


Chapter 11

Nurturing Nature and Local Well-Being in the Hills of Himachal Pradesh: Transformation Through Eco and Sustainable Tourism Practices


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ABSTRACT

The outcome of the heavy rains in Himachal Pradesh has been disturbing, with 300 deaths, 10,000 cracked buildings, and a staggering rain-induced cost of Rs 10,000 crore in 2023. The Himalayan region is at heightened risk due to rising casualties, flood-hit areas, and alarming weather patterns. Despite government initiatives promoting job creation and startup culture, the delicate balance between development and environmental preservation remains a challenge in Himachal. Improper waste disposal and unscientific road construction compound challenges, making daily life difficult for highland residents. Uncontrolled development and tourism in Himachal's mountains have caused severe environmental damage, highlighting the urgent need for sustainable tourism practices. Individuals play a vital role by adopting responsible tourism practices and prioritizing proper waste management to mitigate environmental impact. This chapter highlights the nurturing of nature and local well-being through sustainable tourism practices in Himachal Pradesh.

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INTRODUCTION

Tourism is a multifaceted phenomenon involving human movement beyond usual environments for leisure or commerce. Visitors, whether residents or foreigners, tourists or excursionists, engage in various activities that constitute tourism. Tourism encompasses sociocultural experiences, economic expenditures, and impacts. Analysing tourism requires a holistic approach that spans human behaviour, transport flows, service infrastructure, and qualitative realms. It involves the movement of people, the flow of transport, and the infrastructure of services. Tourism has both economic and sociocultural dimensions, affecting expenditures and experiences (Tovmasyan, 2016). Tourism makes a vital contribution towards countries' economic prosperity. A higher visitor arrival ranking indicates a country is viewed as a more appealing destination. Tourist attractiveness also stems from competitiveness variables spanning policy rules to cultural allure. Therefore, an integrated approach better measures the totality of a country's tourism appeal and strengths (Zaher & Hafez, 2017). Tourism's globalization stems from broader economic integration and tech-enabled connectivity gains. Tourism has ballooned into the world's biggest industry with sweeping impacts. Globalization has spawned new tourism growth patterns and traveller profiles. Cheaper, faster transport and internet permeability have enabled tourism to thoroughly permeate across borders (Brondoni, 2020). Tourism thrives as a pivotal sector within rising economies. Considered the planet's second-largest and most labour-intensive industry, tourism drives economic decentralization, infrastructure growth, public revenues, and artisan preservation. Tourism leverages human ingenuity over finite natural resources. The industry fuels cultural rejuvenation and facilitates cross-cultural empathy. With strategic development, Chisita. Tourism is booming globally with key metrics and rankings underscoring its emergence as a competitive industry. Worldwide trends reveal robust sustained tourism growth, though individual countries like Armenia vary. Tourism promises profitable expansion, community development, and cross-border social impacts. Online tools now shape and streamline travel planning and logistics. Tourism and affiliated sectors draw substantial investment given forecasted expansion. Strategic tourism development and promotion thus hold profound economic and social promise worldwide (Tovmasyan, 2016). In 2018, travel and tourism constituted a \$8.8 trillion global industry, accounting for 10.4% of total worldwide GDP. The sector comprised 6.5% of all global exports and over a quarter of total services exports, in addition to employing one-tenth of all workers. Continued vigorous expansion is forecasted, with projected 2019 tourism growth of 3.6% far outpacing the broader economy's 2.9% rise. Such figures underscore tourism's escalating scale and economic permeation globally across metrics of output, trade, labour, and more (Erceg et al., 2020). International tourism has emerged as an engine of global economic integration and driver of growth, competitiveness, and social welfare. Currently employing one in every twelve workers worldwide, tourism accounts for 7% of investments, 11% of consumer spending, 5% of tax revenues, and a third of global trade in services. As an ever-expanding sector intertwined with sustainable development, tourism generated over 250 million jobs globally as of 2020. Tourism's economic footprint and reach will likely continue to accelerate across metrics from job creation to foreign receipts (Kirylov et al., 2020). India's tourism sector has become a major engine of economic growth within the country's service industries. Given India's abundant cultural, historical, and natural assets spread across its diverse landscapes, the tourism industry holds immense potential. Currently ranked 7th globally in travel and tourism's total contribution to GDP in 2017-2018, India continues to solidify its standing as an attractive travel destination. By 2028, international

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