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The 7A's Model Revisited: Integrating Regenerative Tourism Principles For Coastal Village Development

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Abstract
The traditional 7A's model–Attractions, Accessibility, Amenities, Accommodation, Activities, Available Packages, and Ancillary Services–has long been used as a grounded framework for tourism development and destination competitiveness. Although effective in guiding infrastructure and service provision, its emphasis remains primarily on economic growth and visitor satisfaction, occasionally neglecting the active restoration of ecological systems and the revitalization of local cultures. A shift toward regenerative tourism is imperative in the context of coastal tourism, where environmental degradation, overtourism, and socio-cultural erosion are persistent alarms. This paper recommends a theoretical reconceptualization of the 7A's Model, positioning community wellbeing and ecosystem health at the core through a regenerative lens. By integrating principles of restoration, reciprocity, co-creation, and net positive impact into each element of the framework, the proposed Regenerative 7A's Model offers a pathway for coastal villages to transition from extractive to restorative tourism practices. The paper presents a conceptual framework that aligns destination planning with climate resilience, cultural preservation, and community empowerment, using the coastal region of Maharashtra as an illustrative context. This theoretical contribution aims to supplement tourism planning literature and provide policymakers, practitioners, and local stakeholders with a model that raises both competitive advantage and long-term socio-ecological sustainability.
Keywords: *Regenerative tourism, 7A's Model, coastal village development, sustainable tourism, community-based tourism, destination planning, Maharashtra.*

1. INTRODUCTION

India's extensive coastline, spanning over 7,500 kilometers, presents a diverse mosaic of natural and cultural assets, ranging from pristine beaches and biodiverse mangroves to historic ports and fishing villages. Coastal tourism has emerged as a vital contributor to the national economy, generating employment, fostering regional development, and positioning India as a diverse leisure destination. States such as Goa, Kerala, Tamil Nadu, and Maharashtra have leveraged their maritime heritage to attract both domestic and international visitors, contributing significantly to the hospitality, transportation, and allied service sectors.(Ministry of Tourism, Government of India 2024). India Tourism Statistics at a Glance 2024. New Delhi: Ministry of Tourism.

Maharashtra, with approximately 720 kilometres of coastline, presents a unique amalgamation of marine biodiversity, historical monuments, and rich cultural traditions. The Raigad district, located along the Konkan belt, is emblematic of this diversity.

India's extensive coastline, which measures roughly 7,500–7,516 km, depending on the source, offers a mosaic of natural and cultural assets, ranging from beaches and biodiverse mangroves to historic ports and fishing villages. Coastal tourism has become a major contributor to the national and regional economies, generating employment, fostering regional development, and positioning India as a diverse leisure destination; recent national tourism data continue to highlight the scale and economic importance of domestic and inbound coastal travel(India Tourism Data Compendium 2024, n.d.).

Alibag is a coastal tourism hub, well-known for its beaches, forts, temples, and fishing culture within Raigad. In regions like Raigad, there have been consequences. The rapid growth of coastal tourism has led to overtourism, manifesting in overcrowded beaches, strain on public infrastructure, and deterioration of the very attractions that draw visitors (Chaney & Séraphin, 2023).

Frequent surges in visitor numbers exceed the carrying capacity of fragile coastal ecosystems, resulting in habitat loss, waste accumulation, and declining water quality. Recent evidence suggests an increase in microplastic concentrations and sediment contamination on Maharashtra's tourist beaches, posing a threat to biodiversity and human health (Borah et al., 2024a; Kumkar et al., 2023). These vulnerabilities

worsen under climate change: sea-level rise, storm surges, and coastal erosion jeopardize natural habitats and fishing livelihoods in coastal Maharashtra (Goto et al., 2025). Alterations in meteorological patterns also undermine the predictability of tourist seasons, complicating destination planning and revenue stability (Duro et al., 2024).

Maharashtra, with about 720 km of Arabian Sea coastline, presents a unique mix of marine biodiversity, historic forts, and strong coastal cultures; the Raigad district (headquartered at Alibag) exemplifies this Konkan coastal character and is a growing coastal tourism hub. The rapid growth of coastal tourism in areas such as Alibag, however, has produced symptoms of overtourism — including overcrowding, pressure on infrastructure, and deterioration of the environmental and cultural assets that attract visitors(Mahar et al., 2024).

A significant concern is that cultural erosion poses a substantial threat. For tourist consumption, the commercialization of local customs threatens to erode their authenticity. Changing land use from agriculture and fishing to tourism-related development may compromise community cohesion and traditional knowledge systems.

