



Editorial

“Sustainability & Tourism Business”

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Sustainability bestows a plethora of benefits such as natural resource conservation, cultural heritage preservation, revenue generation, economic growth, employment creation, wildlife conservation, and so on (Frent, 2016). Sustainable development practices should satisfy the needs of the present without compromising future resources (Brundtland, 1985; Ryan, 2002). Sustainability meticulously concerns the present and future aspects and aims at reaping the benefits for a longer time. Place, quality, experience, and responsibility are the key ingredients of sustainability, whereas it could be maximised by a range of factors like prudent utilisation of resources, imbibing conservation attitudes, responsible behaviour, and balancing the economy, socio-cultural and environmental practices (WTO, 2005).

The prime focus of sustainability is to manage the resources constructively and preserve them for the long run. Sustainable tourism comes to light as a motivational element to manage resources effectively. The resources are maintained to fulfil the social, economic, and environmental needs through a range of factors such as ecological processes, cultural integrity, socio-economic equity, biological diversity, and general enrichment (Elmo et al., 2020). When we talk about sustainability, the first thing that comes to mind is the seventeen Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The United Nations unveiled the 17 SDGs to conserve resources and safeguard our planet by 2030. Depletion of natural resources creates an alarming situation and enables a blueprint for a better future sustainable life for all. On the other hand, tourism is a resource-dependent industry that has an

additional responsibility to conserve resources effectively. Achieving sustainability is not an individual task; rather, it is aimed at all stakeholders such as the government body, policymakers, businesses, researchers, academicians, and civil society.

Any tourism business aims to maximise profits and increase the return on investment. Recently, sustainability has become a paramount concern aligned with business practices. Tourism businesses are on the edge of sustainable breakthrough practices, working carefully to minimise the environmental impact and maximise their investment return. Customers also show great interest in companies that provide supreme services leaving a negative or zero impact on the environment. In recent times, the tourism businesses have shown a significant changeover by modifying their practices towards sustainability. It is equally essential to write the responsibility statement of their businesses as well. The statement should be an enabler that helps in communicating the commitment toward sustainability. Tourism companies should devise sustainable activities meant to follow without any false promises. The responsibility statement should provide a vivid picture to the customers of the environmental and social sustainability measures adopted by the tourism businesses (Nyurenberger et al., 2022).

While responsible statements are designed on one side, it is mandatory to prove them through actions rather than simply lying as written words. A paradigm shift has been witnessed in tourism business practices to safeguard resources and maintain a sustainable business environment. A few of the notable global tourism businesses bring a remarkable contribution to sustainability. Rancho Margot, a sustainable and self-sufficient ec lodge in Costa Rica, utilises farm-produced food ingredients and lets its visitors aware of the sustainable practices they have implemented (Mylan, 2018). A robust, sustainable tourism business should cater to the needs of the customers without exploiting the economic and environmental aspects and the local community. This statement is endorsed by the following example: Tour Operators like Wilderness Scotland implemented a sustainable

business model that bolsters the local community, economic growth, and environment.

The other aspects of sustainability include managing natural resources effectively. Uakari, a floating lodge in Brazil, prudently uses natural resources, rivers, and land sustainably. The lodge is designed with rainwater harvesting and solar energy power consumption projects. This community-based tourism lodge also encourages local community growth by employing 100% local staff and is owned by local communities and Mamiraua Institute for Sustainable Development (Pedro, 2012). This institute strives toward the conservation of natural resources and supporting local economies through job opportunities. In terms of environmental engagement, the Uakari lodge is suitable for both dry and rainy seasons.

A Step towards Sustainability

Environmental Certification is an important element and leads a company towards sustainability. It is significant for all tourism companies to be certified. This certification portrays a positive message to the customers regarding the company's effort toward sustainability (Costa et al., 2019). It provides a wonderful opportunity for the customers to know about the company working towards minimising the negative impacts of the economic, socio, environment and maximising the positive impacts of business. Various certification programs foster sustainable Tourism practices. Certification for Sustainable Tourism (CST) is one of the certification programs aimed at achieving physical and biological sustainability, educating employees and guests through good practices, and encouraging socio-economic activities with the local community. Lapa Rios Lodge in Costa Rica has successfully implemented this program through their business practices.

