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ABOUT US

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A PERSPECTIVE ON ACCESSIBILITY OF TOURISM TO ALL

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ABSTRACT

Tourism is an important feature and aspect of life. Making tourism accessible to all, especially for persons with disabilities is very challenging. When accomplished, this shall lead to the development and well-being of the State and its citizens in general. Accessibility to all the tourism facilities, products, and services should be the main agenda of any responsible and sustainable tourism policy. The development prospects of the tourists segments play a very important role like reasonable priced tourism, trained and hospitable staff, information about availability of aids, equipment's etc.

The above factors are not difficult to deal or manage but commitment, sincere efforts and co-ordination with the persons dealing in this segment is a major role along with the financial commitment. Globally many countries are making efforts to make tourism an important aspect of life and especially for the disabled. Article 9 and Article 30 of the United Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (the "UNCRPD") is closely associated with international standard for accessible tourism and participation in cultural life, recreational, leisure and sports for every citizen especially to access by disabled. In India the ministry of tourism has taken the following steps to make tourism accessible friendly to the disabled -

1. Make tourist destination barrier free such as provision of wheel chairs, helicopters, ramps etc.
2. Accommodation facilities for people with different abilities to be provided.
3. Tactile pathways to assists people with vision impairment etc.

The motto of India's G20 Presidency, 'VasudhaivaKutumbakam' - 'One Earth, One Family, One Future' can itself be a motto for global tourism". In conclusion, the course of accessible tourism is very difficult and there are many challenges to negotiate with. Commitment, sincere efforts in the management is the essential elements for an excellent sector of tourism. There by providing specific leisure and recreational destinations for the tourists.

Introduction:

Tourism is an important feature and aspect of life. Making tourism accessible to all, especially for persons with disabilities is very challenging. When accomplished, this shall lead to the development and well-being of the State and its citizens in general.

Accessible tourism - is making available to everyone the facilities, to enjoy and experience tourism. Enable the disabled people to access the requirements like mobility, vision, hearing and cognitive dimensions so that they can independently enjoy the tour. Travel freely without any hassles, with dignity and equity by the access of universally designed products and services. Accessible tourism results in improved quality of tourism for the disabled. This is an ongoing process; they should provide accessible services to the people with physical or intellectual limitations, disabilities or age.

The term disability is very difficult to define precisely. The World Health Organization (the "WHO") in the year 2015 states that "disability is an umbrella term covering impairments, activity limitations, and participation restrictions. Impairment is a problem in body or structure, an activity limitation is a difficulty encountered by an individual in executing a task or, while a participation restriction is a problem experienced in involvement in life situations."¹

Economically, awareness of types of disability which are Physical mobility, Vision impairment, Hearing impairment and Intellectual disability, the diverse models describing it is the most significant aids in the segment of tourism. Based on this criterion, the products to be supplied, to be accessed by the disabled people and its availability in the tourism market are the aspects to be focused on. The tourism market is increasingly become competitive with respect to the disabled people. In the present scenario the term which was previously viewed as insignificant category is now is exemplified as an attractive category. The following is to be taken into consideration for persons with disabilities (the "PWD") mobility, vision, hearing etc. In this field there is a dynamic process of expansion and progression. This will continue with the increase of number of PWD's. Analyzed study is ought to be done and prepared for the type of supply in the tourism market accessible to the PWD's.

There are innovative developments in tourism with efficient technology for the visually and

¹<https://insight/content/doi/10.1108/jtf-04-20150015>

physically impaired individuals. The various aspects to be examined before entering deeply into this field are the financial and social aspect along with management of information that is available. It is necessary to understand the accessible destination experiences by tourism operators to satisfy the tourism market. Several countries have designed legislations to support the needs of disabled people.

International action and normative frameworks:

Legally, the attention to the disabilities issues started in late 1980's. This initiative was taken up by the United Nations (the "UN") in the year 1975. They made a resolution on the "Rights of Persons with Disabilities". The General Assembly of the UN by 1981 defined "1981 as the year of disabled persons". On 20th December, 1983 the General Assembly of UN adopted a resolution setting rules on the equal opportunities for persons with disabilities. These rules are directly related to tourism sector.

