tourism industry development very carefully as sustainability is a key resource for the future generations. Without sustainability, the growth and development will be short lived, and it will turn out to be a major obstacle for the tourism development going forward. India's global ranking in travel and tourism competitiveness index (2007-17) in terms of environmental sustainability has fallen very badly, which is explained in the next section through analysing table 3 and figure 1.

Table 3: India's Ranking (2007-17) in terms of Environmental Sustainability in TTCI

Year/Head ngs	2007	2008	2009	2011	2013	2016	2018
Environmental	41	-----	N/A-----				
Regulation							
Environmental		71	74	107	107	139	134
Sustainability							

Source: Travel and Tourism Competitiveness Report 2016 and Travel and Tourism Competitiveness Report (2007-2018)

India's Rankings in TTCI

Figure 1 explains the global rankings of India in the competitiveness index the last 10 years. The overall rankings of India have shown a significant improvement over the ten years; as in the year 2007 it was 65 and in the year 2018 it rose up to 40th place. Ranking showed a stagnation from the year 2007 to 2013; however, rankings jumped 13 places for the year 2016 up to 52. The growing trend continued as rankings moved to 40 in the year 2018. The overall tourism rankings represents a good scenario for the Indian tourism industry. Infrastructural development and cultural and natural resources can be considered as the major contributors in the overall tourism rankings as these competitiveness pillars lie in top 50 (refer table 1). Post liberalization (after 1991) because of privatization, infrastructural development took place through public-private partnership models and India is bestowed with abundant natural and cultural resources. The Indian tourism industry had great achievement in terms of global tourism rankings but that needs to be sustained in the long run. Sustainability primarily 'environmental sustainability' is a key area of competitiveness. Table 3 and figure 1 indicates a different scenario. The global rankings of the Indian tourism industry in terms of 'environmental

sustainability' has been on a continuous downward spiral since the inception of an index in the year 2007. Sustainability rankings have fallen drastically to 139 in the year 2016, in comparison to 41 in the year 2007. However, they have improved five places in the year 2018 and moved to 134. To improve the sustainability rankings, the government should closely monitor the parameters of 'environmental sustainability' as depicted in table 2. Table 2 is clearly indicating the areas, where India needs to improve in terms of 'environmental sustainability'.

Sustainability has always been in consideration in the five-year planning process and the national tourism policies. The Indian tourism policy planning highlights that sustainable development and sustainable tourism has been given due consideration and largely accentuated during the twelfth five-year plan. In addition, the overall global tourism rankings of the Indian tourism industry has improved as it has moved to place 40 in the year 2018. Sustainability thus comprises an important component of competitiveness. A close examination of the index reveals a different scenario in which the Indian tourism global rankings in terms of 'environmental sustainability' has fallen drastically over the decade from rank 41 in 2007 to 134 in the year 2018. This needs an immediate attention of the policy makers and the Indian Tourism Ministry. India is lagging behind in the sustainability aspect which needs to be monitored closely and continuously. The Tourism Ministry needs to review its policies based on sustainable tourism and identify the weak points responsible for lowering India in the rankings and corrective actions should be taken. A new framework for the development of sustainable tourism in the country is essentially, and this could significantly affect global tourism rankings and it can be asserted here, that without sustainability, the present growth and development loses its relevance entirely.

Strategic Actions for Sustainable Tourism Development in India

- The Indian Tourism Ministry must focus on the parameters of 'environmental sustainability' of the travel and tourism competitive index. Table 3 clearly indicates that the Indian tourism rankings on the competitiveness pillar of 'environmental sustainability' have fallen drastically over the period of ten years; from 41 in the year 2007 to 134 in 2018. Thus, there is a need for immediate attention towards the sustainability in an Indian context as has been discussed since the initiation of the planning process. The ministry should focus on the different parameters of environmental sustainability as depicted in table 2. Monitoring the parameters of 'environmental sustainability' (refer table 2) is essentially required so as to achieve the full potential of the tourism industry. Improved rankings of sustainability will directly contribute in the country's overall global tourism ranking, and India can reach the top 10 tourist destinations worldwide in the Travel and Tourism Competitiveness Index.
- The present study suggests that sustainability should not be linked only with the environmental aspects, and it should be associated with every domain of tourism growth and development. The new identified areas of sustainability in the tourism industry are employment generation, sustainability in tourism economic environment, new product development, heritage conservation and preservation and stability in tourism rankings moving towards improvement.
- The Indian Tourism Ministry must clearly define the parameters which come under sustainable development for tourism industry. Specific policies need to be developed for

