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# Developing a sustainable tribal tourism model vis-a-vis the tribal region of Rajasthan

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## Abstract:

**Purpose:** The tourism industry in India is rising and has excellent potential to create jobs and produce a large amount of foreign capital, thereby promoting the region's overall economic and social growth. The inviting customs of tribal India, the diverse community and native culture are always drawing the attention of tourists. Sustainable tourism is an enterprise that aims to get a minimal effect on the atmosphere and native customs while helping to generate revenue, employment, and conserve local environments. Tribal tourism will promote the development of locally generated goods, apart from direct and indirect jobs, and have essential multiplier effects as money is recycled into communities. Also, the sector offers substantial improvements in the tribal region development with provincial taxes and encourages local and national infrastructure growth for India. This paper describes tribal tourism, sustainable tribal tourism, and its significance in the Indian scenario.

**Methods:** Responses of 213 tribes were analysed with multiple regression to build a model for sustainable tribal tourism's success in Rajasthan.

**Results:** Social, economic, environmental sustainability, facility and problems dimensions are found to have a positive impact on the sustainability in tribal tourism.

**Implications:** This study has been conducted to acquaint the growth prospects in the form of social, economic, environmental and facility aspects and challenges of sustainable tribal tourism in India.

**Keywords:** Tribal tourism, sustainable tourism, Sustainable tribal tourism, cultural heritage, cultural sensitivity

**JEL Classification:** Q01, Q56, M14

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## 1 INTRODUCTION

World Tourism Organization (WTO) describes sustainable tourism as tourism in which social and economic aspect comes together. The appealing needs of sustainable tourism are maintained by cultural credibility, ecology, variation, and biological processes. Today sustainability in tourism is the need of the environment and people (May 1991; Mkono & Tribe, 2017). With a well-marked visit to one of these places, we should discover the origins of a diverse, multicultural India (Godsmark, 2018), in which harmony of plurality will be the core of the spirit (Marx & Dhoest, 2016). Sustainable Tribal Tourism (STT) is the application of sustainable tourism with the tribal community. Under STT, the tourists are exposed to the tribe's culture and customs for dual benefits; tourists can learn about them. On the other hand, the tribal community will get income; on the other hand, their living standards can also be affected by the entry of tourist's finance availability. The STT can be successful if only the tourism activity cannot affect their original position

regarding their culture and customs. On the other hand, the tourists demand can also be at the same or improved level. Facts and Figures of the WTO are suggesting that tourism is going to be a growing industry worldwide, especially in Asia and the Pacific (+28%), the Middle East (+18%), and Africa (+8%) (Ala'a & Albattat, 2019; Saner et al., 2019). Economically, one of the global economy's most significant industries in the travel and tourism business (World Travel and Tourism Council, 2020). The sector's annual GDP growth was 10.5 percent for the year 2019, and the tourism industry remained the world's fastest developing sectors for the coming decades (World Travel and Tourism Council, 2019). The tourism sector generated 334 million workers worldwide in 2019. It is expected to contribute to local economic effects by adding to around 19 percent of the global workforce more within a year (Hassan, 2008).

In the Indian economy, travel and tourism play an essential part. India stands 14th in the world as opposed to other countries in terms of its tourism sector contribution to GDP. The World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC) forecasts India's fifth-largest tourism sector growth. Tourism will give

a nation's economy direct and indirect assistance. The primary benefits include financial funding for restaurants, grocery shops, travel, fun and attractions, while indirect services include public expenditure on associated facilities and household Indians spending on tourism. Apart from the economic effect, a stable tourism industry may have a far-reaching impact that influences the infrastructure and climate of a region. The tourism industry encourages the government to invest in national parks and reserves; the environment can benefit. The eco-tourism or tourism trend focused on respecting and protecting the natural ecosystem increases environmental advantages on a small and broad scale. Eco-tourism communities in India include eco-tourism leaders in Kerala ([tourindiakerala.com](http://tourindiakerala.com)) and Forest Lodges and Resorts in Southern India ([junglelodges.com](http://junglelodges.com)).

