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**Preserving Paradise: Implementing a Sustainable Tourism Strategy to Safeguard
Dharamshala's Natural and Cultural Heritage**

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Abstract:

This study examines the implementation of a sustainable tourism strategy in Dharamshala, investigating the balance between tourism growth and preservation of the region's ecosystem and cultural identity. The research aims to identify tourism-related factors causing environmental degradation and recommend sustainable development strategies for Dharamshala and its suburbs. Using a mixed-method approach, the study combines secondary data from government records with primary data from observations, verified through ethnographic techniques. The methodology ensures triangulation, enhancing the study's validity and reliability. Through stakeholder interviews, environmental impact assessments, and tourism data analysis, the study proposes a comprehensive sustainable tourism framework. Based on the study, key findings reveal that Dharamshala's tourism growth has led to environmental degradation, primarily due to unplanned infrastructure development and exceeding carrying capacity in popular areas. The research also identifies a pressing need for sustainable tourism strategies that balance economic benefits with the preservation of the region's unique ecological and cultural heritage. Recommendations include implementing carrying capacity limits, promoting responsible tourism, and developing cultural heritage programs. This study contributes to understanding sustainable tourism strategies in environmentally and culturally sensitive areas like Dharamshala.

Keywords: Sustainable tourism, environmental conservation, Dharamshala, carrying capacity, responsible tourism, cultural heritage

Tourism:

Technology and society have both developed, allowing tourism to develop from fulfilling basic survival to catering to a leisure and exploratory aspect. It now covers a variety of activities and industries that offer unique travel experiences. Indeed, the World Tourism Organisation has a wide definition of tourism that emphasises its multiform nature. Tourism has grown over time as a global powerhouse for the economy. Groups such as the World Travel and Tourism Council actively advocate for its growth. Such evolution is a reflection of humanity's changing aspirations and abilities. Today, travel is one of the pillars of cultural exchange and growth on all continents (Attri & Kaushal, 2019; Bisht et al., 2024; Nag et al., 2025). Tourism is a global

economic powerhouse, contributing nearly 10% to world GDP and supporting 260 million jobs worldwide. In India, it's the largest service industry, accounting for over 6% of national GDP and nearly 9% of total employment. The sector's economic impact extends beyond direct employment, sustaining communities and economies globally **(Nag, 2018; Nag et al., 2025)**. Tourism is India's largest service industry, contributing 6.8% to GDP and 7.6% to employment, with projected growth to \$375.5 billion by 2018. Berlin, Paris, and London are included with Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, and Delhi among the most popular US and UK tourist destinations. National promotion plans and programs for tourism are handled by the Ministry of Tourism of India. so as to attract foreign tourists and the global appeal of India, the Ministry plays a vital role in facilitating and promoting the variety of attractions of the country. Its programs strongly promote economic growth and tourism **(Gupta, 2015)**. Tourism is an economic activity that is driven by spending and often serves as a major source of income in many countries **(Amir et al., 2017; Bisht et al., 2025)**. According to World Tourism Organization (WTTC, 2020) tourism is the act of people travelling to and staying in places outside their usual environment. This voyage and it takes no longer than an entire year. Tourism refers to all leisure, business, and other types of travel. It highlights the transitional nature of these trips. The definition stresses both the purpose of the trip and its length. This general framework describes the different aspects of working in tourism **(Nag et al., 2025)**. The notion of tourism has transformed from being an exclusive and opulent endeavour limited to a select few individuals (such as the elite and royalty) to becoming a widespread activity accessible to the entire community. Royal families and the upper class were the only ones who could afford leisure travel in the early years of tourism's development. Tourism is travel for recreation, vacation, and business purposes **(Susanto, 2019)**. Direct workplace operations are what push tourism to be self-sustaining in economic activities. As its industries and services intermingle, it becomes propitious for growth. And because of this dynamic, tourism takes up a very significant place in the economy **(Personal & Archive, 2018)**. The UNWTO (2015) describes tourism as a social, cultural, and economic phenomenon. It is the movement of people to places away from their usual environment. This journey can be taken for work-related, personal, or business purposes. Tourism represents the dynamic interaction of people and places. It fosters both economic activity and cultural exchange. This concept emphasises its complexity and importance worldwide **(Gretzel et al., 2015)**. The phenomenon of tourism is multidimensional, embracing

