

## Evaluating Sustainability Integration in India's Tourism Policy Framework (1982–2022)

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### ABSTRACT

**Purpose:** Given the growing global emphasis on sustainability, this research addresses a critical gap in understanding the extent to which Indian tourism policies incorporate global sustainable development guidelines. This study undertakes a comprehensive review and critically examines the Indian tourism policies (1982-2022), the G20 Goa Roadmap, key UNWTO guidelines, and the SDG 2030 Agenda, with the objective of assessing the extent to which Indian tourism policies align with the Global Sustainability Standards as established by the UNWTO and SDG 2030 guidelines. This paper identifies existing gaps in the integration of sustainability principles in Tourism policies and proposes strategic measures to enhance the policy coherence with global sustainability benchmarks.

**Design/Methodology/ Approach:** Using a qualitative, descriptive research design, the study employs content analysis of the policy documents using Atlas. ti software, complemented a systematic literature review (SLR) of significant studies on Tourism Policy and Sustainability. This combined approach provides a holistic understanding of global sustainability perspectives and policy, a comparison that assisted in the formulation of well-informed recommendations at the end of the study.

**Findings:** The study suggests that the Draft National Tourism Policy 2022 is the most comprehensive and sustainability-aligned policy developed to date. However, as per the press release by the Ministry of Tourism dated March 17, 2025, Government of India is yet to formalize this draft policy as the National Tourism Policy. At the same time, the G20 Goa Roadmap suggests strong potential but would benefit from refinements to fully meet SDGs and UNWTO sustainability guidelines. However, the National Strategy for Sustainable Tourism 2022, with Sustainability as the focal point, strongly links to almost all the national and international policies reviewed in the study and provides clear directives to ensure that Tourism contributes to the maximum number of SDG 2030 goals.

**Originality/Value:** This paper's original contribution lies in its comprehensive and holistic review of all the National Tourism Policies of India through the lenses of Sustainability, and their alignment with the Global sustainable strategies and guidelines. This study is among the first to contribute towards a better Tourism Policy alignment with Sustainability and Sustainable Development Goals via suggestions on how to map all SDGs more effectively. The findings of this study aim to guide policymakers and stakeholders in designing tourism policies in the future that integrate sustainability more effectively.

**Paper Type:** Review of Literature

**KEYWORDS:** Tourism Policy | Sustainable Tourism | SDG 2030 | UNWTO | Goa Roadmap

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## Introduction

Tourism plays a vital role in driving economic growth and supporting social and environmental sustainability. This section discusses tourism's global and national importance, its growing focus on sustainability, and the key frameworks guiding these efforts. It also highlights this study's main documents, research gaps, and objectives for a detailed review of India's tourism policies in line with sustainability standards and UN SDGs.

## Overview

Tourism has been recognized as a significant driver of economic growth all over the world. As per Liu & Liu (2009), tourism can solve various development issues too, especially economic in nature. It is also widely recognized as a significant employment generator due to its labor-intensive nature. Khan and Kirmani (2018) found that Tourism motivations are diverse in nature and competition is prominent among nations for attracting visitors from across the world, thus showing its critical relevance on the economic front. Tourism has emerged as a critical sector for global economic growth, and it is also increasingly recognized for its potential to contribute to sustainability. Buhalis et al. (2023) stress that sustainable tourism can directly and indirectly support the achievement of multiple Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), introduced as part of the 2030 Agenda, represent a universal call to address global challenges across social, economic, and environmental dimensions. Tourism, as a dynamic global sector, has significant potential to advance all 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), leveraging its impact across diverse areas from economic growth to environmental conservation (UNWTO, 2018). UNWTO (2018) emphasized that while tourism directly addresses SDGs 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth), 12 (Responsible Consumption and Production), and 14 (Life Below Water), it also indirectly supports other goals, given its interlinked nature with sectors such as health, education, infrastructure, and others.

Japan International Cooperation Agency (2023) proposed, in collaboration with UNWTO, to complement this by offering a practical framework for aligning tourism projects with the SDGs at a foundation level, helping to track contributions of individual projects towards sustainable development outcomes. Aligned with these frameworks, the Goa Roadmap was introduced during India's G20 presidency, specifically to integrate tourism as a catalyst for achieving SDGs by 2030; focusing on green, digital, and inclusive growth (UNWTO, 2023). However, aligning tourism policies with sustainability requires a strategic framework that integrates environmental, social, and economic goals. According to Niñerola et al. (2019), the challenge lies in ensuring that national tourism policies are not only growth-

oriented but also prioritize sustainability. As we focus on India, we find that India is a significant emerging player in tourism on a global level, considering that India's rank in International Tourism Receipts was 51 in 2001 and has improved to 17th in 2022 (India Tourism Data Compendium, MoT, 2025). In terms of contribution to the country, Harini (2016) also observed that tourism is one of the largest service industries in India due to its significant contribution to the nation's GDP and employment generation.

Moreover, History suggests that tourism in India lacked a sense of urgency or proactive approach (Richter, 1989). Sharma (2017) observed that tourism never got the importance it deserved from the government, and the plans made were just words without supporting action. Efforts to bring tourism to the mainstream of the National Development Plan started from the Sergeant Report of 1945, and the latest to it is the draft national tourism policy 2022, along with the most significant of current times. India's tourism policies, particularly the Draft National Tourism Policy (2022), reflect these global aspirations, yet they vary in comprehensiveness regarding SDG alignment. This study critically evaluates the extent to which India's tourism policies align with global frameworks, emphasizing the need to embed sustainability comprehensively within national tourism planning.

