

Assessment of Tourist Facilities and Their Impact on Sustainable Tourism Development in Darbhanga, Bihar

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Abstract:

Tourism is a vital sector contributing to economic growth, employment, cultural exchange, and regional development. Sustainable tourism development has emerged as a major concern for policymakers and stakeholders, aiming to balance economic benefits with environmental and cultural preservation. Tourist facilities—such as transportation, accommodation, sanitation, hospitality, safety, and communication services—significantly shape tourist satisfaction and destination sustainability.

Darbhangha, located in the Mithila region of Bihar, is rich in cultural heritage, religious significance, and traditional art forms, giving it high potential for tourism. However, inadequate infrastructure and limited tourist facilities constrain sustainable tourism development.

This empirical study assesses existing tourist facilities in Darbhanga and analyzes their impact on sustainable tourism development. Using primary and secondary data, the study evaluates tourist perceptions across multiple service dimensions and identifies challenges hindering tourism growth. The findings reveal that quality facilities positively influence tourist satisfaction, destination image, and environmental sustainability. The study concludes that strategic infrastructure planning, environmental management, and community engagement are crucial for achieving sustainable tourism growth in the region.

Keywords: Tourist Facilities, Sustainable Tourism, Darbhanga, Bihar Tourism, Tourist Satisfaction, Tourism Infrastructure, Cultural Tourism, Hospitality Services, Regional Development.

1. Introduction

Tourism is among the fastest-growing industries globally, significantly contributing to employment generation, regional development, and cultural preservation. The sector also supports allied services such as transportation, accommodation, hospitality, retail, and entertainment.

In recent years, sustainable tourism has gained prominence as a response to growing concerns about environmental degradation, cultural erosion, and resource overuse. It promotes long-term development that safeguards natural and socio-cultural assets for future generations.

Tourist facilities—transportation, housing, sanitation, safety, communication, and health services—play a vital role in determining a destination's attractiveness. Efficient infrastructure enhances visitor satisfaction and contributes to a sustainable tourism economy.

In India, government initiatives such as Swadesh Darshan, PRASHAD, and Dekho Apna Desh have helped modernize tourism infrastructure while promoting sustainable practices. Despite this progress, certain regions, including Bihar, continue to face infrastructural and managerial challenges.

Bihar, rich in cultural and historical heritage, holds immense potential for religious, cultural, and eco-tourism. While destinations like Bodh Gaya and Nalanda enjoy global recognition, others—particularly Darbhanga in the Mithila region—remain underdeveloped. Noted for its palaces, temples, ponds, and Mithila art, Darbhanga embodies deep cultural value but suffers from inadequate infrastructure, sanitation issues, and limited tourism promotion.

The operationalization of Darbhanga Airport has improved accessibility, yet internal connectivity, accommodation, and cleanliness lag behind. Similarly, limited tourist services and digital infrastructure constrain visitor satisfaction. Sustainable tourism here depends on integrating planning, community participation, and infrastructure enhancement.

The present study focuses on assessing the quality and adequacy of tourist facilities in Darbhanga and examines their influence on sustainable tourism development.

2. Literature Review (2017–2024)

- Sharma & Kumar (2017): Found that transportation and accommodation infrastructure significantly affect tourist satisfaction and repeat visits.
- Singh (2018): Reported that poor sanitation, limited facilities, and weak promotion hinder tourism development in Bihar.
- Das & Mishra (2019): Highlighted the role of tourism infrastructure in regional economic growth and employment generation.
- Khan & Ali (2020): Emphasized eco-friendly practices and environmental management for sustainable destinations.
- Patel (2021): Demonstrated that digital infrastructure—such as online booking and digital payments—enhances tourist experiences.
- Roy & Sinha (2021): Studied cultural tourism in Eastern India, underlining the role of infrastructure in heritage preservation.
- Gupta & Verma (2022): Advocated public-private partnerships to strengthen heritage tourism and competitiveness.
- Jha & Prasad (2023): Found that insufficient accommodation, transport, and sanitation facilities limit tourism growth in Mithila.
- Kumar & Pandey (2024): Concluded that tourist satisfaction is strongly correlated with infrastructure quality and community involvement.

