

Tourism Innovations

A Bi-Annual Refereed International Journal

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Indian Tourism and Hospitality Congress (ITHC)

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TOURISM INNOVATIONS: A JOURNAL OF INDIAN TOURISM AND HOSPITALITY CONGRESS (ITHC) is a bi-annual international referred research Journal focusing on academic perspectives in Tourism and Hospitality. Being an journal of interdisciplinary field, the journal focuses on various aspects of tourism and hospitality like, Tourism Issues, Tourism Impacts, Eco-tourism, Sustainable Tourism, Tourism Marketing, Medical Tourism, Health Tourism, Culture Tourism, Culinary Arts, Service Operations and other tourism, travel and hospitality areas. The objective of the journal is to have a comprehensive collection of research articles and dispersal of updated knowledge and information about tourism sector.

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Editorial:

Tourism and Peace – The Essential Synergy for a Harmonious Global Future

As the world celebrates World Tourism Day under the theme “Tourism and Peace,” it is essential to reflect on the profound relationship between tourism and the pursuit of peace. In a world marked by economic disparities, cultural differences, and political tensions, tourism stands as a bridge that connects societies, promotes mutual understanding, and fosters harmony. This year’s theme calls upon governments, industries, and individuals to recognize the transformative power of tourism as not just an economic driver but also as a tool for building and sustaining peace.

Tourism is inherently an act of cultural exchange. As travelers visit new destinations, they immerse themselves in the traditions, values, and histories of other cultures. This act of cultural immersion has the potential to challenge stereotypes, diminish prejudices, and foster empathy. The intercultural dialogue that tourism facilitates encourages an appreciation of diversity and cultivates a sense of shared humanity. When people from different backgrounds meet and interact in a peaceful and friendly setting, it becomes much harder to view the “other” as a threat. Rather, the other becomes someone with a different perspective, shaped by unique cultural experiences, but still fundamentally human.

International tourism, which involves the crossing of borders and the interaction between people of diverse nationalities, plays an essential role in promoting peace. For example, people-to-people interactions through tourism in conflict zones or between communities that have experienced historical tensions can foster reconciliation. In such situations, tourism becomes an avenue for shared experiences that highlight commonalities rather than differences, contributing to the healing of past wounds. A traveler who experiences the warmth and hospitality of another culture is more likely to develop positive perceptions of that culture, leading to greater intercultural tolerance and less likelihood of conflict.

One of the most tangible ways tourism contributes to peace is through its economic impact. Tourism is a vital industry for many countries, providing jobs and income that support livelihoods. When tourism flourishes, it can improve the economic well-being of local communities, leading to a reduction in poverty and social inequality – two major contributors to unrest. By creating economic opportunities, tourism can promote stability, as people have a greater incentive to preserve peaceful conditions that allow for continued economic prosperity.

For developing nations, especially those recovering from conflict, tourism can be a crucial industry for reconstruction. Take, for example, countries such as Cambodia and Rwanda, both of which have leveraged their tourism sectors to rebuild after periods of intense conflict. In these cases, tourism has been instrumental in reintegrating former combatants into society by providing employment opportunities. Furthermore, as tourism brings in foreign investment and creates jobs, it helps reduce social tensions that often arise from economic disparities.

Moreover, governments are more likely to maintain peaceful environments when tourism plays a significant role in their national economy. Peace is not only necessary for tourism to thrive, but it is also maintained as a consequence of tourism’s success. Countries that rely on tourism revenue are less likely to engage in aggressive policies that could deter tourists. For instance, the small Pacific Island nation of Fiji, which faced military coups in the late 20th century, has found that maintaining political stability is crucial for its tourism industry, which is a significant part of its economy. Thus, tourism can act as a motivator for peace on a national scale.