## Study Documents

1. National Tourism Policy 1982
2. National Tourism Policy 2002
3. Draft National Tourism Policy 2022
4. Goa Roadmap for Tourism as a Vehicle for Achieving the Sustainable Development Goals 2030
5. Significant UNWTO guidelines, frameworks, and toolkits regarding SDGs
6. National Strategy for Sustainable Tourism 2022

## Research Gaps

Over the past four decades, from 1982 to 2022, India's tourism sector has undergone a substantial transformation in response to evolving economic, cultural, and environmental priorities. Despite these changes, there remains a significant gap in research that holistically examines the alignment of India's tourism policies with sustainability standards. While some studies address specific policies or sustainability elements, a comprehensive review that evaluates Indian National Tourism Policies and relevant strategies through the lens of UNWTO guidelines, SDG 2030, and SDG2030- Goa Roadmap is notably lacking. This study addresses this gap by applying Systematic Literature Review and Content Analysis methodologies to critically assess the extent of sustainability alignment across India's tourism policies, identifying areas where improvements are necessary to achieve full alignment with global sustainability standards.

## Objectives of the study

- (i) To critically analyze the Indian National Tourism Policies to check whether they are in tandem with the SDG 2030 and UNWTO sustainability guidelines,
- (ii) To propose guidelines to mitigate lacunae in aligning the Tourism Policies of India with Sustainability concepts

## Literature Review

As per WTTC (2022), Tourism as an Industry contributes to around 10 percent of global GDP, which shows the significance of the sector in current times. Government efforts and interest levels in the sector play a prominent role in streamlining the efforts and reaping potential benefits, as discussed by Pathak (2024). As per Liu et. al. (2020), as cited in Pathak (2024), Tourism policies have always aimed to support government endeavors in the sector by efficiently navigating its multidimensional aspects while ensuring tourism growth.

Sharma (2022) observed a slow but steady improvement in India's stance towards tourism as the policies and plans have evolved retrospectively. Sharma (2022) further observes that various initiatives, like the development of numerous tourism circuits on a domestic level and branding India on a global level, reflect the intent of the government towards national tourism development. From the early tourism initiatives in 1956 to the Draft National Tourism Policy of 2022, the government has shown a holistic approach to

developing the sector. Prajapati & Ruhil (2023) observed that various initiatives targeting both domestic and international tourism have come into the picture, with policies showcasing a growth in the realization of the country's potential in contributing to the tourism sector. With the rapid growth of tourism globally and domestically, sustainability has become a key priority due to the clear negative impacts tourism has on the environment, other economic sectors, and local communities. Hence, there is a need for agendas like SDG 2030 and brainstorming on the ways tourism could contribute to Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and Sustainability in a holistic manner.

Buhalis et.al. (2023) have also tried to underscore and reflect upon the importance of SDGs with a model having three nodes- Destination, Tourists, and Hosts connected to each other that aligns all SDG goals to Tourism. In this model, the link between destination and tourist, consideration of environmental protection and resource preservation could contribute to SDGs 12,13,14, and 15, while the Tourist and Host link can contribute to the domain of social equality and hence catering to SDGs 3,4,5,6,7, and 10. The third link between Destination and Host could contribute to the domain of economic development, hence catering to SDG 1,2,8,9, and 11. SDGs 16 and 17, talking about peace and partnership, are central to all three, with the core of tourism.

Some other significant works of previous researchers are mentioned in Table 1 below:

**Table 1 – Significant Scopus Published Studies of the field**

Author (s)	Year	Paper Title	Focus Areas	Journal Name	Key Findings
Moyle et al.	2020	Are We Really Progressing Sustainable Tourism Research?	Sustainability, Tourism, Research	Journal of Sustainable Tourism	Critical need for stronger theoretical frameworks, systematic SDG integration, and enhanced practical impact.
Liburd, Duedahl & Heape	2020	Co-designing Tourism for Sustainable Development	Sustainable tourism, collaboration, SDGs	Journal of Sustainable Tourism	Advocates for collaborative, flexible approaches to create meaningful change in sustainable tourism.
Torkington, Stanford & Guiver	2020	Discourse(s) of Growth and Sustainability in National Tourism Policy Documents	Sustainable tourism, economic growth	Journal of Sustainable Tourism	Finds that "sustainable" often serves to justify growth rather than ecological limits in tourism policies.
Gössling et al.	2020	Pandemics, Tourism, and Global Change a rapid assessment of COVID-19	Tourism recovery, global sustainability	Journal of Sustainable Tourism	Stresses the urgent need for transformative, SDG-aligned sustainable tourism to address global vulnerabilities.
Khan et al.	2020	Revisiting the Dynamics of Tourism, Economic Growth, and Environmental Pollutants in the emerging economies—sustainable tourism policy implications	Tourism, economic growth, and environmental impact	Sustainability	Links tourism to economic growth and CO2 emissions, recommending integrated policies to tackle environmental issues.



