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Startups And Micro-Enterprises In Sustainable Tourism In India

The sustainability aspect in tourism and the focus of startups are increasing due to catalyzing effects of policy and increased attention to responsible business. Sustainable development Goals (SDGs) are getting central space of compliance in the companies as well



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Travel and tourism are an inseparable part of human lives, which also makes it one of the most dynamic businesses globally with approx. USD 8.9 trillion business size by 2026. Thus, the development of this sector will have an enormous economic, social and environmental impact in the modern world. Tourism not only facilitates economic growth but also creates synergies between culture, history, nature, and community. There has been a non-coordinated and non-optimized effort towards the treatment and economic value creation of historic places, nature parks, waterways, animal safaris, and other such potential tourism destinations. However, the sustainable tourism focus from the international community to regional level operators has given attention to organized efforts creating sustainable tourism model by prioritizing environment, community, economy along with tourist satisfaction.

The new methods of business operations and pressures of cost optimization are giving space to startups for their innovations and dynamic solution offerings. The start-up ecosystem of India is redefining with innovative models, huge infusions of funds, a

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models of growth. This is transforming the tourism start-ups sector with technology and innovation elevating the “Incredible India” experience. According to MICE India and Luxury Travel Congress, “the market is set to touch a staggering \$9 billion market size by 2025, bolstered by an influx of new-age travel start-ups, and changing trends driven by millennial and Gen Z travelers”. Easy access to technology and internet services has opened up a huge opportunity for travel start-up businesses to organize an ever-evolving travel story with personalized, safe, and easy travel. And, increasing investments are accelerating the sustainable conversions with start-ups by focusing on health and hygiene post-Covid – 19 pandemics.

The sustainability aspect in tourism and the focus of startups are increasing due to catalyzing effects of policy and increased attention to responsible business. Sustainable development Goals (SDGs) are getting central space of compliance in the companies and these can be accomplished through a strong partnership by economic entity stakeholders, for the tourism sector i.e. tourism stakeholders and policymakers. Private companies are becoming key players in the tourism sector by ensuring a healthy environment as well as a well-functioning society with a positive social impact. Recently, Martin Barth, President, and CEO, of WTFL mentioned, “In this fast-changing world, it’s more important than ever to bring start-ups with their new business model together with investors, but also with established companies. This is the only way we’ll do the tourism industry into something more sustainable that is capable of surviving in the long term even when faced with a constant stream of new trends and new needs like it is at the moment”.

In such a dynamic environment, start-ups bring disruption in the tourism industry with innovations and focus on about 6 United Nations sustainable goals. The practices in sustainable tourism are not new in India, entrepreneurs are focusing on sustainable development through new models, practices, old systems, and new social behaviors. India is poised to become a USD 5 trillion economy by 2025, tourism is a big contributor to the service sector.

Micro-level initiatives are receiving the attention of the region and the global community. There are many initiatives run by inspiring individuals in partnership with local communities supporting the thought. Immersion India is one such initiative by Anand Joseph and Vineet Thomas which focuses on quality education, by designing the study-centric program for the global learning community. It’s time to make people aware of responsible tourism with initiatives like Green Park near Mussorie, which aims to encourage the reverse migration of farmers. Himalayan Ark in Kumaon, offering eco-conscious insights and mountains treks and expeditions by employing local guides. Grassroutes' journeys, with their exceptional business model of supporting the rural village community as an equal partner in “Milion Fireflies Festival” in Purushwadi, is a unique concept. Spiti Ecosphere, Rural Pleasure, Kaban, and many such organizations are working with local communities and promising to bring sustainable tourism to India.

There is an opportunity to use tourism’s power to drive positive development outcomes and long-lasting benefits to the country, as the sector has the potential to reduce poverty, generate quality jobs and incentives for environmental conservations. Start-ups and micro-level organizations have aggregation capabilities and they are many in the whole ecosystem, thus having great influence. The organized value chain and business model of sustainable tourism engagement will help the industry grow and serve society in a better way towards sustainable and responsible business.

(The given article is attributed to Rahul Singh, Professor, Strategy and Globalization, BIMTECH, Greater Noida and Veenu Sharma, Assistant Professor, Retail and Marketing, BIMTECH, Greater Noida)

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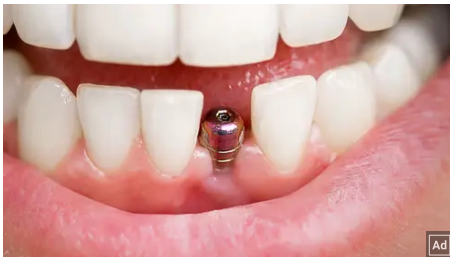
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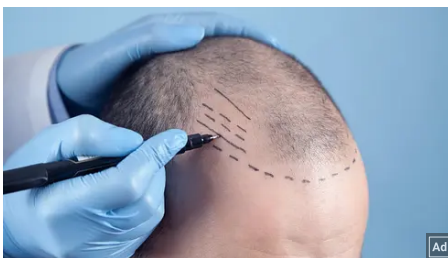
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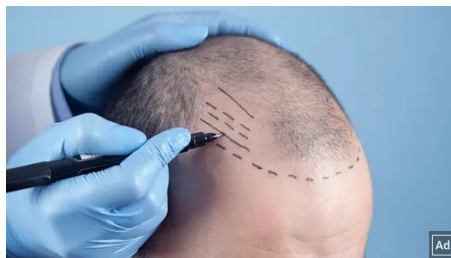
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