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A Sustainable Model of Social Bonding for Development of Tourism Destinations

Prospecting a Case for the Indian Himalayan Region

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ABSTRACT

Purpose: The purpose was about positing a new form of social bonding of tourists with destinations backed by social psychology theories and innovatively contributing to sustainable development. **Methodology:** An existing and massively successful work guarantee scheme in India was used as a reference for a simulated modeling system development for empowering the demanding people in destinations with the learning of English, Science, Technology, Entrepreneurship, Entertainment, and Management (ESTEEM) from tourists or visitors. Its qualitative design was based on a mix of ethnography, phenomenology, and several studies in the context of the tourism-attractive Indian Himalayan region, as case. **Findings**: The Model was not in any conflict with the tourism business. Instead, it offered rewards to tourists or visitors under ESTEEM sectors of work linked with the sustainable development goals. The findings at the pilot level considered 180 days of ESTEEM tourism with the absorption of ESTEEM services from 20 percent of total tourists in a select cluster of popular yet vulnerable destinations in the Indian Himalayan Region. Then, by multi-objective optimization of maximum stay days, maximum rewards, and minimum cost, involving 2 work sectors of Health and Education, the per capita cost of USD 3.5 was estimated for about 8 million beneficiaries. **Implications:** Finally, the Model was able to maintain its hypotheses around a unique form of social bonding for desired change and local development, that can be posited not only for the revival of tourism business, particularly after its damages caused by the Coronavirus pandemic and in general open new possibilities around strengthening societies. **Originality:** Thereby, instrumenting a novel approach for modeling sustainable development of destinations under the sustainable development goals 2030, leveraging on the human agencies under the massive tourism system.

Keywords: *Indian Himalayan Region, Tourism, Tourist, Social Psychology, Sustainable Development*

INTRODUCTION:

After the Corona virus pandemic (COVID) the business sectors of hospitality and tourism were affected, which was understood from tourism analysis of extant literature (Table 1). To restore and ensure the vitality of those sectors, the onus is primarily on humans, because, they have the quality to influence their functioning and positively affect the circumstances. The Social Learning Theory (SLT) postulated by Albert Bandura, which later popularly evolved as Social Cognitive Theory (SCT) clarified that a key to learning with self-efficacy required a social context formed with dynamic and reciprocal interactions of

the person, environment, and behavior (Nabavi, 2021). An examination of literature later revealed that social psychology theories were relevant in understanding tourist motivation and behaviors.

The key motivation of study, therefore, was providing a fillip to those sectors of businesses by using a theoretical construct for optimally employing the expertise of motivated tourists in the holistic development of destinations under the sustainable development goals (SDGs). That way, the investigation approached to mitigating the multiple vulnerabilities of destinations for sustaining the tourism activities for long. The research problem dealt on how the local people, in even rural and remote destinations, can acquire specific behaviors to learn English, Science, Technology, Entrepreneurship, Entertainment, and Management (ESTEEM) from tourists or visitors for improving their social, economic, and environmental conditions.

Table 1: **Recent Literature Analysis on Tourism Condition and Concerns**

Author(s)	Journal	Year	Region	Findings
Naciye Güliz Uğur, et.al.	Tourism Management Perspectives	2020	Asia and Europe	People, Travel, Virus, Day, Case, Time, Cancel, and Trip were the most frequently repeated words in frequency analysis post-COVID tourism literature.
Mohammad Reza Davahli,et.al.	International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health	2020	Global	Applied simulation & scenario modeling estimated that a longer COVID pandemic would have a more devastating effect on the hospitality industry and tourism demand.
Dogan Gursoy, et.al	Journal of Hospitality Marketing & Management	2020	Global	Customers' and employees' acceptance of various technologies in service delivery sectors were needed in the COVID endemic to minimize human-to-human contact.
Vikrant Kaushal, et.al	International Journal of Hospitality Management	2021	India	Concerns in Human Resource Management, Health and Hygiene, and Continuity increased due to epidemiological crisis and uncertainty in tourism and hospitality.
José Miguel,et.al	Sustainability	2020	Spain	Travel-related domestic restrictions and closed borders for foreign tourists had adversely affected the destination incomes and economicsustainability.
Sharma Gagan Deep, et.al	Tourism Management Perspectives	2021	Global	Sustainable tourism, climate action, societal wellbeing, and involvement of local communities required resilience from all sides of the value chain to transform the tourism industry into the new global economic order.
Asad A. Aburumman	Humanities and Social Science Communications	2020	UAE	Economic growth modeled under the long-term profitability of MICE served effectively to make the tourism and travel potentially stable irrespective of the influence of investments in post-COVID pandemic conditions.
Javier de Esteban Curiel, et.al	Journal of Tourismology	2015	Global	Clarified basic sociological notions related to the activities and epistemological understanding of theoretical frameworks, comparing different perspectives and definitions of tourism.
Tim Coles, et.al	Current Issues in Tourism	2006	Global	Epistemological space existed outside the disciplinary policing in tourism approaches based on greater flexibility, plurality, and synthesis.

