

GLOBAL SUSTAINABILITY AND POLICY INSTRUMENTS FOR SUSTAINABLE TOURISM DEVELOPMENT OF PAKISTAN

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ABSTRACT

In this paper, an attempt has been made to identify the opportunities for sustainable tourism development in Pakistan for tourism for environmental conservation, economic development and socio-cultural enhancement. This study assesses the current situation of Pakistan's tourist industry and identifies key problems, such as declining environmental quality, poor infrastructure, and troublesome governance preventing long-term growth. The sustainability implications of the National Tourism Strategy and Vision 2025 are examined in order to determine their efficacy. Based on the study of equivalent examples of countries such as Bhutan, Costa Rica, and Nepal, the paper elaborates on the particular course of action for Pakistan. These are the adoption of sustainability indicators in policy-making, encouragement of ecological tourism, involvement of native communities through skill enhancement and revenue sharing, as well as the use of technology in GIS and digital marketing strategy. Therefore, the a need for cooperation between the public and the private sector as well as proper follow through and implementation of policy and regular assessment to make sure goals are being met. This article also contains recommendations for further research on regional investigation and incorporating renewable energy and digital technologies in tourism management.

Keywords:- Global Sustainability, Policy Instruments, Sustainable Tourism Development, Pakistan

INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background and Context

It is acknowledged universally that tourism plays a stimulating role in both the economy and cultural interchange. It has also stimulated negative effects related to its fast development, including environmental pollution and social injustice. Sustainability in global tourism is one of the main objectives in the provision of maintaining economic development, conserving the physical environment, and meeting social needs. Sustainable tourism involves the utilization of resources that will not leave disastrous impacts on the physical environment whilst ensuring the improvement of socio-economic returns in the host community (Ullah et al., 2021). There is

nothing as damaging to the environment as uncontrolled tourism, not only in developed countries but especially in emergent ones, and this approach seeks to address this problem (Khan et al., 2020). Pakistan enjoys various facilities with regards to tourism abundance including beautiful experiences and incredible places of interest, culture, and geography. Prestigious tourist places like Hunza Valley, Swat Valley, Thar Desert, etc., are the favourite spots for national and international tourists. Nevertheless, the tourism industry in Pakistan has a number of drawbacks, including underdeveloped facilities, pollution of the environment, and the absence of effective management systems (Baloch et al., 2023).

Climate change intensifies these challenges and negatively affects the sustainability of cultural and natural attractions vital for the tourism sector (Hussain et al., 2024).

1.2. Research Aims and Objectives

This article will comprehensively analyse the global sustainable tourism principles and their relevance to the Pakistani context. It is focused on describing how policy instruments can be used to achieve sustainable tourism practices and reduce negative impacts on the environment and people.

The main objectives of this article are:

- ✓ To analyze sustainability frameworks applicable to tourism development in Pakistan.
- ✓ To evaluate the effectiveness of policy instruments in addressing environmental, economic, and social challenges in Pakistan's tourism sector.
- ✓ To examine the current approaches towards sustainable policies in Pakistan's tourism sector and to put forward feasible recommendations.

1.3. Structure of the Article

Firstly, it provides an idea of global sustainability in tourism, and secondly, it examines the economic and environmental sustainability of tourism in Pakistan. This task deep analyzes the present existing policy instruments, assesses the effectiveness of the measures and defines deficits. Finally, the recommendations for sustainable tourism for Pakistan relative to the policies of other countries and a few case studies are available. This methodical approach offers an overview of the data and policies used to identify sustainability elements in Pakistan's tourism sector (Khan et al., 2020; Hussain et al., 2024).

2. Conceptual Framework of Global Sustainability in Tourism

After broadly reviewing the literature on global sustainability in tourism, this article offers an overview of Pakistan's tourism sector and sustainability issues. It examines the current approaches in policy and assesses them in terms of effectiveness and research gaps. Finally, there are suggestions on whether sustainable tourism

development should be implemented in Pakistan based on the policies of other countries and some real-life experiences. This systematized approach gives a large picture of the existence of sustainability factors in the tourist industry of Pakistan and has policy information (Khan et al., 2020; Hussain et al., 2024).