Sustainable tourism, with its emphasis on responsible travel that minimizes environmental impact and supports local cultures, has a particularly important role in peacebuilding. It is a model that encourages travelers and the tourism industry to be mindful of their effect on destinations. By promoting environmental conservation and the protection of local cultures, sustainable tourism advocates for a future where human activity, including tourism, supports the well-being of both people and the planet.

One of the key aspects of sustainable tourism is community involvement. When local communities are empowered to manage and benefit from tourism, it fosters a sense of ownership and pride. This, in turn, creates conditions for peace, as local residents see tourism as a positive force for their development. Sustainable tourism ensures that the benefits of tourism are not concentrated in the hands of a few, but rather distributed across communities, reducing the likelihood of social conflicts over resources. Moreover, involving local populations in decision-making processes related to tourism development promotes transparency and builds trust between communities and government authorities.

In post-conflict societies, sustainable tourism can aid peacebuilding efforts by ensuring that tourism development

respects the social and cultural sensitivities of affected communities. For example, in Bosnia and Herzegovina, tourism has been used as a tool to foster reconciliation between ethnically diverse populations. Guided tours that focus on the country's multicultural heritage and the impacts of the Bosnian War allow visitors to engage with difficult historical narratives, promoting dialogue and understanding between different ethnic groups. In such cases, tourism becomes a platform for peace education, helping visitors and locals alike to reflect on the causes of conflict and the importance of coexistence.

While tourism has immense potential as a force for peace, it is not without its challenges. The rapid expansion of tourism can sometimes lead to negative consequences such as cultural commodification, environmental degradation, and over-tourism, which can strain local resources and lead to resentment among host communities. These issues must be addressed carefully to ensure that tourism remains a positive force for peace.

Additionally, tourism in conflict zones or politically unstable regions can sometimes exacerbate tensions if not managed properly. Tourists may be perceived as outsiders or even as a threat by local populations, especially if tourism development displaces local communities or disregards their cultural practices. It is therefore crucial for governments and tourism operators to engage with local communities in a respectful and inclusive manner, ensuring that tourism benefits everyone.

Tourism professionals and stakeholders must take responsibility for ensuring that the industry promotes peace. This requires a commitment to ethical practices, including respect for human rights, cultural heritage, and the environment. It also means using tourism as a platform to raise awareness about peace and conflict issues, encouraging travelers to be responsible global citizens.

The theme of "Tourism and Peace" for this year's World Tourism Day is both timely and necessary. As we navigate a world fraught with political and social challenges, tourism offers a powerful tool for fostering peace and understanding across borders. By promoting cross-cultural dialogue, economic stability, and sustainable development, tourism can contribute to a more peaceful and harmonious world. However, this potential will only be realized if we commit to ethical tourism practices that respect and uplift local communities.

Let us use this World Tourism Day as a reminder that tourism is not just about travel—it is about building bridges, promoting understanding, and contributing to global peace. With thoughtful planning, responsible practices, and a focus on sustainability, tourism can continue to be a driving force for peace in our world.

Chief Editors

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Sustainable Tourism in Fragile Ecosystems: Challenges and Opportunities

Rayees Ahmad Bhat & Mandeep kaur

Abstract

The Earth's ecosystems are important and capable of providing for necessities. The Himalayan ranges are home to numerous million people, a variety of rare creatures, and a wide spectrum of religious and spiritual practices. They are located in Asia and span around 2,500 kilometres from east to west. The primary goal of the paradigm of ecologically conscious tourist repercussions for policies is to decouple the link between the rise of tourists and environmental damage. The current work focuses on identifying possible locations for the development of ecotourism in Western Rajasthan, India, utilizing GIS and weightage sum overlay methods based on remote sensing. One of the industries with the quickest rate of growth and profitability that incorporates sustainability is ecotourism. There are several opportunities for Western Rajasthan to grow its tourist industry, primarily via its unique wildlife, historical and archaeological sites, and cultural legacy. These figures are derived from a number of variables and assumptions used during the research. Various forms of data have been extracted from the United States Geological Survey's website for this purpose. To process the data, Arc GIS 10.8 is the latest and ERDAS Imagine spatial planning software 2015 were used. A appropriateness map is the ultimate result we get after analysing each of the theme layers. Seven thematic layers are included in this study: elevation, stream proximity to one another, land use/cover, density of people, road connection, protected area proximity, and historical hotspots. The final suitability map illustrates the potential for ecotourism in Western Rajasthan by showing five classifications of suitability that split the whole region into the following categories: exceptionally high (36.38%), high (78.36%), moderate (5.65%), low (0.86%), and very low (28.56%). By protecting and restoring animal habitats, this review will provide a new approach to management, managing the ecological equilibrium along with encouraging sustainable resource use.