Tribal Tourism will promote the development of locally generated goods, apart from the development of direct and indirect jobs, and have essential multiplier effects as money is recycled into communities. Also, the sector offers substantial improvements in the tribal region development with provincial taxes and encourages local and national infrastructure growth for India (Chinomona, 2019; Sangwan & Bhatia, 2020). Against this backdrop, this study has been conducted to get acquainted with India's growth prospects and challenges of sustainable tribal tourism. The subsequent sections present the overview of sustainable tribal tourism in India. The paper deals with the significance of sustainable tourism with the growth prospects of tribal sustainable tourism.

## 2 LITERATURE REVIEW

There are downsides of tourism, including economic abuse, cultural destruction, and environmental damage (Singh, 2005). The expected increased number of visitors could significantly escalate these issues (Hassan, 2008). The three main ecological consequences of unsustainable tourism included rising environmental pressure (e.g. erosion, soil degradation); contamination (e.g. unmanaged waste management, high-energy use of materials, water and earth contamination); and biodiversity depletion (e.g. wildlife and devastation of ecosystems and indiscriminate clearing, coral harm). Socially, mass tourism has contributed, sometimes, to corruption, aboriginal community migration, local erosion in traditions and identity losses, growing income disparities, crime and property disputes, the decay of cultural practices and tradition. These violations are often encouraged by states, tourism firms, and organisations, and some categories of visitors who conspire involuntarily to commit these transgressions (Choibamroong, 2006).

India has great cultural diversity and having around 577 tribes in the region (Prasad & Sengupta 2019; Nautiyal et al., 2020; Dalal, 2019). These tribes also must abandon their conventional way of living. The India tourism industry has grown and is centered on all these tribes in various parts of India. These tribes are a significant part of Indian culture and dominate uncertain horizons with history and practice that is markedly separate from the others (Witzel, 2019). Thus, cultural and tribal tourism would be one of the best choices for visitors in India, which is conducted by several tour operators and travel agencies (Nautiyal et al., 2019). The

Indian tribes are unique in their way. All tribes have customs, values, and practices of their own, which are classified into significant classes, including Cultural & Tribal Tourism (Morin & Morin, 2019).

India is also home to many tribes and several indigenous groups who retain their original traditions until today and have a direct link with their natural world (Lauderdale, 2019). Tribes in India are environmentally friendly communities that struggle to protect the rivers, land, and forests that enable them to live. The congruence between local tribes and nature makes tribal areas full of exotic biodiversity. Rajasthan and Gujarat in the west observe a colourful way of life, and the craftsmanship of the Nilgiri Hills is fascinating in southern India. This pastoral lifestyle emphasises attractiveness with simplicity. In Jharkhand, Santhals and the Bastar tribe add charm to the central part of the country. The Santhal are the oldest tribes in India. Their traditional songs and dances, colourful hand-worked clothes and finely crafted bamboo designs highlight North-eastern India.

In response, attempts have been made to prevent the detrimental consequences of this avalanche of tourists on the economy, culture, and the climate. The critical factor contributing to the growth of sustainable tourism might lead to a different quest for tourism and might hinder the sustainable development trend. Tribal tourism can reduce substantial leakage from communities of capital and wealth, the destruction of local trades, rising land prices. It can also limit local employment access in industry and reduce unemployment.

The WTO describes Sustainable tourism as tourisms that fulfil the basic requirements of current tourism development in regions while protecting and improving future opportunities (Institute for Tourism, 2010). It incorporates highlighting the individual's role to make rational and productive choices (Haanpaa, 2005; Edgell, 2019). This prevailing paradigm encompasses all sustainable tourism practices and seems to be central to all facets of the planning and integration of the sector. The debate on sustainable travel has been entirely driven by sustainable tourism (Tribe, 2006). Most conceptions of sustainable tourism answer environmental challenges, interacting with three dimensions of economic, social, and ecological sustainability (Butler, 1999).