Recent empirical studies have shown that environmental pressures are tangible and measurable on Maharashtra beaches. Microplastic concentrations and sediment contamination have been recorded at multiple sites along the western coast of Maharashtra, posing threats to biodiversity and human health, and signaling the need for targeted coastal waste management and policy responses. At the same time, climate change — particularly sea-level rise, increased storm surge frequency, and coastal erosion — compounds the vulnerability of low-lying coastal settlements and fishing livelihoods, undermining both the natural infrastructure and the reliability of tourism seasons (Borah et al., 2024b).

Tourism leakages are economically substantial. A significant portion of tourism revenue is allocated to overseas operators, urban investors, or large hotel chains, leading to reduced reinvestment in the local community. Subsequently, local communities experience environmental and social costs without proportionate economic benefits, intensifying inequality and dissatisfaction.

Sustainable tourism is traditionally a strategy to reconcile economic development with environmental and social accountability; nonetheless, it frequently emphasizes harm reduction over proactive restoration. To mitigate adverse effects without necessarily enhancing the sustainability of compromised systems, a threshold-based methodology should be adopted in its application. Given the rapid progression of climate change, the decline of biodiversity, and socio-cultural disintegration, the "do less harm" concept may prove inadequate.

Regenerative tourism represents a transformative paradigm that extends beyond mere sustainability to encompass the restoration, revitalization, and enhancement of a destination's natural and cultural elements. As an alternative to observing people and ecosystems as measly beneficiaries of tourism's effects, regenerative tourism encourages reciprocal connections in which visitors, businesses, and local inhabitants collaboratively generate beneficial change. This may entail rehabilitating mangrove ecosystems, revitalizing traditional boat construction techniques, establishing local food supply chains for tourism, or crafting tourism experiences that directly finance conservation initiatives for coastal settlements in Raigad. The regenerative method enhances ecological resilience while promoting cultural integrity, economic sovereignty, and social wellbeing.

The 7A's Model—comprising Attractions, Accessibility, Amenities, Accommodations, Activities, Available Packages, and Ancillary Services—has been a fundamental element in destination design and competitiveness evaluation. However, it enables planners and policymakers to identify the key elements crucial for a tourism location's growth through a structured framework. This is achieved by providing a comprehensive checklist for infrastructural preparedness and service delivery. The concept has been widely applied in various contexts, including urban tourism, as well as rural and coastal development.

However, the traditional 7A's framework is fundamentally **supply-oriented**. Environmental sustainability and cultural preservation are often treated as added contemplations rather than central organizing principles. The conventional form of the Model does not adequately integrate regenerative thinking, particularly in ecologically sensitive and culturally rich coastal areas. However, it has proven valuable in guiding destination marketing and infrastructure investment.

Despite increasing academic and policy interest in regenerative tourism, there is a deficiency of cohesive frameworks that convert its concepts into practical destination design instruments. The current literature on regenerative tourism often provides philosophical insights or case-specific best practices but lacks a

systematic evaluative framework similar to the 7A's. Similarly, the 7A's literature rarely examines tourism's restorative capacity or its contribution to fostering enduring socio-ecological resilience.

Despite increasing scholarly and policy interest in regenerative tourism, there is a lack of cohesive frameworks that translate its concepts into practical instruments for destination development. The current regenerative tourism literature frequently offers philosophical insights or case-specific best practices, although it is deficient in a standardized evaluative framework akin to the 7A's. Similarly, the 7A's literature rarely examines tourism's restorative capacity or its contribution to the development of enduring socio-ecological resilience.

This research aims to reframe the 7A's Model from a regenerative perspective, emphasizing community wellbeing and ecosystem health as its fundamental components. The suggested Regenerative 7A's Model reinterprets each of the seven components to actively foster environmental restoration, cultural revival, and equitable economic advantages, providing coastal villages with a means to shift from extractive to restorative tourism practices.

This study develops a theoretical framework using the coastal villages of Raigad, Maharashtra, as an illustrative context:

1. The Model retains the structural clarity and comprehensiveness of the original 7A's Model.
2. Integrates regenerative tourism principles into each component.
3. Provides a conceptual tool for policymakers, practitioners, and community leaders to design, monitor, and evaluate tourism development that is net-positive for both people and the planet.

The primary objective of this paper is to critically re-examine the traditional 7A's Model in the context of coastal tourism, identifying its limitations in addressing the intertwined challenges of environmental degradation, socio-cultural erosion, and unequal economic benefits in destinations such as the coastal villages of Raigad, Maharashtra. The intention is to move beyond a supply-driven, infrastructure-centric perspective and explore how each component of the 7A's can be reframed to actively support ecological restoration, cultural revitalization, and community empowerment. Building on this critical review, the second objective is to conceptualize a **Regenerative 7A's Model** that integrates the principles of restoration, reciprocity, co-creation, and net-positive impact into destination planning. This theoretical framework seeks to provide policymakers, tourism planners, and local stakeholders with a practical yet adaptable tool for designing and managing coastal tourism in a manner that enhances both ecosystem health and community wellbeing, thereby offering a pathway from extractive to regenerative tourism development.