Sustainability in tourism is multifaceted, involving three critical dimensions, such as Environmental sustainability, Economic sustainability and Socio-cultural sustainability. Sustainable development examines the management of demand, impacts, and methods of perpetuating and encouraging the utilization of tourism to support the environment (Iftikhar et al., 2022). This dimension is crucial in fighting climate change, which is an important global crisis that affects mostly vulnerable areas. Economic stability propounds that benefits accruing from tourism ought to be used for economic growth, without which dependencies on tourism income could prove disastrous. This analysis of literature on the economic impact of tourism highlights several findings that include The economic benefits of tourism, which should also get to the people within the destination society (Yousaf et al., 2021). Socio-cultural sustainability mainly focuses on the protection of cultural resources and practices, whereby it ensures the participation of people in tourism activities and the recognition of tourists and host communities. This dimension is brought in to assist in preserving the social structure and identifying tourist markets.

The new tendencies of sustainable tourist development indicate an increasing vision to guide tourist activities in compliance with the environmental, social, and economic objectives observed. Examples from Costa Rica, Bhutan and New Zealand present showcase how sustainability frameworks can be successfully incorporated into the tourism policies and practices. For instance, The ecotourism programs of Costa Rica have not only listed the country's economy but also promoted conservation programs. Bhutan launched its high-value, low-impact model, which acts as a bar on the number of tourists and does not spoil the beauty of the place; New Zealand also gives emphasis to sustainable adventure

tourism to maintain the geographical feature of the country (Yousaf et al., 2021). These examples point to the fact that, again, good planning and effective policies make the difference in making tourism sustainable.

An analysis of climate change and ecological factors contributing to the trends in world tourism cannot be overemphasized. New temperatures, weather conditions, and growing natural disasters are altering tourism. The survival of vulnerable tourism destinations and ordinarily, countries, particularly the small island nations and those located in fragile altitudes, are at risk of climate change. Solving these issues entails out-of-the-box-feasible strategies such as the incorporation of renewable energy climate-neutral tourism from being carbon-intensive to embracing climate change resilient structures (Bano et al., 2021). Multilateral organizations have enormous potential to stimulate the principles of sustainable tourism. The UNWTO is a specialized organization of the United Nations that is aimed at the promotion of tourism sectors' sustainable development by offering recommendations, requirements, and assistance in its member states. Campaigns, including the Global Code of Ethics for Tourism, stand for the UNWTO and the Sustainable Development Goals agenda and accentuate the responsibility of tourism for the sustainability of the world's objectives. As the GSTC, it establishes and oversees the framework for sustainable tourism for destinations, businesses, or any program that seeks to establish sustainable credentials and responsible travel. These organizations promote the exchange of knowledge and information and learning as well as collaborative partnerships, which help countries such as Pakistan adopt high-quality standards, thereby leading countries on the path to the achievement of sustainable tourism goals.

3. Current Status of Tourism in Pakistan

Tourism sectors in Pakistan have the potential for economic returns and culture and heritage conservation as well as the environment. However, there are a number of issues that revolve around Pakistan's tourism sector that do not allow sustainable tourism development in Pakistan, such as environment degradation, lack of Infrastructure,

and policy gap. To address these challenges, a systems approach that complies with international sustainable practices based on echo-innovation and sustainable tourism policies. This paper analyzes the tourism industry of Pakistan and provides different destinations which can appeal to different types of traveler. Former shatter zones like Hunza, Swat, and Skardu are famous for their towering hills and exploration tourism (Firman et al., 2023). Finally, the Thar Desert and Makran Coastal Highway are listed as be most suitable for cultural and ecologically sensitive tourism. Pilgrimage tourism, especially Sikh, Buddhist and Islamic tourism strengthens the image of Pakistan as a country for religious travel. These tourism facilities are not only targeting foreign tourists but also encouraging domestic tourists to travel around, boosting the region's economy.