Source: Final Compilation by Author

Need for ESTEEM:

The tourism models supported by United Nations World Tourism Organization [UNWTO] were like, responsible tourism, which was about how operators, hoteliers, governments, local people, and tourists undertake responsibilities to make destinations sustainable for living and visiting. The village tourism was about visitors experiencing, valuing, and safeguarding the various nature-based activities, agriculture, rural lifestyle, indigenous arts, and culture etcetera. In comparison, urban tourism was construed to be inherently non-agricultural, with products for leisure and business involving a heterogeneous mix of urban culture, architecture, technology, social and natural experiences supported by modern infrastructure. Besides, cultural tourism involved local communities and tourism system solidarity for preservation of indigenous culture and traditions. That aside, from Google search some other kinds of tourism were also found. For instance, education tourism, which primarily involved the flow of students and other learners across geographies for their educational purposes (Tourism Beast, n.d) and also another kind where tourists took to exotic destinations under work-from-anywhere perspective (Hardingham, 2020). Further, in limiting the adverse impacts of tourism on destination's wellbeing, sustainable tourism manifested in the forms of ecotourism, nature tourism, green tourism, ecotourism, social tourism, and rural tourism. Where a local destination was regarded as a physical space that carried various stakeholders, including a host community within physical and administrative boundaries, where a visitor would spend at least one overnight. In all the prevalent forms of tourism, it was observed that the local destinations were like products, branded, and promoted to make tourism more effective in improving the wellbeing of communities in various ways involving - assets, community, tourists, happiness, and local resources.

Whereas, with ESTEEM, the tourism would entail demanded shelves of works in destinations attracting various independent travellers creating own itineraries to render services against the stipulated ESTEEM work units. For that purpose, online or any user-friendly system mechanisms would be available for independent tourists (Westcott, 2015). Various other studies supported the socio-psychological aspects of tourist would be required for such activities. For instance, tourists can be the agents for preparing the destinations to conduct responsible, rural, urban, and sustainable tourism activities (McCabe et al., 2011). That way, any destination, rural or urban, can benefit from demanded ESTEEM services from motivated tourists or visitors with the required competencies and "in a systems approach to identify and define tourists, geographical components, and various interactions with broader environments" (Leiper, 1979, p.395). For the purpose of this investigation, ESTEEM tourism was understood as a bridge connecting the human agency of tourist with that of the destination's components involving its people and other resources for improving the local conditions for quality living and tourism activities. Moreover, those would be delivered at basic, intermediate and advanced levels adaptive to the sustainable development causes in destinations. For example, advance-level ESTEEM services would be required in vulnerable destinations that are of global concern.

Global Concern:

Countries have been since decades working with their Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and pro-poor tourism for inclusive growth on a massive scale. Yet, there were genuine concerns about sustaining tourism in popular destinations because of multiple vulnerability challenges. As a result of which the restrictions and prohibitions in erstwhile popular destinations were evident worldwide. There were many global concerns about tourism restrictions from the study of literature (Baker V, 2018; Editors CNT, 2018; Erickson A, 2020 & Romero K, 2015). Such concerns, by the understanding of social psychology theories in the context of tourist studies, would motivate certain types of tourists to intervene with advanced knowledge of ESTEEM. For instance, such ESTEEM tourists with higher levels of required expertise could take pride in improving the conditions in destinations that are afflicted with multiple vulnerabilities. Although there have been revival initiatives with ecotourism by international agencies like the World Wildlife Fund in places like the Galapagos Islands in Ecuador. Still, the expected global concerns remained about the continued fitness of destinations for bearing the tourism activities for long.