- 1) Create awareness – Countries must create awareness amongst the people of the society on the rights and needs of the disabled and in turn realize the contribution of the people with disabilities to the society. This can be achieved by campaigns and by advertisements in the media example television, cinema halls, distribution of information via pamphlets etc., and public training programs.
- 2) Accessibility - Countries shall introduce programs to provide them with healthy physical environment in accessible formats for people with disabilities.
- 3) Culture – Countries should also make sure that persons with disabilities are included in the society and be able to participate in different cultural activities at par with others.
- 4) Recreation and sports –Beaches, hotels, gyms, sports etc., be available to people with disabilities. Organizers should arrange services specifically for the people with disabilities. Trained people are mandatory for these services.

The United Nation Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (the "UNCRPD") held in New York was adopted on December 13, 2006. This was the first instrument where minimum standards for the right of persons with disabilities were set up. The European Union became a party to this convention. The rights and freedoms of people with disabilities were guaranteed. The application of human rights to the disabled is mentioned in this convention. The convention presented a new approach with respect to disability. Previously they were barriers of different nature which subdued their participation in the society on par with the others and its main aim was to overcome such barriers. The convention was based on the

priorities of the disabled like dignity, equality and non-discrimination. Participation and infusion in the society and acceptance of the disabled in the society is a part of human diversity. The convention was of great significance as it integrated the effective implementation of the principles of equality into the existing legislative framework. In November 2009 the Convention became a European Law. The European Union Council endorsed the document and obliged the State members to set up and recognize the objectives.

Article 9 of the United Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (the "UNCRPD") is closely associated with international standard for accessible tourism. It is to make available the services to all tourists irrespective of their impairment. In due course, all this will enhance the growth of business in tourism sector.

The objectives of Article 30 refers to participation in cultural life, recreational, leisure and sports for every citizen specially to access by persons with disabilities to cultural material. For any change to be brought needs a substantial amount of time and money. In the field of tourism for disabled persons a lot of modifications are being made which are in the infancy stage, still many improvements are yet to be done.

In UN, in the year 2013 a meeting on advanced development in regards to disability was held. Several heads of the States were invited. They discussed the link of disability and called a meeting for enhanced action to align disability with the regular mainstream society. This was a global development agenda. In the meeting accessibility was identified as a key and major sector to be accomplished.

The UN Secretary-General, Ban Ki-Moon in his message – ‘World Habitat Day – 2013’, asked the International community to make towns and cities accessible to all. In the Agenda for Global Action for Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs 2015), which will be held in 2030 shall focus on the principles to “Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable”.² This shall take over the tourism sector and recreation facilities by infusing the provisions of universal design for accessible and sustainable transport systems. This shall highlight urbanization and access to green and public spaces.

² <https://www.un.org/development/desa/disabilities/issues/promoting-accessible-tourism-for-all.html>

In 2011- Declaration, The United Nations World Tourism Organization (the "UNWTO") anticipated that the tourism shall increase and experience a sustainable development and predicting the increase in international tourists by about 1.8 billion by 2030³. It is necessary that accessible cities and tourism provisions be comfortable both socially and economically to all persons especially the disabled. The direct benefits of promoting more sustainable travel habits should be the main agenda of tourism.⁴

To establish a structured framework for sustainability of the hotels by way of Global Sustainable and Tourism Council (the "GSTC") certification; the GSTC and World Travel and Tourism Council (the "WTTC") announced a major partnership. They are collaborating to the market regarding the consistency and co-operation in the travel and tourism sector. Working in partnership with a prestigious and renowned organization like GSTC shall lead this industry towards a sustainable future. This is a positive approach that will make the tourism market to set up a target and inspire the tourists. Across the world the GSTC accreditation program shall elevate, initiate and also ensure that the tourism sector is going ahead towards a unified vision of sustainability. The WTTC hotel sustainability area is accessible to the tourism industry. The next stage in collaboration with the GSTC is scheduled to be launch in 2024. Randy Durband, CEO of GSTC, added, "WTTC Hotel Sustainability Basics" is a finely crafted entry level for hotels of any size and type to begin their journey to sustainable practices. GSTC's certification by GSTC-accredited certification bodies is recognized widely as the gold standard in certification of sustainable hotels, with the highest levels of assurance that exist.⁵