For the investors, this sector also has the potential to be the driving force for growth in Pakistan's economy by providing employment opportunities and additional income to support small businesses and import/export conversion. For instance, it has a slow development due to inadequate structures, poor advertising, and occasional support from the government. Examples from Indonesia and China provide evidence of how echo-innovation and policies targeting the tourist industry lead to greater economic returns without creating or exacerbating environmental issues (Chau et al., 2023). Environmental deterioration represents one of the main obstacles to the development of sustainable tourism in Pakistan. Ecological pressures comprise uncontrolled tourism, loss of forest cover and poor waste disposal pregnant the country's natural environment. These are compounded by climate change factors such as heat, meltage of glaciers, and volatile weather patterns that are threatening tourist interest areas, mainly in the northern part of the globe. Due to the persistently high vulnerability to environmental degradation, Pakistan requires the formulation of ecologically sustainable tourism policies that would increase awareness among the residents and visitors of responsible tourism.

The lack of physical facilities also works against the development of appropriate sustainable tourism. Some of the remote tourist sites can be easily inaccessible by road, and facilities like

accommodation and health centres. Second, lack of investment in the physical infrastructure for eco-tourism, including the provision of renewable solar energy and efficient management of wastes, hampers the development of sustainable eco-tourism business. The approach to integrating energy efficiency and carbon-neutral tourism exemplified by Singapore shows that the further development of tourism should be in step with results in the framework of sustainable development (Raihan et al., 2022). Lack of policy and other governance issues add to the challenges for the successful implementation of sustainable tourism in Pakistan. There is no well-coordinated countrywide development plan for tourism, and the subject is shared between the federal and provincial state governments in a way that has created planning problems. Moreover, improving relations among the stakeholders and adding sustainability policies within the policies of an organization is critical in eradicating those barriers.

4. Policy Instruments for Sustainable Tourism Development

Sustainable tourism can only be achieved by both legal requirements from authorities and voluntary cooperation from businesses and international organizations, primarily for incentives. All these policy instruments areas have the vital function of tackling environmental depletion, spurring economic development and enhancing social equity in the tourism industry. These instruments are critical for Pakistan to recognize and imbed to effectively manage the concerns of sustainability and enhance the overall prospects of Pakistan tourism. The basis of sustainable tourism policies is regulatory instruments. Measures of environmental legal protection and special legislation for tourism are required to avoid the depletion of resource stocks and reduce the adverse impact of tourism. Licensing and zoning regulations can limit tourism activities within certain conducted regional ecological capacities. For instance, in an efficacy study of the wine tourism sector of Spain, zoning strategies were used, thereby followed by Pakistan's special zones, such as Gilgit Baltistan (Vazquez Vicente et al., 2021). However, these regulations can only

be of significant effect if complemented by efficient enforcement measures and frequent supervision.

It is important to note that economic instruments are sanitary tools that address the tendency to promote appropriate behaviour among stakeholders. The Tax incentives for eco-tourism operators can lead to the construction of environmentally friendly eating places, the use of solar energy and proper waste disposal. The deployment of green infrastructure, which includes renewable energy power systems and efficient transport systems, is crucial in enabling the sustainable growth of tourism. Large-scale green energy projects, which are necessary for the development of eco-tourism, can be financed with the help of green financing options such as Green Sukuk, which has already been adopted in Pakistan (Nehal, 2023). Therefore, comparing with the global practices, this paper can conclude that more consideration should be paid to harmonize the economic motive with the environmental purposes for sustainable development.

The main concerns of voluntary and collaborative approaches are based on partnerships and community engagement in tourism. A relevant strategy in this context refers to public-private partnerships (PPPs) as instruments that can help mobilize resources and accumulate the necessary experience in the construction of sustainable tourism infrastructure and service provision. Local people should be part of the decision-making and planning of tourism, too. CBT interventions do not only address the issue of the distribution of economic returns fairly but also make the locals feel that they have ownership and responsibility over their geographical areas. For instance, it has been noted that community mobilization of tourist activities in Gilgit Baltistan for example shows that sustainable tourism for socio-economic development does not necessarily have to harm the environment (Jehan et al., 2023). Multilateralism and politicization are invaluable premises of sustainable tourism, especially in the context of globalization. Through bilateral tourism relations, countries can coordinate in terms of human resource and skills exchange, and by integrating international sustainable tourism,

overtures, the destination guarantees that tourism activities conform to international standards. For instance, the integration of renewable energy in tourism, as seen in international studies, has a strong potential to decrease environmental degradation and live up to international climate change obligations (Banga et al., 2022). Through partnerships with global institutions as well as other countries, Pakistan tourism has all the chances to get the necessary information and support in order to make the sector more sustainable.