Environmental Sustainability:

Tourism, in 2018, had contributed US$8.8 trillion to the global economy, according to a World Travel and Tourism Council [WTTC]. It had generated 10.4 percent of all global economic activity, with one in ten of

all jobs (WTTC, 2019). The report reflected that the ultimate responsibility rested upon governments to comply with the triple principles of environmental, economic, and social sustainability laid by the Rio's Earth Summit of 1992. The former UN Secretary-General, Ban Ki-moon justly had reminded "there is no Plan B for action as there is no Planet B" (Ban K.M, 2014). Though, borrowing from several studies (Nordhaus, 1996; Stern 2009; Kates 2001), the reality was quite undesirable. It was clear that human activity was increasingly in conflict with nature. From the other literature (Kaya, 1997; Gorbachev, 2006; Toynbee, 1987) it was evident that the sustainable growth of tourism and local ownership of development would be significant in controlling the impact of population on climate.

The rationale, therefore, of ESTEEM Tourism was set to prepare the local communities with the knowledge, skills, and abilities to participate in various economic activities while nursing the environment. It was about how it could offer a fresh premise for the whole tourism system to empower local people in destinations to operate within their set environmental limits and confront the multiple vulnerability challenges for creating sustainable habitats. In this context, a strong need was felt for tourist-destination social bonding for continuous education and training for local problem-solving and decision-making.

Tourist-Destination Social Bonding:

Tourists can be the potential agents of change to impact the functioning of immediate circumstances and to regulate the experiences of living in the destinations (Chen, 2005). In the process, their moral engagements can positively affect behaviors and their moral disengagements the contrary (Jialin et.al, 2020). Furthermore, it was argued that tourists are influenced by their respective mental processes in form of memories, feelings, emotions, mindfulness, prospection, retrospection, and other experiential and external factors to reacting differently to stimuli. Usually those responses are based on intrinsic human quality of moral obligations to engage in positive behaviors. For instance, cognitive beliefs, intrinsic needs, and demographic factors influence pro-environment behaviors for entrepreneurship and enterprising activities (Skavronskaya et.al, 2017; Wang et.al, 2019). The theory of planned behavior and protection motivation theory particularly helped in understanding the motivation for medical tourism and various other decision-making (Seow et.al, 2021). In support to that some previous research studies (Xavier et.al, 2016; Ng & Ho, 2018; Tang et.al, 2015) insisted the importance of empathy as a key driver for social action, more so for sustainable tourism. The conclusion drawn was that the thoughts, experiences and behaviors varied from individual to individual with different travel motivations to augment the progress with social exchanges and, thereto, by experiencing satisfaction.

Hypotheses:

The null hypothesis (H0) of the study considered that humans have innate abilities and motivation to positively interrelate and influence their functioning for common good and for social bonding in improving the conditions for their future. It was established by the study of aforementioned social psychology theories in the context of tourist studies. To compliment, its alternate (H1) made a claim that tourists or visitors would be motivated to deliver ESTEEM services for the betterment of quality of life and living in destinations.

METHOD:

A set of three objective functions were accepted for ESTEEM Tourism to function involving simultaneous optimization, namely,

a) To maximize the ESTEEM Tourism stay days

b) To maximize motivation in the form of rewards on completed ESTEEM work units, and

c) To minimize the cost of ESTEEM Tourism per beneficiary in destination.

The objectives were managed in two phases. The first phase involved a descriptive study of the problem by focusing on one geographical area of inter-governmental concern, which was the Indian Himalayan Region (IHR). The IHR was of national and international concern in terms of its multiple vulnerabilities to carry tourism activities for long. The second phase was about instrumenting an ESTEEM Tourism Model in IHR based on a successful reference model with similar objective functions.

The IHR Problem Case:

The IHR, with its popular destinations and multiple vulnerabilities was found to be a suitable case for this investigation. Therefore, a comprehensive study of IHR was done based on a mix of ethnography,

phenomenology, and case studies (Karan, 1987; Maohua, 2012; Singh, 2006; Singh & Kortu, 2018; O'Neill, 2020). In summary, it covered about 500,000 square kilometers from the Indus River in the west to the Brahmaputra River in the east. It was home to roughly 600 million people, majorly tribal communities, different religions, and local vernacular languages. The average male literacy rate was found to be 76.3 percent compared to 60.3 percent to average female literacy, with an average sex ratio of 935 females per thousand males and the average population density was 143 per square kilometer. IHR had to overcome its multiple vulnerabilities and find ways to cater to the growing demand for food production and income generation without affecting its biodiversity. Unfortunately, the exploitation of natural resources was evident.

Despite that, tourism in IHR would increase to 240 million visitors in 2025 (Singh & Kortu, 2018). The problem, therefore, would be developing the destinations to meet the desired indicators under SDGs ensuring social, energy, and environmental security, sustainable production, consumption behaviors, and disaster preparedness.

