

Chapter 17

Navigating the Path to Sustainable Transformation in Tourism and Hospitality

Paramjeet Kumar

 <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-3824-2289>

North Eastern Hill University, India

ABSTRACT

This chapter provides an overview of a research study titled “Navigating the Path to Sustainable Transformation in Tourism and Hospitality: Overcoming Challenges and Advancing Towards SDGs Through Holistic Sustainability Practices.” This research study explores the journey towards sustainable transformation in the tourism and hospitality industry. It examines the challenges faced in achieving sustainable development goals and proposes holistic sustainability practices to overcome these challenges. The study aims to shed light on the path towards sustainable transformation in the tourism and hospitality industry, highlighting the challenges that need to be addressed for the successful achievement of sustainable development goals.

UNDERSTANDING SUSTAINABLE TRANSFORMATION IN TOURISM AND HOSPITALITY

The tourism and hospitality industry is currently confronted with a multitude of problems and opportunities as it strives to achieve sustainable transformation in the face of a constantly evolving global landscape. An important obstacle is the necessity to surpass conventional methods that prioritise immediate financial gains above long-lasting ecological viability. To achieve this change in thinking, one must possess a thorough comprehension of sustainability and its ramifications for the industry. In order to achieve sustainable transformation, it is essential to integrate comprehensive sustainability practices. These practices incorporate environmental, social, and economic aspects, in accordance with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. The environmental aspect of sustainability focuses on the protection and safeguarding of natural resources, biodiversity, and ecosystems. The social dimension

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emphasises the promotion of inclusive and fair practices, the observance of human rights, the support of local communities, and the assurance of the welfare of employees and guests. Moreover, the economic aspect underscores the significance of financial sustainability and adaptability while considering the interests of all parties involved. In order to achieve a more comprehensive comprehension of sustainable transformation in the tourist and hospitality sector, it is important to evaluate the present condition of sustainability within the industry.

Challenges in Navigating the Path to Sustainable Transformation

The journey towards achieving sustainable transformation in the tourist and hospitality industry is fraught with various obstacles and difficulties. A significant obstacle lies in the industry's limited awareness and comprehension of sustainability. Studies investigating the viewpoints of industry managers and stakeholders have emphasised the necessity of incorporating sustainability more extensively into the curriculum of hospitality and tourism education. The integration of this knowledge and skills is crucial in order to guarantee that future professionals in the industry are equipped to make valuable contributions towards sustainable growth. Research conducted with hospitality sector managers in Northern California indicates a consensus that sustainability should be integrated into the hospitality curriculum (Millar & Park, 2013). Nevertheless, there is a requirement for a thorough and forward-thinking strategy towards sustainability education. Moreover, managers exhibit a variance in their understanding of sustainability, highlighting a dearth of clarity and consistency in the definition of the concept. A further obstacle in achieving sustainable transformation lies in the scarcity of sustainability courses available in hospitality/leisure management programmes. Based on a 2017 study that analysed the top 50 international hospitality/leisure management programmes, most of these programmes provide between zero and five sustainability courses in their undergraduate curriculum (Zizka, 2021). The insufficient focus on sustainability education impedes the development of future professionals as effective catalysts for constructive social transformation.

Approaches to Overcome Obstacles in Sustainable Tourism

In order to surmount the obstacles in achieving sustainable transformation, it is imperative to embrace comprehensive sustainability strategies that encompass the environmental, social, and economic dimensions. These holistic methods entail incorporating sustainability into the curriculum by fostering a comprehensive comprehension of the topic and its significance across all sectors of the industry. Furthermore, it is imperative to establish collaboration and partnerships among academic institutions, industry stakeholders, and government agencies to guarantee that sustainability is given utmost importance and backed at every level. These partnerships can result in the creation of modern and forward-thinking educational programmes in the hotel industry that include a thorough focus on sustainability (Millar & Park, 2013). Moreover, it is crucial to embrace a framework that promotes the integration of critical reflective thinking with the Sustainable Development Goals. The framework presented by Cotterell et al. (2019) facilitates the development of a comprehensive comprehension of sustainability among educators and students. It also empowers them to engage in critical analysis and take action to achieve global sustainable tourism objectives. The use of these strategies enables the hospitality and tourism sector to successfully traverse the journey towards sustainable transformation.

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