

A Comprehensive Review of Nexus between Tourism and Attainment of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

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ABSTRACT

Aim of the Study: Tourism has a crucial role in development of economies and The World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) has emphasized on attainment of SDGs through tourism.

Methodology: This is an exploratory study sought to find out the relationship between tourism and SDGs. The article is based on the review of relevant literature, and the development of a model indicating the nexus between tourism and SDGs. The desk research methodology was used for data collection. A total of 95 research articles were reviewed to determine the connection between the SDGs and tourism.

Findings: Out of 17, 14 SDGs were found to be associated with tourism. In particular, SDG1, SDG2, SDG3, SDG5, SDG10, and SDG16 are contributed by tourism. Whereas, SDG3, SDG5, SDG8, SDG11, SDG12, SDG14, and SDG15 are adversely affected by tourism. However, tourism has a great potential to contribute to achievement of SDG1, SDG2, SDG4, SDG6, SDG8, SDG10, SDG11, SDG12, SDG13 and SDG16.

Conclusion: Hence, Tourism is likely to play a dynamic role in the SDG 2030 agenda. Public awareness is immensely required for shaping their behaviour responsible towards tourism since transition to sustainable and responsible tourism is the need of time.

Keywords: Tourism, Sustainable, Contribution, SDG Goals.

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1. INTRODUCTION

SDGs were developed in 2012 at the United Nation's conference on Sustainable Development. The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) has also significant progress in achievement of its various milestones, particularly poverty reduction, minimizing child mortality rate, decreasing school dropouts, and prevention of HIV/AIDS infections. MDGs were replaced by SDGs, which serve as

urgent calls to shift towards and maintain sustainability. They were adopted by seventieth UN General Assembly in 2015 and are targeted to be achieved till 2030.

Since their inception SDGs have been investigated from various aspects, and contributions of different sectors have been analyzed. Role of tourism in achievement of SDGs has also been studied and evidences are found about its relationship with 14 SDGs. Literature is found about the contribution of tourism in the SDGs' achievement, potential of tourism to contribute in the SDGs' achievement, tourism as an obstacle in SDGs' achievement, and contribution of SDGs' achievement in development of tourism sector.

This paper has investigated about the relationship between tourism sector and the achievement of 14 SDGs, either positive or negative effects of tourism sector on SDGs or the potential of tourism to contribute towards achievement of SDGs. This is the novel study in terms of the extensiveness as it has identified relationship of tourism with 14 SDGs, otherwise researchers have investigated one or a few SDGs association with tourism sector in a single study. The objectives of the study are as under;

1. To identify the positive/negative role of tourism in attainment of SDGs.
2. To identify the potential of tourism towards attainment of SDGs.
3. To develop a model of the nexus between tourism and attainment of SDGs.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Tourism was considered as a vital sector for achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) when the SDGs were ratified in 2015 in United Nation's Agenda 2030.

In particular, SDG 8, 12 and 14 (inclusive and sustainable economic growth, sustainable consumption and production (SCP) and the sustainable use of oceans and marine resources) has been targeted by The World Tourism Organization (UNWTO). In this study, out of 17, 14 SDGs were found to be associated with tourism industry and investigated with different perspective.

2.1 SDG 1: No Poverty & Tourism

Poverty is a thorny issue and has been greatly emphasized and worked a lot for its eradication, though it remains unresolved and a cause of concern for economies.

Saarinen and Rogerson (2017) asserted about the contribution of tourism industry in poverty eradication. Likewise, Amerta (2017) stressed the significance of community-based tourism because of tourist' eagerness to explore new destinations and products. This demand can be utilized by local communities to utilize their areas' potential and contribute serving tourists and earn well. Whereas, Holden (2013) mentioned the World Bank highlights about the role of tourism industry in poverty reduction.

Pasanchay and Schott (2021) investigated benefits of community-based tourism homestays — the lodging facility shared by visitor with local residents — which serves as revenue generator for local communities in peak seasons of tourism and eradicate poverty. However, Sadrudin (2014) suggested for formulation of strategies to eliminate poverty through the mediation of tourism. Likewise, Makhdoom et al. (2021) argued about the tourism contribution in empowering the poverty-ridden folks. Similarly, Folarin and Adeniyi (2020) emphasized on pro-poor tourism for eradication of poverty. Furthermore, Scheyvens and Hughes (2021) established that well managed tourism is a tool for reducing poverty in many poor countries.

