

HVS Monday Musings: Adventure Tourism in India

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As per a recent **travel survey**, almost 65% of the Indians who participated in the survey were keen to travel for leisure and adventure in 2021. Several domestic tourists are now looking beyond traditional holidays. They want to try new experiences at open and less crowded places, which is likely to boost adventure tourism in the country. In fact, domestic tourists traveled to adventure sports hotspots in the country soon after the lockdown ended last year. For instance, media reports say that close to 60,000 tourists have visited

Uttarakhand for river rafting since the activity reopened post the lockdown.

India has the potential to become a global adventure tourism hub going forward owing to its diverse natural landscape. The country's vast coastline, deserts, snow-clad mountain peaks, forests, and undiscovered wilderness provide unique adventurous experiences to tourists. Trekking, rappelling, paragliding, and white-water rafting have been popular activities for the past few years. Meanwhile, multi-day trekking, ziplining, snorkeling, scuba diving, and four-wheel self-drive expeditions are some other activities that have been gaining ground. Realizing the potential of adventure tourism in the country, the Ministry of Tourism (MoT) has announced several initiatives in the past few years to promote this niche segment. Some of them include creating adventure circuits, developing Indian Adventure Tourism guidelines with detailed operating and risk mitigation instructions, and opening 137 peaks for mountaineering and trekking with easier visa procedures for international tourists.



Adventure tourism in India is still evolving and its success going forward depends on how well the public and private sectors can collaborate to implement and monitor global standards in safety and professionalism while ensuring responsible and sustainable tourism practices. With the surge in domestic tourism, this is an appropriate time to focus on developing and promoting adventure travel in the country. For a start, it is vital to redesign adventure tourism programs to cater to the evolving demands of guests. For instance, smaller closed group activities instead of larger group activities are the need of the hour, to ensure social distancing and strict adherence to the pandemic-related safety and sanitization protocols to protect both tourists as well as employees.

The government's adventure tourism guidelines should be implemented and executed uniformly across the country to ensure consistency. It is imperative to establish high standards of safety by leveraging the best

Summary

Adventure tourism is still evolving in India and has considerable growth potential. This article discusses some of the factors that can help in the growth of this niche segment in the country.

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practices from popular global adventure travel destinations such as New Zealand, Australia, and Brazil. Regular audits should be made to guarantee that the safety guidelines are being followed to the tee. Appropriate infrastructure facilities, accommodation, and equipment, including rescue and disaster management equipment and support, should be made available at even the most remote destination through public-private partnerships. Additionally, training the locals as professional guides and instructors, developing good homestays and bed & breakfast accommodation and an aggressive marketing campaign will go a long way in promoting India as a global adventure tourism destination with unique experiences in the future.

About **Mandeep S Lamba**



Mandeep S. Lamba, President – South Asia, oversees the HVS global hospitality practice for South Asia. He has spent over 30 years in the hospitality industry of which the last 19 have been in CEO positions. Having worked with leading International and domestic Hotel Companies such as IHG, Radisson & ITC Hotels, he also set up joint venture companies with Dawnay Day Group UK and Onyx Hospitality, Thailand to own and operate hotels in India giving him a broader exposure to the hospitality business.

An established industry leader, Mandeep has won several awards and recognitions in India and abroad for his accomplishments and contribution to the hospitality industry. He is a Certified Hospitality Administrator from the American Hotels Association (CHA), a member of the Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors, UK (MRICS) and a member of the Tourism Council of CII (Northern India). His views are often solicited for television and print media as a spokesperson for the hospitality & tourism sector.

Prior to joining HVS in 2018, Mandeep was the Managing Director, Hotels & Hospitality Group for JLL.

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