The irrevocable effects on the atmosphere, society and cultural compositions of host communities have shifted the world's attention from counting the goodness of tourism on economy, income, and employment towards environmental and social sustainability issues. This has led to the introduction of many buzzwords, such as natural-based tourism, green tourism, eco-tourism, and sustainable tourism. Community participation is considered a vital agenda in any future tourism development and a significant concern of many international bodies, such as those under the United Nations (e.g. WTO, UNESCO, SESCO, etc.).

From a socio-economic and cultural point of view, tribal tourism offers a variety of opportunities. It will raise educational opportunities, protect local communities, strengthen identity, and promote human rights (Mapp & Rice, 2019). Tribal tourism will contribute to an expanded understanding of the value of the ecosystem and local biodiversity and emissions control initiatives (Conley et al., 2020). In Rajasthan, tourism has encouraged some

government bodies to devise and enforce biodiversity protection and sustainability policies.

### 3 METHODOLOGY

This research studied the tribal tourism sector in India's territory of the rural area of the Mewar Region of Rajasthan state. Tribes of Rajasthan constitute approximately 13.5% of Rajasthan's population. Each of these tribes can be identified by their own culture, customs, trades, fairs & festivals. Bhils & Minas constitute the majority of the population of the tribes of the Mewar region of Rajasthan. Minas are claimed to be the descendants of the Matsya avatar of Vishnu and the ancient Matsya Kingdom. Drums and dances are typical at weddings and other festivals. The men's corpse is covered in a white cloth and the women in a piece of coloured fabric. Meena believes in life after death and rebirth. Various beliefs and superstitions govern the Meenas. They celebrate different festivals and create their unique living style and traditions that attract the tourists who wish to capture the tribal life. The two other places from the Udaipur district called 'Beneshwar Mela' and 'Shilpgram Mahotsav' are charged for the current research project.

The two events represent the Meena culture, tradition, folklore, and the Meena that live in this region. The schedule has been modified and shortened for a more effective interview. The program used for this survey consists of two sections. The first section of the schedule covers demographic details. In contrast, the second part of the schedule comprises close-ended questions aimed at assessing the responses of the local Meena community and their activities. Attributes were calculated on a five-point Likert style scale varying from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). Interviews were conducted within the limit of municipalities of Udaipur-Rajasthan, including Tiddi and Akhoda Village, district Udaipur. There were 300 schedules, but only 213 (71%) reliable and complete responses were used for analysis.

### 4 FINDINGS

Based on the objectives of the research work, the data is gathered from the 213 respondents, including tribal people engaged in the tribal tourism-related activities at the geographical location of Udaipur district at Rajasthan state. The respondent's profile is presented as under:

*Table 1: Respondents' demographic profile*

Age (in Years)	Frequency	Percentage	Gender	Frequency	Percentage
≤20	140	65.7	Male	107	50.2
21–35	46	21.6	Female	106	49.8
36–50	18	8.5	Occupation	Frequency	Percentage
50≥	9	4.2	Farmer	98	46.0
Education	Frequency	Percentage	Student	59	27.7
Primary education	54	25.4	Employed	34	16.0
Secondary	69	32.4	Unemployed	22	10.3
Graduation	69	32.4			
Master's degree	21	9.9			

*Source: self-compiled (Respondent's profile)*

For this study, firstly an in-depth interview was conducted with 25 major operators who is currently working for the STT

at Rajasthan. Based on that interview data, themes were generated, and items were written. Initial questionnaire consisted of total of 48 items with reliability of 97.1%. The initial data was collected from a sample of 213 tribes residing in Udaipur city, on the 48 items, and were executed with an exploratory factor analysis.