5. Analysis of Pakistan's Policy Framework for Sustainable Tourism

In the case of Pakistan, elements of its policy environment for sustainable tourism development show a development of understanding of the need to promote sustainable tourism goals. However, a closer examination points out the absence of guidelines in terms of planning, execution, and engaging relevant stakeholders that prevent the achievement of sustainability objectives (Ikram et al., 2021). Learning from the experience of other nations can mitigate these deficits and bring Pakistan's tourism sector to its proper place in the fold of sustainable tourism practices. As with many developing countries, there is recognition of the need for sustainable tourism, with Pakistan having in place a National Tourism Strategy and Pakistan Vision 2025. The National Tourism Strategy for Pakistan has very loft goals for promoting sustainable tourism in the country with a focus on developing facilities and encouraging eco-tourism. Likewise, Pakistan has considered sustainability in the country's Vision 2025, where sustainability is described as achieving sustainable use of natural resources, involving the community and preserving culture. Despite sounding good on paper, these policies are weak in their implementation simply because there has been no serious effort and funding to make them work in practice.

The problem of coordination is proving to be one of the most difficult hurdles to overcome in the proper implementation of these policies. This is even coupled with the execution of multiple agencies in tourism development at both federal and provincial stages, making them fragmented

with the most inefficiency. Sustainability goals are often poorly integrated due to stakeholders' lack of cooperation; disparate functions of sustainability initiatives often exist within separate departments. However, financial constraints and technical challenges remain major challenges. Generally, resource allocation for sustainable tourism projects is inadequate and lacks applicable technological knowledge in green technology application and sustainability practices in the tourism industry. In general, it has been identified that there are differing levels of effort and systematic problems for developing countries such as Pakistan for the synthesis of green technology, sustainable tourism and cleaner production practices (Ikram et al., 2021).

International examples offer useful experience of how the challenges in question can be solved in Pakistan. The cases of Bhutan Costa Rica, and Nepal demonstrate that sustainability can be effectively incorporated into the tourist industry through the implementation of progressive policies and encouraging local citizens' participation. Bhutan's "selective, quality tourism" approach limits the amount of tourists allowed to enter the country and charges a daily tariff that finances conservation programs as well as tourism projects. The governmental support for eco-tourism, which actively promotes the use of renewable power sources and sustainable practices in Costa Rica, makes it one of the most eco-friendly tourist destinations. Likewise, Nepal's concentration on community-based tourism economically benefits the local communities as they are within their cultural and natural poor environments (Trišić et al., 2021; Idroes et al., 2024).

For Pakistan to succeed in its policies, it needs to integrate the existing policy framework's best practices by facilitating stakeholder coordination, increasing green infrastructure funding, and skill development. Applying global standards to Malaysia's tourism development concepts, like tourism based in communities and eco-tourism rewards, will go a long way in boosting sustainability (Khan et al., 2021). Moreover, there is also an improved capacity for adapting green building standards to the context of Pakistan, enhancing the ability of the tourism industry

structures in Pakistan to embrace environment-friendly architectural standards.

6. Proposed Strategies for Sustainable Tourism Development in Pakistan

For sustainable tourism in Pakistan, there is a need for an approach that would support the global goals and objectives of sustainable tourism but also sufficiently respond to the challenges that are peculiar to Pakistan. As suggested strategies, it is aimed to adopt sustainability within the policy environment, to support and develop eco-tourism, to involve locals, and to apply technological advances for the economic, ecological, and social success of the sector (Bhammar et al., 2021). Mainstreaming sustainable tourism as part of the national policies of countries is the initial approach towards the attainment of sustainable tourism. The development of key sustainability indicators will facilitate the definition and understanding of trends in the implementation of tourist projects and a responsible attitude toward the environment. These standards can be in the form of energy-efficient building structures, waste disposal mechanisms, and mechanisms for water usage. Climate shall also be one of the policy stapes for tourism because many destinations in Pakistan are considered to be sensitive to climate change. This paper concludes that through measures that lower carbon impacts and increase the resilience of destination communities to climate change, Pakistan can ensure the sustainability of its tourism resources.