social, cultural, and economic aspects. It involves people relocating away from their usual environments. This relocation may be for work, personal reasons, or business. This shows different reasons and impacts associated with travel. One of the factors that unite people and cultures internationally is tourism **(Lee et al., 2020)**.

Tourism in Himachal Pradesh:

Himachal Pradesh, a mountainous state in Northern India, is known as the "Land of the Gods" for its spiritual significance and numerous temples. Its stunning landscape features lush valleys, glaciers, pine forests, and roaring rivers, earning it the name "province of snow-laden mountain ranges" **(Kumar et al., 2025)**. The state is a fascinating destination for a wide range of tourists due to its distinctive fusion of natural beauty, rich cultural legacy, and mystical aura **(Attri & Kaushal, 2019; Kumar et al., 2024)**. The Himachal Pradesh Tourism department strives to provide a pleasant and exciting experience, earning the state the moniker 'the magical showcase of Nature's splendour.' With its diverse attractions, including adventure destinations, trekking routes, religious sites, eco-tourism spots, and picturesque hill stations, Himachal Pradesh's tourism map is truly impressive **(Nag, 2018; Kumar et al., 2025)**. Himachal Pradesh, nestled in the Himalayas, offers diverse landscapes from the Shivalik Range to Kinnar Kailash, bordering several North Indian states. Tourism is vital to the state's economy, with the government prioritising its development due to limited industrial opportunities. The state focuses on infrastructure development and eco-friendly projects to support and enhance its tourism sector **(Gupta, 2015; Sharma et al., 2025)**. Himachal Pradesh's diverse landscape offers a wide range of tourist activities, from trekking and adventure sports to religious and eco-tourism. Popular destinations include Shimla, the 'Queen of Hill Stations', Kufri for skiing and hiking, and Chail for its forests and wildlife. Other notable spots, such as Manali, Dharamsala, and Spiti, attract visitors with their unique features, ranging from sacred sites to snow-capped peaks and glaciers **(Nag, 2018; Bansal et al., 2024)**. Himachal Pradesh's economy is primarily driven by hydroelectric power, tourism, and agriculture, with tourism contributing 7% to the state's GDP. The state offers diverse tourism experiences, from adventure and wellness to eco-tourism and religious tourism, leveraging its picturesque landscapes and cultural attractions to draw visitors globally **(Sharma & Parkash, 2018)**. Himachal Pradesh's economy comprises agriculture, horticulture, mining, manufacturing, power, services like transport, tourism, and finance, with agriculture being a dominant sector, while services contribute significantly to the state's GDP.

(Verma et al., 2024; Nag et al., 2025). In Himachal Pradesh, tourism is becoming a significant economic sector that creates a significant number of job possibilities. The state's socioeconomic development is anticipated to be significantly impacted by the construction of enterprises, infrastructure, and jobs (Thakur, 2023; Bansal et al., 2023). Himachal Pradesh has implemented substantial modifications to its tourist policies periodically. Himachal Pradesh is a renowned and acknowledged tourism destination. The objective is to fully utilise the state's potential to promote tourism, which in turn may significantly contribute to the state's economic growth and prosperity (Chandra, 2017; Kumar et al., 2025).



Figure 1: A peaceful and tranquil atmosphere created by a wooden bench along a misty forest road in Dharamshala.

