Virtual Tourism: A New Rising and Promising Travel Areana

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Abstract

Using a combination of technical elements like virtual reality software, audio, video, images, and narration, virtual tourism is a digital experience that enables people to visit places without ever leaving their homes. People can have a real time experience without travelling and without leaving their houses. Virtual Tourism turns out to be a platform for those people who cannot afford to travel and can experience something that they would have never thought they would experience and see in their lives. The quality and availability of Virtual reality technology makes it truly amazing. The brochure and the website images prompt them to travel but do not give a real travel experience. Virtual reality allows them to imagine themselves in a tour destination. People can have a real time experience without travelling and without leaving their houses. Virtual Tourism turns out to be a platform for those people who cannot afford to travel and can experience something that they would have never thought they would experience and see in their lives. The quality and availability of Virtual reality technology makes it truly amazing. The brochure and the website images prompt them to travel but do not give a real travel experience. Virtual reality allows them to imagine themselves in a tour destination.

Keywords: Virtual, Reality, Travel, Tourism, Technical

Introduction

People were forced to stay at home throughout the pandemic and had little chance of traveling anytime soon. One could consider virtual tourism to be an extension of this. Among the various tourism sector stakeholders, this is growing in popularity. When Tourism industry came to standstill Tourism organisations, tour operators and travel agents thought of virtual reality as a means to popularise tourism products and services. They started developing videos and interactive maps which could replace the physical travel with virtual experiences without a decline in the quality of experience and satisfaction to people who loved to travel. Virtual Tourism gives a 360 degree view of the tour destination and amenities. It allows people to get immersed in a travel experience way beyond their imagination. Vacation needs a lot of planning and many people due to their work arrangements are able to take only short holidays. Virtual reality can overcome this where people can have a virtual reality tour of all the destinations they love to visit sitting in their comfort zones. Virtual tourism can be marketed in the best way where tour

companies can now use social networking platforms and post pictures of popular destinations. Virtual reality uses many technical components. It should be able to project images from different angles, should display non visual data, should be flexible enough to cater to the requirements of different travellers and should be able to enhance and expand user experiences. The knowledge of Computers is important for Virtual travel. Virtual Tourism will definablymark a step in future when people find it hard to plan vacations due to their work arrangements and when they struggle to have a good work- life balance.

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Review of Literature

1. Sanjeev Varma, Lekha Warrier, Brajesh Bolia, Shraddha Mehta (2022), The study analyses the literature related to virtual tourism. It emphasizes the need and importance of technology and access to the same. There has been a transformative conceptualization of virtual tourism through primary stakeholders. It also provides a holistic study on the contributions of tech based services.

2. Sandeep Naik, Asmita Patil, Pralhad Botre, The technology has transformed the concept of virtual reality into realistic cost effective phenomena. Virtual reality promotes virtual tourism as a more sustainable industry. It opens up many new possibilities for the Tourism industry and has a great potential to attract tourists towards it because of the economical budget. It has been a good opportunity for elderly people and people with disabilities.

3. Muhammed Shoiab Siddique, Toqeer Ali Syed, Adnan Nadeem Al Hassan, Waqas Nawaz (2022), The paper has analyzed the concept of virtual reality which plays a significant role in virtual tourism and digital heritage. The study has presented survey analysis regarding the willingness and awareness of virtual tourism among the different age groups. The study shows that younger generations are more excited to experience such technologies. It also provides the advantages and disadvantages associated with virtual tourism.

4. Iana Bilynets, Peter Trkman, Ljubicaknezevic Cvelbar(2023), The paper contributes to the understanding of virtual experiences in tourism. The participants showed a great interest in experiencing virtual tourism. The study emphasized on the behavioural intentions and their willingness of tourists towards virtual tourism.

5. L P Voronkova (2018), There are many challenges in modern tourism and virtual tours prove to be a promising tool to organize and manage tourism industry. Virtual tourism can transform the

economy to a digital one. Virtual tourism can increase tourist flows in a world where the safety of tourists cannot be guaranteed and where the cultural and natural assets need conservation.

6. Maria A Bretos, Selgion Ibanez, Sanchez Carlos, Orus (2023), The study explores the possibilities of augmented reality and virtual reality in creating different tourism experiences. The two are different technologies with distinct features. The study reviews the application of AR and VR which has become imperative in today's modern world. A comparative analysis and a research on AR and VR can help create meaningful and immersive tourist experiences.

Significance of the Study

Virtual Tourism combines virtual reality to give a complete real time travel experience to travel lovers. When the Tourism industry faces many challenges like legal entry formalities, outbreak of diseases, lack of infrastructure which can result in the decline of quality travel experiences, Virtual tourism can be a promising one offering a real touring experience of destinations. Tourists can avail services without any time and space limitations. When travellers have to count on costs like travel tickets, food and accommodation, entry tickets, visa procedures and compulsory vaccinations Virtual Travel proves to be more economical. The environment created by Virtual reality are stimulated with many real time sensory features like touch, voice and images which fosters a more satisfying experience for people.

Objectives of the Study
- To study the idea and importance of Virtual Tourism.
- To evaluate the technologies used in Virtual Tourism.
- To examine the advantages and drawbacks of Virtual Tourism.
- To analyze the demographics and behaviour of virtual tourists their motivations, preferences and expectations.

Research Methodology

The paper is based on Secondary data and has analyzed the existing data from various sources such as-
- Tourism Industry reports and statistics
- Social media and online review platforms
- Surveys and questionnaires from previous studies
- Case studies that examine virtual tourism initiatives and projects.

The pros and cons of Virtual Tourism

Virtual Tours give an immersive experience to the viewers where people can navigate to places like if they were present physically there. The many features it carries like multimedia content, hotspots and clickable content offers a very unique and engaging experience. The convenience and accessibility is another factor where people can have a memorable travel experience sitting very comfortably at their homes with a good internet connection. In today's Strenuous world people can save on their time and cost by using virtual tours and choose places according to their preferences. Virtual tours can be shared to other online platforms catering to a global audience and to showcase places or properties to people who don't have an opportunity to travel. It can engage viewers 24/7 irrespective of the place or time. It offers a completely unique experience due to the innovative element and can attract potential customers and other clients.

Creating high quality virtual tours require a huge initial investment. Good internet connectivity is important to provide a stable virtual experience to its viewers. Virtual tours lack a personal

interaction in contrary to that provided by a tour guide or an agent. Some people prefer more face to face interactions. The features and components that these tours include require a good planning, photography, scanning and post processing. Not everyone has an access to the technology that Virtual platforms use like a high speed internet connection, headsets, or devices. Virtual tours can never ever replace the physical mobility or the physical environment that people get to enjoy when they actually travel to a destination.

Findings, Suggestions and Conclusion

Virtual reality has transformed the travel and tourism industry offering new and unique experiences to the viewers. When mass tourism proves to be threat to the survival of tourism industry virtual tours can be developed as a sustainable concept. The stakeholders in the tourism industry are finding it very hard to build up an infrastructure that is in harmony and consistent with nature. To become eco-friendly requires a huge initial investment. Awareness programs need to be initiated to sensitize visitors on the importance of a quality environment to get quality travel experiences. Virtual tours in the current scenario prove to be responsible and sustainable concept where people can have engaging and immersive experiences of actually travelling to a particular destination. Tourists can also save their time and cost and have a real travel experience. Virtual tourism is not just about sustainability but is accessible to people who are confined to their homes because of their disabilities. People are always attracted to something which is unique and innovative. Virtual tours will definitely transform the tourism industry since the technology is advancing and the industry might witness many new ground breaking applications of virtual reality.

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