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## A Coordinated Strategy to Encourage Eco-Friendly Travel in the Marwar Area of Rajasthan

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### Abstract

Tourism is the most attractive and important human activity that motivates people to go from one location to another. Sustainable tourism development meets the needs of present tourists and host regions while protecting and enhancing opportunities for the future. It is envisaged as leading to management of all resources in such a way that economic, social and aesthetics needs can be fulfilled while maintaining cultural integrity, essential ecological processes, biological diversity, and life support system. The Marwar region comprises five districts as Jodhpur, Barmer, Jalore, Sirohi and Pali. The paper aims to express the strategies for sustainable development of tourism in Marwar region of Rajasthan. Secondary data collection method was used to make the research more vibrant and accurate. Tourism industry have a crucial role in creating jobs in the studied region as well as contributing to the state's GDP and the national economy. In addition to the sustainability components of the investigate issues, the theoretical underpinning of the research and the socio economic and environmental ramifications of the tourism sector have been discussed.

**Keywords:** Tourism, Sustainable Development, Marwar Region, Tourism industry.

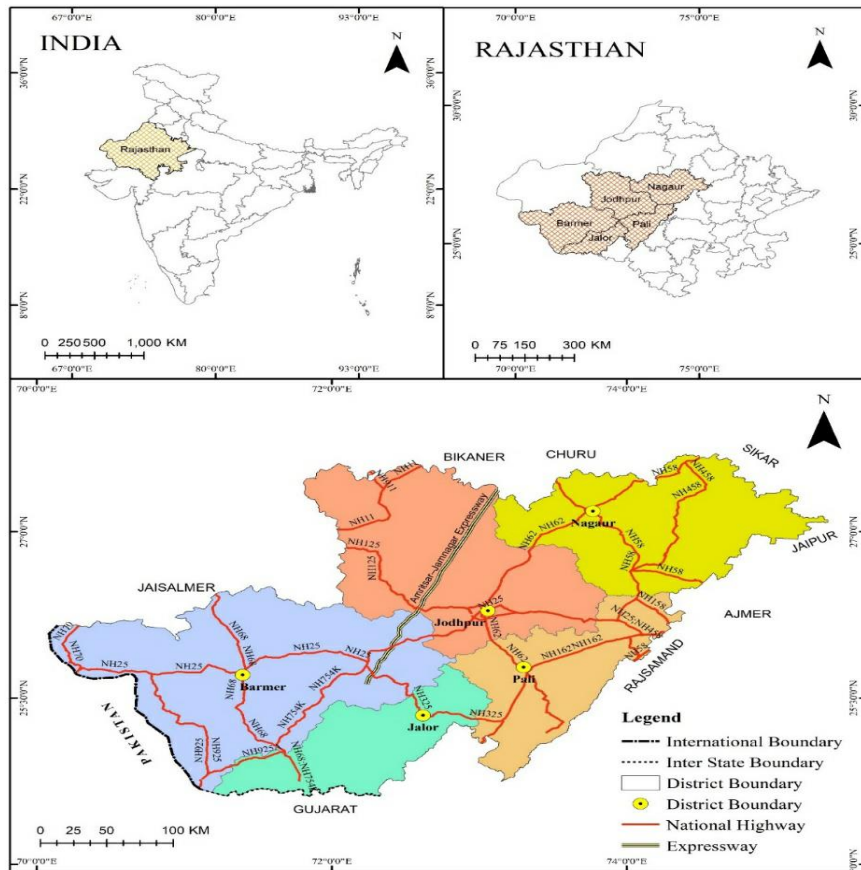
### Introduction:

Tourism is the most attractive and important human activity that motivates people to go from one location to another. It has been identified as the fastest-growing commercial activity that entails enticing people to a certain location and then providing them with transportation, accommodation, food, entertainment, and other amenities upon their arrival. As a result, it is an amalgamation of numerous interconnected industries.

Tourism has been defined by the United Nations as “*The activities of persons traveling to and staying in places outside their usual environment for less than one consecutive year for business, leisure, and various other activities.*” (Pearce, 2005; Shaw and Williams, 1994) Tourism is mostly understood based on the purpose of visit in many forms. General forms of tourism are Social Tourism, Cultural tourism, Religious & family tourism, nature-based tourism, medical tourism, Sports tourism, business (MICE) tourism, and other alternate forms of tourism like eco-tourism and Argo-rural tourism.