The acknowledgement of tourism in Himachal Pradesh, as we know it today, occurred in the 19th century with the establishment of the British hill stations (Susanto, 2019; Kabia et al., 2025). Himachal Pradesh, a small mountain state in northern India, is well known for its rich cultural legacy and pristine natural beauty. It attracts travellers from around the globe who seek to revel in its distinctiveness. The state is abundant in religious tourism, with numerous Shakti peeths (pilgrimage centres), sacred lakes, and hot water springs. Each hamlet has its local deity, contributing to the state's reputation as 'Dev Bhumi' (Gretzel et al., 2015).

Annual Tourist Footfall:

In 2015, the state attracted an unprecedented number of 160 lakh tourists. Given the current rate of expansion, it is projected that tourism in the state will contribute an annual increase of 300 crores to the GDP (**Bhardwaj et al., 2019**). Recent estimates place the number of visitors at about 160 lakh visitors, more than twice the state population (**Negi, 2017; Nag et al., 2025**). Himachal Pradesh is undeniably a top destination for people considering vacation options.

This fact alone highlights the significance of the tourist sector as a crucial component of the state's economy. The state received a total of around 13.923 million tourists, with 13.897 million being Indian tourists and 0.26 million being foreign tourists, as of November 2022 (Personal & Archive, 2018). According to Tourist statistics of Himachal Pradesh, in 2020-32,13,379 tourists, 2021-56,37,102 and in 2022- 1,51,00,277 numbers of tourists were recorded in Himachal Pradesh (**Himachal Pradesh Tourism Development Corporation, 2023**).

Environmental and Cultural Deterioration:

The celebration of various festivals in societies has a significant impact on the degradation of aquatic environments. The Ganesh festival, in particular, is equally responsible for the damage to the Tapi river ecosystem. This is because Ganesh idols are made from both biodegradable and non-biodegradable materials, including plaster of Paris, clothing, tiny iron rods, paints, varnish, chemical colouring, and ornamental elements, all of which are submerged in the river (**Ujjania et al., 2018**). Historical monuments refer to sites of significant historical, cultural, religious, and architectural interest that have been created by humans and are more than one hundred years old. Various types of monuments utilised diverse biological and inorganic materials, including stones, bricks (terracotta), lime surkhi mortar, lime surkhi plaster, mud, and tiles. The degradation of building materials is evident through several elements, such as environmental conditions, pollution, biological agents, mechanical forces, and chemical substances (**Kumar et al., 2018**). Himachal Pradesh, which accounts for about 25.9% of India's total hydroelectric capacity, is ideally suited for the growth of hydropower. Such massive projects would have negative effects on the ecosystem, including the loss of forest and agricultural area, the eviction of wild animals, and the potential extinction of some endangered plants and animals. The depletion of vegetation in the upper catchment area leads to an increased amount of water runoff and erosion of the topsoil. Consequently, this shortens the reservoir's lifespan by hastening the process of sediment buildup (**Sharma, 2022; Nag et al., 2024**).

Depletion of Natural Resources:

Global trends unequivocally show that natural resources are being widely exploited at a rate that is far faster than their replenishment. The modern civilisation's way of life, human-induced emissions that cause climate change, and changes in natural elements all put the Himalayan flora and fauna in jeopardy. The main cause of the growing gap between resource replenishment and use in wealthy regions is the rise in per capita (Singh et al., 2021; Sharma et al., 2025). One of the main problems that causes a lot of problems is the decline in the Himalayan Forest cover. Slope deforestation speeds up a number of environmental deterioration processes, including soil erosion, slope collapses, soil fertility loss, fuelwood and feed shortages, increased overland flows, decreased groundwater recharge, and biological diversity loss. The decline of the Himalayan plant cover results in the deposition of silt in the river bottoms of the lowlands (Rao, 1997; Nag et al., 2024). Along with other elements like solar radiation, temperature, moisture, geology, and biotic effects from the past (such as shifting agriculture, forest fire, grazing, etc.), climate, soil, and other factors all affect the type of plant. Himachal Pradesh's primary vegetation types are tropical, subtropical, wet temperate, dry temperate, subalpine, and alpine; they vary with altitudinal gradients and may overlap as a result of climatic shifts (Ramachandra et al., 2012).