*Table 2: Respondents' descriptive statistics*

Variable	SPSS Code	Mean	Std. Deviation
Do you agree that Tribal tourism is sustainable?	D_V	3.3850	1.19043
Better availability of basic needs (food, water and shelter)	SS_1	3.7981	1.12501
Understanding of Educational importance	SS_2	3.7981	1.18226
Improvement in sanitation facility	SS_3	3.5305	1.06632
Authentic historical and cultural traditions have been shown them properly	SS_4	3.1878	1.13372
Creating good relationships with host tribes	SS_5	3.3333	1.12714
Contribution to sustainable development is the responsibility of the Tourists also	SS_6	3.1268	1.15247
It helps the local community to maintain adequate tourism development	SS_7	3.2066	1.17944
The local community must benefit directly from the flourishing tourism	SS_8	3.4977	1.07556
Fair codes, ethics and some guidelines need to be established	SS_9	3.4977	1.19994
It enhances unique relationships among tourists, business, environment, and local communities	SS_10	2.9108	1.18422
Relationship with tourism is very positive for sustainable development	SS_11	3.6244	1.03694
Improves interaction amongst visitors, host communities and local environments	SS_12	3.5869	1.11093
Interaction and clean environments	SS_13	2.6901	1.29867
Increase informal use of Medical facility	SS_14	3.5399	1.02080
Provide financial stability to the tribal community	FS_1	2.9624	1.15272
Increase the household income of the family host tourists	FS_2	3.1455	1.19844
Reduce dependency on communal money lenders	FS_3	2.8638	1.15956
Importance of cultural heritage and natural resources need to be increased	FS_4	3.1221	1.24163
Training and education program should be established to better manage tribal tourism	FS_5	2.7465	1.19415
Growing opportunities for entrepreneurship and job creation	FS_6	3.5822	1.18523
Tribal tourism must be well planned and managed suitably	FS_7	3.0563	1.12712
Contribution to the generation of employment in society	FS_8	3.1080	1.23723
Increase visitor's direct income for conservation	FS_9	3.1033	1.19695
Stimulating investment and local resources for rural areas	ED_1	3.0141	1.26446
Sustainable tourism guidelines and principles are followed	ED_2	3.1268	1.17276
The link between local businesses and tourism is required.	ED_3	3.0751	1.14677
Help in animal husbandry, dairying and poultry	ED_4	3.6667	1.08882
Irrigation and power facilities for agriculture	ED_5	2.8779	1.23400
Assist in Credit and marketing facilities for agriculture	ED_6	3.2347	1.25942
Contribution to the economy of tribes must be well informed to them	ED_7	3.1925	1.24216
It will add real economic benefit to natural and cultural capital	ED_8	3.2911	1.14091
Increased funding for local communities' conservation	ED_9	3.1268	1.25438
Tribal Tourism should be kept at a parking space venue	FAC_1	3.1643	1.13114
Tribal Tourism should have no harmful ecological impact	FAC_2	3.2394	1.23775
Visitor protection during Tribal Tourism is high	FAC_3	2.9906	1.20920
Product and service rates are manageable (food, drinks, souvenirs)	FAC_4	3.1080	1.15030
Exceptional product and service quality (food, drink, souvenirs)	FAC_5	3.5728	1.12460
Tribal Tourism should be organised by or with the help of a local authority	FAC_6	3.4038	1.10590
Tribal Tourism is promoted among different structures of potential visitors	FAC_7	3.2113	1.17661
Developed without concern for sustainability	Prob_1	3.1408	1.22431
Tribal Tourism can not only damage societies but the environment	Prob_2	3.2864	1.16459
It may even produce its death seeds	Prob_3	3.2347	1.12490

The 17 items in five factors were further analysed through factor analysis using Principal Component Extraction method and varimax with Kaiser Normalization rotation. A total of 05 factors emerged from the analysis as with 74.182 percent of variance and individually for Social Sustainability(18.106), Financial Sustainability(17.349), Economic Development (16.065), Facility (13.014), and Problems (9.647).

In the second stage the perception of the tribes is analysed to find out the social, economic, environmental sustainability with facility and problems factors and hypotheses are developed as follows:

H1: The variable configuring social sustainability dimension has a significant influence on the sustainability of tribal tourism.

H2: The variable configuring the Financial sustainability dimension has a significant influence on the sustainability of tribal tourism.