## Study Area:

Marwar (also known as the Jodhpur region) is a region in the north-western Indian state of Rajasthan. It is partially located in the Thar Desert. In Rajasthani, "wad" refers to a certain location. Marwar is derived from the Sanskrit word 'Maruwat.' The English translation of the name is "desert region." Its geographical location lies between 24°48' to 27°40' North latitude and 70°05' to 75°15' East longitude, with the cancer tropic running across the state's southernmost tip. The current regions of Barmer, Jalore, Jodhpur, Nagaur, and Pali are part of the region. The Jangladesh region borders it on the north, Dhundhar on the northeast, Ajmer on the east, Mewar on the southeast, Sindh on the southwest, and Jaisalmer on the west. The area of the region is 91,982 km<sup>2</sup>.



## Objectives:

The fundamental goal of the work is to elucidate & discuss the present condition of regional (Marwar) growth of tourism. In addition to this, the prospects and potential of the subject matter are in context to the sustainable economic development of the desert state. The objectives of this research pursuit are:

- 1) To describe the tourist sites in Marwar region of Rajasthan
- 2) To discuss the strategies for sustainable tourism development in study area.

## Research Methodology:

Secondary data collection methods were used to make the research more vibrant and accurate. Data is collected from Rajasthan Tourism Department, Jaipur. Annual Progress reports of Tourism Department, Rajasthan have been used in the research.

## Literature Review:

Research in any field demands planning in addition to the reviews of work done so far. The available literature about the research has been helpful for the execution of the chronological and thematic approach.

Hunziker & Kraph (1941) defined tourism in a more precise manner. as "the sum of the phenomena and relationships arise from the travel and stay to non-residents, insofar as they do not lead to permanent residence and are not connected with any earning activity". It is interesting to note that the term "tourism" did not occur in the English language until the nineteenth century, and it was more closely related with the concept of a voyage or a circuit.

R.M. Brown, (1953) stated the concept of a human temporarily leaving for pleasure purposes became a prominent component of the use of the word's "tourist" and "tourism."

In the year 1976, The Tourism society in England defined tourism and stated that "Tourism is the temporary short-term movement of people to destinations outside the places where they normally live and work and their activity during the stay at each destination. It includes movement for all purposes, as well as day visits and excursions".

Mathieson and Wall, (1982). While broadening the definition of tourism beyond the usual idea of a vacation, the World Tourism Organization (WTO) described tourism as "Tourism comprises the activities of persons traveling to and staying in places outside their usual environment for not more than one consecutive year for leisure, business, and other purposes."

Duimal (1996) states the incorporation of laws of sustainable development in the development of tourism. The popularity of the sustainable concept of development has been linked to emergent industrial activities. Though the concept of sustainable tourism used to exist even before the term sustainable development was coined and acknowledged.

The UNWTO (2006) published the book *Sustainable Development of Tourism in Deserts: A Guide to Decision Makers*. "It provides a vision of sustainable tourism that is specific to deserts, considering their special characteristics, their fragility, and their wealth of natural, human, and cultural resources-tangible and intangible, archaeological and historical."