Shahbaz et al.	2021	A Bibliometric Analysis and Systematic Literature Review of Tourism-Environmental Degradation Nexus	Environmental degradation, sustainability policies	Environmental Science and Pollution Research	Emphasizes the need for research collaboration between developed and developing nations to advance sustainable tourism reforms.
Khan et al.	2021	Sustainable Tourism Policy, Destination Management, and Sustainable Tourism Development: A Moderated-Mediation Model	Sustainable tourism policy, destination management	Sustainability	Sustainable tourism policies and management enhance tourism development, with social responsibility as a key factor.
Molina-Collado et al.	2022	Sustainability in Hospitality and Tourism: A Review of Key Research Topics from 1994 to 2020	Tourism & Hospitality, sustainability	International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management	Identifies biodiversity conservation, climate change, and environmental management as key themes.
Payini et al.	2024	Trends and Patterns in Indian Sustainable Tourism Development literature: A bibliometric analysis and visualisation	Sustainable tourism, policy analysis	International Journal of Tourism Policy	Key areas include sustainable tourism development, community-based tourism, and attitudes toward sustainability.
Thi et al.	2024	Sustainable Tourism Governance: Impact of Culture Sustainable tourism governance: A study of the impact of culture	Cultural preservation, sustainable tourism governance	Journal of Governance & Regulation	Sustainable tourism preserves ethnic cultural heritage while supporting local communities.

Source: Researchers

## Research Methodology

This paper follows a qualitative approach with a descriptive nature using Systematic Literature Review and Inductive Content Analysis of policies. The Ministry of Tourism, Government of India website was used as a source of the 03 National Tourism Policies, and the UNWTO website became the source of the Goa Roadmap and relevant guidelines, as mentioned in the introduction, being selected for review. Inductive content analysis using Atlas.Ti software was used to identify key patterns and themes. Both manual and AI coding were used, and Treemaps were generated of repeated words of relevance at specific thresholds, which was followed by the analysis and interpretation of the same.

## Analysis

This section talks about the content analysis of all documents considered in the study.

### The National Tourism Policy 1982

As per word frequency analysis (Atlas.ti output), the top 10 words in decreasing order of frequency were identified, after obvious words like Tourism, Development & Policy; other words are India, International, Cultural, Exchange, Domestic, Foreign, National, Economic, Archaeological & Social. This policy, being the first, projects India's rich

cultural heritage and promotes a sense of unity, identity, and pride among its people, while creating a better understanding of the country for international travelers, which were the foundational aspects as per those times (Ministry of Tourism, Government of India, n.d.-a).

### National Tourism Policy 2002

As per the word frequency analysis (Atlas.ti output), the top 10 relevant words in decreasing order at the relevant threshold after Tourism, Development & Policy are - India, International, World, Domestic, Employment, Industry, Market, National, Tourist & Potential. This policy was introduced after the National Action Plan 1992, during a period of stagnant tourism growth and low government focus. Talks about foundational aspects like the economy in an elaborate way, along with putting forward the potential of the sector in different sub-sectors like rural area development and others. (Ministry of Tourism, Government of India, n.d.-b).

### Draft National Tourism Policy (NTP) 2022

In this policy, a large number of words are of high occurrence and relevance. Among them, the top 10 words other than Tourism, Development & Policy in the decreasing

order of their occurrence are - Destination, Mission, MSME, Private, Digital, Marketing, Stakeholders, Skills, Hospitality & Sustainable.

The Draft NTP 2022 can be called the most comprehensive tourism policy so far. In its vision statement, it talks about making India one of the topmost destinations in Sustainable and Responsible Tourism (Ministry of Tourism, Government of India, 2022a). Overall, the policy, with its validity of 10 years, aims at contributing to tourism development in the country in a holistic manner with its six guiding principles, five missions, and eight pillars, along with Institutional and Government Architecture being central to it. This policy has also put forward the target of welcoming 1 trillion tourists

and their contributions to the Indian economy by 2047 (100<sup>th</sup> year of India's Independence).

### Goa Roadmap for Tourism as a Vehicle for Achieving the Sustainable Development Goals 2030

Goa Roadmap is a highly comprehensive document similar to the Draft National Tourism Policy 2022 and incorporates many recurring words. Few (10) significant words (Atlas.ti output) in decreasing order of their occurrence after are – Sustainable, SDGs, World, Roadmap, Digital, MSMEs, Local, Management, Destination, and Economic.