Review of literature:

Fauzi & Anggraini Buchary (2002) This study examines and analyses the underlying factors that contribute to the internal issues, employing a socioeconomic viewpoint. We propose that the primary focus should be on reducing poverty and marginalisation among the residents of the park in Kepulauan Seribus, a marine protected area in Indonesia. Additionally, we recommend that park management be centred upon consensus building and the active involvement of all stakeholders.

Thakur & Gill (2013) Research indicates that both natural and human-induced alterations in several domains also impact this layer. This report specifically examines three significant components associated with the geoenvironment of Dharamshala town. Specifically, these locations include Dal Lake, the site where municipal waste is dumped, and the area where slate mining takes place. The author concludes that the three distinct components of the geoenvironment in Dharamshala, namely the Dal Lake, waste disposal site, and slate mining

activity, are currently in a critical state of potential hazard due to mismanagement. The current state of geoenvironmental deterioration in Dharamshala town is also a matter of concern. This is a result of immoral and negligent human behaviour, disregarding the repercussions and detrimental impacts.

Kabote et al (2016) With a particular focus on the Great Zimbabwe example, the study examined how human activity affects the sustainable development of cultural heritage monuments. By using an appropriate sample technique and distributing a questionnaire, quantitative data were gathered. The study determined that human activities are indeed impacting the sustainable growth of tourism and require effective management for both the tourism industry and the nation.

Islam and Bhuiyan (2018) investigate the main causes of deterioration in the Sundarbans mangrove forest and provide conservation measures. According to their results, the region's ecosystems and biodiversity are threatened by both natural and man-made sources. These include reduced upstream water flow, pollution, oil spills, land use changes, and overexploitation of resources. Climate change, sea level rise, natural disasters, lack of understanding about conservation, uncontrolled tourism, and poor management are some other challenges. Conflict between humans and animals, as well as increased salinity, further threaten the forest.

Ganguly (2019). The chapter deals with the application of air quality indicators in measuring compliance with air quality standards in Dharamshala, a tourist town in Himachal Pradesh, India. The period of evaluation is 2016-2017. There are two approaches to the computation of AQI. The first one is the revised method adopted in India by the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB), and this method is basically drawn from the methodology of USEPA, but with sub-indices specific to Indian conditions. The second method is an alternative approach that takes into account the contribution from all criteria pollutants. The rapid process of urbanisation and globalisation has resulted in significant deterioration of the prevailing air quality in most Indian towns.

Llausàs et al (2019) Case study (Mediterranean marine protected area) research methodologies are commonly used in political ecology to acquire a detailed narrative that identifies the biophysical and socioeconomic factors driving environmental change at local and regional levels. These tactics also aim to explain how these factors combine to produce the observed outcome. The authors assert that for natural resource management strategies to be successful in reducing

social conflict, they must be supplemented with an initial evaluation of the biopolitical context. This evaluation ensures that the planning goals align with the potential of the socially constructed environment.

Passos et al (2020) This paper examines a methodological routine that analyses remote sensing data over 30 years. The analysis focuses on specific time points, including 1984 (ten years after the construction of the Rio-Santos Highway) and 1982 (two years after the construction of the Port of Sepetiba, now known as the Port of Itaguaí). The analysis extends to 2014, the year of the inauguration of the Metropolitan Arc of Rio de Janeiro. The findings from this analysis will serve as the basis for constructing a Markov transition Matrix of Markov for the year 2034. It is determined that in a very vulnerable area, where the beaches are experiencing significant strain from human activities and interventions. Therefore, insufficient urbanisation can result in a cascade of consequences, leading to the deterioration of coastal ecosystems.

Kuniyal et al (2021) This study aims to assess the consequences of the comprehensive eco-restoration model adopted by the Department of Forest, Government of Uttarakhand in 2019. The current study provides an integrated framework of the restoration and assessment of degraded high-altitude alpine pastures of the Himalayan region. The studied characteristics of degradation were in agreement with other affected areas of the Himalayan Region. Overgrazing has been reported from the high-altitude grasslands of Kashmir, Tung Nath, and Garhwal in the Indian Himalaya.