Forgetting the goal of ecotourism and responsible tourism as a driver for sustainable tourism may be useful. This consists of creating tourist' attractions that are environmentally sustainable while providing visitors with remarkable experiences (Rej et al., 2022). For example, tourism in some protected areas, including national parks and wildlife conservancies, can be regulated with a view to allowing tourism operations to take place without interference with local species. The principles of tourism responsible use should be explained to tourists and other stakeholders residing in the area as well. These campaigns are therefore necessary as they will help make all the stakeholders understand the need to reduce impacts on the environment, respect archaeology

and the local people's culture as well as support the local economies. It is crucial to integrate the residents into the community in order to prevent situations when the local population will not receive almost any benefits from the influx of tourists. Community-based projects in skill enhancement and capacity building ensure that disadvantaged groups can be engaged to perform most of the Tourism operations, starting from tourism-based accommodations all the way to providing guided Tourism services (Kumar et al., 2022). Besides, there are other changes, including the training of sustainable practices relevant to hospitality and crafts of the community to make local tourism services additional worthwhile.

The tourism industry may reap key benefits from the application of technology in management with a focus on efficiency improvement and sustainability. GIS and smart tourism tools may help in mapping tourist attractions, studying the flow of tourists and thereby conservation of the areas that need it most. For example, GIS could be used in planning eco-tourism trails where interference with the natural environment is kept to a bare minimum. Therefore, using social media platforms and employing virtual reality and other high-tech means for presenting Pakistan's potential travel destinations can increase awareness of the country's offers among the potential clientele, with minimum need for actually travelling to promote these opportunities. These tools not only enhance resource utilization efficiency but also open up a new way of popularizing interactions with tourists and promoting the practice of sustainability (Sharif et al., 2020).

7. Case Study: Potential for Sustainable Tourism in Specific Regions of Pakistan

The different and unique physical environment of Pakistan has ample opportunities for exploiting integrated tourist products. Sustainable tourism development creates jobs, increases income, and improves infrastructure and overall quality of life in the targeted regions, which are properly selected with regard to the peculiarities of the area. Selected areas of Punjab include the northern region and coastal belts, and cultural tourism is a totally different prospect. Gilgit Baltistan and

Khyber Pakhtunkhwa regions of the northern areas of Pakistan have attracted tourists due to sparkling mountains, hills, majestic and beautiful lakes, and wide valleys. These regions also comprise the greatest opportunities for adventure & eco-tourism. Right from trekking, mountaineering, and wildlife watching, many people, including from the international community, visit the country. Nonetheless, an organization needs to be able to facilitate the management of the effects that certain activities may have on the environment. Case studies of community-based tourism development in Gilgit-Baltistan have shown that the incidence was an outstanding example of how the locals can spearhead sustainable tourism. For example, the ongoing engagements in guesthouse management and trekking services guarantee that tourism income is reinvested in residents' welfare and used to conserve natural systems (Ali, 2022). Social media and other ICT applications may enhance the effectiveness of these efforts by increasing the number of environmentally sustainable tourists, and these tourists will support sustainable travel activities (Saseanu et al., 2020). Sindh and Balochistan have vast potential for sea and beachside tourism. The Makran Coast, which is blessed with natural and untarnished beaches and vast marine life potential, can be a good ground for exploring other non-conventional tourism activities such as scuba diving, snorkelling and dolphin watching. However, the absorption of such a model in these areas presupposes the development of the corresponding infrastructure and severe limitations on the impact on the environment for the sake of preserving the indigenous flora and fauna. Some of the most important factors for setting up eco-tourism facilities and maintaining environmental standards are well-understood by public-private entities. For instance, local people can be entrusted with the responsibility of overseeing marine tourism activities with a view to gaining ownership. Social media can also help extend these coastal attractions, as this generation of young travellers is interested in the opportunities provided by sustainable tourism (Seyfi et al., 2023).