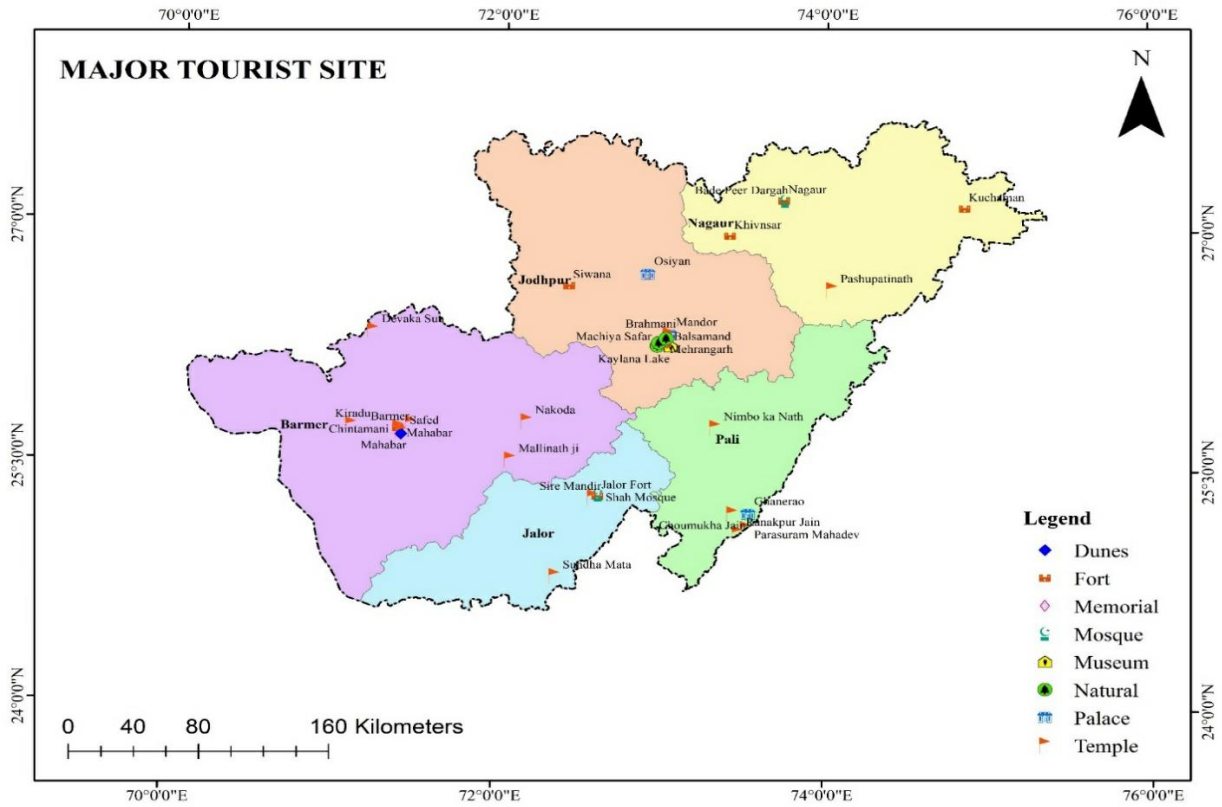
Becker (2013) considered the exaggeration of tourist spots in the form of over-tourism as a complicated and multi-layered ailment.' The solution for such a problem in the form of appropriate people-centric policies in the destinations was given by some tourism scholars.

Horner, S., & Swarbrooke, J. (2016). defined tourism as "the aggregate of operations, primarily of an economic nature, that directly relate to the arrival, stay, and movement of foreigners within and beyond a specific country, city, or region."

Cooper, C., & Hall, C. M. (2017)observed the numerous attributes of tourism and stated, "From people and organizations (tourist, hosts, and product distributors) to natural and manmade events and attractions, tourism engulfs infrastructure, transportation, and information."

Seema Choudhary, Dr.S. B. Yadav (2018) explained that the economy at its various stages is benefitted from tourist activities. He pointed "The reason behind the entire world experiencing the tourism as the driving force behind the development strategy is its contribution to the various level of the economy at local and global."

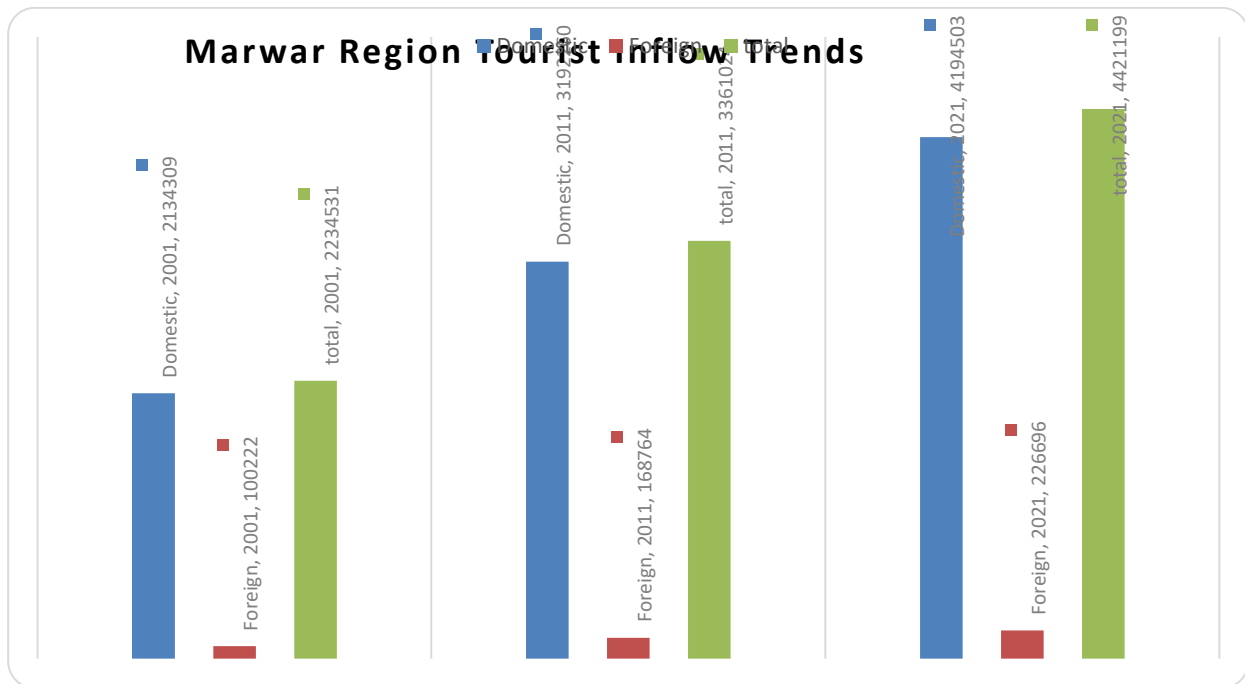
## Major tourist sites in Marwar region:



Region	Major tourist spot	Major events, Fairs & Festivals
Jodhpur	Mehrangarh fort, Mandore. Umaid Bhavan Palace, Osayan Jain Temple, Jaswant Thada and Brahmanical temple, kailana lake, Machiya safari park, Balsamand lake	Marwar festival, Pabuji Fair, Chamunda Fair, Khejdali and Nag Panchami fair
Barmer	Kiradu temples, Barmer fort & garh temple, Shri nakoda jain temple, Devka-sun temple, Vishnu temple Rani bhatiyani temple, Chintamani parasnath jain temple, Mahabar dunes, Safed akhara, Ranchhod temple, Mallinath and Someshwar temple, Siwana Fort	Thar Festival, Baloon Festival, Suriya and Haldeshwar fair, Mallinath fair
Nagaur	Nagaur fort, Ladnu, Khimsar fort, Kuchaman city Khatu, Kuchaman fort, Ahhichatragarh, Nagaur Fort, and museum Pashupati Nath temple, Jorda, Bade peer saheb dargah	Nagaur fair, Charbhujia fair, Teja ji fair
Pali	Ghanerao Palace, Choumukha Jain temple, Parashurama Mahadev temple, Sun Temple, Ranakpur Jain Temple, Ranakpur Dam, Om Banna Dham, Samand Lake, Nimbo ka Nath temple	Nimboo Ka Nath Temple Fair, Parshuram Mahadev Fair
Jalore	Mansingh Palace, Sudha Mata temple, Jalore fort, Topekhan malik, Shah's Mosque,	Baba Raghunath pashu Mela

**Table 1.1 Major Tourist Sites in the Marwar Region**

## Marwar Region Tourist Inflow Trends :



Source : Department of Tourism, Jaipur, Rajasthan

### Definition of Sustainable Tourism:

The concept of sustainable tourism as defined by the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) focuses on creating a balance between the economic, social and environmental dimensions of tourism. "The idea of sustainable tourism that takes full account of its present and future economic, social and environmental impacts, addresses the needs of visitors, industry, the environment and host communities". To put it another way, it targets responsible travel habits that look at the long-term development of all parties concerned. The goal of sustainable tourism is to ensure that travel has a positive impact on the environment, protects natural resources and helps local communities.

The primary obligations of sustainable tourism encompass:

- Safeguarding the environment, natural resources, and wildlife.
- Offering socio-economic advantages to the communities residing in tourist destinations.
- Preserving cultural heritage and crafting genuine tourist encounters.
- Facilitating the collaboration between tourists and local communities for mutual gain.
- Establishing all-encompassing and easily accessible tourist prospects.

Ecotourism and Sustainable Tourism both are slightly different in their nature. Sustainable tourism aims to provide travel experiences that have a positive impact on destinations and local communities while minimizing negative effects. On the other hand, ecotourism places a stronger emphasis on educating visitors about nature and the environment, as well as encouraging participation in conservation and cultural activities.

## Strategies for Sustainable Tourism Development in Marwar Region:

**1. Community-based Tourism:** A 2023 study by Rajasthan Tourism Development Corporation (RTDC) revealed that more than 60% of tourists in Marwar prefer homestays that offer cultural experiences. This suggests the need to empower local communities by involving them in tourism operations such as homestays, guided tours and handicraft sales. This spreads economic benefits and promotes cultural preservation. To implement this idea, in February 2024, RTDC launched a "Marwar Home Page Experience" program to train and certify local communities in hospitality management. Which is a good initiative but a lot still remains to be done.