Adebayo et al (2022) This study uses a multivariate methodology to examine the connection between environmental deterioration and political risk. In terms of the direction, magnitude, and statistical significance of the coefficients, the outcomes of the three distinct approaches employed for robustness assessment are in agreement with the results of the moments quantile regression, or MMQR. Environmental degradation is positively impacted by political risk, economic expansion, and globalisation, spanning quantiles 0.1 to 0.90, according to the MMQR methodology.

Kumar (2023) The purpose of this study is to identify the causal link between Himachal Pradesh's population, poverty, and environmental deterioration. Proponents contend that environmental degradation leads to poverty and that both environmental degradation and poverty are exacerbated by population pressure. However, once these variables were empirically investigated, the relationship between poverty and environmental degradation is still unclear.

Liang et al (2023) discovered that Guangxi province's total tourism spending has increased by 36.48% since the creation of the China and ASEAN Free Trade Area. Unfortunately, the significant increase in visitors has given rise to a number of environmental degradation issues, including resource overuse, air pollution, disruption of native life, and others. To promote the high-quality growth of tourism, it is urgently necessary to assess the resilience of Guangxi's tourism ecosystem.

Giang & Khanal (2024) The effects of socioeconomic activities on marine ecosystems, including industry, tourism, maritime transportation and services, aquaculture, and fishing, are investigated and analysed in this study. Compared to the early 2000s, 48% of other coral reefs and 12% of coral reefs in Vietnam are at risk of destruction. Orientations that emphasise effective management and protection of marine ecosystems to adapt are based on the findings. The detrimental impacts of human activity, climate change, and the demands of socioeconomic development were all mentioned.

Study Area:

Situated around 11 miles from Kangra and at 32.219044° N and longitude 76.323402° E, Dharamshala is an important municipality in Himachal Pradesh (**Nagamani, 2024**). The research area's topography primarily comprises hills and mountains divided by numerous drainage systems (Sharma & Mahajan, 2018). With the vast Dhauladhar range to one side and the Kangra plains to the other, Dharamshala is a fascinating city. This charming location is surrounded by lush forests of oak, pine, and cedar, which makes it a haven for tourists looking for a variety of experiences in a short amount of time (**Jasrotia & Gangotia, 2020**). Lower and Upper Dharamshala are the two separate regions that make up the Dharamshala region. With its vibrant markets, courts, and the well-known Kotwali Bazaar, Lower Dharamshala serves as the city's commercial centre. McLeod Ganj is a prominent landmark in Upper Dharamshala, which is renowned for its colonial architecture. These two areas offer diverse attractions and atmospheres, allowing visitors to experience both the vibrant local culture and the serene beauty of the region's colonial heritage (**Nagamani, 2024**).



Figure 2: Overlooking Dharamshala with a cloudy sky, displaying verdant valleys and layered mountain ranges.

The internationally recognised spiritual leader, His Holiness the Dalai Lama, resides in Upper Dharamshala, which is sometimes referred to as McLeod Ganj. It is home to the parliament building of the Tibetan government in exile, a Tibetan market, and an international cricket stadium. This area of the city also has charming little towns like Dharamkot, the starting point of the popular Triund trek, and Naddi. Visitors can engage in a wide variety of activities in Dharamshala, such as paragliding, trekking, camping, and visiting beautiful waterfalls. It is a genuinely multicultural place that effortlessly blends the cultures of India, Tibet, and Nepal **(Grover & Kaur, 2024)**. In 2017, it became the second capital of Himachal Pradesh, after Shimla. The Government of India has also identified it for transformation into a smart city **(Nagamani, 2024)**. Dharamshala, a prominent centre of Tibetan culture in India, is experiencing rapid urbanisation and a surge in tourism, leading to a host of ecological challenges. The city's serene beauty is under pressure as more land is converted for housing and hotel construction to accommodate the growing population and tourist influx. This urban expansion has resulted in various civic issues, including inadequate garbage disposal, traffic congestion, deteriorating water infrastructure, and unchecked illegal construction. The environmental impact of tourism is significant, affecting local flora and fauna, causing pollution of water, air, and soil resources, and