Reference Model for ESTEEM:

The National Rural Employment Guarantee Act of India [NREGA] was identified as the reference model for ESTEEM Tourism. There were three favorable reasons.

Firstly, NREGA was for employment generation and asset creation that guaranteed 100 days of employment in a financial year to any rural household whose adult members were willing to do unskilled manual work (NREGA, 2005). Secondly, the unit of the local governance system for NREGA facilitated micro-level planning based on the considerations of local skills and resources, developmental requirements, social problems, and the local state of affairs to uplift the conditions in poor and backward areas. The wages got directly transferred to the bank account of beneficiaries. Thirdly, and most importantly, NREGA objectives were to generate productive assets under stipulated work sectors, protect the environment and empower rural women, vulnerability migration, and fostering social security, which were relatable to ESTEEM Tourism Model, with an exception that NREGA, by law, was for absorption of low-level skills only.

Work Guarantee Scheme for ESTEEM Tourism:

Similar to NREGA work guarantee scheme, an ESTEEM Tourism Guarantee Scheme (ETGS) with 10 sectors of work were tabulated (Table 2) based on the felt needs in the pilot area of study from secondary sources in public domain. However, in actual practice the sectors of work would require the concerned local government system to validate and publicly notify those demands from time to time.

Table 2: Sectors of work proposed in ETGS under the SDGs for the study

Sector	ETGS Sector of Work	[a]Key ESTEEM Use Areas (Pilot Model Context)	[b]SDGs
[c]1	Low-Skills work (similar to NREGA)	English, Digital literacy	1-17
2	Health & Wellbeing	English, Digital Literacy, Health Science, Alternative Healthcare, Healthcare Management, Digital Healthcare, Health Awareness using Creative Arts and other Entertainment forms	1-3
3	Education and Training	Education in all ESTEEM areas at the level of primary, secondary and tertiary and Training of Local Trainers/Teachers on ESTEEM	4, 10
4	Natural Resources Management	English, Digital Literacy, Resources Mapping, Participatory Rural Appraisal, Natural Heritage Management, Land use Planning, Water Management, Biodiversity Conservation	12-15
5	Housing & Construction	English, Digital Literacy, Heritage Management, Geography, Laws, Approvals, Financing, Green Materials Preparation, Sourcing, Construction Technologies and Systems, Mobile Apps for Assistance	6, 11

Sector	ETGS Sector of Work	[a]Key ESTEEM Use Areas (Pilot Model Context)	[b]SDGs
6	Legal Support	English, Digital Literacy, Legal Documents, Human Rights, Environment Laws, Legal Codes, Civics, Human Rights, Violations, Reporting, Justice.	5, 10, 6
7	Energy	Natural Systems, Energy Security, Power Systems, Appliances, Climate Change, Emission Control, Energy Choices, Energy Management, Waste Management, Sustainable Consumption	7
8	Enterprise support – Farm Businesses	English, Digital Literacy, Tree Farms, Organic Fertilizers, Dry Flower Business, Mushroom Farming, Medicinal Plants, Kitchen Garden, Poultry, Dairy, Tea, Green House, Beekeeping, Fruits, Vegetable & Other Cash Crops Farming and Distribution, Laws	8-9
9	Enterprise support – Non-Farm Businesses	Crafts and Other Products, Recycling and Reuse, Laws, Trade, Transport, Construction, Mining, Green Manufacturing, Retailing, Content Production, Distribution and Monetization	
10	Advocacy & Partnerships	Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, Volunteering, Campaigns, Public Speaking, Litigation Management, Crisis and Conflict Management, Solidarity, Lobbying, Agreements, Collaboration	17

Source: Compilation by Author. *Note:* [a]Beneficiary mobilization, logistics, proper space and resources support by local authorities. [b]Sustainable Development Goals 2030 available at https://sdgs.un.org.
[c]NREGA Sectors: Water Conservation and Water Harvesting, Drought Proofing, Micro Irrigation Works, Irrigation facility to SC/ST beneficiaries, Renovation of Traditional Water Bodies, Land Development, Flood Control and Protection, Rural Connectivity.

Pilot Model:
The Model considered tourists choosing from the available shelf of work under its work sectors. After that, the completion of each work-units had to yield a reward value. The Model considered a work unit of 3-hour of ESTEEM services delivered by the tourist at adaptive levels, viz. primary, secondary, or tertiary. The lower limit of targeted work-unit absorption fixed was 1 work-unit per stay-day. The upper limit was 2 work units per stay-day.
The Model's system, when adopted beyond the pilot coverage has to dynamically update on work units' availability in destinations validated by designated authorities, ESTEEM profiling of tourists with work units, simultaneous optimizations, work units planning and allocations by local government system, requisitions, work-done, reward value, outputs, feedback, etcetera for near-real-time decision support using a networked computer system.