**Table 2 – Key Points of the Four Segments of the Goa Roadmap (2023)**

Executive Summary	Introduction	Priority Areas (G20 Working Group)	Key Enablers
Voluntary Tools & Recommendations	Theme - 'Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam' or 'One Earth-One Family-One Future'	<i>Green Tourism</i> SDG 7,8,11,12 & 13)	Working towards Climate Action & Environmental Protection
Tourism Sector's Contribution to SDGs	India's G20 Presidency priorities	<i>Digitalization</i> (SDG 4,8,9,11 & 17)	Equitable Economic Models
Safer, Healthier, Sustainable & Equitable future	2022 SDG report - t (Economic Precarity, Food Insecurity, Economic Inequality, Environmental	<i>Skills</i> (SDG 4,5,8,9 & 10)	Sustained public-private-community partnerships
5 interconnected priority areas	Recognition by the UN General Assembly	<i>Tourism - MSMEs</i> (SDG 8,9,11,12 & 17)	Visitors as key stakeholders: Enhancing Sustainability
G 20 Tourism Working Group (3 Years)	2030 Agenda	<i>Destination Management</i> (SDG 8,9,11,12 & 17)	Holistic Destination Management
Tourism inclusion in National SDG agendas	SDG 8,12 & 14 - Targets Mentioning Tourism		Upskilling, reskilling, and new skilling (Focus on Vulnerable Groups)
Case Studies	G 20 member & guest country survey - SDG 8,9,11,12 & 17 link to Tourism		Strengthening measurement, monitoring, and reporting (Tourism impact on economic, social, and environmental dimensions)
Government & Stakeholders alignment	Cross-cutting sector - Contribution to all SDGs		Innovative approaches to meet the SDGs
	Tourism & Environment-Complex Relation		Consistent knowledge sharing
	Balance b/w Economic Development & Ecological Preservation		Long-term forward planning to foster tourism resilience
	21 G-20 & Guest countries - Tourism in National SDG Policy		

Source: Compiled by author based on UNWTO (2023). Goa Roadmap for Tourism as a Vehicle for Achieving the Sustainable Development Goals



Table 2 talks about the key points under the four segments of the roadmap, like executive summary to start with, followed by an introductory section, 05 interconnected priority areas, which are the focal point of the roadmap, along with key enablers that would support the overall execution of the roadmap.

As per UNWTO (2023), the Goa Roadmap was a result of collaboration between UNWTO and the G20 Working Group that was guided by the efforts and work of G20 spanning the last 3 years. The roadmap aims to catalyze the achievement of the SDG 2030 Agenda & foster SDGs progress through the Tourism sector. It puts forward 05 interconnected priority areas mentioned in the summary table 2 above. The roadmap puts forward voluntary gears to support its objective after reflecting the need to aim for sustainability as the primary focal area due to increased challenges in achieving the 2030 agenda, as per the data from recent years.

### Significant UNWTO guidelines –

The various guidelines/ reports given by UNWTO in relation to sustainability, which are considered for the study, are discussed below.

**UNWTO 2018 “Tourism and the Sustainable Development Goals – Journey to 2030”** - The report comprehensively addresses the potential for tourism to advance all 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), emphasizing tourism’s cross-sectoral influence on economic, environmental, and social dimensions (UNWTO, 2018). It reflects tourism as a unique contributor to global development agendas, directly supporting SDGs like SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth) by creating employment opportunities, SDG 12 (Responsible Consumption and Production) by promoting sustainable practices among tourists and industry players, and SDG 13 (Climate Action) by encouraging eco-friendly tourism development. Furthermore, the report highlights indirect linkages to other SDGs, including SDG 1 (No Poverty), SDG 4 (Quality Education), SDG 5 (Gender Equality), SDG 10 (Reduced Inequalities), and SDG 11 (Sustainable Cities and Communities), stressing tourism’s ability to foster economic and social inclusion. The report establishes tourism as a driver for sustainable development across all SDGs, underlining that with effective policy frameworks, tourism can be a transformative tool for achieving the 2030 Agenda (UNWTO, 2018).

**Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) 2023 “Toolkit of Indicators for Projects (TIPs)”** - The JICA 2023 Toolkit of Indicators for Projects (TIPs) complements the UNWTO’s 2018 vision by offering a practical framework for project-level SDG alignment within the tourism sector. Unlike the UNWTO’s broad policy-focused document, this toolkit is designed to provide specific indicators and metrics to help measure the contributions of individual tourism projects to

sustainable development goals. It supports a granular approach, focusing on outcomes that align with SDGs, such as promoting responsible consumption, reducing carbon footprints, and supporting local economies in line with SDG 8 and SDG 12. The toolkit’s structured guidance allows project managers to systematically track and report progress toward SDG targets, offering a bottom-up approach to sustainability in tourism. Although it is project-oriented, the TIPs toolkit also underscores the importance of integrating environmental, social, and economic factors (JICA, 2023).

**Global Code of Ethics for Tourism** – Officially recognized in 2001, it is a voluntary code aiming at becoming a reference point for sustainable & responsible tourism. It addresses all stakeholders together, towards enhancing tourism benefits while reducing its negative impacts to preserve the environment, legacy, and civilizations. It involves 10 articles which broadly talk about community development, fulfillment, sustainable development, Stakeholders’ roles, Rights & liberty in tourism, Rights of tourism entrepreneurs, and implementation of the code (UNWTO, 2001).

**Global guidelines to restart Tourism** – These guidelines were put forward to assist the speedy recovery of the tourism sector post-COVID-19 pandemic. Having foundations from the global tourism crisis committee and partnership with Google to promote digital learning and innovation, these guidelines aim to assist governments and businesses in restarting tourism in a safe and responsible manner. Involving eight guidelines, the document holistically talked about incorporating hygiene and safety to sub-segments like hospitality, air travel, border management, meetings, tour operations, destination planning considerations, and others (UNWTO, 2020).