2.2 *SDG 2: Zero Hunger & Tourism*

Availability of food for people is necessity of human life and is part of SDGs labeled as SDG 2 “No hunger”. Degarege et al. (2018) advised for conducting conceptual and empirical studies for analyzing the factors involve in tourism’s contribution in improving food security and its limitations, as they can help in policy formulation for achievement of SDG 2.

Foran et al. (2014) investigated the food security concerns and concluded about its solutions that are not solely dependent on agriculture sector, but tourism sectors should also be utilized for it. Moreover, Hepburn (2015) stressed on strengthening agritourism by government, which will directly contribute to increase food security. Likewise, Degarege (2019) collected data from 630 households in two tourism sites and one non-tourism site. The respondents affirmed of their food security contributed by tourism but not they don’t fully depend on it and agriculture was their main source of food security. However the people participated in tourism were found to be more food secured as compared to non-participants.

Hall and Gössling (2016) recommended the tourism-agriculture linkages that will increase opportunities for production growth, enhanced income and establishment of new markets, which will ultimately guarantee the availability of food. Similarly, Degarege and Lovelock (2020) emphasized on policy formulation for direct contribution of tourism to food, since there was found the direct contributions of tourism to poverty eradication, job opportunities and increasing income, but an indirect and implicit contribution in food security.

Scheyvens and Laeis (2022) identified significant constraints in the way to develop relationship between food availability and tourism, which can contribute sustainable development. Similarly, Rogerson (2012) argued that a strong link between tourism and agriculture may lead to sustainable tourism development and promotion of pro-poor initiatives. Degarege and Lovelock (2021) could not find the strong effect of tourism on food security, and a minor contribution was found. It was attributed to non-cooperation between tourism sector and agriculture sector. Thus, it is a challenge of tourism sector to participate in food security of tourism destinations.

2.3 *SDG 3: Good Health and Wellbeing & Tourism*

Health is considered wealth and for the growth of a nation, health of community should not be compromised. Pasanchay and Schott (2021) mentioned the various benefits of Community Based Tourism homestays in terms of improving and maintaining health and wellbeing. However, Smith and Diekmann (2017) argued that nexus of tourism and wellbeing is complex because of different types of tourism, i.e. episodic, hedonic, altruistic, ethical, retreat or spiritual pilgrimage trips. They recommended the tourist agencies/companies to plan adequately for the wellbeing of the destinations and residents, and assure wellbeing of tourists.

Brooks et al. (2023) concluded that tourism is believed to reduce poverty, but the contribution of tourism with health and wellbeing depends on involvement of local communities in tourism. They inferred that heritage tourism negatively affect health, i.e. loss of livelihood, relocation, increased outmigration, erosion of culture, increases in crime, restrictions placed on local community participation and access to land. They also advocated for more studies on this topic.

2.4 *SDG 4: Quality Education & Tourism*

Quality education has been associated with good performance and success, it helps survive in ever changing economic conditions and the fast growing global world as argued by Shelley and Ooi (2020). Likewise, Innes and Sharp (2021) and Bertella and Rinaldi (2020) opined that tourism resources can be mobilized with the direct and indirect contribution of educational potentials.

However, Nkwanyana (2018), Canosa et al. (2020) and Abascal et al. (2016) termed educational outcomes as an indirect effect of tourism development.

Johns et al. (2016) opined that learning experiences of young people can be enhanced by development of tourism. On the other hand, Agyeiwaah et al. (2014) and Walter et al. (2018) stressed on promotion of homestay eco-tourism because it helps in educating tourists about the hosts' culture because of extensive interactions among them. However, Mir et al. (2024) found the limited contributions of tourism industry and other related sectors for achievement of quality education goal. Even education as the secondary benefit of tourism deemed unclear and inconsistent. They suggested the collaboration of regional and local communities for attainment of this goal through tourism.

2.5 *SDG 5: Gender Equality & Tourism*

Without tackling gender equality in a meaningful and substantive way, tourism's potential to contribute to all 17 SDGs will be substantively reduced. Pasanchay and Schott (2021) found the promotion of social status of women in CBT homestays, because majority of the operators are women, and the women' involvement in community-based tourism, which contributes strongly in gender equality. Whereas, Zhang and Zhang (2020) investigated the impact of tourism on gender equality and found it significantly positive and also substantial in different regions.

