

Chapter 8

Impact of Waste Management in Transforming Dharamshala to a Sustainably Developed Tourist Destination: An Empirical Investigation

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ABSTRACT

The increasing number of tourists visiting Dharamshala, the temporary residence of His Holiness the Dalai Lama and the location of the impressive Dhauladhaar, presents a significant challenge for sustainable waste management. This requires a comprehensive understanding of the effects on stakeholders. This study investigates the consequences of sustainable waste management in the context of increasing tourists. It examines the intricate dynamics between stakeholders and waste man-

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agement practices to identify the benefits and challenges of this paradigm shift. The perspectives of various stakeholders, including local communities, businesses, government agencies, non-governmental organisations, and tourists, are analysed to illuminate their diverse interests, concerns, and aspirations. With the growth of tourism, the amount of waste generated also increases, necessitating sustainable waste management practices. The need for collaboration, innovation, and stakeholder engagement is also highlighted to develop a sustainable path.

1. INTRODUCTION

Dharamshala, a renowned tourist destination in the Himalayas, is a cultural melting pot with diverse landscapes. Nevertheless, the city confronts the challenge of effectively managing waste to preserve its natural beauty and cultural identity. Waste management is essential for sustainable tourism development as it mitigates environmental degradation, enhances the visitor experience, and fosters community well-being. This chapter examines the influence of waste management practices in transforming Dharamshala into a sustainably developed tourist destination. The surge in waste generation, including solid waste, wastewater, and litter, due to the influx of tourists can pose significant environmental and health hazards. Inadequate waste disposal can tarnish the aesthetic appeal of tourist sites, diminishing the overall visitor experience and Dharamshala's attractiveness as a tourist destination. This empirical investigation aims to illuminate the impact of waste management practices in transforming Dharamshala into a sustainably developed tourist destination.

Dharamshala, situated amidst the tranquil and beautiful Dhauladhar range of the Himalayas, Dharamshala has become a well-known tourist attraction, drawing people from all over the world who come to experience the breathtaking natural beauty, spiritual solitude, and cultural immersion. Dharamshala, the exiled Tibetan government's capital and home to His Holiness the Dalai Lama, is a cosmopolitan city that combines many different traditions, cultures, and topographies. Dharamshala's charm is found in its diverse array of attractions, which spans from the serene surroundings of McLeod Ganj to the historic temples of Bhagsu Nag, and from the picturesque pathways of Triund to the bustling Tibetan marketplaces. To maintain its pristine environment and rich cultural legacy, Dharamshala must successfully manage its waste in addition to the city's explosive increase in tourists (Diederich, 1993; Bodo, 2019; Jasrotia et al, 2020).

In 2017, Dharamshala received 2,823,289 visitors; however, this number surged to 676,836 following the COVID-19 pandemic in 2023 (<https://himachaltourism.gov.in>). The proposed international airport and four-lane highways will boost tourism and attract more visitors by improving transportation options. Consequently, the

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