### National Strategy for Sustainable Tourism 2022

The strategy puts forward key aspects to be focused upon to put India as a significantly preferred destination in Sustainable and Responsible Tourism. It provides a holistic way of bringing together all stakeholders with efficient governance and establishing a focused vertical for Sustainable Tourism Development in the Country. Seven pillars have been identified, which are focused on Environmental Sustainability, Biodiversity and Natural Heritage Preservation, Enhancing Economic Sustainability through an inclusive approach, Safeguarding socio-cultural aspects through Socio-Cultural Sustainability using a preservation-focused approach in visitor management, community involvement, etc. Certifications for Sustainable Tourism have also been discussed, which have criteria adopted from Global Standards and Ranking of States to initiate a positive competition. Information, Education and Communication (IEC) and Capacity Building have also been put forward as a strategic pillar focusing upon better information sharing and skill development with coordination between States and the

Centre. Governance is talked about as the last pillar, talking about the preparation of a National Action Plan with inter-ministerial involvement and stakeholders. National and Level Nodal Agencies have also been proposed (Ministry of Tourism, Government of India, 2022b).

### Overall Convergence Analysis

If we talk about relevant terms discussed in all 03 policy documents having all 03 national policies, then few terms of relevance among many as visible in *Image 1* below, in decreasing order of occurrence after Tourism are, Development, India, Ministry, Destination, Tourist, State, private, Management, MSMEs, international, Government, Marketing, Research, Digital, Stakeholders, Capacity, **Sustainable**, Domestic, Economic, Experience, **Culture**, Infrastructure, Promotion, Investment, Employment, information, Implementation, Connectivity, **Green**, Heritage, Facilities & **Responsible**.

### Interpretation –

#### 1. Core Focus on Economic and Developmental Aspects:

The largest blocks are Tourism, Development, Destination, Policy, and India, indicating a dominant focus on tourism growth and economic development. The word Development appears prominently, suggesting that the primary orientation of these policies is towards tourism as an economic engine rather than a tool for environmental or social sustainability.

Terms like Mission, Private, Management, Marketing, and Product further highlight a market-driven approach aimed at positioning tourism as a sector for economic gain, rather than an instrument for sustainability.