Araújo-Vila et al. (2021) identified gender inequality an obvious factor in tourism industry because of seasonality, part-time work, and precarious contracts extensive job rotation found in tourism sector. They suggested to increase gender equality in the tourism academy, by involving women at top posts and in different activities i.e. conferences, seminar, trainings etc. they also recommended to increase literature on gender equality in tourism. Similarly, Boluk and Rasoolimanesh (2022) found insignificant role of tourism in promoting gender equity and suggested more empirical investigations on it.

2.6 *SDG 6: Clean Water and Sanitation & Tourism*

Water is a basic need which is also a source of entertainment in form of rivers, ponds, streams, pools, dams etc. But the unclean water becomes a nuisance that can adversely affect the residential and tourism activities. Elysia and Wihadanto (2020) argued that inadequate sanitation is a major concern that threatens tourism. Similarly, Bhatta et al. (2022) established that tourist mostly have negative opinion about availability of water, hygiene conditions, and sanitation at tourist destination, as they experience gastrointestinal symptoms during their visit and have to later their travel plans.

Gibson et al. (2021) concluded that people who are socially vulnerable face health and safety risks from inadequate sanitation conditions at tourist destinations. Likewise, Dwipayanti et al. (2022) identified the inadequate water and sanitation negatively impacts on women, disabled and elderly people as they face various problems at hotels and public washroom during their visits. Likewise, Abbas et al. (2024) reported that fatalities and infections among tourism in particular destination resulted from consumption of unsafe water and improper sanitation, adversely affects tourism.

Hence, Frone and Frone (2013) opined that tourism increases the demand for availability of water and sanitation, and a pressure on their sustainable use. Tourism also needs proper system of wastewater treatment for decreasing water pollution. So, the relationship between SDG 7 and tourism is reciprocal.

2.7 *SDG 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth & Tourism*

Employment with good working condition is one of the agenda of SDGs that contributes to economic growth. Kronenberg and Fuchs (2021) investigated about the accommodation and food sectors and found positive contribution of tourism in regional job growth. However, Maggi and Vroegop (2022) tourism jobs are counter conflicting to work-life balance concept and it faces various challenges in providing options of decent work. Sustainable tourism, responsible tourism, community-based tourism, slow tourism, and regenerative tourism are the suggested forms of tourism without that it cannot have a positive impact on decent work and economic growth (Cave & Dredge, 2021; Oh et al., 2016; Okazaki, 2008).

La Moreno and Javier (2020) discussed about informality of tourism sector due to the lack of decent job opportunities in rural areas, because rural communities lack experience and need help to serve tourists. Local informal businesses are ignored in national labour legislation, children are also involved in tourism sector by selling products or rendering services and fall prey to abuse. Likewise, Bianchi and Man (2021) criticized the treatment of labor as factor of production and their exploitation for prosperity of organizations and states, and such treatment is also prevalent in tourism industry. The use of adjectives like ‘decent’ and ‘inclusive’ does not serve the purpose alone.

2.8 *SDG 10: Reduced Inequalities & Tourism*

Equal treatment of people as a tourism industry performance variable is also strongly emphasized, Boopen et al. (2022) described that wide income inequalities are found in underdeveloped countries and tourism dependent countries, while inequalities are narrow in developed countries. Moreover, Alam and Paramati (2016) argued that by increasing tourism twice from its current state, we can decrease income inequality in developing countries.

Lacher and Nepal (2013) found weak income inequalities among the various occupations are do not show extraordinarily wide gaps in context of tourism sector. Similarly, Brandt (2018) established that despite the involvement of less number of employees, the wage rate are relatively equal in tourism sectors as compared to other sectors.

2.9 *SDG 11: Sustainable Cities and Communities & Tourism*

Socially, economically, and environmentally resilient cities and communities are strength for nations, and the part of agenda 2030. Duffy (2013) inferred that community-based tourism can help achieving SDG11 Sustainable Cities and Communities where it encourages local participation, empowerment, and decision-making. Nevertheless, Edema (2019) concluded that improvement in local infrastructure, health care, transportation and communication will benefit the community.

Pasanchay and Schott (2021) investigated about CBT homestays and concluded about various direct and indirect benefits of CBT. Whereas, Da Silva et al. (2019) identified some of the negative consequences of tourism on cities and communities as perceived by residents. Displaced residents, rising prices, high cost of living, touristification, gentrification is notorious, injustice in the distribution of tourism profits were deemed disadvantageous to cities and communities. Likewise, Day et al. (2021) identified various examples of negative economic, social, and environmental impacts of tourism on urban areas. Birendra (2021) highlighted the destruction of world heritage sites due to increased tourism. Similarly, Gonia and Jezierska-Thöle (2022) asserted that nature reserves located at unfavorable places — near busy roads, rail tracks, single- or multi-family buildings, housing estates — are deteriorated and no longer remain ideal for tourism. Day (2020) also concluded it a wicked problem to achieve sustainability in both cities and tourism systems.