H3: The variable configuring the Economic Development sustainability dimension has a significant influence on the sustainability of tribal tourism.

H4: The variable configuring facility dimension has a significant influence on the sustainability of tribal tourism.

H5: The variable configuring problems dimension have a significant influence on the sustainability of tribal tourism.

To define core variables in the sustainability of tribal tourism, multivariate regression analysis was used with SPSS-19 software and findings are shown in Table 2 and Table 3 below.:

Table 3: Multiple Regression Analysis Result

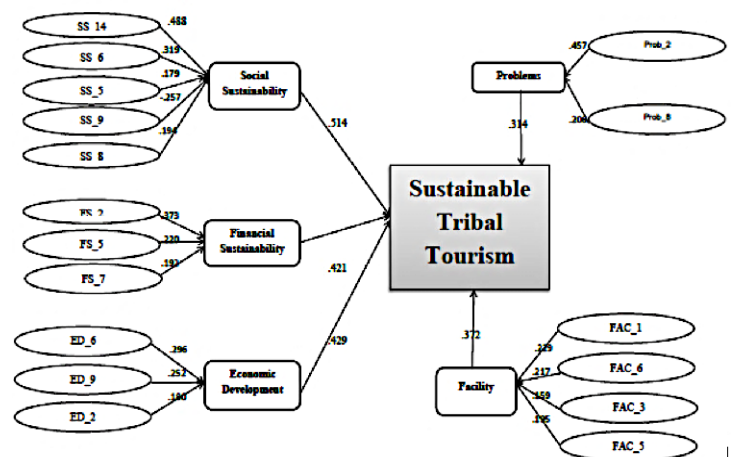
Variables	Variable name	Adj. R2	Beta	ANOVA	Sig.
Social Sustainability	SS_14	.514	.488	45.842	.000 <sup>f</sup>
	SS_6		.319		
	SS_5		.179		
	SS_9		-.257		
	SS_8		.194		
	SS_2		.373		
Financial Sustainability	FS_5	.421	.220	52.436	.000 <sup>d</sup>
	FS_7		.192		
	FS_2		.296		
Economic Development	ED_6	.429	.252	54.102	.000 <sup>d</sup>
	ED_9		.180		
	ED_2		.229		
Facility	FAC_1	.372	.229	32.343	.000 <sup>e</sup>
	FAC_6		.217		
	FAC_3		.159		
	FAC_5		.195		
	FAC_2		.184		
Problems	Prob_2	.314	.457	49.564	.000 <sup>e</sup>
	Prob_8		.206		

The results of stepwise regression (Table 3) show that social, economic, environmental sustainability, facility and problems dimension have a positive impact on the sustainability in tribal tourism. Specifically, if social, Financial, Economic sustainability and facility dimensions are used, it improves the sustainability of tribal tourism. These will improve ST with .514, .421, .429, .372 and .314 with statistical significance of 5%. Meanwhile, variables Creating good relationships with hosts tribes (SS\_5), contribution for sustainable development is responsibility of Tourists also (SS\_6), The local community must benefit directly from the flourishing tourism (SS\_8), Fair codes, ethics and some guidelines need to be established (SS\_9), Increase in formal use of Medical facility (SS\_14), Increase household income of the family host tourists (FS\_2), training and education program should be established to better manage tribal tourism (FS\_5), Tribal tourism must be well planned and managed suitably (FS\_7), Sustainable tourism guidelines and principles are followed (ED\_2), Assist in Credit and marketing facilities for agriculture (ED\_6), Increase in support for conservation from local communities (ED\_9), Tribal Tourisms should be held at a location with secured parking space (FAC\_1), Safety of visitors during the Tribal Tourisms is on high level (FAC\_3), quality of products and services is exceptional (food, beverages, souvenirs)(FAC\_5), Tribal Tourisms should be organised by or with the help of local authority(FAC\_6) positively impact

and with Tribal tourism can not only damage societies but the environment (Prob\_2) and Damage the natural, social or cultural environment of tribal community (Prob\_8) negatively impacts on sustainability of tribal tourism.