As per the census of the World Health Organization (WHO, 2023), "an estimated 1.3 billion people - about 16% of the global population - currently experience significant disability".⁶ Accessibility to all the tourism facilities, products, and services should be the main agenda of any responsible and sustainable tourism policy. Accessibility is about human rights. To enhance the revenues in tourism it is a way of giving an opportunity to companies and travel agents to embrace all visitors by way of comfortable tourist destinations.

This portal provides UNWTO resources targeting both public and private sectors to include accessibility into their policies and businesses strategies. All resources have been developed in

³ <https://www.unwto.org/archive/global/press-release/2011-10-11/international-tourists-hit-18-billion-2030>

⁴ <https://www.un.org/development/desa/disabilities/issues/promoting-accessible-tourism-for-all.html>

⁵ <https://wttc.org/news-article/wttc-partners-with-gstc-to-strengthen-global-hospitality-standards>

⁶ <https://www.unwto.org/accessibility>

collaboration with Organizations with Persons with Disabilities (the "DPOs"), and key civil society and tourism sector stakeholders. Most of publications guidelines and recommendations have been laid-out following the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (the "WCAG") 2.0 (level AA).⁷

UNWTO International Conference on Accessible Tourism - 16/17 November 2023.

This conference is specifically designed for the Government, destination tourism industry professionals, developers of IT software, for the disabled. The main intention of this conference is to discuss the pivotal role of the government in making its destination access friendly. In this conference they provided international guidelines with respect to tourism industry professionals and IT solutions. It also provided guidelines to embrace advanced innovative ideas in transportation, cultural heritage sites, leisure etc. and in the tourism business. "Accessibility guidelines in the Management of Natural Resources" was published by UNWTO and partners in October 2023. It focuses on access to protected areas, beach and parks that are within environmental area.

Cultural Tourism:

It plays a very important role in tourism accessibility. The prominent partners in drafting were the International Cultural Tourism Committee (the "ICOMOS") and the **European Network for Accessible Tourism (the "ENAT")** the inclusion of the different cultures of the different places will make tourism more pleasant and an enjoyable experience to the tourists. This factor will enhance the tourism and attract tourists.⁸

The UNWTO in July 2020 suggested to set up good and practical measures like services, products and destination so that all persons specially persons with disabilities and the senior citizens can be accommodated. This Reopening of tourism for travelers with Disabilities is the most welcomed feature. **This is in particular is undergoing a drastic reformation along with the ONCE Foundation of Spain and the European Network for Accessible Tourism (ENAT).** On 3rdDecember 2020 it was initiated and this day was declared as "The International Day of Persons with Disabilities". **UNWTO in partnership with the ONCE Foundation, UNE Spain and ENAT held a webinar on 9th December, 2021 on accessible tourism.**

⁷ <https://www.unwto.org/accessibility>

⁸ <https://www.icomosictc.org/>

All the tourism stakeholders were asked to implement their own accessibility agenda to benefit everyone.⁹

Indian Perspective:

In the present days there is a dramatic perceptible change. Accessibility is the key sector of tourism is a challenge in India as there is lack of national feeling and the prevalent feelings of regionality among the citizens. The common intricate problems that are seen in tourism are physical accessibility, sensory access and communication access. The infrastructure facilities at the tourist places should be well developed and transport facilities like land, air and sea should be well developed and comfortable for every individual and people with disabilities. The staff should be well trained to provide good quality service. This is a continuous process, efforts to be made for the changes from time to time with regard to the services, product and destination. In a way all these are available to all the people, irrespective of their physical and intellectual limitations, disabilities or age. Thus, enabling tourists to access the services of mobility, vision hearing etc. So they can manage independently with equity and dignity. This can be possible by use of universally designed tourism, its services and products. The modes of accessibility should be operable, comprehensible and perceivable. The most important feature of accessibility is, it should be designed to help people with disabilities and the technology used should be at ease. For example:-

- 1) Text to speech – This feature shall read the text loudly for people with limited vision.
- 2) Speech recognition feature- This is helpful for users with limited mobility.