2.10 SDG 12: Responsible Consumption and Production & Tourism

Tourism is responsible to increase consumption because it involves masses' gatherings at one places, which causes uses of resources and accumulation of wastes. Such as, Ahmad et al. (2019) argued tourism consumption and production damages the surroundings. Whereas, Patwary (2023) established that the strong effect of conservation commitment with environmental beliefs on responsible behaviour of tourists. Furthermore, Obersteiner et al. (2021) determined that several tourism businesses have adopted various practical measures to reduce different types of waste. Moreover, Sharpley (2021) recommended to adopt reduced and limited levels of consumption in tourism. Similarly, Dolnicar (2023) advised for responsible consumption, with the automated measurement for consumption of water in hotels, food waste systems to mitigate the negative impacts of tourism.

2.11 SDG 13: Climate Action & Tourism

Most of the countries are facing the challenges of climate change as an hindrance in flourishing tourism sector, although there has a tremendous development in spreading awareness about the impact of climate change (Gössling & Scott, 2018). Similarly, Becken (2019) emphasized on significance of climate change response by government collaborating other sectors since this challenges bars tourism industry to grow at full swing. Hence, Scott et al. (2019) suggested to prioritize the solutions for climate change by the collaboration of tourism academics, tourism industry, government and other disciplines. Similarly, Pavlova et al. (2017) expressed the concern of climate change and natural disasters i.e. earthquakes, volcanic eruptions landslides or tsunamis which may devastate the heritage sites and tourism of the area is badly affected due to large number of visits.

Dube and Nhamo (2020) suggested climate resilience for fostering tourism sector. Similarly, Dube et al. (2022) suggested responsible and sustainable tourism and advised for water management within the tourism sector in the era of climate change. Because droughts cause stakeholders to decrease water usage, due to which tours are cancelled.

2.12 SDG 14: Life below Water & Tourism

There is lack of public awareness about the importance of oceans that cause people's unfavourable attitude towards the sustainability of life below water as argued by Fauville et al. (2019). Hence, Trave et al. (2017) identified the challenges posed by the combination of tourism and water, because the reckless and rapidly growing tourism is impacting adversely on water and life below it.

Kabil et al. (2021) inferred Blue Economy as one of the prominent concepts that is based on the attainment of sustainable development through the protection of marine resources. Moreover, O. Yılmaz (2020) argued that tourism is one of the sectors closely related to blue economy. Likewise, Cummings and Greenberg (2021) concluded about various hurdles in attainment of blue economy in tourism sector.

E. Yılmaz and Ilal (2024) emphasized on expanding academic literature awareness for make public realize the significance of the blue economy in global world. Additionally, Garcia and Cater (2022) also stressed on formulating framework for ocean literacy for sustaining life below water.

2.13 SDG 15: Life on Land & Tourism

The life on land depicts promotion of sustainable use of ecosystems and preservation of biodiversity. Turner (2017) viewed the relationship of nature and societies is depicted by tourism. Whereas, Dube and Nhamo (2020) concluded that biodiversity and wildlife habitat are threatened

due to droughts. High temperatures adversely affect flora and fauna, cause fires in forests, and also require chillers for tourists which will increase expenses for tourists and tour companies and decreases tourism. Jones (2022) established that biodiversity is the heart of tourism, ironically tourism activities harm biodiversity. Similarly, Tolvanen and Kangas (2016) highlighted negative effect of tourism on biodiversity, as the use of forest for recreational facilities. Hence sensitive wildlife species are endangered due to tourism.

However, Pueyo-Ros (2018) found the fallacious contribution of tourism to ecosystem and very slight contribution of ecosystem to tourism in literature. Thus literature hides the detrimental effects tourism on the ecosystems and in order to promote tourism. Additionally, Hillebrand (2022) emphasized on setting norms and values for adapting ecosystem. All actors in tourism need to implement managerial systems for effectuating the ecosystem. Ultimately, Jurkus et al. (2022) suggested the environmental awareness, avoidance of overtourism for fruitful collaboration of biodiversity and ecosystem with tourism.