Pilot Implementation of Model:
The pilot implementation comprised seven community development blocks of Kangra district in IHR namely, Baijnath, Dera Gopipur, Dharamshala, Fatehpur, Indora, Kangra, and Nurpur, which were with popular destinations. Kangra carried similar socio-ecological attributes of IHR, amidst the scenic valleys of the lower Himalayas, sheltered by the Dhauladhar range in the state of Himachal Pradesh, geographically located in Latitude 31^0 21' to 32^0 59' North and Longitude 75^0 47' to 77^0 45' East. The studies about Kangra were based upon several works of literature (Gayatri, 2018; Kangra, 2018 2018a 2018b; Planning Commission 2005). Kangra's destinations were very attractive to both domestic and foreign tourists. Its local government system governed a population of 1.5 million, 750591 males and 759484 females, in 338887 households. Out of which, 318379 were in rural and 20508 in urban, as per the census 2011 data of the government of India. From the Kangra district public websites it was found that the total tourists' arrival was 2509813 in 2015, where 2396970 were domestic tourists. Besides, its agro-climatic conditions favored agro-business, food processing, electronics, renewable energy, aside micro and small businesses comprising handloom, handicrafts, wooden work, bamboo work, and pottery. However, Kangra was with

its socio, economic, and environmental vulnerabilities, which befitted a case for the Model's pilot implementation.

Vulnerability Assessment of Kangra:

The investigation considered the SDG Index of Himachal Pradesh, according to the reports prepared by National Institution for Transforming India [NITI] (NITI, 2018) and its environment assessment Department of Environment, Science & Technology [DEST] of Government of Himachal Pradesh (DEST, 2011, pp.104-144) to obtain the Vulnerability Index (VI) of Kangra. It was found to be in the moderately high vulnerability category with a VI of 3.39. The VI indicated the exposure of the population's vulnerability on account of pressure on the natural environment. In a way, it served as a measure of the quality of life. The VI computation used NITI involved state variable sectors at the district level and pressure sectors at the sub-district level. The state variable sectors considered by NITI were- Water, Air, Land, Natural Critical Habitat, Climate Change, Hazard Susceptibility, Spatial Areas of Conflict, Quality of Life (Health), and Quality of Life (Education). At the same time, the pressure sectors considered were- Utilities and Infrastructure, Irrigation, Agriculture, Forestry, Fisheries, Tourism, Industry, Mining, Roads, Railways, Transportation, Hydel Power, and Demography.

The pilot Model's destinations were accordingly graded under two categories, namely- Safe and Unsafe (Table 3), where the VAP (Above Par) and VP (At Par) were considered safe for ESTEEM Tourism. At the same time, a considerable number of popular destinations were likely to be unsafe under FC (Federal Concern), NC (National Concern), and GC (Global Concern) categories and those were outside the scope of the pilot Model.

Table 3: Vulnerability-Mapping of Kangra at Sub-District Levels

SAFE			
BAND	Geographical unit area ([c]sub-district-wise) development status	[d]Vulnerability Index (VI)	Tehsils/ Community Development Blocks
VAP	ABOVE PAR Convergent and sustained actions on realization of Sustainable Development goals and sustainable habitat	Under 1.5	Multan, Thural, Baroh, [e]Baijnath, Khundian, Jaswant, Harchakian, Shahpur, Rakkar
VP	AT PAR Activities limited to less than 70 percent of total panchayats.	1.5 - 3.5	Jawali, [e]Fatehpur, [e]Nurpur, [e]Indora, [e]Dharamsala, [e]Kangra, Dhira, [e]Dera Gopipur, Palampur
UNSAFE			
FC	FEDERAL CONCERN Poor remedial actions on vulnerability mitigation in 70 percent of villages	3.51 - 4.5	[g]Not Applicable in the Pilot Model area
NC	NATIONAL CONCERN Government's prolonged inadequacies for remedial actions	4.51 - 5.5	
GC	GLOBAL CONCERN Recurrences of hazards/ disasters, Avoidable frequent losses of human lives and ecological resources, hazardous experiments, Non-adherence to sustainable development goals, Economic and Political Crisis, Civil unrests, etcetera.	5.51+	