Destination accessibility is done by providing ramps for wheel chairs, elevators, escalators etc., provide information well in advance so as to make them easy to travel. Provide good arrangements like hearing aids, audio induction loop systems for visitors who are unable to hear properly or who are deaf. If possible provide Braille indicators to visually impaired visitors. Free entry should be entertained to the people who are accompanying the disabled persons. On the website a visual tool should be made available so that they can have a view before the actual tour. Sensory guided tours be encouraged which focus on touch and sound for people with mobility issues. The seating arrangement is to be made available if there is along walking tour. Information should be printed, verbal, digital or audio described tools be introduced. Make sure that the visitors are made comfortable and welcoming. When these

⁹ <https://www.unwto.org/accessibility>

matters are taken care of it will persuade them to participate in activities and events thus boosting their confidence.

Many tourists with disabilities look for specific information about the accessible conditions that are important to them. Thus, the lack of such information is considered to be a great barrier. It is important that such information is specified in standard media. For many visitors they lack awareness about the personal service and the requirements of the guests. This is a frequently sighted problem. There are other equally important barriers like the accommodation, insufficient service of wheelchair, ramps etc., and lack of physical accessibility. The major problems of this segment of travelers are as follows:

- 1) Awareness of disability laws – The concerned people are not generally aware of the disability laws like the foreigners who are more aware.
- 2) Mobility equipment's - Most of the tourists carry some form of mobility equipment's like walking stick which is most common. A very small percentage of tourists who are wheel chair users do not have access to it and also the environment and the facilities are not conducive for its use.
- 3) Expenditure – As they require the support of mobility enablers, care givers, attenders they have to spend an extra amount to meet such expenses.
- 4) Attitude of people working in tourism establishments- The unfavorable attitude should be molded to a positive attitude towards disabled tourists and this is an area of concern. The main need is extra time and good understanding of the needs of persons with disabilities.
- 5) Problems during travel- This is not easy task, “easier said than done”. The most noticeable constraint is the non-availability of personal aids, equipment at stations, to find affordable and accessible accommodation etc. This is found both in domestic as well as foreign visitors segment.
- 6) Problems of stay- There is lack of necessary facilities in the room of tourists with reduced mobility. There is the requirement of understanding about their needs amongst staff; inappropriate location of rooms; and comparatively expensive room tariff of adaptable rooms which they cannot afford. This problem is with respect to both the foreign and the domestic tourists.
- 7) Other important factors - The toilets are not available at the places of visit and if available they are in an unhygienic condition, ramps are not available at the required places etc.

Prospects of tourism:

The development prospects of the tourists segments play a very important role and they are as follows:-

- 1) Reasonable priced tourism
- 2) Trained and hospitable staff
- 3) Information about availability of aids, equipment's etc.

The above factors are not difficult to deal or manage but commitment, sincere efforts and co-ordination with the persons dealing in this segment is a major role but the most difficult and limited element is the financial commitment.