contributing to soil erosion and landslides. Additionally, the city faces problems related to slums, water scarcity, and the degradation of its natural surroundings. Dharamshala struggles with the loss of natural resources and the aesthetic effects of development as urban resource use rises. Unfortunately, it is the local population that bears the brunt of the environmental degradation resulting from this rapid urban growth and tourism exploitation (**Grover & Kaur, 2024**). The awarding of the Nobel Peace Prize to the Dalai Lama in 1989 thrust Dharamshala into the global spotlight as a centre for Buddhist studies, meditation practices, and spiritual tourism. This acknowledgement stimulated economic growth and brought in large investments to the area, especially when combined with the state government's goal of making Dharamshala a tourist destination and cultural centre. The combination of international attention and strategic development initiatives transformed Dharamshala, enhancing its appeal to both spiritual seekers and tourists, thereby boosting its economy and infrastructure (**Jha & Singh, 2022**).

Research Design

The following are some of the sub-parts that make up the research design of the work:

1. Need for study:

Unplanned tourism development can disturb a destination's ecosystem, often overlooked initially due to apparent economic benefits. As visitor numbers increase, exceeding carrying capacity becomes a risk, leading to detrimental effects that require constant monitoring. Dharamshala, a popular year-round destination, faces potential long-term issues from continuous infrastructure development despite its natural beauty and religious significance.

2. Scope of the study: Dharamshala, nestled in the Dhauladhar range, blends Indian and Tibetan cultures, offering stunning natural beauty and diverse attractions from historical landmarks to adventure activities. As the capital of the Tibetan Government in exile, McLeod Ganj ('Little Lhasa') attracts global visitors and personalities. The town provides a rich cultural experience with multiple languages spoken and a wide array of tourist activities, from trekking and sports to historical and nature tours.

3. Objectives of the Study:

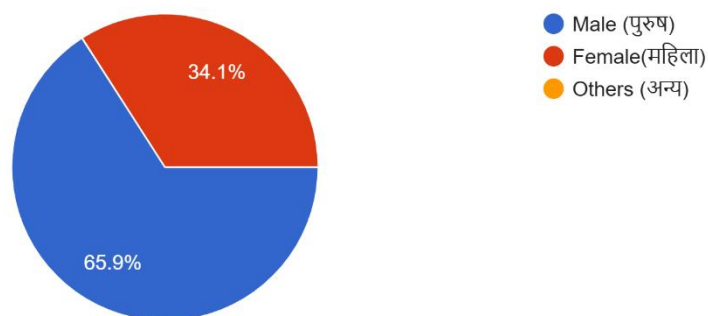
1. To explore natural and cultural attractions in Dharamshala.

2. To examine the impact of tourism on natural and cultural attractions in Dharamsala, particularly concerning the last decade.
3. To study the effects of rapid growth of tourism on society and the environment.

4. Data Collection:

Using a mixed-method approach, this study collates secondary data from different sources in academic journals with that collected from primary sources by the local respondents. Between September and October of 2024, 44 local respondents—29 men and 15 women—were interviewed in order to gather primary data. To back the analysis, secondary data were derived from research papers, journals, and book chapters. The integration of diverse data sources for the conduct of this research helps make possible a comprehensive analysis of the problems under study, besides enhancing the validity of results by capturing qualitative insights.

Gender (लिंग)
44 responses



Source: primary Probe

Results and Discussion:

Critical insights into the delicate balance between environmental preservation and economic growth in this culturally rich destination have been uncovered by this study on the sustainable development of tourism in Dharamshala. Given the possible long-term ecological and cultural effects of uncontrolled expansion, the study emphasises the urgent need for a thorough and sustainable approach to Dharamshala's tourism management.