While the traditional 7A's Model has been a foundational framework for tourism development, its focus on economic growth and visitor satisfaction is increasingly insufficient in an era defined by climate change, ecological degradation, and social inequality. The Model, as it stands, can inadvertently foster overtourism and an extractive approach that depletes natural and cultural resources, particularly in sensitive environments like coastal villages. There is a critical need to move beyond a "minimise harm" mindset to a proactive, regenerative approach that actively restores ecosystems and revitalises communities. This study addresses this gap by reconceptualising the 7A's Model, providing a new framework that prioritises the wellbeing of the destination and its people, thereby offering a theoretical pathway for a more resilient and sustainable form of tourism development in coastal regions.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

The 7A's model—Attractions, Accessibility, Amenities, Accommodation, Activities, Available Packages, and Ancillary Services—emerged from tourism marketing and destination management literature as a systematic framework for assessing the essential elements that enhance a destination's competitiveness and visitor satisfaction (Morrison, 2013; Crouch & Ritchie, 2003). It developed from the comprehensive "A's" framework of destination analysis introduced in the late 20th century, which initially focused on Attractions and Accessibility but was broadened as the tourist sector recognized the need to incorporate a broader range of services and experiences. The Model serves as a comprehensive checklist for planners and marketers to verify that a destination provides a complete and attractive tourism product.

The usefulness of the 7A's resides in its comprehensive yet operationally straightforward framework. In contrast to more abstract models of destination competitiveness, it disaggregates the destination experience into concrete components. Attractions may denote natural landscapes, including beaches and mountains, or cultural monuments; accessibility pertains to the convenience of transportation to and

within the destination; amenities refer to supporting infrastructure such as public restrooms, dining establishments, and signage; accommodation signifies lodging facilities; activities encompass experiences available to tourists; available packages indicate curated itineraries and bundled services; and ancillary services relate to supplementary facilities like banking, communication centers, and medical care (Buhalis, 2000).

The approach has been utilized by destination marketing organizations (DMOs), tourism boards, and regional planners worldwide. The New Zealand Tourism Board employed a comparable checklist method to assess regional preparedness for the expansion of international tourism (Pike, 2004). In Southeast Asia, the Model has been modified to evaluate island tourism in Indonesia, where accessibility and facilities were identified as significant constraints (Saraniemi & Kylänen, 2011). Its utility lies in directing investment priorities and assisting policymakers in identifying underdeveloped "A's" that necessitate budget allocation.

In coastal tourist environments, the 7A's Model has been employed to evaluate both established and nascent beach resorts. In Goa, state tourist planners utilized the framework to identify regions requiring infrastructure enhancements, including beach shacks, lifeguard stations, and signage, to augment visitor safety and comfort (Goa Tourism Development Corporation, 2018). In the Maldives, the 7A's framework guided the creation of luxury resort islands, where access via seaplanes and boat transfers is as essential as the allure of coral reefs and marine biodiversity (UNWTO, 2016). These instances demonstrate the approach's adaptability across various economic and geographical contexts.

Recent scholarship emphasizes that sustainable rural tourism must be viewed holistically through the “triple development” lens of economic, social, and environmental sustainability. Rhama (2025) argues that while economic outcomes often dominate tourism planning, long-term viability requires equal attention to community wellbeing and ecological balance. Their review shows that destinations failing to integrate social and environmental pillars risk short-term gains but long-term instability, reinforcing the need for frameworks such as the Regenerative 7A’s that embed ecological restoration and equity into planning.

