



Sustainability of Indian Tourism in Backdrop of COVID-19

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Abstract: The Indian tourism and travel industry is one of the fastest growing industry. According to WTTC (2019), India ranked 10th among 185 countries in terms of travel & tourism's having a total contribution to GDP of 6.8% of the total economy, Rs. 13,68,100 crores (US\$ 194.30 billion) (www.ibef.org). In the year 2017, The United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) has declared 2017 as the 'International Year of Sustainable Tourism for Development', which underscores tourism's critical role in fostering inclusive growth. Hence, the efforts to achieve sustainability got an impetus and gained much wanted attention. However, everything came to standstill with the onset of Corona Virus Pandemic in November 2019, questioning the survival of the industry itself. The present crisis caused tremendous losses which have resulted in large scale job losses bringing the sustainability in question. This study aims to investigate the state of sustainability of Indian tourism through infrastructure development, environmental degradation, social, economic and cultural impacts on destinations due to this growth in the backdrop of the present COVID pandemic. It is an empirical study of perceptions of tourists to Indian destinations. The data was collected through self-administered questionnaires and interviews. A total of 520 valid responses were analyzed and results revealed a different scenario. The study concludes with a discussion of the findings and providing a few recommendations to rectify the situation for a sustainable industry and future.

Keywords: COVID 19, Pandemic, Sustainability, Tourism