Increased tourism has had a significant impact on Dharamsala's natural and cultural assets over the last ten years. The once pristine Bhagsu Waterfall has seriously deteriorated due to overtourism with garbage, water pollution, and unchecked commercial growth around its perimeter. Just like the famous Triund Trek, camping in the area has been temporarily banned by the officials because of severe environmental damage, such as rubbish accumulation and route erosion. Although tourism brought monetary gains to the population, McLeod Ganj and the Dalai Lama Temple complex became very commercialised, which created weak points in terms of weak waste management, traffic control, and overcrowding that destroyed this spiritual atmosphere. These negative impacts also continue towards Dal Lake, seriously hit by the problem through recent reports that indicate a likely sinking of the Lake from pollution and overtourism. Although the influence is beneficial to cultural tourism, it is difficult to be preserved in a calm environment necessary to preserve arts and Tibetan culture in relation to the Norbulingka Institute. Increased environmental stress has resulted in more frequent landslides and depletion of natural resources in the Dhauladhar mountain range and its many trekking trails. Traditional cultural sites such as Bhagsunag Temple and St. Christ Church are finding it difficult to maintain their historical and spiritual relevance amidst growing tourism and commercialisation. As the summer temperatures increase, the pollution levels climb and the demand on resources increases in the local areas; thus, the wider ecological impact is felt throughout this region. Cultural landmarks and monasteries like Gyuto Monastery face the complicated task of balancing real spiritual activities with tourist accommodations. What once used to be known for its natural beauty, Naddi viewpoint and Tea Gardens are undergoing environmental degradation with the increasing presence of pollution and the growth of mass tourism. The change required sustainable tourism practices and appropriate management techniques in order to preserve Dharamsala's natural heritage and cultural identity for future generations.

All respondents were analysed, and the results show that although there have been some encouraging changes, tourism is mostly responsible for the alarming growth rate. Of course, the overall economic advantage of the good roads and infrastructure, as well as job opportunities for the local handicraft vendors, taxi drivers, and hospitality industry businesses, is great, but on the other hand, people are highly concerned about the sustainability of the environment and culture. Our water streams and forest areas are particularly exploited by the growing uncontrolled hotels

and commercial developments that have led to deforestation, visual pollution, and natural resource stress. What are the most alarming environmental changes he noted during his lifetime-warming temperatures, less snow than eight to ten years ago, and higher levels of pollution caused by jams and bad waste management. Some residents prefer to lead tourist-influenced lives at the cost of our authentic traditional Himachali way of life. This brings a change in our cultural fabric of community, as, along with this development of tourist areas, we can notice that the pure environment which once was in place as the true spiritual arena for our region is beginning to be degraded through commercialised sacred locations and unrelenting tourists at such once serene locations as McLeodganj. Overcrowding, traffic congestion, and the increasing cost of commodities have made it difficult to sustain daily life, thereby complicating the lives of those residents who do not directly benefit from tourists. It is excruciating to see how our natural icons are being affected; once-pristine landscapes are now suffering from overexploitation, noise pollution, and garbage. Although some areas of our community have benefited economically from tourism, the long-term preservation of our cultural and environmental heritage for future generations is seriously threatened by the absence of adequate planning and sustainable tourism practices. My biggest fear is losing the natural beauty and cultural authenticity of Dharamshala, along with its peaceful lifestyle, unless we enforce stricter regulations governing construction, waste management, and tourism.

In conclusion, there are many chances for sustainable development even if Dharamshala has considerable difficulties in striking a balance between the expansion of tourism and the preservation of the environment and culture. Dharamshala can maintain its prosperity as a travel destination while preserving its natural beauty and rich legacy for future generations by taking a comprehensive approach that takes ecological, cultural, and economic aspects into account. This study provides a foundation for future research and policy-making aimed at achieving sustainable tourism development in culturally and ecologically sensitive destinations.

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