Keywords: Ecotourism, Western Rajasthan, GIS Analysis

INTRODUCTION

One in ten employment globally, one-third of global service exports, and one-tenth of the global output are all attributed to tourism. Despite widespread concerns about the potential negative effects of tourism on the environment and the growth of the global economy, tourism is nonetheless praised as a major driver of job and income development worldwide [1]. Researchers and politicians have been very interested in the concept of "sustainable tourism" for the last 20 years.

However, there seems to be a significant gap among theory and practice in this field. Most nations are re-evaluating the effects of tourism and creating policies to support environmentally friendly tourism procedures that can aid in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) of the UN after the UN declared 2017 to be the International Year for Sustainable development in Tourism for Development [1, 2].

Thus, a tourism landscape provides the most significant geographical medium to study the connections between visitors and their visited destination based on its image ability and a noteworthy empirical appeal. However, a lot of the world's naturally occurring landscapes that are linked to tourism are undergoing physical changes as a result of climate fluctuations, agricultural practices, building, and other developmental activities [4].

Issues facing the Himalayan area

Global sensu amplo trends clearly demonstrate that natural resources are being used at a far higher tariff compared to the rate at which these assets become mostly obsolete [4, 5]. The Himalayan ecosystem is susceptible to the effects of three main human activities: (a) changes in natural processes, (b) human activity leading to changes in the environment, and (c) contemporary civilization.

Plans of action for Himalayan concerns

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In 2008, the National Mission for Safeguarding the Himalayan Environment (NMSHE) was established by the Ministry of Environment and Forests as part of the National Action Plan on Climate Change (NAPCC) to address concerns specific to the Himalayan areas [6, 7]. The goal of the assignment is to determine how the Himalayan ecology and climatic components are coupled in order to provide better livelihood options [8].

In the backdrop of the Himalayas, organic farming

The majority of the foreign nations that border the Himalayas as well as the Indian states in those areas have started and adopted creative organic farming to acquire high-quality goods from their region, bolstering the economy and promoting improved livelihood and sustainability [8, 9]. Meghalaya, a state in northeast India, was the first to proclaim itself an organic state.

The preservation of wildlife in the Himalaya

With approximately 10,000 plants, 300 animals, 977 birds, 281 herpetofauna, 269 fish, and many species of invertebrates and microorganisms, many of which have worldwide conservation importance, the Indian Himalayan Region (IHR) is one of the world's most biodiverse places. Notwithstanding its important ecological, [9, 10], hydrological, and biological advantages, the IHR's delicate alpine ecosystems are gravely endangered by growing human pressures, namely development.

Endangering the Himalayan ecology is pollution

The fate of the Himalayas, which suffer from the same urban decay as the lowlands, is a cause for increasing worry. Such an uncontrolled society would devolve into piles of trash and plastic, raw sewage, unrelieved water shortages, unplanned urban growth, [11], and vehicle-related air pollution. As a result, the Himalayan towns should be carefully constructed to minimise summertime tourist, which will not fund municipal services [12, 13].

Urban development

The new administration enters office at a critical policy juncture, facing rapid urbanisation, rising energy needs, environmental degradation, diminishing agricultural productivity, a lack of human capital, the creation of productive employment, new security concerns, and the need to reposition India in a changing global order [14, 15]. The Indian states that share the Himalayas serve as its major sentinels.