2.14 SDG 16: Peace Justice and Strong Institution & Tourism

Tourism is the activity of travelling to a new place and spend some days for pleasure, the movement of people from one place to another requires tolerance and resilience. This acceptance and inclusion of local communities at destinations and the tourists is a quality of tourism activity that proves it as a tool for peace-building (Malik, 2022). Furthermore, Higgins-Desbiolles (2013) advocated the justice approach to peace through tourism from micro to the global level, they exemplified the “guests” and “host” relationships as a catalyst of global citizenship and strengthening international relations. Likewise, Isaac (2014) established that tourism facilitates interactions between tourists and locals and promote optimism. Omotoba (2023) concluded that tourism promotes peaceful coexistence because tourists have exposure of other cultures and civilization.

Various studies demonstrate insights into the concept of peace through tourism as a complex process. Such as, Novelli et al. (2012) inferred that tourism’s potential to reestablish societies and restore peace and after wars, is a common opinion, but it is tough to ascertain its contribution. Whereas, Higgins-Desbiolles et al. (2022) established that tourism processes can be linked to structural justice for attainment of peace. Likewise, Farmaki and Stergiou (2021) termed tourism as an agent of distributive, procedural, and restorative justice. Although, Perkumienė and Pranskūnienė (2019) argued that overtourism creates conflict between the local people’s right to live peacefully and tourists’ right to travel peacefully.

Out of the 17 SDGs 14 were found to be contributed or has potential to be contributed by tourism. Hence, this proposition indicates the tourism’s potential to contribute SDG 17 “partnerships for the goals”, which means tourism can integrate various other sectors in achievement of all the SDGs.

3. METHODS

This is an exploratory study that sought to determine the contribution of tourism in the achievement of SDGs, and its potential to contribute in achievement of SDGs. This is a review article, based on the narrative review of literature, and the development of the model. The desk research methodology was used for data collection, total of 95 research articles were reviewed, in order to determine which SDGs need to be achieved for the development of the tourism industry and which SDGs are proposed to be achieved through a tourism industry. The article which were published after or in the same year when SDGs were born (i.e. 2012) have been included and articles published before 2012 were excluded.

4. DISCUSSION AND CONCEPTUAL MODEL

Based on the evidences driven from literature a conceptual model was developed. The model shown in Figure.1 has highlighted the nexus between tourism and achievement of SDGs.