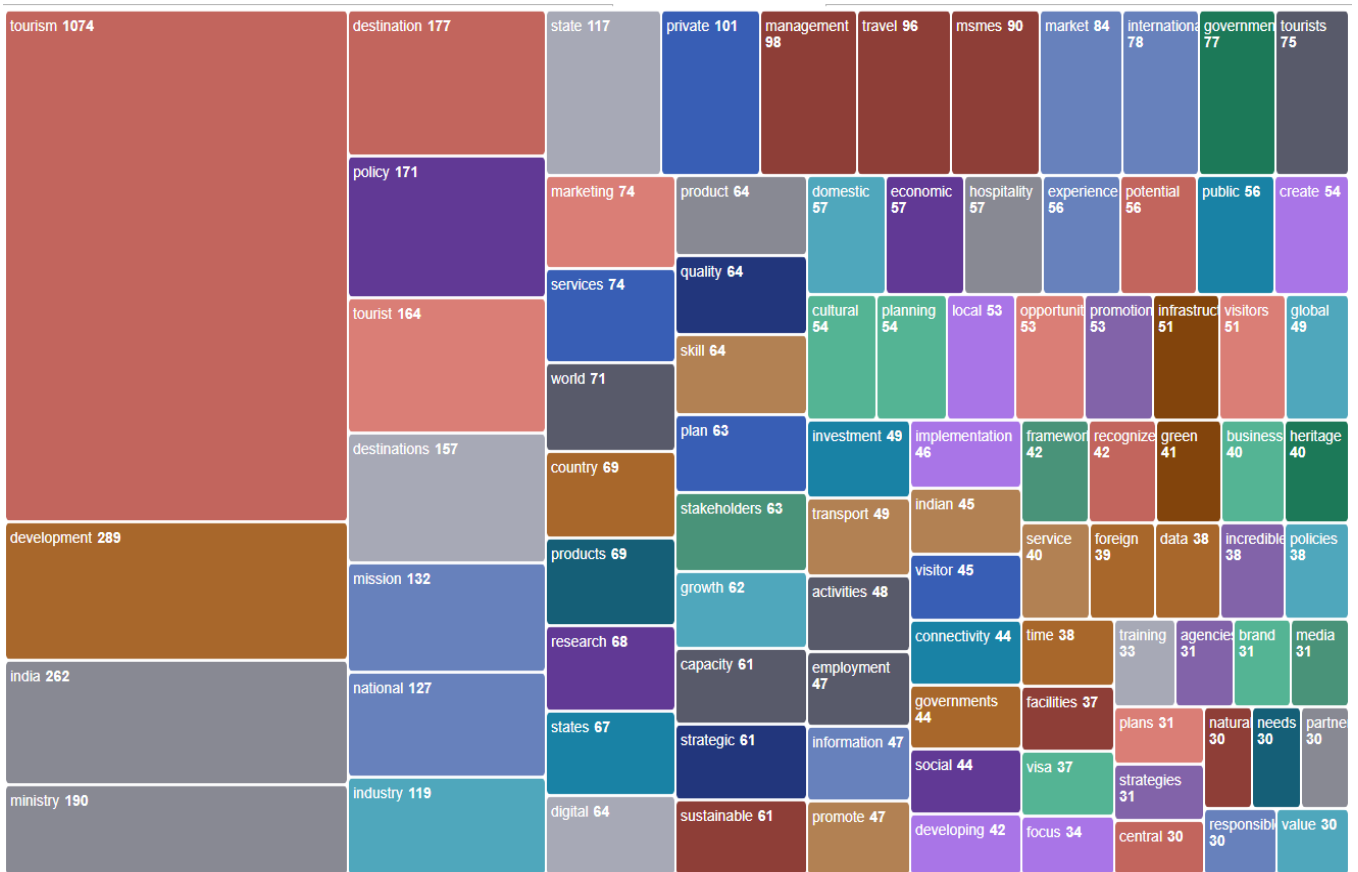


Figure 1 - All three national policies convergence tree map

Source: Atlas. Ti output



### 2. Limited Emphasis on Environmental Sustainability:

Words specifically associated with environmental sustainability, such as Green, Sustainable, Nature, Heritage, and Responsible, appear in smaller blocks. This suggests that while the policies recognize sustainable and eco-friendly concepts, they are not central themes. The appearance of terms like Green and Sustainable suggests some consideration, but their lesser prominence implies a secondary focus compared to economic and infrastructure-driven objectives.

Notably, terms related to climate action, conservation, and biodiversity are absent or minimally visible, which could indicate gaps in addressing crucial environmental aspects of sustainability within these policies.

### 3. Focus on Infrastructure and Investment:

The prominence of words like Infrastructure, Investment, Facilities, and Connectivity shows a substantial focus on developing tourism infrastructure. While infrastructure is important for sustainable tourism, a policy heavily weighted towards infrastructure without environmental safeguards could lead to unsustainable practices.

This focus could reflect an opportunity for improvement, as sustainable tourism infrastructure would ideally integrate eco-friendly designs, renewable energy, and minimal impact on local ecosystems, aspects that do not appear to be central in the current policy focus.

### 4. Social and Community Aspects:

Terms like Stakeholders, Local, Employment, and Community suggest some attention to social sustainability and community inclusion. This could indicate alignment with SDG goals related to decent work (SDG 8) and reduced inequalities (SDG 10).

However, the relatively lower prominence of these words compared to economic terms may point to a lack of strong emphasis on social equity and community-based tourism.

### 5. Digital Transformation and Innovation:

The presence of Digital, Technology, and Research indicates a policy interest in digital transformation and innovation. Digitalization can support sustainability by enabling data-driven decision-making, enhancing resource efficiency, and promoting sustainable tourism practices.

However, for this to be impactful for sustainability, digital initiatives would need to be targeted towards areas like resource monitoring, carbon footprint reduction, and support for local, eco-friendly businesses, which are not specifically highlighted in the tree map.

## Findings

All the policies have different and continuously enhanced contributions towards SDGs in a direct or indirect manner. Employment, economic gains, infrastructure, vulnerable groups involvement (inclusivity), unity, and other themes being common to all the policies contribute towards Goal 1 of no poverty, Goal 8 of Decent work & economic growth, Goal 9 of Industry Innovation & Infrastructure, Goal 10 of reduced inequalities, Goal 11 of sustainable cities and communities, and others. Though alignment of tourism with SDGs has been comprehensively dealt with in the Goa Roadmap, as evident from its summary, it also does not cover all SDGs.

Various guidelines of UNWTO, like the global code of ethics, global guidelines to restart tourism (post-COVID), aimed at promoting ethics and sustainability in tourism, along with restarting tourism in a responsible manner. Former being broad in nature, experiences alignment with tourism policies as well as the Goa roadmap on different levels. Considerations of environmental preservation in the global codes get aligned with the national tourism policy of 1982, which was prior to them. National Tourism Policy 2002 has a mention of the tourism code of ethics development in its focus areas. The highest linking to both significant guidelines was encountered in draft NTP 2022 in matters of sustainability, stakeholders' role and engagement, private sector role, as well as safe and secure travel.

We can say that the first national tourism policy of 1982 did not talk about SDGs or sustainability in a direct manner, while the national tourism policy of 2002 did mention sustainability as the guiding star, though not with much of an elaboration of focus areas depicting the same. Some common elements being identified, like resource preservation, heritage conservation, carrying capacity considerations, etc., indicated a brief focus towards sustainability. The draft national tourism policy 2022 could be said to be most in alignment with the Goa roadmap as well as the SDG 2030 agenda and UNWTO guidelines. The National Strategy for Sustainable Tourism 2022 talks solely about Sustainability, reflecting Global inputs, and proposes various measures towards the seven strategic pillars discussed earlier. It links strongly with UNWTO SDG 2030 agenda, UNWTO global code of Ethics, and Draft National Tourism Policy 2022, while also being in alignment with the latest Goa Roadmap and other guidelines showcasing how tourism can contribute to almost all SDGs.

Table 3 ahead reflects a summary of the Sustainability alignment of various documents in the study.