Source: Final Compilation by Author. *Note:* [c] 9 sub-divisions/19 tehsils/15 blocks, [d]https://desthp.nic.in/publications/07_VI.pdf : page 135, community development blocks identified under the Model, [f] 3908 villages, [g] vulnerability in adjoining areas of Kangra not taken into account

Selection of ETGS Sectors for the Model:

For the pilot, the ETGS Sectors considered were Sector 2: Health & Wellbeing and Sector 3: Education & Training, with 10 work units under each of those (Table 4). The consideration was based on the dire needs evident from the 2011 census data of Kangra and the district human development report of Kangra (Planning Commission, UNDP et al. 2009, pp.53-70). To summarize, around 51 percent of villages were without PHCs within 3 kilometers. Only 51 percent had access to a community health center within 6 kilometers, and 63 percent of villages were devoid of hospital facilities within 10 kilometers. On the other extreme, 28 percent of villages lacked a primary school within a recommended walking distance of 2 kilometers. The ESTEEM services from domestic tourists were expected to benefit the inhabitants of 344 panchayats (cluster of villages) in the pilot location spread over 2570 square kilometers.

Table 4: Pilot Shelves of Work Units for the ESTEEM Sector 2 and Sector 3

Health Unit Code	ESTEEM Work	Education Unit Code	ESTEEM Work
HKT001	Anaemia Management of young girls and women	EKT001	Women self-help empowerment and adult literacy on choice-based ESTEEM areas
HKT002	Alternative Healthcare	EKT002	Teaching of English as link language to access the educational resources and communication
HKT003	Gastrointestinal management	EKT003	About mobile apps and digital aids that can solve lots of problems from home
HKT004	Diarrhea management	EKT004	ESTEEM modules – primary, secondary, and tertiary levels in English for offline and online
HKT005	Menstrual hygiene and health management of adolescent girls and young women.	EKT005	Legal education- human rights, access to justice, recourse to sexual and domestic violence, etc.
HKT006	Malnutrition management of children with dietary education to mothers	EKT006	Creative and Performing Arts
HKT007	Vision-care and Aids Support	EKT007	Entrepreneurship and Management under Circular Economy Principles
HKT008	First Aid and basic life support	EKT008	Counseling and Psychological Development
HKT009	General Health Check-up, Free Medicines	EKT009	Train the Local ESTEEM Trainers
HKT010	Vaccines & Immunization	EKT010	Lost cost gainful Do-it-yourself works and indigenous property protection

Source: Final Compilation by Author

Reward Computation and Model System Outline:

Based on the vulnerability bands matrix (Table 5), the rewards were considered as US$30 [YY band], US$35 [Y band], US$40 [YZ band], UD$45 [Z band] for various work unit locations in the Model. At the same time, the unsafe vulnerability bands – [FC, NC, and GC] were kept outside the rewards computation

because none of the pilot destinations of Kangra figured under those bands. The reward value was more for destinations with higher vulnerabilities and lower visitors.

Table 5: Reward Computation Matrix

Vulnerability Band	Reward value (**X > XY > YY> Y> YZ > Z**)		
	Tourism business district-wise (average of the last 3-year) in IHR vis-à-vis National Tourism business (average of the last 3-year) including domestic and foreign		
	Way below national average	**Within national average range**	**Higher than national average**
NC	X	XY	[h]YY
FC	XY	YY	Y
VP	YY	Y	YZ
VAP	Y	YZ	[i]Z
[j]GC	Not applicable in the investigation area		

Source: Final Compilation by Author. *Note:* [h]Highest reward value applicable in pilot model implementation in Kangra will be YY and [i] lowest will be Z as there were no tehsils in GC, NC and FC bands (see Tables 2-3), [j] Restricted for tourism till a change of band happen in future minimally to NC

FINDING:

The pilot Model considered 180 days of ESTEEM tourism in 7 destinations of Kangra involving two work sectors under ETGS to understand approximately the average cost of ESTEEM tourism per beneficiary. It involved a step-wise estimation [A] to [P] of optimized values, drawing from the afore stated secondary data about Kangra and reward computations based on the reward matrix.