Many government agencies and non-governmental agencies have already started to work in this field specially the web space has been made access friendly to provide information through Web Accessibility Initiative (the "WAI"). Features in line with World Wide Web Consortium (the "W3C") and as provided by Government of India is being encouraged. Information of tourism destination and product in India is being published in English as well as in major Indian languages. This field of tourism is evolving at a rapid pace major factors contributing are-

- 1) Rapid increase in income has led to vacations where access to information pertaining to transport, accommodation, attractive destinations etc., is to be provided. This fast growth in tourist number coincides with the country entertaining as a new development model.
- 2) Accessible tourism or inclusive tourism. This is the phase popularly used for tourists with reduced mobility. Disable tourists are faced with a variety of problems namely finance, mobility, family support etc.
- 3) Specially the vast monuments, historical sites which happen to be on hilly terrains

Indian tourism:

India offers a tourists destination which is a unique combination of rich heritage and diverse cultures. It has many world heritage sites which are famous for the impeccable exquisiteness, diversity and historical significance. Millions of people visit them every year but few are differently abled who cannot tour due to physical barriers such as staircases, multiple levels, slopes, etc. People with reduced mobility have a right to travel and experience it. Barriers in access discourage elderly and persons with different abilities from visiting a heritage or a

cultural site. The barriers are diverse in nature. The most common are the physical constraints, steps, uneven surfaces etc. It is difficult to identify the barriers to ensure that the heritage sites are accessible to all. Marketing booking systems websites and services are the different modes of making information accessible to all.

The ministry of tourism has taken the following steps to make tourism accessible friendly to the disabled -

- 1) Make tourist destination barrier free - Guidelines have been issued for making the tourists facilities to be created with central financial assistance, barrier free such as provision of wheel chairs, helicopters, ramps etc.
- 2) Award of excellence - The ministry has also instituted a new category of award of excellence for maximum barrier free movement. To encourage the tourist agencies in the country and other related tourist agencies for maintaining monuments/ tourists attractions in the country and for the promotion of accessible tourism.
- 3) Accommodation facilities - The conditions of making the hotels accessible for differently abled and for people with different abilities has been included in the guidelines for approval and classification of four and five star category hotels.
- 4) New infra projects “DELLI HAAT, DELHI METRO and BRT.
- 5) DTTDC started hop-in hop-off, low floor buses.
- 6) Ticket counters are also being made accessible.
- 7) Tactile pathways to assists people with vision impairment.
- 8) Accessible toilets are also being made.
- 9) Provision of Wi-Fi facilities

All this will enhance the experience and satisfaction of visitors.

Accessible environment:

Although improvements are needed in a number of sectors for achieving inclusion of persons with disabilities, there should be inclusive and affirmative policies, sensitive infrastructure planning such as sensory aids, hearing aids, augmentative communication devices, etc are to be provided as per universal designed standards with effective implementation and enforcement. Accessible environment is an essential element which should be “comfortable to all and shall not be problematic to anyone”.

According to UNWTO approximately a billion people on earth have some kind of disability

today. That is equivalent to 15% of the total population.¹⁰ The number is growing fast because we are living longer and we are travelling more than we used to do in older age.

The world's population of elderly persons is augmenting. The need to handle problems that come along with this issue is important. The tourism market will be benefited only when a wide range of clientele is attracted.

All fields of the touristic industry should be aware of accessible tourism. There are a few tourist branches that are in a particular need to make their offer accessible

1. Transport industry (aeroplane, trains, buses, ships etc.)
2. Accommodation industry (hotels, lodges, etc.)
3. Activity providers (ski station for example)
4. Tour operators and travel agents should know how to handle the tourists.

There are private retailers and also a public service provider to take care of tourism related services to the public on behalf of suppliers such as airlines, car rentals, cruise lines, hotels and many more.

The tourism sector is centered in preserving the rich cultural heritage of India by creating a "state-of-the-art" world class infrastructure in tourism. India attracts pilgrims of all major religions of the world. Presently spiritual tourism is one of the focused areas. The upgrading of the infrastructure in the city of Varanasi which is one of the major spiritual centers, the construction of the temple of Ayodhya in Uttar Pradesh has led to the attraction of many pilgrims from India and across the world.

The construction of the Statue of Unity, the tallest statue in the world has also increased many tourists. India is recognizing the importance of tourism for the speedy achievement of Sustainable Development Goals.