**Table 3 - Sustainability alignment of all documents studied**

S. No.	Policy Document	Primary Focus Areas	Sustainability Alignment	Key Points
1	National Tourism Policy 1982	Cultural Tourism Promotion, National Identity	Indirect: Cultural preservation, limited environmental focus	Cultural Heritage focus, Unity, International Traveler
2	UNWTO Global Code of Ethics for Tourism (2001)	Ethical tourism, environmental and cultural respect	Comprehensive: Emphasis on ethical and sustainable practices	Ethical Standards for tourism, Community Development, Environmental Preservation, Inclusivity
3	National Tourism Policy 2002	Economic growth, Infrastructure development	Limited: Mostly economic, with some rural development aspects	Economic Potential of Tourism, Job Creation, Rural Tourism, Limited Sustainability, Integration
4	UNWTO SDG 2030 Agenda - Tourism and SDGs: Journey to 2030 (2018)	Global alignment of Tourism with all 17 SDGs	Strong: Integration of all SDGs	17 SDGs, Climate Action, Poverty Reduction
5	UNWTO Guidelines to Restart Tourism (2020)	Recovery after Covid-19, Responsible Tourism Practices	Strong: Talked about safe and sustainability-focused recovery of the Tourism Sector	Restart Tourism with safety and responsibility, eight guidelines, Hygiene, Digital Innovation, Safety
6	JICA TIPs (2023)	Mapping of Project-level SDGs in Tourism	Strong: Focused on integrating Environmental, Economic, and Social aspects	SDG-aligned outcomes, bottom-up approach, project-level execution
7	Draft National Tourism Policy (NTP) 2022	Multidimensional Sustainability Orientation of Tourism in India	Strong: Highly comprehensive and holistic approach towards sustainability	Sustainable Tourism, economic contribution targets by 2047, digitalization, MSMEs, inclusivity, Private sector, Integrated Approach
8	National Strategy for Sustainable Tourism 2022	Sustainable and Responsible Tourism	Direct: Comprehensive with 7 Strategic pillars	Environmental Sustainability, Biodiversity, Economic Sustainability, Socio-Cultural Sustainability, Certification of Sustainable Tourism, IEC and Capacity Building, Governance
9	Goa Roadmap for SDG 2030 (2023)	SDG alignment, Digital and sustainable initiatives	Strong: Focus on achieving SDGs, environmental sustainability	Prioritizes SDGs, strategies for green tourism, MSME development, and digitalization for inclusive and sustainable tourism.

Source: Researchers



Apart from direct mention of most of the SDGs in priority areas, the following SDGs are not directly targeted but are mentioned as a part of individual objectives without much explanation -

SDG 1: No Poverty

SDG 2: Zero Hunger

SDG 3: Good Health and Well-being

SDG 6: Clean Water and Sanitation

SDG 14: Life Below Water

SDG 15: Life on Land

SDG 16: Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions

## Suggestions

The UNWTO (2018) report, *Tourism and the Sustainable Development Goals – Journey to 2030*, emphasizes tourism's potential to contribute to all 17 SDGs. For the Goa Roadmap, additional focus areas could include SDG 1 (No Poverty) and SDG 2 (Zero Hunger) by promoting community-based tourism that provides local jobs and directs revenue to low-income communities, while also supporting local food systems. SDG 3 (Good Health and Well-being) could be enhanced through wellness and medical tourism programs that partner with healthcare providers, promoting both health benefits and public health infrastructure.

Further, SDG 6 (Clean Water and Sanitation) and SDG 14 (Life Below Water) can be supported by sustainable water practices and marine conservation efforts, such as rainwater harvesting and coral reef protection. Similarly, SDG 15 (Life on Land) can be advanced by encouraging eco-tourism in national parks, which helps protect biodiversity. Finally, SDG 16 (Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions) could be fostered through policies that encourage transparency, community participation, and cultural respect, creating stronger governance and positive interactions in tourism settings. Adding these areas to the Goa Roadmap would strengthen its alignment with the UNWTO's vision of tourism as a vital driver of sustainable development.

General Recommendations for fostering inclusion and attainment of all 17 SDGs for the Indian National Tourism Policy frameworks and Enhancing the Goa Roadmap, are discussed below -

1- Introduce specific initiatives focused on poverty reduction, food security, public health, and sanitation in tourism-intensive regions. On the national and international level, develop partnerships with NGOs and local organizations to implement community-centric tourism models that contribute directly to these goals. A basic example could be Swaswara Resort in Karnataka, India, which sources local products and employs community members, creating direct benefits for rural populations by integrating tourism with local livelihoods (CGH Earth, 2021).

2- Expand "Green Tourism" in the Goa Roadmap to include SDG 14 (Life Below Water) and SDG 15 (Life on Land) by fostering conservation initiatives. Focus should be on supporting eco-tourism, creating protected marine and terrestrial areas, and enforcing strict environmental standards in tourism projects to mitigate ecological impact on the national and global level. Great Barrier Reef Marine Park, Australia, is an example where they have eco-certifications and visitor restrictions to reduce coral damage and conserve marine life (Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority, 2020).

3. Integrate SDG 16 (Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions) by involving local communities and institutions in decision-making processes. Formation of local tourism boards and promotion of policies that ensure community involvement, fostering strong institutions, and support for tourism activities can assist in holistic, sustainable tourism development. For example, Nepal's Annapurna Conservation Area Project (ACAP) allows local communities to manage resources, encouraging sustainable tourism practices that benefit local livelihoods (Baral et al. 2018).