Tourism is an amalgam of several interconnected sectors. ICT use has completely revolutionised it with features such as online reservation, finding information via multiple online platforms and social networking sites, more flexible and tailored service offerings, integrated management of consumer services, and supply chain management [16]. ICT has also helped to enhance visa processing and travel facilitation.

The state's agricultural cultivation sector is supported by Rajasthan's eleven agro climatic zones and a variety of soil types that encourage the development of various crops. In 2020–2021, food grain output rose by 7.49% to around 19.79 million tons, comparing to the 26.58 million metric tons produced in 2019–2020 [17]. Current projections place Rajasthan's GSDP for 2022–2023 at INR 497648 crore. This is a 12.4% increase above the revised projected Gross State Domestic Product (GSDP) of INR 149761 million for the 2021–2022 period. In 2019–2020, the state's economy was primarily driven by the hospitality sector (17.35%), with agriculture (47.65%) and the manufacturing sector (47.57%) lagging closely behind [18]. Rajasthan's western region is renowned for its folklore, literature, art, and music. Seldom is any other region in India as rich in natural riches and native human culture [19]. The principal cultural assets of Western Rajasthan are its buildings, forts, the temples, the pilgrimage destinations, archaeological sites, mining, and natural features like sand dunes and sunshades. The friendly and hospitable nature of the people of Western Rajasthan also draws tourists to the area.

Because of this, Remote Sensing (RS) and GIS (Geographic Information Systems) are essential for quickly examining regions that are hard to reach and gathering a thorough picture of the site. The market is full of products and methods that help achieve the finest outcomes with a minimum number of resources [19, 20]. A Geographic Information System uses the least amount of resources while producing good outcomes. According to current trends, GIS is essential for tracking and reducing risks to biodiversity and animals while promoting sustainable growth for society.

Objectives of the study

- ✦ To evaluate Western Rajasthan, India, for sustainable ecotourism prospects using cutting-edge GIS technologies.
- ✦ Examine current global programs and practices for sustainable tourism, such as ecotourism, responsibility travel, and community-based tourism, which are being applied in fragile environments.

LITERATURE REVIEW

(Aayog, N. I. T. I. 2018) [21] Approximately 27% of the Earth's surface is made up of mountains, which are essential to the survival and well-being of the billions of people who live downstream as well as the 720 million people who live there. Put another way, more than half of all people on Earth rely on mountains for their access to clean energy, food, and water. However, natural disasters, overexploitation, climate change, and land degradation pose a threat to the mountains, with potential disastrous effects on both communities living in the mountains and those downstream.

(Rej, S., 2023) [22] The primary goal of the paradigm of

environmentally conscious tourist policy implications is to decouple the link between the increase of tourism and environmental damage. The study revisits the dynamic correlations between carbon dioxide emissions, economic growth, foreign tourists, learning, utilization of renewable energy, and the creation of gross capital for the case of India through the lens of the Kuznets curve as an environmental issues the hypothesis framework.

(Rej, S., 2021) [23] Given growing public awareness of environmentally friendly growth and environmental protection, ecotourism research has garnered a lot of interest recently. However, conflicts related to interests amongst stakeholders frequently have a detrimental impact on the efficacy and efficiency of ecotourism construction when it comes to the development and building of the industry in environmentally sensitive locations.

(Ramachandra, T. V., 2019) [24] The degree of anthropogenic pressure, ecological deterioration, and their effects on local well-being are all taken into account when evaluating land use and land cover changes in wooded areas. There will be a permanent depletion of habitat due to the rapid proliferation of linear constructions like highways and electricity lines since they will split the forest and disrupt local biological processes.