The Prime Minister stated in the G20 Summit, Goa "Terrorism divides but Tourism unites", it unites people from all domains and thus creates a harmonious society. The motto of India's G20 Presidency, 'VasudhaivaKutumbakam' - 'One Earth, One Family, One Future' can itself

¹⁰ <https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/disability-and-health#:~:text=Key%20facts,earlier%20than%20those%20without%20disabilities.>

be a motto for global tourism”¹¹. Regular meetings of Tourism Working Group are organized. These are instrumental in promoting instrumental and diverse tourism where various themes like Rural Tourism, Archaeological Tourism, Adventure Tourism, Film Tourism, Eco Tourism and Cruise Tourism are explored. In the G20 Working Group welcomed the theme “Travel for Life”. This was incorporated in the GOA Roadmap based on Prime Minister’s visionary initiative 'Mission Life. It emphasized the individuals to actively participate to protect the environment against the effects of climate change. Travel for Life endeavors the visitors and the tourism businesses to adapt sustainable practice and contribute to the preservation of our natural and cultural heritage.

The ‘Goa Roadmap for Tourism is a key component for achieving the ‘Sustainable Development Goals (SDG)’ and endorses the main role of the 5 important areas i.e Green Tourism, Digitalization, Skills, Tourism MSMEs, and Destination Management are identified under India’s G20 Presidency for development, modernization, and collaboration in the tourism industry.”

G20 Tourism and SDG, set an online platform to showcase best practices for achieving progress towards SDGs. This helps the stakeholders to learn from the practices and replicate them. Tourism is a major source of employment along with social and economic benefits such as -Trade, investment, infrastructure development etc.

Tourism employs more women and youth than most other sectors. It provides livelihood opportunities to disadvantaged and vulnerable communities.

In future tourism shall be a profitable investment for the private and public sectors. There is a need to encourage and explore new areas and craft new strategies to move ahead. The private sector plays a critical role in the 5 priority areas of green tourism, digitalization, skills, MSMEs, and destinations. The private sector will lead the growth in tourism and the public sector will become an enabler and facilitator.

A sound public and private partnership shall help in ensuring sustainability and inclusion for investment decisions and future growth”.¹²

¹¹ <https://mines.gov.in/admin/storage/app/uploads/64d0d3fac113b1691407354.pdf>

¹² <https://www.g20.org/en/media-resources/press-releases/june-2023/tourism-go/>

Developments in India:

1. **India to have a first Wax Museum and Ferris Wheel in Kolkata** - Kolkata is the first Indian city to have a wax museum like Madame Tussauds in London. This museum has been named after Mother Teresa and is located in the city's IT hub. This museum exhibits statues of eminent personalities and leaders, celebrities and freedom fighters of India. **Like the London Eye on the Thames Kolkata is also about to get a Ferris Wheel on the Ganges.**
2. **Easier Ways of pilgrimage in India-** Pilgrimage travel and tourism is easily accessible and comfortable to persons of all ages especially persons with disabilities and aged. To name a few are **the newly laid Katra-Udhampur railway track which has made pilgrimage to the hilltop Vaishno Devi shrine in Jammu & Kashmir easier than before, Char Dham Yatra from Haridwar - Gangotri - Kedarnath – Badrinath pilgrimage by helicopter.**
3. **E-Tourist Visa** - The e-tourist visa to India is available to **tourists from 75 countries across the world** for the nationals of the United States, Canada, the United Kingdom, and China. This has taken Indian tourism to a great height. Recently, seven tier-II Indian airports including Jaipur, Amritsar, Gaya, Lucknow, Trichy, and Varanasi have been added to the e-tourist visa on arrival scheme and this to a great extent has led to the increase of tourists.
4. **Domestic air connectivity - In the aviation sector too there has been tremendous development.** In 2014, the Airport Authority of India has announced a plan to develop 200 low-cost, energy-efficient airports in tier II and tier III cities across the country over the next 20 years. Recently, the aviation gave has approved a project for developing five **regional airports** including two in Karnataka, one in Rajasthan, one in Arunachal Pradesh and one in Odisha to control the tourism potential of remote regions by extending the domestic air connectivity.
5. **Wi-Fi and online ticketing for heritage monuments- This facility is available for places like Taj Mahal, the Agra Fort, the Qutub Minar Khajuraho Temple Complex and Varanasi etc.**
6. **Indian railway stations under Wi-Fi coverage** - Bangalore Railway Station is the **first to have Wi-Fi connection in India including New Delhi Railway Station.**¹³ Presently almost all the Railway Stations in India have **Wi-Fi coverage.**