- flora and fauna, monuments and other tourism products. Every tourism market offering needs a distinct policy framework that needs to be monitored and controlled closely.
- Apart from policy making there is a strong need for a stringent legislative framework, which would clearly state the penalties and punishments for any and all violations of tourism sustainability. The fear of punishment will restrict the people causing harm to the environment and sustainability for other paradigms as well.
- The policy planning is a preliminary work for sustainable tourism, however policy planning is not sufficient enough in itself and it is required to be converted into actions. Indian tourism policy planning has witnessed adequate attention towards the sustainability, however, rankings reflects a different scenario. Thus, there is a need to put effective plans into action. Environmental sustainability of the Indian tourism industry is in a dire need of attention and it needs quick, effective and efficient actions by the destination marketing organizations.
- The Indian tourism planning framework has been fantastically framed. Albeit, the rankings depicted a different scenario of downward movement. With sound policies, such a result is astounding. It means that something is in the execution process. Thus, there is an urgent requirement to carry out marketing research activities for continuous evaluation and control of the policy implementation so that the problems can be identified and corrective actions can be taken. Through research activities the reasons for lower rankings on 'environmental sustainability' parameter can be found and any loopholes in the execution process can be prevented from occurring in the future.
- Pollution has become a major cause of worry for the Indian government as it is badly affecting the population and generating life-threatening diseases. The government should take preventative actions as in the long run this is going to affect environmental sustainability with the rise in global warming.
- The Ministry should include host community and other stakeholders of the tourism industry for sustainable tourism development. The participation of local residents is essential and it can be achieved when some rewards are paid to the local community through participation as highlighted by Thryambakam (2013).
- The study calls for a joint participation not only of the stakeholders, but of the different nations to tackle the issue of sustainability worldwide. One platform should exist where all the nations (neighbouring countries on a common landmass) must work together to achieve sustainable development for the tourism industry and other spheres of life.
- World organizations of good repute like the UNWTO, WTTC, WEF must help the developing countries to achieve the sustainable tourism development that is required.

12. Discussion and Conclusions

Sustainability is a key for country's prosperity and essential for future generations. In the tourism industry, it is mainly associated with the environment, including conservation and preservation of natural resources, maintaining the ecological balance as tourism activities are causing harm to the environment in terms of deforestation, soil erosion, natural habitat displacement, air pollution, and water pollution. Even the Competitiveness Index associates sustainability with environment. The present study has been undertaken, so as to draw the

attention of the Indian tourism policy makers towards the declining country's environmental sustainability rankings despite improvement in overall global tourism rankings.

Overall, the tourism rankings of the Indian tourism industry have been improving at a fast pace on account of infrastructural developments and the country's rich cultural and natural resources and monumental heritage. Sustainability cannot be counted as an input in the country's tourism growth and development, as its rankings presented a different scenario. However, every country aims for sustainable development including sustainability in the tourism industry, which has been linked with a concept of sustainable tourism to a large extent. Thus, sustainability becomes a cause of worry for the Government of India, as it has been emphasized since the country stabilized itself after the 1948 independence and over this long period of time, negative results are obtained in terms of the poor rankings on the notion of 'environmental sustainability'.

Thus, this research stresses the presence of sustainability in the tourism industry because of the involvement of the natural resources. This study is descriptive in nature as it is specific to the Indian tourism industry. The study began with a review of research literature. The literature was primarily based on international research studies specific to the Indian tourism industry and also on taxonomical researches. It was identified that sustainability leads to community development. This is also evident in the various Five-Year plans and National Tourism policies. The Government of India regards sustainable tourism as an essential for the tourism industry, which leads to host community development through infrastructural developments, employment generation and poverty reduction. Thus, the present research study is based on secondary data analysis including the review of relevant literature, analysis of five-year plans and national tourism policies. The 'boat appears to be sailing with the wind', as policy documentation has been effectively done by the Indian government and India is also improving in the global tourism rankings. However, a close examination of an index presented a different scenario. The Indian tourism industry has witnessed a major downfall in environmental sustainability rankings over the past decade.

The rankings have fallen from 41 to 134 from 2007 to 2018. There emerges a paradoxical situation of "sustainability and the tourism rankings" for the Indian Tourism Ministry. This raises the future research question - Is India improving its tourism at the cost of environmental sustainability? Solving the question, the study has suggested some measures for the development of sustainable tourism. The researchers consider this study to be a highlighter of the paradox of "sustainability and tourism rankings". The study seeks actions from the 'maestros' of the Indian tourism industry to 'turn the wheel around' and improve the Indian tourism rankings in terms of environmental sustainability and in global tourism ranking, which would directly lead to improvements in overall global tourism rankings on the competitiveness index. India is improving in overall global tourism rankings on the basis of its richness in cultural and natural resources and infrastructural developments that have taken place post-liberalization because of public-private partnerships. India has the potential to make it to the top 10 list of the competitiveness index and that push needs to be provided by sustainability.

The present research study suffers from some limitations. First, it is only a qualitative research initiative. Secondly, it is based on the secondary data analysis. Insights from the Ministerial perspective would have showed the path to solve the paradox of "sustainability and the tourism rankings". The study has been successful in identifying and presenting the

Paradoxical situation to the Indian Tourism Ministry in terms of "environmental sustainability and the tourism rankings".

Thus, it becomes a future research area of the present study to carry out a research study to know more about this problem based on the insights from a Ministerial perspective.

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