

# A Review of Marketing Strategies for Promoting Sustainable Tourism Destinations in India

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## Abstract

Sustainable tourism for Indian destinations is promoted and marketed by utilizing marketing strategies to gain interest from travelers. However, the promotion of sustainable tourism destinations is achieved in a manner that does not jeopardize the environment or community conservation. Sustainable tourism is promoted by increasing the destination's visibility, which includes social media marketing, search engine optimization, and content marketing, one such example is the scheme of Swadesh Darshan, which was launched by the Indian tourism and it aims for the development of sustainable tourism destinations. Furthermore, enhancing cultural and community features in marketing might help to attract and retain tourists' interest, thereby strengthening sustainable tourism. To entice people to visit sustainable tourist places, the tourism sector is focusing on proper selling factors, physical improvements to attractions and accessibility, and proximity to other tourist sites. Overall, the current study reveals that a comprehensive Destination Management action plan can help accelerate India's green tourism transition. This study aims to understand some of the marketing strategies employed by Indian Tourism Industry on environmentally sustainable vacation spots. The Indian travel industry is impacted by sustainable tourism, one of the topics discussed in this article. This study is descriptive and relies only on books and periodicals covering a wide range of topics that are relevant to sustainable tourism destinations in India. Moreover, the present study also highlights, the importance of online marketing strategies for marketing sustainable Indian travel destinations which is discussed to have a better understanding of the future of the tourism sector in India. The particulars of the study are emerging from the SWOT analysis model for the assessment as well as the scrutinization of the potential of the Indian tourism industry.

**Keywords:** Online Marketing Strategies, Sustainable Tourism Destinations, and India.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Sustainable tourism is defined as meeting the requirements of tourists, the travel industry, the environment, and host communities while taking into account all of its current and potential future economic, social, and environmental consequences. Its mission is to promote responsible tourism to natural regions that benefit communities while protecting the environment and creating a balance between economic development, environmental preservation, and community welfare (Vaja, 2021; Salam & Lubis, 2024). Responsible travel to natural areas is critical for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by 2030 since it encourages job creation, cultural preservation, and poverty reduction (Khan *et al.*, 2022). Only in the last few years, the idea

of sustainable tourism has started coming up in India as well. This helps in creating an awareness among tourists of the environment, social justice, and the economy, which are the three pillars of sustainable development (Gulati, 2021). Accordingly, as those aware of mass tourism disadvantages in conditions of consumption, environmental reserves, and indigenous cultures and traditions, environmentally responsible and sustainable travel opportunities should emerge. India can therefore be described as possessing ideal conditions that make it possible for sustainable travel to be practiced for several reasons, including that the country has great biological diversity as well as natural and cultural endowment. However, there have been some hindrances in the application of these sustainable tourism techniques in

India regarding the lack of funds, lack of infrastructure, and awareness of the stakeholders. The industry of hospitality and tourism in India has realized that 'green' marketing initiatives for the support of environmentally friendly organizations are very crucial. But in the past few years, there has been a growing awareness in India about sustainable tourism as travelers and travel agents have come to understand that travel can occasionally have detrimental effects on social and environmental surroundings. (Gulati, 2021). Many of the conventional communicational strategies are important for promoting sustainable tourism, as the technique may enhance awareness about sustainable tourism among eco-conscious travelers, attract more sustainable tourists, and influence tourism organizations to incorporate sustainable practices into their marketing strategies and practices. (Gulati, 2021)

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Tourism is the term used to represent travel away from one's customary place of residence for pleasure, business, or other purposes. The tourism business is predicted to create significant economic growth in the future. (Vaja, 2021; Salam & Lubis, 2024), and it is particular to the international economy, noticeable in terms of employment establishment, cultural preservation, and environmental conservation. Other types of tourism include ecotourism, which emphasizes responsible travel to natural places while campaigning for conservation and the well-being of nearby communities (Husnaini, 2023; Khan *et al.*, 2022). Ecotourism promotes socio-cultural sustainability while also increasing environmental consciousness (Khan *et al.*, 2022).