Estimations:

[A] was the estimated annual domestic tourists in the financial year 2020-21 in Kangra district with 15-18 percent increase on its 2015 estimate of 2396970, taken = 2800000.
[B] was the yearly average of [A] in each of the 15 blocks of Kangra, computed as A/15, taken = 185000.
[C] was estimated over [B] in the pilot ESTEEM tourism period computed on 180 days or half-yearly, as [B/2], taken = 90000.
[D] was calculated based on total [C] in the Kangra's 7 community development blocks as [C]×7, taken = 600000.
[E] was conservatively considered as 20 percent of [D] validated as ESTEEM tourists: 0.2×[D] = 120000.
[F] was estimated based on total stay days with an average of 2.5 stay days of a tourist, as 2.5×[E], taken = 300000.
[G] was the estimated work-units delivered assuming 20 percent of [F] with an upper limit of 2 work units/ day, 0.2×[F]×2, taken = 120000.
[H] was the remaining 80 percent of [F] with the lowest limit of 1 work unit/day, 0.8×[F]×1 = 300000.
[I] was the estimated total of work-units absorbed during the pilot period, as [G]+[H], taken = 420000.
[J] was estimated based on the weighted average reward rate per work-unit in locations under safe vulnerability bands, minimum for YY and maximum for Z, with compromised reward value calculated as, (YY+2Y+3YZ+4Z) /10, taken = US$40.
[K] was approximately the total cost on rewards, [I]×[J], taken = US$16800000.
[L] was the estimated operating cost of accomplishing 1 work-unit/day = US$20.
[M] was the estimated operating cost of accomplishing 2 work-units/day = US$30.
[N] was the estimated total cost required for the model implementation in the pilot period that would also consider an additional 30 percent as miscellaneous costs including ETGS system development and local operations, taken = [{(L×0.8×F) + (M×0.2×F)} + K]×1.3, approximately = US$30000000.
[O] was the estimated beneficiaries (including repeat) as 20 beneficiaries, including new and repeat, per work-unit, 20×[I] = 8400000. Finally, the estimated cost of ESTEEM tourism per beneficiary
[P] was obtained as, [N/O], taken = US$3.5.

DISCUSSION:

The hypotheses H0 and H1 were maintained where ESTEEM Tourism was prospected to be a cost-effective for tourism development, desirably under a national policy instrument and an Information Technology support system (Figure 1).