Methodology

Study area

Four primary districts, totalling 114,256 km², make up the research geographical area of Western the state of Rajasthan: Jodhpur (25.6689° N, 23, 4214° E), Jaisalmer municipality (25, 7684° N, 70.9083° E), the Bikaner region (28, 4768° N, 84, 4265° E), [21], and Barmer (57,5748° N, 78, 4687° E) as shown in Figure 1.

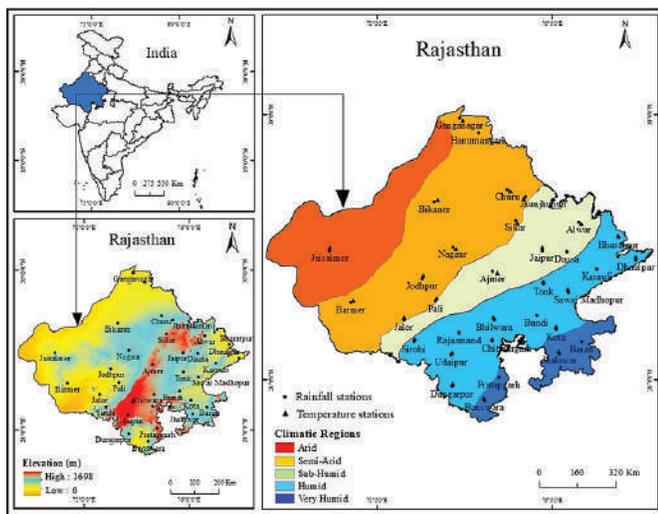


Fig. 1 A map demonstrating the research area's location in Western Rajasthan, India.

LULC Mapping

Land Use and Cover Maps Provide geographic information on the several physical encompassing classifications that exist in the Earth's uppermost layers. ERDAS Imagine 2015 was used for image processing to identify land-use groups, and Arc GIS 10.8 application was used to get additional details using DN values [22].

Protected Area

According to the International Union for Conservation of Nature, protected zones are places where inappropriate resource use is either completely banned or severely restricted. From a tourist standpoint, protected places are essential to comprehending the natural wildlife more thoroughly. Table 1, which was obtained from the ENVIS Centre on the Wild Life and Protected Area website, prominently lists the significant protected areas for wildlife in Western Rajasthan.

Table 1 There are significant protected areas in India's Western Rajasthan.

| S. No. | Name | District | Area (km) ² |
|--------|------------------------------|----------------------|------------------------|
| 1 | Jorbeer Conversation Reserve | Bikaner | 58.964 |
| 2 | Desert National park | Jaisalmer and Barmer | 6481.696 |
| 3 | Wildlife Guda Bishnoyan | Jodhpur | 2.596 |

Result

Due to its abundance of stunning and exciting historical places, Western Rajasthan has a great deal of potential for tourism-related enterprises [23]. A good management system is necessary for ensuring the successful growth of tourism-based activities since it establishes a ladder for the creation of different kinds of chances for the lives of the community.

Through the identification of appropriate ecotourism locations, the current research aims to create a cohesive strategy for the growth of ecotourism. After doing the research study, a final suitability map was produced using the weighted sum overlay evaluation method and the geospatial approach (Figure 2).

the GIS-based analysis, allowing decision-makers to make well-informed choices based on the relative relevance of each layer. Five different suitability classifications, ranging from very high to very low, are shown in the final suitability map that is produced. The districts of Bikaner and Jaisalmer were the main concentration of the study's high ecotourism appropriateness locations. Nonetheless, low adaptability locations are exacerbated by issues like poor infrastructure and poor connection in the Barmer region. Unchecked, avaricious human activity using natural resources is the secondary cause of the Himalayan ecosystem's deterioration problems. Therefore, it is a crucial and opportune time to respond more swiftly to causes that have long been seen as endangering the rich and natural environment of the very vulnerable area. This study has a great deal of promise for more research. The suitability map generated by this study might serve as a foundation for Western Rajasthan's future ecotourism planning and development.

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