¹³ <https://www.indianeagle.com/travelbeats/tourism-developments-in-india/>

Conclusion:

Tourism plays a pivotal role in the developing countries. It is the largest and fast growing industry thus leading to the growth in the economy of the country. In the present scenario tourism has become very popular. The change in lifestyle of the people, the increase in their income with their spending capacity and their approach towards change from the routine life is enabling people to travel thereby leading to an increase in the tourism sector. With these developments the tourists sectors is making efforts to make it a comfortable, pleasant and a memorable travel. The attitude of the people has changed. Previously tourism was at a very nascent stage and was a neglected sector. Inclusive tourism is not a new concept but was persistent. This concept was ignored and it never held a prominent position. There is a great inflow of disabled tourists and there is fast increase.

Now a day's many people want to see and appreciate the natural and rich cultural heritage of the country. Hence there is a dramatic change in the tourism industry and more efforts are being made to improve it. It is necessary that infrastructure facilities are to be maintained along with the development in the tourists sector. The tourism services provided to the disabled is being much focused. It is observed that there will be a drastic change when the services to the neglected persons are provided.

Many conventions, meetings and conferences are being held to ensure that all the countries around the world make tourism accessible and friendly. India has the potential to become one the major tourists centers in the world with its rich culture and heritage and historical landmarks by providing services, is attracting the tourists from all over the world. To keep abreast with the international standards for tourism India is making major reforms to attract tourists especially to persons with disabilities.

Promoting accessible tourism is an appropriate decision to attract the disabled people to travel more. The destinations should be inclusive and accessible to attract a large number of tourists. Presently, this is being done thus, improving the overall experience of the tourists.

Efforts are being made by the Government and other corporations to make plans for access friendly features at the destination. They have to ensure that the tourist destinations where accessible facilities are provided should be identified and promoted. Further accessible facilities should be strengthened. Also prime destinations should be identified where there are

no services and efforts should be made for development and promoting accessible tourism. The country should also conduct tourism campaign and advertisements to attract tourists and see that the required information about the destinations is provided to the tourists.

Ventures in collaboration with the State governments should be undertaken to improve

- a) Transport stations like railways, airways roads, make vehicles available at places of visit.
- b) Universally Designed Accommodation Standards shall be made available where people will always be on a look-out for reasonably priced accommodation.
- c) The India Tourism Development Corporation (ITDC) should create access-enabling facilities in their premises and thus be model for other hotels.
- d) Tourism, travel and hospitality management institutions are incorporated, disability awareness programs is inducted in the curriculum for training people working in the tourism sector and developing a positive attitude towards the needs of tourists with disabilities.¹⁴

In recent years the shade of the legal laws is taken to provide a better environment and benefits for the disabled citizen in India. Laws should be made to promote equal participation and opportunities. To serve this, legislations and protocols are brought in both at national and international levels.

A majority of persons with disabilities who knew the different provisions provided under laws have been availing the benefits, it is to be ensured that these are also available to everyone irrespective of any discrimination and reservations.

In conclusion, the course of accessible tourism is very difficult and there are many challenges to negotiate with. It offers both opportunities and challenges. Commitment, sincere efforts in the management is the essential elements for an excellent sector of tourism. There by providing specific leisure and recreational destinations for the tourists.

¹⁴ <https://tourism.gov.in/sites/default/files/2022-07/Notice%20%26%20Draft%20version%20of%20Accessible%20Tourism%20Guidelines%20%281%29%20%281%29.pdf>

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