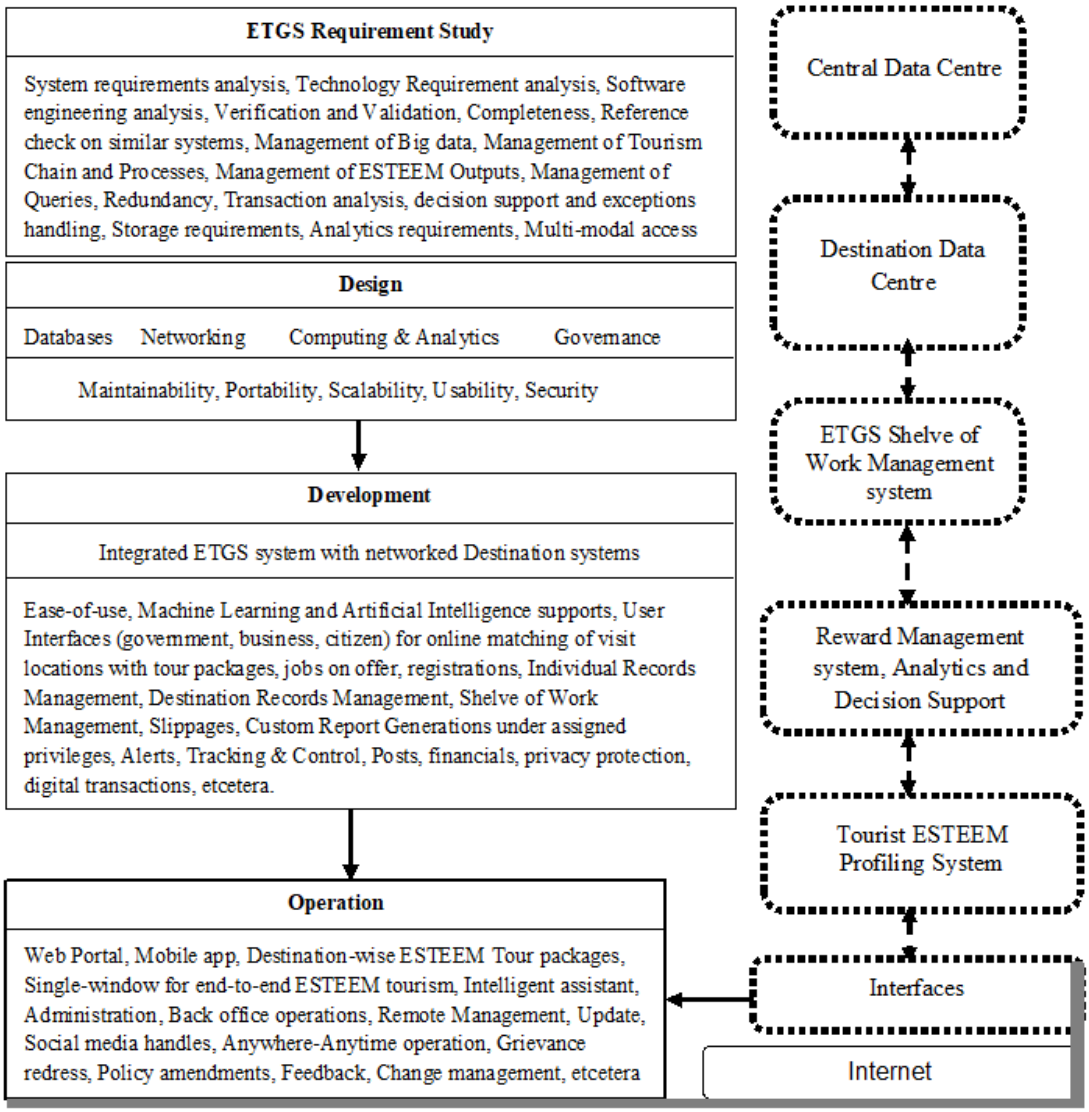

Figure 1: ESTEEM Tourism System Outline

Scope: Good Politics and Good Economics:

For ESTEEM Tourism to flourish, ETGS has to be promulgated as an Act and operated by Governments. Under the Act, Governments can consider graded tax waivers for tourists, the tourism industry, and various socially responsible donations under income tax waivers. Besides, it can help promote public-private partnerships supported under an inter-ministerial alliance to motivate the local governments, other development agencies, corporate, resource centers, and various other institutions to support the citizen actions with ESTEEM tourism.

In the post-COVID grim scenario with hospitality and tourism businesses, the local authorities could honestly compete with each other to attract ESTEEM tourists in their respective destinations against their demanded shelves of work. Besides, ESTEEM could be extended online, thereby, opening new virtual and augmented reality possibilities along with analytics for greater tourist-destination social bonding for positive change. Moreover, in democracies, politicians wield financial mobilization powers for local area development. However, from several media reports (Rawat, 2019; Roychoudhury, 2018; Ray, 2018) it was found that about US$160 million remained unspent as per 16th Lok Sabha MP development fund utilization reports, which could have been channelized for sustainable development schemes like ETGS at local levels.

LIMITATION:

The proposed reward model for tourists was a unique instance, apparently, because, there was no previous empirical studies to rest the Model case. Moreover, the Model only considered potential domestic tourists for ESTEEM tourism, leaving a big chunk of potential foreign tourists in the ESTEEM tourism model. The Model had assumed the average percentage of willing and able tourists, average stay days, average beneficiaries per work unit, etcetera as part of simultaneous optimization of the object functions, which was only a projection based on secondary data. Aside, limitations in terms of mobilization of beneficiaries, provision of space and other requisites, validated competencies of ESTEEM Tourists were not accounted for by the Model. Because for the actual implementation the Model required a kind of support system that was out of the scope of this investigation. Instead, it banked solely on the actual reference of a similar and successful model of NREGA to support its claim.

CONCLUSION:

This work is based on a critical examination of existing knowledge on emerging issues in the tourism industry along with socio-psychological aspects of human agency to make a case for strengthening tourists' bonding with destination and its local communities. To ascertain, a pilot simulation was modeled for a select cluster of popular destinations with multiple vulnerabilities in Kangra located in the Indian Himalayan Region. It was potentially estimated to benefit a vast population there against a meager per capita beneficiary cost. Such projections should epistemologically interest the discourse of advancing local development with tourists and visitors alongside the local people. Mainly, it would be in the interest of policymakers, planners, academicians, researchers, businesses, local governments, development agencies, and global tourism supply chains to realize tourist-destination bonding outcomes for vulnerability management of habitat components in social and sustainable ways.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS:

The corresponding author has made substantial contribution to the concept of ESTEEM for conceiving a novel design for social bonding backed by proven social psychology theories and analysis and interpretation of secondary data within ethical norms and responsibility for accuracy with descriptions while writing the paper. Besides, critically revising it for the sake of emanating important intellectual content for onward discussions and further empirical investigations in the wider interest of economy, especially post the COVID pandemic.

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