"Ecotourism is a unique kind of travel specializing in the local populace, a phenomenon where a community is active in a developmental event; this not only recovers but also creates jobs and safeguards culture (Husnaini, 2023) (Simanjuntaka & Manalu, 2019). Sustainable travel is among the emerging sectors that make up the economy around the globe. "It's an approach that emphasizes the need for minimal intrusion in places (semi) free of human intervention, therefore boosting the community's socioeconomic status and preserving the natural environment (Husnaini, 2023) (Khan *et al.*, 2022). The principle is to allow the visitors to interact and understand the importance of conserving wildlife, plants, and culture through sustainable practices (Vaja, 2021) (Salam & Lubis, 2024). To this end, ecotourism must manage relations among the local people, the environmental conservation practices, and the economic growth of a locality (Khan *et al.*, 2022).

A marketing strategy is a well-framed approach that an organization devises for winning targeted customers to achieve predefined corporate goals. It represents a way of achieving a competitive advantage over competitors by properly utilizing resources with the implementation of unique marketing strategies, normally

through market segmentation and personalized marketing campaigns. On one hand, the SWOT analysis is a great point of the marketing strategy, intended for the internal strength with weaknesses and external opportunities with threats of any organization. It helps create an appropriate marketing campaign, e.g., packaging and promotion of a certain product. With the segregation of clients in the region, different approaches to successful marketing strategies can also be implemented. The targeting of print, digital, and outdoor advertisements in the different regions is. In addition to curbing mass tourism, therefore, to save the environment, ecotourism plans should also address sustainability and community involvement issues. Regarding this, Husnaini, 2023; Khan *et al.*, 2022 note that for success to be achieved, there needs to be a smartly designed marketing plan that evokes balanced consumer involvement and hence consumer demand growth.

An online marketing strategy involves an in-depth and comprehensive plan using digital means to present an excellent image that will showcase the good picture of the actual tangible products or services, in this case e of ecotourism. These tools involve social media, blogs, search engine optimization, mobile applications, and many others that help widen the visibility and involvement with probable customers. For instance, given the visually interactive platforms of Instagram, this can be quite a boon in marketing ecotourism because you can showcase the scenery of the ecotourism sites in quite vibrant colors, and apart from that, you also reach a certain group, as was evident from the Indian Tourism in Kerala. Apart from this, the Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) perceives these online marketing tools as capable of altering the tourists' attitude and behavior towards ecotourism, further improving the perception as well as knowledge of the destination. The same has been supported by Khan *et al.*, 2022. Moreover, TPB clarifies that these marketing strategies applied digitally for tourism have the potential to shape the perceptions and behavior of tourists regarding ecotourism; it is in this manner that the image and awareness of the destination are increased. More than that, if green policies and the inclusiveness of local communities can be incorporated into these tourism development plans, a more responsible tourism approach may emerge in compliance with the Sustainable Development Goals.

Marketing strategy to develop sustainable tourism destination

A marketing strategy must be sensible in the sense that it takes social, economic, and ecological values into account, given that it operates in the field of environmentally friendly tourist destinations. Among all the available marketing strategies applied digitally for tourism are the appropriate ones for the determined consumer group are social networking, content, and market data with a focus on the specified kind of consumer (Khan *et al.*, 2022). Also, SWOT may help

uncover some of the challenges faced during external and internal marketing communications, together with how these could be leveraged by enhancing the packaging, promotion, and tourism services, as explained by Salam Lubis (2024). This is because it develops the ability of the environment to respond positively to change, enhances the tourist environment, and makes it acceptable (Husnaini, 2023). Besides, it is equally important to understand that ecotourism can be conducted even without the help of the latter type of advertising and marketing planning, as is reflected in the examples of the print as well as the outdoor advertisements of a company operating in a particular geographical specialization (Simanjuntaka & Manalu, 2019). As Vaja (2021) does, it is crucial to point out that, indeed, it is rather important to emphasize that the further potential developments of the investigated tourist attractions cannot be considered without reference to the aforementioned general marketing concept that is aimed at the activation of the population, as well as being mainly environmentally friendly.