4. Policies as well as the Goa Roadmap could explicitly target socio-economic gaps by aligning with SDG 1 (No Poverty), SDG 2 (Zero Hunger), and SDG 10 (Reduced Inequalities) in a more direct manner. Designing tourism programs aimed at supporting low-income groups, creating jobs in rural areas, and promoting products and experiences from marginalized communities can significantly contribute at the regional and global levels. For example, the Village Ways Program under the rural tourism segment creates rural tourism paths like in Kumaon, Uttarakhand, where locals benefit from guiding, lodging, and meal services (Virgo et al, 2023).

5. Policies can enhance their contribution to SDG 9 (Industry, Innovation, and Infrastructure) by focusing on sustainable tourism infrastructure and technological innovation. Promoting sustainable architecture in new tourism projects on ground level, investing in digital tools for environmental impact monitoring, and encouraging tech-driven tourism solutions to reduce carbon footprints are a few suggestions. As a suitable example, ITC Hotels has set an industry benchmark in sustainable infrastructure by adopting practices such as LEED Platinum certification, renewable energy sourcing, and zero-waste initiatives, all under its "responsible luxury" ethos (ITC Hotels, 2021).

6. Expand SDG 3 (Good Health and Well-being) by developing health and wellness tourism initiatives. Partner with healthcare providers to create wellness programs, support spa and yoga tourism, and ensure strict health and safety standards in tourism facilities. As an example, Kerala, India, has positioned itself as a leading destination in Ayurveda yoga and wellness tourism (Parakkal et al., 2024).

7. Strengthen SDG 17 (Partnerships for the Goals) by implementing robust measurement, monitoring, and

reporting practices. Establish indicators to measure progress in each SDG area and ensure regular reporting on tourism's impact on economic, social, and environmental goals. Spain's Biosphere Tourism Certification, for example, mandates annual audits to ensure sustainable tourism practices, providing a model that could be adapted for India (Instituto de Turismo Responsable, 2021).

## Limitations and Further Scope

The study has reviewed all the available Tourism Policies of India in relation to sustainability and their alignment with global guidelines in a holistic manner. Although the study was highly comprehensive in nature, some limitations were also encountered. First and foremost, the study relies on Secondary data sources for analysis. Second, the policy documents being extensive in nature needed much time for comprehensive review, and third, various policies had some overlapping information, which created challenges in isolating unique contributions and insights.

Hence, further studies could benefit from primary data collection via interviews or surveys of stakeholders on policy parameters, comparison of tourism policies of different nations, or state vs central policy comparison in India also.

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### Annexure 17.3.10

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8	How to promote sustainable wine tourism Insights from Italian and French young, by Vecchio, Riccardo, Yr-2024	<1	Publication

### Reviewers Memorandum



**Reviewer's Comment 1:** This paper addresses the alignment of India's tourism policies (1982–2022) with global sustainability frameworks, including the UNWTO guidelines and SDG 2030 agenda. It critically examines India's tourism policies through content analysis and a systematic literature review to identify gaps in sustainability integration. The paper highlights the Draft National Tourism Policy 2022 as the most comprehensive in terms of sustainability, while also exploring the potential improvements suggested by the G20 Goa Roadmap.

**Reviewer Comment 2 :** The paper clearly identifies the gap in research regarding the alignment of India's tourism policies with global sustainability frameworks. However, the connection between the theoretical frameworks (SDG 2030, UNWTO guidelines) and the practical implications for India's tourism policies a bit unclear.

**Reviewer Comment 3:** The qualitative, descriptive methodology is well-chosen for this research. However, it would benefit from further elaboration on the use of the Atlas.Ti software for content analysis. Providing more details on the coding process, the reliability of the software's results, and how human interpretation was integrated could enhance the credibility of the findings. It might also be useful to include a discussion on the limitations of using software-based content analysis in policy studies.



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**Conflict of Interest:** Author of a Paper  
has no conflict neither financially nor academically.

### Editorial Excerpt



The article has 02% of plagiarism which is the accepted percentage as per the norms and standards of the journal for publication. As per the editorial board's observations and blind reviewers' remarks the paper had some minor revisions which were communicated on a timely basis to the authors (Shikhar and Paramita), and accordingly, all the corrections had been incorporated as and when directed and required to do so. The comments related to this manuscript are noticeably related to the theme "**Evaluating Sustainability Integration in India's Tourism Policy Framework (1982–2022)**" both subject-wise and research-wise. The paper addresses an important and timely issue, focusing on the alignment of India's tourism policies with global sustainability standards. The structure of the paper is generally well-organized, with clear sections and a logical flow. The sections are clearly organized, and the discussion of India's tourism policies provides insightful analysis. After comprehensive reviews and editorial board's remarks the manuscript has been categorized and decided to publish under "**Review of Literature**" category.

### Acknowledgement



The acknowledgment section is an essential part of all academic research papers. It provides appropriate recognition to all contributors for their hard work and effort taken while writing a paper. The data presented and analyzed in this paper by (Shikhar and Paramita) were collected first handily and wherever it has been taken the proper acknowledgment and endorsement depicts. The authors are highly indebted to others who facilitated accomplishing the research. Last but not least, endorse all reviewers and editors of GJEIS in publishing in the present issue.

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