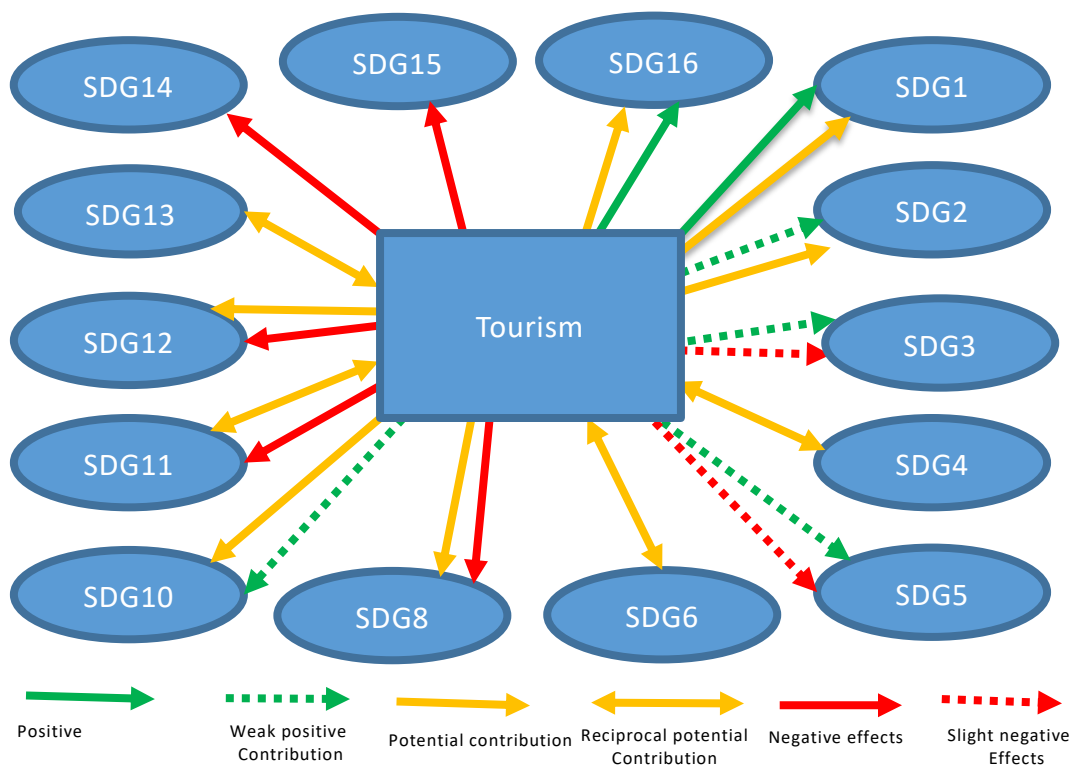


Figure. 1. Conceptual model for nexus between tourism and SDGs

SDG1 and SDG16 are evidenced to be contributed by tourism hence, tourism is eradicating poverty and promoting peaceful and inclusive societies, respectively.

Though, Tourism is evidenced to contribute weakly/indirectly/insignificantly in achievement of SDG2, SDG3, SDG5, and SDG10. Which means tourism is providing food as people make it their livelihood, it helps improving people's wellbeing and health (because peoples earn from tourism activities and tourism also provides pleasure and entertainment, which may affect people's health), it provides job opportunities for women, and somehow help in reducing income inequalities.

Literature also highlighted the negative effects of tourism on some of the SDGs and asserts that tourism hinders in their achievement. Since SDG8, SDG11, SDG12, SDG14, and SDG15 are found to be adversely affected by tourism. Tourism is claimed to be infused with informality which is less likely to provide decent work so SDG8 is believed to be hampered by tourism. It is also believed to create mess in cities, cause deterioration to infrastructure, and disturb the residents, so deemed harmful for sustainable cities and communities and hampers in accomplishing SDG11. Furthermore, tourism is an activity that causes vast consumptions, as tourists lack sense of belongingness, it results in senseless consumption of goods and resources, and hence SDG12 suffers. The reckless treatment of natural resources by tourists and tourism industry, both life below water and life on land are badly affected, which is hampering the achievement of SDG14 and SDG15.

Residents may face problems of relocation, migration, erosion of culture, increases in crime. Natures of jobs in tourism sector are informal or precarious, and it is not welcoming for women.

Thus, tourism have slight negative effects on the accomplishment of SDG3 and SDG5, respectively.

Tourism has potential to contribute in almost all of the SDGs, however, in literature tourism is asserted to have potential to contribute in 10 SDGs, i.e. SDG1, SDG2, SDG4, SDG6, SDG8, SDG10, SDG11, SDG12, SDG13, and SDG16.

Tourism's potential to provide jobs can significantly reduce more poverty, and it can also vanish hunger since food will be available for everyone. Hence, it will accomplish SDG1 and SDG2.

Tourism has potential to provide decent jobs and make peoples life comfortable, which will help achieving SDG8. It can maintain equity by offering jobs with equitable compensation and play a role in accomplishing SDG10. It can management and control the overconsumption by spreading awareness about responsible tourism and attain SDG12. Tourism has a great potential to restore peace and harmony by interaction of people from diversified cultures, religions, and traditions, which will achieve SDG16.

SDG4, SDG6, SDG11, and SDG13 have reciprocal relationship with tourism. Tourism can work for quality education, and if quality of education is improved, there will be availability of qualified and skilled employees for tourism industry. On the other hand quality education will also improve tourists' attitude towards tourism. SDG 6 is essential to achieve for tourism as water and sanitation are acute problems in tourism, if tourists adopt responsible behaviour in usage of water and sanitation it will ultimately benefit tourism itself. Tourism can contribute in maintaining Sustainable cities and communities and such cities and communities will facilitate tourism. Responsible and sustainable tourism can combat climate change, and limiting climate change significantly benefits tourism.

5. CONCLUSION

Tourism's contribution to SDGs is undeniable, and this study has identified its relationship with SDGs from various aspects. Tourism plays a vital role in reduction of poverty and maintaining global peace and harmony. At some extend tourism contributes to maintain health, wellbeing, and gender and income equalities. It has a potential to contribute quality education, clean water and sanitation, providing decent work, maintaining sustainable cities, adopting responsible consumption, and combating against climate change. However, it is found to have slight negative effects on health, wellbeing and gender equality. Whereas, tourism's obvious negative effects were found on decent work, sustainable cities, life below water, and life on land.

For mitigating the negative effects of tourism and utilizing its full potential to contribute to attain SDGs, it is imperative to transition from traditional tourism to sustainable and responsible tourism. Public awareness about sustainable tourism will serve a key to success, an empirical study for determining the public awareness will help in preventive measures, corrective actions, and policies formulation.

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