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**MGBBT1TEN TOURISM ENVIRONMENT AND INDUSTRY:
ESSAY**

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Introduction

The context of Sustainable Tourism involves the implementation of sustainable practices in the tourism industry along with proper execution by the sector itself. It is defined by the World Tourism Organisation as “*tourism that takes full account of its current and future economic, social and environmental impacts*” (United Nations, 2022). This is believed to be crucial in “*addressing the needs of visitors, the industry, the environment and host communities*”. Elicited from this context this particular essay is focused on ensuring sustainable tourism in Italy. It concerns the aspect that Italy gets attributed as a nation with one of the highest counts of “World Heritage Sites” under UNESCO. In this regard, the following study is aimed at understanding the principles of sustainable tourism in Italy along with the potential stakeholders associated with the process. It is also intended to stress on relevant macro- and micro-environmental factors influencing tourism development and demand in Italy.

Concept of Sustainable Tourism and its Principles Concerning Italy

Based on the aforementioned definition of sustainable tourism, associated principles are subject to economic, socio-cultural, and environmental aspects of tourism development. It also aims at maintaining a suitable balance between the three dimensions for securing long-term sustainability (UNWTO, 2020). On this note, sustainable tourism requires maintaining a high extent of tourism satisfaction in addition to securing a meaningful experience for them. This also involves raising awareness regarding potential sustainability issues while promoting sustainable tourism practices. Therefore, a major aim of sustainable tourism is increasing the benefits while reducing the negative impacts rendered by tourism for concerned destinations.

Potential rational for sustainable development of tourism are as follows -

- Protection of wildlife natural resources and natural environments during the development and management of tourism activities (The Travel Foundation, 2022).
- Promoting authentic tourism experiences that can cater to celebrating and conserving both culture and heritage.
- Creation of relevant socio-economic benefits for desired communities with relevant income earning and employment opportunities.
- Retaining a high degree of satisfaction regarding the needs of tourists while assuring substantial experiences (Streimikiene *et al.* 2021).
- Enhancing their consciousness regarding sustainability issues in addition to propagating sustainable tourism practices among them.

In this view, tourism appears as one of the most dynamic and prospective businesses on a global scale. This is correlated to its great significance towards planning and developing tourism sustainable and purposefully searching for compromises between economic, social, and environmental aims. Font *et al.* (2021) asserted that sustainability value requires being co-created and co-defined with experience-based sustainability value being hedonic. Furthermore, sustainability maintains a significant emotional value rather than a functional one with the designs requiring a willingness towards experimentation. In this matter, tourism decision-makers require emphasising sustainability for reinforcing professionalism and trust.

Referring to Italy, sustainable tourism practices are widely embraced with the engagement towards the application of sustainable transport in addition to supporting local traditions and cultures. This is supported by the figure of 2021 highlighting that about 58% of Italian people preferred eco-friendly choices as part of planning their destinations, transport, or accommodation during holidays (Statista, 2021). Major examples of sustainable tourism in Italy include zero-food mile products and anti-mafia tourist excursions along with eco-friendly mobility and zero-emission travel among others. Conversely, speculative and overbuilding buildings are attributed as one of the major environmental challenges for tourism in Italy, as of 2021 (Statista, 2021). This is regarded as a leading factor impacting sustainability in Italy over the impact of tourism and pollution.

Role of Stakeholders in Decision-Making of Sustainable Tourism Development

Tourists

Consumers or the tourists themselves serve as one of the leading stakeholders in decision-making regarding the sustainable development of tourism. Fennel (2021) opined that sustainable tourists in the evolving digital era make a potential contribution towards alleviating associated conditions of tourism development. These involve monetary and GDP relations along with highlighting the need for required infrastructure, poverty and desired employment rates. Focusing on the present-day tourist segments aiming at exploring Italy, sustainable development includes tangible benefits like increased physical exercise with reduced stress and monetary saving by cost reduction and consumption (Enel Italia, 2019). This also involves a combination of diverse experiences, cultural exchange, and protection of artistic and historical heritage while conserving local resources.

Tourism Businesses

Besides tourists, tourism businesses are attributed as another leading stakeholder going to their contribution to enhancing the economic well-being of the local community without sacrificing environmental integrity. Goeldner and Ritchie (2007) put forward that entrepreneurs visualise tourism as a potential opportunity for making a profit through the facilitation of services and goods interesting to tourists. As an example, tourism businesses in Italy are widely focused on ethical and social considerations that can satisfy the target customer segments. This involves emphasising sustainability practices like walking and hiking for attracting enthusiasts to the Apennines and Alps (Enel Italia, 2019). It also entails the availability of cycling practices with electric bikes for exploring the island of Elba, around Recanati, or Giacomo Leopardi's hometown.

Host Government

Accordingly, a concerned government is highly responsible for pushing communities to look after their places along with the cultural and natural environment. In this context, the government has a crucial contribution in making certain that tourism accounts for bringing more benefits to the local community along with positively contributing towards macro factors. Cheung and Li (2019) posited that evaluating the social impacts garnered by tourism on respective communities is substantially crucial for all level governments for deciding on the required action. Focusing on Italy, the local government involves politicians accounting for the formulation of policies and implementing the same for ensuring their serve the purpose. The 43 NSDS Indicators or "*primo nucleo di indicatori per la Strategia Nazionale per lo Sviluppo Sostenibile, identificato dal Tavolo nazionale indicatori*" is a leading example of sustainability and well-being framework by the Italian government (OECD, 2021). This also accounts for making certain that the government holds potential compliance with the SDGs for securing sustainable tourism practices.