The cultural facilities and historical backgrounds of Punjab are nearly perfect for cultural tourism. Lahore, Multan and Taxila have many historical or culturally important structures ranging from monuments, shrines, museums and art galleries. Therefore, for Punjab to sustain the cultural tourism it offers, the heritage sites must be protected for use by tourists. Measures of conservation such as preservation and even rehabilitation, and the regulation of access by people to such landmarks are instrumental in the preservation of landmarks. At the same time, community empowerment programs can educate the population to become guides and cultural mediators for tourists to connect with cultural roots directly (Wani et al., 2024). The use of these sites as a digital presence can help increase visitor traffic while at the same time passing information about the need to preserve such structures to the visitors. Consequently, Pakistan can utilize the potential of every region for sustainable tourism development through a regional approach supported by local communities. The combination of digital applications, community participation, and environmentally sustainable development can enable the conservation of natural and cultural resources while stimulating sound economic growth and international market recognition of the tourism potential of Pakistan.

8. Conclusion and Recommendations

In context with Pakistan, the quest for sustainable tourism development is one of the best chances to have convergence of the objectives of economic progress with that of environmental protection as well as social equity. This article has provided the state of play of Pakistan's tourism sector alongside an evaluation of challenges affecting it and a set of practical recommendations for enhancing sustainability. Concisely, the result also highlights the necessity of integrated policies, community and adoption of new technology to ensure the sustainability of the tourism industry of Pakistan. First of all, the work emphasizes that Pakistani tourism is extremely promising because of its availability for tourists' geographical and cultural diversities. Nevertheless, this has remained virtually untapped due to issues of environmental degradation, poor infrastructure and governance.

There are other existing documents that offer the framework for developing sustainable tourism in the country, including the National Tourism Strategy and Vision 2025. However, the policies contain no clear implementation strategies. Observing how other countries such as Bhutan, Costa Rica, and Nepal have managed and implemented environment and community-friendly tourism strategies is useful. Furthermore, tourism management and global marketing opportunities are offered by technological innovations, including GIS and other digital marketing technologies.

To sum it up, both policymakers and stakeholders need to act to make sustainable tourism possible. The critical policy concerns are an objective to ensure that the right policies are established and implemented. Policy leaders must set sustainable targets as well as goals that take into consideration the issue of climate change, efficiency of resources, as well as people's participation in the development of tourism policies. This relation means that environmental regulations should be exercised to avoid excessive tourism impact on the environment. Zoning strategies for typical tourist sites are important in recreating access to tourists and conservation efforts. Another crucial recommendation is building up public-private partnerships (PPPs). There is potential to engage private enterprises in the achievement of financing, technology and service provision for eco-tourism. That way, PPPs can also deliver innovation in the sustainable management of tourism, like the integration of renewable energy sources or examples in waste management. Other private investments can also be promoted by offering incentives like tax exemption for initiatives to be taken in the environmental and sustainable tourism sectors of growth.

Sustainability assurance and assessment are crucial in providing accountability for the efforts and improvements that are being made. Creating procedures for recognizing the environmental, social, and economic effects of tourism activities may also contribute to the definition of intervention strategies. Scheduling and engaging the key stakeholders in the audit can guarantee that the tourism interventions are sustainable and

responsive to current change. Further studies are required which identify and highlight the problems and prospects of sustainable tourism in different regions of Pakistan. Research can be undertaken on the consequences of community-based tourism on socio-economics, the possible application of renewable energy and the use of information technologies in the management of tourism. Instead, analysis of successful international models can offer additional layers of understanding of the possible practices that would be appropriate for the Pakistan context. Moreover, future research on the actualization and longitudinal analysis of established effects of policy and program implementations will be of immense benefit in the development of adjusting sustainable tourism frameworks in the long run.

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