The international accreditation body Global Sustainable Tourism Council (GSTC), looks after the global standards of sustainable tourism and travel. This accreditation body, along with standards designing, provides sustainable tourism certification as well. The GSTC standards and regulations apply to all sectors of tourism and revolve around four main themes. They strive forwards toward

efficacious sustainability planning, mitigating negative environmental impacts, strengthening cultural heritage, and maximising the economic and social benefits of the local community.

Elements for a Sustainable Tourism Business

Incorporating sustainability in the tourism business is a time-consuming process, whereas the companies should try to achieve the goal within the timeframe. The level of sustainability and the responsible nature of business decides the level of positive impact on the environment, local community, tourism product, and customer experience. Sustainability could be achieved through the eight prominent elements such as energy-efficient, water conservation and waste management, greenhouse gas emissions, carbon offsetting schemes, community relations, labour practices, and human rights, maximising positive impact on local cultures, health, and safety, animal welfare, and responsibility statements.

Improving energy will bring in a lot of benefits to the hotel businesses as they mitigate the operating cost, reduce climate change risks and encourage green tourism aspects. The energy-efficient practices are proven to be cost-effective investments such as the use of renewable energy sources such as solar panels, wind power, energy-efficient appliances, smart meters to control the excess energy consumption, and electric vehicles, and encourage the guests to be mindful of energy conservation at hotels and accommodation. Another intriguing measure is organising energy-saving programs and behavioural campaigns that nurture energy conservation attitudes among the guests and employees (Said et al.; 2017). These practices will reduce the negative impact and mitigate the human impact imposed on the environment.

The 3R theme: Reduce, Reuse, Recycle forms the key activities in effective waste management. Tourism companies have adopted various waste management practices that highlight their higher responsibility toward environmental preservation. Another major problem is plastic pollution at tourist destinations. Many tourist destinations, for example, beaches and oceans, have been contaminated with plastic pollution. Over the decades, this

problem arose as a global issue and created an alarming situation for many countries. Europe has well-publicised this problem in the minds of the people, and even many countries have banned the use of single-use plastics, while countries like Tanzania have completely banned tourists from bringing plastic bags inside the country.

Aviation, fossil fuels, deforestation, transportation, and other factors contribute to the greenhouse gases like carbon dioxide in the atmosphere. Global carbon footprint is a critical issue, and the tourism industry accounts for 8 per cent of the global greenhouse gases (Lenzen et al., 2018). Offsetting carbon footprint is an important initiative seen among many tourism organisations as carbon dioxide majorly affects climatic change. The climatic change brings a range of serious problems to the environment as well as to tourism. To compensate for the harmful emissions generated by tourism activities, many tourism companies show interest in carbon offsetting programs. Many European tour operators have contributed to the carbon offsetting plans. In addition to that, travellers are showing a keen interest in choosing the operators who are more environmentally friendly and active participants in programs like carbon offsetting, green certification, etc. Sustainability is an unavoidable criterion for tourism businesses as it contributes to a significant percentage of climatic change and environmental issues. Though, the impacts can be mitigated by pivoting the business model, lifestyle changes, educating visitors, technology assistance, etc. (Kantar Sifo, 2019).

Employing local people in tourism businesses is one of the key elements of adhering to sustainability. It is equally important to include local stakeholders in the planning and implementation stages of tourism businesses. This brings in dual benefits of winning the trust of local communities and providing an immersive experience for the tourists. Enhancing the visitor experience through rightful interactions with local communities and culture is the crux of sustainable tourism activities. Authentic experiences are the key to sustainable tourism and be an emerging niche market recently. Experiences could be in the form of a guided tour to a village accompanied by a list of activities such as handicraft making, cooking and staying with locals, harvesting,

and so on. Community-based tourism enables an authentic and unique experience that the visitors are looking forward to. It is equally significant that both parties have to benefit from one another. Visitors should gain authentic experiences, while the local community should benefit from the revenue and job opportunities generated by tourism. The participation of local communities adds significant value to the sustainable measures. However, there is a knowledge gap between the local community and environmental issues, which needs to be advocated urgently to stabilise environmental sustainability in vulnerable areas such as marine tourism (Suryani et al., 2022). Guests are the main audience, and ensuring their health and safety will be the prime responsibility of the tourism providers. Tourism providers ensure customer satisfaction through high-quality services, whereas they should incorporate health and safety features while granting those services to win customers' trust. Henceforth, the business practices have to be designed in alignment with quality, health, and safety to cater to the exhaustive needs of the customers. On the other hand, to regulate business practices, a Code of Conduct has to be devised precisely supporting human rights, animal welfare, and so on.