The signs of coefficient  $\beta_1$  ( $\beta_1 > 0$ ) imply the relationship between individual variables with social sustainability, economic sustainability, environmental sustainability and facility to tourists and problems dimensions. It does mean that when the above variables are used, it will increase tribal tourism sustainability. Further, all the selected variables in the model are fit to predict the sustainability of tribal tourism as proven by the ANOVA analysis, which provides the statistical test for overall model fit in terms of F Ratio. Using the values of the predictor in the model, these errors can be reduced significantly, and they explain the sustainability of tribal tourism.

Figure 1: Sustainable Tribal Tourism Model



Source: SPSS-AMOS software, compiled based upon the data analysis.

## 5 CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS

The tribe community of Rajasthan still do not represent an exception community-based tourism development because of their strong sovereignty, appropriate institutions, and self-determination, which also attract the Tourists more. STT will place direct strain on cultural habitats, triggering physical habitat degradation and biodiversity destruction. It will also put tremendous pressure on tribal cultures and split up traditional structures. It is a fragile, insecure source of income since tourism is also very susceptible to actual and perceived shifts in travel destinations' environmental and social conditions. However, we are all familiar with tourism's downsides, including economic exploitation, cultural degradation and, most notably, environmental degradation, particularly in mass tourism destinations (Singh, 2005). The predicted increased number of tourists could greatly exacerbate these problems (Hassan, 2008).

The Economic Development sustainability dimension will be increased funding for local communities' conservation and requested guidelines and principles with help and assistance in marketing facilities for agriculture. The facility dimension requires the parking facilities and service quality (food, drink, souvenirs) and demand the local authority's involvement. On the problem side, it is believed that it can damage societies

environment with a chance to damage the natural, social, or cultural environment of the tribal community.

This study summarized five recommendations for its growth with Social Sustainability, Financial Sustainability, Economic Development and facility part from the government side and reduction of the problems faced by both tribes and the tourists, than only the tribal tourism become the STT. Furthermore, in reaction to the study, efforts should be made to avoid this avalanche of travellers' devastating economic, social, and environmental impacts. Most importantly, the quest for tourism that retains rather than destroys, along with the campaign for sustainable growth, has contributed to sustainable tribal tourism.

### 5.1 Implication to theory and practice

The STT improvement will be useful for the economic and social growth of the tribes with the overall increase in the balance of payment of the country. It is a mode of the tribe's contribution in the cultural heritage as theory. Further, it practically has raised the question of mixing and loosing up the rich culture of the tribes who are moving from the history and making them the uniques. The STT will be a base for the economic activities and mixing up the culture and cultural exchange between the traditional and modern community. For the practice it will be hard to merge the culture but providing facilities to the foreign tourists but taking them to come and see the tribe's life will be a new experience. The practice must be in the direction of making the success of STT covering all the aspects of the STT, is major limitations and is not an easy task.

### 5.2 Social Implication

The STT will be a new revolution and a power to raise the social improvement of the tribes, not only with the income growth but also by increasing their contribution in national income. Although there is a danger of mixing up and losing their cultural heritage yet they can make a boarder to adopt the social changes that brings in with the STT. On the financial side, it will increase the income of the tribes that also demand their own willingness to adopt it with good planning and proper management. Further, It can create and build relationships in the cultures and demand fair codes, ethics, and some guidelines that need to be established.

### 5.3 Recommendation

The study's recommendations for the host community is the way they can improve their income with STT and the help needed for the agricultural activities. It further presented the facts that tribal tourism will be only sustainable if social, financial, and economic development is reached. For the authority part, the study unravelled the facts that the facilities for the same needs to be rethink as legal framework, medical facilities, tourist-related facilities (parking, road etc.) that needs to be improved with the involvement of the local authorities. On the other hand, tourist protection is also a significant concern for both authority and operator. For the critical operator, the implication is a requirement of training needs to be fulfilled.

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