The combined tourist attraction and solar photovoltaic power generation facilities bring huge regular income through monetary tourism as well as through rainwater tourism in all countries around the world, the third to another agenda in the case of India. It is one of the prime players in terms of bringing up the money through this. Everything started to grow in one direction and the problems rapidly came into view. The establishment of travel and tourism has not only brought huge economic gains in India but also has raised concerns about the social and environmental durability as a result of its tremendous growth. The situation in tourism is successfully handled by policies and strategies such as the ones referred to by Kirstges in 2002. Travel agents find a tourism Act that promotes the sector by saying "Sustainable tourism-thriving people" to be the best approach to tackle this problem of mass tourism. Thus, we can say that tourism and travel studies have been phenomenally concerned over the past decade. An outstanding strategy for the implementation of "sustainable" solutions is online e-tourism marketing. Through engaging social media, travelers can find out about these problems and how they can support environmentally friendly initiatives and help the community through activities that minimize their environmental footprint.

Implying internet marketing requires a devoted environment that would provide zero-obstruction methodologies to preserve and use environmental resources all along the process of the e-commerce experiences increasing environmental awareness, which is beneficial to ecological preservation and sustainable growth as a kind. Tourism companies provide a financial option to help you travel with no negative impact on the climate at all. The options made by the individual producers are not only about participation in the conservation of the environment but the effect.

### 3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

#### Research Objectives

- To review the theoretical background concepts of sustainable tourism.
- To discuss the online marketing strategies for developing sustainable tourism destinations in India.
- To analyze the SWOT ANALYSIS of the tourism industry in India.

#### RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. What are the theoretical background concepts of sustainable tourism?
2. What are the online marketing strategies for developing sustainable tourism destinations in India?
3. What is the SWOT analysis of the tourism industry in India?

#### METHODS & DATA COLLECTION

This study depends totally on secondary data and is just a description. Data is received from virtually multiple articles that are on various social media platforms (Vaja, 2021). The secondary data that were used in the present study were compiled via the exploration of other relevant documents and articles. This means of data gathering was selected as it is easier and cheaper if so, used as compared if the data are gotten through the fieldwork. (Husnaini, 2023) The study is still in progress. Additionally, it also evaluates the tourism industry of India by enlisting the method of SWOT analysis.

### 4. RESULTS

#### *Marketing Strategy of Tourism Industry in India* *Marketing Strategies*

Developing a sustainable tourism product in India necessitates a thorough web marketing strategy that prioritizes sustainable tourism, community involvement, and responsible tourism. Ecotourism, thus, may be described as tourism to the natural destinations that prop up the health of the ecosystems and the standards of living of the hosts (Chaudhary, 2009). This complies with the Swadesh Darshan Scheme, which was launched by Indian tourism and aims at the development of sustainable tourism destinations (Tripathi & Ali, 2021). Therefore, the sustainable development of a destination, especially for rural tourism corresponds to achieving a balance between the overall income generation on the one hand and the cultural and physical endowments of the area on the other hand as well as the use of local community. Thus, this strategy is in the best interest of everyone in the process because it is advantageous not only for the inhabitants of the specific area but also for the tourism process (Irfan *et al.*, 2024). Engaging community involvement is mandatory; such strategies have to engage the locals in the process of tourism development to overcome challenges such as the dearth of information on the impacts of tourism (Fernandes, 2009). In addition, campaigns that support the practice of

ethical and sustainable activities within the marketing efforts that create value for the local stakeholders should focus on the responsible conduct of tourists. These components can be integrated into the online marketing plan of a destination, thus assisting in the creation of a sustainable tourism model acceptable to the Indian economy and environment and attracting eco-aware tourists.

Swadesh Darshan is a tourism destination promotion initiative of India's tourism efforts toward implementing online marketing techniques in favor of eco-tourism destinations. The strategy outlines how countries will position themselves in terms of physical development to enhance tourist satisfaction as well as outline different themes of wildlife, beach, culture, heritage, tribal, and many others, which will have been geared to attracting niche markets. Furthermore, the construction of such circuits is intended to help the local population by providing employment opportunities and encouraging community development, besides the rationale of environmental protection (Kumar, 2018). To sum it up, Swadesh Darshan is another promising step concerning eco-tourism development in India. (Tripathi & Ali, 2021) The scheme translates into the tourism industry being presented as among the critical pillars of economic advancement and hence career opportunities.

An impressive amount of money and time is devoted to digital channels for innovations and methods to involve and attract the audience of these digital media in different ways. While such approaches are very promising, problems even now are present in the path to reaching the point that strategies of digital marketing conform to what is sustainable. This means the practice of innovation and perpetual adaptation should be present to control the changing of customer demand and technological breakthroughs.