**2. Eco-sensitive Accommodation:** Looking at the Marwar region, there is a need for a more environmental approach. Recently, the Tourism Ministry's 2022 survey found that eco-tourism inquiries for Rajasthan have increased by 35% in the last year. So it is natural to feel pressure. Therefore, eco-lodges and camps built from local materials and following water conservation practices have to be promoted. This reduces environmental impact and provides a more immersive experience. Some initiatives have also been taken in this context such as in December 2023, "Desert Sands Eco-Lodge" near Jodhpur was opened using local materials and with rain water harvesting facility.

**3. Responsible Wildlife Tourism:** Responsible tourism is the moral responsibility of everyone. The Desert National Park recorded an increase in illegal off-roading incidents in 2023, causing damage to the delicate desert ecosystem. However in January 2024, park authorities issued strict guidelines for jeep safaris, including mandatory eco-sensitive driver training. But it has become increasingly important to focus on responsible wildlife safaris in protected areas like Desert National Parks. We all need to ensure that jeeps are well maintained to reduce noise and avoid disturbing wildlife habitats.

**4. Water Conservation:** The annual rainfall in Marwar is less than 20 cm, making water scarcity a major concern. Encourage water-saving measures in hotels and resorts. Promote rainwater harvesting and educate tourists about responsible water use in the arid region. Rajasthan government is paying attention to this. Most recently, the city of Jodhpur implemented a rainwater harvesting mandate for all new hotels in March 2024.

**5. Waste Management:** The Pollution Control Board's 2023 report highlights plastic waste pollution as a growing threat to the natural beauty of Marwar. This can become a big danger. Therefore implement effective waste management system which includes waste separation, composting and recycling. It reduces landfill waste and promotes a cleaner environment. There have been some initiatives such as several hotels in Jodhpur partnering with NGOs in February 2024 to start waste separation and recycling programs for plastic waste.

**6. Sustainable Transportation:** Clean air leads to a better ecosystem, hence it becomes necessary to control air pollution. A recent study by IIT Jodhpur found that tourist vehicles contribute significantly to air pollution in the region. Advocating electric or CNG powered vehicles for tourist transportation. Encourage cycling and walking in appropriate areas to reduce carbon footprint. Some positive initiatives have been taken by the government like the state government announced plans to start a pilot electric bus service for Jodhpur city in April 2024.

**7. Responsible Festivals:** Irresponsible tourism harms hygiene. Plastic is a big danger in this. The annual Marwar (Marwar Festival) is known to generate tonnes of plastic waste from food stalls and decorations. Promote traditional Marwari festivals with focus on sustainability. Reduce the use of single-use plastics and encourage the use of local, organic products for food stalls. To create awareness, organizers of the 2024 Marwar partnered with environmental NGOs to promote reusable cutlery and organic food options at the festival.

**8. Heritage Conservation:** Mehrangarh Fort in Jodhpur partnered with the Mehrangarh Museum Trust in March 2024 to launch an "Adopt a Haveli" program where tourists can contribute to the restoration of specific historical structures. But many historical sites in Marwar still lack proper maintenance due to limited resources. Partner with local communities for heritage site conservation. Tourists can contribute through responsible visitation and supporting restoration projects.

**9. Volunteer Tourism:** There is a growing interest among tourists, especially young travelers, in giving back to the places they visit. Participation among the tourists themselves will have to be increased. For this, "Thar Rural Development Programme" launched volunteer opportunities in March 2024 for tourists to participate in tree plantation drives in desert villages. Providing volunteer opportunities for tourists to participate in conservation efforts, tree planting campaigns or village development projects is a good idea.

**10. Skilling & Education:** Jodhpur Chamber of Commerce announced a skills initiative in February 2024 to train local youth in hospitality management and traditional Marwari craft making. But this was a small initiative as the unemployment rate in Marwar, especially among the youth, is a challenge. This can be tackled through tourism. Hence provide skill development programs for local youth in hospitality, guidance and traditional craft making. It empowers communities and creates sustainable livelihoods.

## **Conclusion:**

Several strategies are needed to sustainably increase tourism in Marwar. Through responsible practices, community involvement, historical preservation, environmental protection and the implementation of ecotourism programs, Marwar can effectively accommodate tourists while maintaining its unique identity and guaranteeing sustainable benefits for all parties involved. This holistic strategy will open the door to a thriving tourism sector that blends well with the natural environment and cultural heritage of the region.

## **Further Considerations:**

- This paper offers a basic structure. Additional investigation may go more deeply into particular areas, such as environmentally friendly waste management techniques or Marwar-specific marketing plans for ethical travel.
- Successful implementation of these policies requires cooperation between government agencies, local communities, tourism stakeholders, and non-governmental organizations.



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