Host Community

A major principle concerning sustainable tourism is the participation of the local community in old relevant tourism activities. This positively contributes towards the development of tourism along with a display of local culture, festivals, and food for promoting authentic tourism experiences (Amoako *et al.* 2022). These local residents play a major role in addressing each of the diverse forms of travellers focusing on Italian destinations. According to Galuppo

et al. (2020), the main tourism narratives involve *redemption travels*, *intercultural encounters*, *all-inclusive esthetic*, and the “*going native*” myths. A further illustration is an existence of “Ecobnb” as a considerable community start-up for addressing sustainability requirements in Italy.

Macro-environmental Factors Driving Sustainable Tourism Development in Italy

Technological Innovation

Tourism tends to be highly beneficial to cities given its contribution towards the economy along with creating a border customer base and increased employment levels. The same can be considered beneficial for Italy with the inclusion of new technologies like smart video communications, tourism marketing, securities services, and ticketing (Mancinelli, 2018). A new approach is also positively contributing towards an ideal travel experience and personalised stay with a sustainability approach among tourists in Italy. However, Meo (2020) argued that the fragmented nature of tourist offerings in Italy serves as a major obstacle in the present scenario. It is also identified as negatively contributing towards the Italian supply chain against foreign top intermediaries.

Environmental Trends

Tourism tends to be ² of great importance to European economies with environmental degradation reducing the attractiveness of many considerable destinations. Contrary to this, transportation vehicles in Italy are also identified as a major means of contribution towards pollutant emissions with ranging values. Betta *et al.* (2021) pointed out that the recent year of 2019 analysed an emission of about ² 70.8% PM2.5 to 94.9% VOCs. In comparison to other road transportation mediums, a significant contribution towards air pollution was by caravans, vans, and camper vans by influencing 26.2% PM2.5 and 18.6% NOx emissions.

Cultural Trends

The natural protected areas conserving a territory represents essential instruments for an environmental policy with significant added value resources for European regions. Buongiorno and Intini (2021) stated that the evaluation of adopted policies with relevant economic planning tends to be a major contribution towards mobility services around the Apulia Region of Italy. This is widely contributed by the local and global tourists concerning Italy given their extensive preference for sustainability along with supporting transport infrastructures and soft mobility.

A worldwide survey of 2020 has also highlighted the millennials and Gen Z travellers as generations highly concerned with environment-friendly travel options (Statista, 2021). Thereby, the following two parameters are positively responsible for contributing towards the sustainable development of tourism in Italy.

Economic Parameters

Since the onset of 2019, sustainable tourism in Italy has been challenged by a diverse range of factors. Economic positives on grounds of inflation, interest, employment rates and GDP have widely contributed towards the overcrowding of tourists in Italy (IANS, 2021). Parallel to this, the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic has negatively impacted the environment, infrastructure, and quality of life of the residents. In the course of the pandemic, the overall contribution of the tourism sector towards employment in Italy witnessed a potential decline in 2020 (Dossier, 2022). Although recovering partially in 2021, these fluctuations in terms of both economic and employment rates in Italy can have a negative impact on its sustainability practices.

Micro-environmental Factors Influencing Tourism Demand in Italy

Intrinsic Factors

A leading factor that serves as an enthusiastic push for tourists is its land of beautiful art, ancient monuments, significant natural landscapes, and stunning food. Privitera *et al.* (2018) established that tourism practices foster scope for the continuity of local foods along with reinterpretation in the context of urban conjunction. On this note, the concept of events linked to food serves as a potential opportunity for gastronomic tourism and local development for sustainable tourism in Italy. Examples are those of the famous **Polenta** in Valle d'Aosta, **Pizza** in Campania, **Pasta Amatriciana** in Lazio, and others (Ghansiyal, 2023). Additionally, Italy's reputation for having friendly people with access to great nature, beaches, and weather serves as a potential source of attraction for tourism. Besides, exploring sustainable practices with well-planned stays at a reasonable price with sustainable accommodations serves as a crucial motivating factor for tourists.

Extrinsic Factors

Despite addressing a small section of the total tourism flow domestic tourism gets recognised as a crucial factor in Italy. In particular, domestic tourists tend to be interested in less promoted

or developed areas over international tourists (Giambona and Grassini, 2020). This is specifically attributed to tourists having a significant preference for locations ⁴ that are challenging to reach, thus making domestic tourism an undisputed driver for poverty alleviation and local development. To better illustrate, reports of 2016 have highlighted domestic arrivals contributing to about 51% of the total arrivals. In this regard, factors driving tourism attractiveness tend to be highly dependent on the push-pull factors relevant to the Italian market. On the contrary, Corbisiero and Monaco (2021) also cited that the COVID-19 pandemic has made an inevitable impact on tourist choices. This is regardless of the specific area of residence being impacted by the pandemic outbreak, thereby posing a significance to both international and local tourists for choosing Italy.

Conclusion

The major responsibilities associated with sustainable tourism are the protection of natural resources, wildlife, and the environment. This is also identified to involve promoting socio-economic benefits for the community residing in certain tourism destinations while also conserving cultural heritage. A major facet of sustainable tourism is the creation of authentic tourist experiences while also leveraging the betterment of the concerned community. The following process for Italy also includes diverse services industries and activities for promoting experiences like accommodations and transportation. This essay has inferred that the need for stakeholder analysis regarding decisions for sustainable tourism in Italy includes focusing on drinking and eating establishments, entertainment, shopping and others. It is also deduced from this essay that despite Italy establishing itself as a promising destination answer on sustainability grounds, there tend to be certain barriers that can impose challenges. In conclusion, it is substantially required for the identified stakeholders to account for an extensive assessment of the negative factors while sharpening the positive ones for enhancing sustainability to resume practices in Italy.

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