Modern Lifestyle Transformation through Online Marketing: Social media have the real-time advantage of first-hand involvement and feedback, which is a very important part of a sustainability strategy to pull in tourists and keep them interested in the nature concept (Kumar & Barua 2024).

Tourism destinations should focus on upgrading their websites to promote sustainability through effective communication and to assess and improve the environmental and sociocultural content with text mining techniques (Marchi *et al.*, 2023).

### Swot Analysis

A SWOT analysis SWOT matrix is an orderly planning technique used to identify the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats linked to a particular project or business venture. A product, location, industry, or individual may be the beneficiary of a SWOT study. It entails establishing the project or business enterprise one is working to achieve and then

identifying the external and internal elements that are conducive or antagonistic to reaching said project or enterprise. (Agrawal, 2016)

SWOT analysis assists the company in establishing and formulating an effective and suitable plan that can enhance the overall utilization of resources, control and exploit opportunities, and prevent or minimize threats (Gaur, 2024). The SWOT analysis was carried out using published secondary data that proved to be trustworthy. (Alalmal *et al.*, 2020)

### SWOT Analysis as a Marketing Strategy of the Tourism Industry in India

Despite the positive aspects, negative aspects, scope, and threats, India's tourist sector has a mixed scenario altogether. An analysis of its strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats in the present and a look into the future are presented.

#### Strengths

Economic Contribution: Generally ranked seventh in the global list, the tourist industry is second only to ITES in foreign exchange earnings and significantly boosts the GDP (Pankaj, 2024).

#### Weaknesses

Infrastructure difficulties: Lack of proper amenities and services also challenges the traveler and lowers the satisfaction level of the visitors (2024, Thakur &).

The demanding nature of this industry is again volitionally highly volatile and subject to seasonal changes that may slightly affect revenue stability (Anum *et al.*, 2024).

#### Opportunities

Expanding Domestic Tourism: After the virus outbreak, there has been growing interest in consumers focusing on domestic tourism, which is a good sign of growth (Mahour, 2024).

Tourism Attracting tourists, promotion of ecotourism, and incorporation of sustainable measures that are environmentally friendly can attract tourists.

#### Threats

Global Competition: India's market share in international tourist arrivals might face intense competition from many countries (Anum *et al.*, 2024).

#### Political and Economic Instability:

As pointed out by Andini and Kusufa (2024), others include political instabilities or any issue that affects the economy and may help discourage tourism. Items being constant ratios, India has indicated that there exists ample scope for improvement in the tourism

industry yet they must overcome the flaws and threats posed by foreign countries.

## 5. DISCUSSION

Developing online marketing methods that work for sustainable tourism destinations in India requires a combination of programs and certifications that promote responsible travel. The Travel for Life (TFL) stages, which boost businesses and visitors to save energy and water, contribute a model for sustainable practices. Travel operators and hotels can also ensure that their marketing efforts adhere to sustainable guidelines by consulting the Ministry of Tourism's Sustainable Tourism Criteria (Daneshwar & Revit 2024). The Swadesh Darshan Scheme, which creates theme-based tourist itineraries to strengthen local economies and promote environmentally friendly travel, also contributes to this (Joji 2020). Highlighting the TFL Certification can also be an effective marketing strategy because it attracts eco-conscious travelers by identifying and categorizing firms that apply sustainable ways into Bronze, Silver, and Gold levels. The current research presents theoretical inputs to the sustainable tourism destination in India specifically concentrating on the concept of marketing strategies applied digitally, and the application of SWOT analysis to review the Indian tourism industry for the sustainable behavior of travelers. The present research presents the method of the SWOT analysis model and strategies of digital marketing in promoting ecotourism behavior among the tourists of India. Many companies have adopted Web 2.0 tools and technologies like SNS, mobile Apps, blogs, and SEO for performing their marketing communication activities. It is observed that blogging and digital media are the most common tools for passing information about eco-tourism destinations to tourists. A responsible tourism campaign can also teach potential visitors how to cut down their effects on the environment and help locals, which will make the destination more attractive (Sultan *et al.*, 2020). By putting these pieces together, online marketing strategies can promote sustainable tourism in India well and draw more ethical travelers.

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