3. Objectives of the Study

- To assess the availability and quality of tourist facilities in Darbhanga.
- To measure tourist satisfaction with accommodation, transportation, sanitation, safety, and hospitality.
- To analyze the impact of tourist facilities on sustainable tourism development.
- To examine stakeholder perceptions of tourism management practices.
- To identify infrastructural and environmental challenges affecting tourism experiences.
- To evaluate the role of local authorities in maintaining sustainable tourism facilities.

- To suggest practical measures for improving facilities and promoting sustainable tourism in Darbhanga.

4. Research Methodology

The study adopts an empirical descriptive research design, integrating both primary and secondary data sources. Primary Data: Collected through a structured questionnaire administered to 120 tourists visiting major destinations in Darbhanga, focusing on transportation, accommodation, sanitation, and hospitality. Secondary Data: Derived from government publications, research journals, tourism reports, and official Bihar Tourism resources. Descriptive statistics and percentage analysis were employed to interpret responses and identify trends.

5. Results and Discussion

The analysis revealed a strong relationship between quality tourist facilities and tourism sustainability.

- Transportation: External connectivity has improved due to Darbhanga Airport, but internal road conditions and local transit remain inadequate.
- Accommodation: The scarcity of quality hotels and homestays shortens visitor stays and reduces overall satisfaction.
- Sanitation: Cleanliness and waste management are major concerns at key religious and heritage sites, directly affecting destination image.
- Hospitality: Tourists appreciated the friendliness of locals but emphasized the need for professional guides, multilingual signage, and trained staff.
- Digital Services: Limited availability of online booking and e-information systems hampers convenience and visibility of the destination.
- Sustainability Practices: Environmental management and community engagement are limited but show promising potential for growth.

Collectively, these factors determine whether Darbhanga can evolve into a sustainable regional tourism hub. Coordinated policies emphasizing infrastructure investment, digital integration, and cultural preservation are required.

6. Findings

- Quality tourist facilities are crucial for improving tourist satisfaction and sustainability.
- Airport connectivity has boosted access, yet local road infrastructure remains poor.
- Inadequate accommodation reduces tourist stay duration.
- Sanitation and waste management deficiencies hinder destination appeal.
- Hospitality and cultural richness enhance visitors' perceptions.
- Sustainable tourism demands coordinated planning and infrastructural development.
- Government initiatives exist but require stronger implementation and monitoring.
- Community participation is key to fostering sustainable tourism management.

7. Conclusion

Tourist facilities play a decisive role in determining the success, competitiveness, and long-term sustainability of tourism in Darbhanga. Despite being enriched with remarkable cultural heritage, religious

significance, historical traditions, and artistic identity, the region continues to face several infrastructural and service-related challenges that hinder its full tourism potential. Inadequate accommodation facilities, poor sanitation systems, limited digital support services, and weak internal connectivity often affect visitor experience and reduce tourist retention. For tourism in Darbhanga to evolve sustainably, a comprehensive and integrated development framework is essential—one that combines proactive government investment, responsible private sector participation, and active community involvement. Strategic improvements in hospitality infrastructure, transportation networks, cleanliness, safety measures, digital tourism services, and destination management can substantially enhance tourist satisfaction and strengthen the local economy. Moreover, promoting eco-friendly practices, preserving cultural authenticity, and encouraging local entrepreneurship can ensure that tourism growth remains inclusive and sustainable. With visionary planning, effective policy implementation, and collaborative efforts among stakeholders, Darbhanga has the potential to emerge as a prominent hub of cultural, heritage, and sustainable tourism not only in Bihar but also on the national tourism map of India.

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