Overall, when we look at today's sustainable tourism business models, there is a competitive pattern delineating each other in terms of value creation or perhaps a process of co-creation. A real stiff competition exists among tourism businesses rather than creating higher value for their customers. Recent research analysis has shown that customers are prone to be more selective with their tourism destinations and wide range of business choices. They want to buy products or services from businesses that are sustainable-oriented. Customer preference has been pivoted towards sensible things such as authentic experiences, cultural heritage, benefiting the local community, high environmental quality, and so on.

Subsequently, sustainability revamps the image of a tourist destination by leveraging its competitiveness. To establish a highly competitive tourist destination, tourism development has to be sustainable in terms of socio-cultural, economic, and ecological factors (Ritchie & Crouch, 2003). Henceforth, sustainable development maintains the competitive advantage of tourism

destinations and acts as a catalyst to boost tourism business growth. To summarise, sustainable tourism businesses can save money and at the same time can elevate customer appeal, create a competitive advantage, reduce negative environmental effects, bolster the local economy (Graci & Dodds, 2008; Taylor, 2008) and sustainable practices by tourism businesses should focus on the following main three attributes: characteristics of innovation, organisation and external environment (Mirjam, 2015) for a longer run of sustainability.

With this background, I welcome everyone to have a glance at a series of primary research-based articles that are empirical and conceptual and are exclusively presented by our splendid authors. Their works are challenging and address the current issue's theme, "Sustainability and Tourism Business" by adding remarkable value to tourism businesses.

Soni Narula et al. conducted an exploratory study on Domestic Women Business Travellers (DWBTs) and the demographic and psychological indicators influencing them in the hospitality sector. Researchers suggested a conceptual framework for the beneficial effects of DWBTs. It highlights the growth in the number of female demographic in the hospitality industry and the need for involvement of psychological constructs to accommodate their needs in the tourism business and enable sustainability. This can further be defined by attitudes, values, and personality attributes in the approaches for market segmentation.

Dahiya et al. ideated on giving an overview of the research trends through a longitudinal bibliometric analysis from 2000 to 2021 in Indian Hospitality and Tourism Industry. An inventory of 1,821 research papers has been studied in 21 years to accumulate popular themes in tourism research. The results conglomerate sustainability and conservation as the most popular themes, while Singh S. & Jauhari V. are the most popular authors. According to the authors, the recent trends were focused on social media and COVID-19.

The sustainable dimension of tourism indicates an imperative need to examine the coastal destinations which have significant relevance for economic and environmental propositions. The research by Baitalik et al. has identified the various factors

contributing to the higher satisfaction level and the influences of demographics and financial elements over coastal destinations of West Bengal. The authors have focused on the satisfaction element as a measure of coastal tourism destinations' sustainability.

Mary & Ramachandran substantiate the influence of the recent global pandemic on the domestic travel industry. The article analysed the risk perceptions on travel intentions for the state of Kerala. The study's target population is young travellers, who are considered allocentric (adventurous and more mobile) and are prone to vulnerability towards travelling amidst COVID-19. Their intentions are analysed based on financial, health, and travel risks.

Health and wellness tourism business is rising to its peak with improved quality medical services and efficient systems in place by the healthcare sector. Faisal & Dhusia introspected on the various seminal works related to globalisation, health care systems, their services and health tourism. They brought in the concept of global health tourism businesses and the opportunities associated with it.

Nagouda & Veerashekhara brought in the concept of financial sustainability in tourism businesses. The authors highlighted the potential of Indian tourism destinations and the role of Micro Finance Institutions (MFIs) in facilitating financial aid for them. This laid a supporting step for micro tourism businesses to improve their commercial capital and maintain the stability of their businesses.

I hope the compilation of research works is engaging and thought-provoking as the aforementioned work turns out to be an enriching experience by opening the minds of the readers. I believe the preview of various works of the authors has created a curiosity to explore the mind-blowing sustainable tourism business practices mentioned in their pieces of work. This issue of *Atna* is the pure bliss of various components substantiating tourism businesses and the opportunities associated with it.

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