The 7A's Model has been utilized in the advancement of rural tourism. In the Konkan region of Maharashtra, local tourism initiatives have employed the framework to assess the potential of untapped beaches and heritage forts, emphasizing the enhancement of accessibility via rural road improvements, the augmentation of amenities such as rest areas, and the development of activities including village walks and culinary experiences (Bhatia, 2001). Rural applications often demonstrate that, although attractions may be plentiful, other elements such as lodging and supplementary services are lacking, thereby impacting the ability to attract and retain tourists. Despite its widespread application, the Model has inherent limitations. A significant criticism is its economic and supply-side bias (Dwyer & Kim, 2003). It typically conceptualizes tourist development in terms of service delivery and infrastructural preparedness, implicitly presuming that increased amenities and enhanced accessibility will invariably result in improved outcomes. This viewpoint may overlook the social carrying capacity of a town, the natural constraints of a destination, and the necessity for equitable allocation of tourist benefits. In ecologically sensitive coastal areas, excessive focus on accessibility and amenities can result in overdevelopment, potentially compromising the very attractions the Model aims to enhance. Another critique is the inadequate incorporation of community engagement and environmental stewardship within the Model's framework (Jamal & Camargo, 2014). Although the Model may implicitly incorporate sustainability issues under "Amenities" or "Activities," these aspects are not officially defined or quantified within the framework. Consequently, significant qualitative factors—such as promoting cultural authenticity or utilizing renewable materials in amenities—are frequently overlooked in conventional applications. Another constraint is its unchanging nature. The 7A's Model is excellent for snapshot assessments but is inadequate for addressing dynamic changes in tourism systems, such as the effects of climate change, alterations in tourist demography, or technological advancements in service delivery. The emergence of digital tourism platforms and the growing demand for experiential and transformative travel necessitate more flexible and adaptable approaches to tourism.

In light of these critiques, there is increasing acknowledgment that although the 7A's Model is beneficial for organizing tourism planning, it requires conceptual enhancement to integrate modern priorities such as climate resilience, regenerative practices, and community empowerment. This is especially pertinent in coastal areas such as Raigad, where tourism development must reconcile economic ambitions with the

imperative to safeguard delicate ecosystems and cultural heritage. Modifying the Model to incorporate regenerative tourism concepts can facilitate a means of ensuring that each "A" not only caters to tourists but also actively contributes to the restoration and development of the destination's natural and cultural resources. Coastal tourism represents a significant and rapidly expanding sector of the global tourism industry, accounting for a substantial share of both international and domestic travel (Hall, 2001; UNWTO, 2016). Coastal zones present a distinctive blend of natural splendor, recreational opportunities, and cultural heritage, rendering them exceptionally appealing to tourists. Coastal landscapes, aquatic biodiversity, fishing communities, and historical harbors collectively enhance a destination's appeal. In India, states such as Goa, Kerala, Tamil Nadu, and Maharashtra have leveraged these benefits, with coastal tourism substantially enhancing local economies and creating jobs (Ministry of Tourism, Government of India, 2022). Nonetheless, the attributes that render coastal regions appealing simultaneously render them susceptible to overexploitation and deterioration. In areas such as Raigad, Maharashtra, where rapid tourism expansion coincides with ecological vulnerability and socio-cultural complexities, these issues are especially pronounced.

Samper Mendívil et al. (2025) in a case study of rural tourism in Navarre (Spain), demonstrates how sustainability assessments can highlight gaps in both ecological and cultural dimensions. While economic indicators were generally positive, their study found insufficient monitoring of biodiversity health and limited integration of local traditions into tourism packages. This underscores the limitations of traditional planning frameworks like the 7A's, which prioritize market readiness, and reinforces the need for regenerative approaches that embed ecological and cultural indicators into destination evaluation.

A prevalent issue in seaside tourism is the violation of carrying capacity. Carrying capacity refers to the maximum number of visitors a place can sustain without causing detrimental changes to its physical environment, cultural integrity, or visitor satisfaction (Saveriades, 2000). In renowned coastal locales, such as Baga and Calangute in Goa, or Alibaug and Kashid in Maharashtra, the tourist influx during peak seasons frequently surpasses the infrastructure and environmental capacities. Overpopulation leads to increased littering, congestion, noise pollution, and higher pressure on public services, including bathrooms, waste disposal systems, and freshwater resources. Anecdotal evidence and local news sources in Raigad have observed a significant accumulation of rubbish on beaches during weekends and public holidays, reflecting the impact of unregulated visitor influx. Seasonality and economic reliance constitute a significant barrier. Numerous coastal locales heavily rely on a limited peak season for revenue generation, often coinciding with favorable meteorological conditions or holiday schedules. This periodicity results in overcapacity during peak months, followed by economic stagnation in off-peak periods (Baum & Lundtorp, 2001). In Raigad, tourist visitation peaks from October to February, aligning with the temperate conditions, while the monsoon season experiences a significant decline in visitors. This reliance renders local economies vulnerable to fluctuations in tourist demand, influenced by variables such as pandemics, global recessions, or severe weather disasters. The COVID-19 pandemic vividly demonstrated this susceptibility, as coastal regions experienced extended revenue declines due to travel restrictions (Gössling et al., 2021). Environmental damage is a frequent consequence of inadequately managed coastal tourism. Habitat loss occurs when natural elements, such as mangroves, dunes, or coral reefs, are destroyed or altered to accommodate tourism infrastructure (Brown et al., 1997). In the Konkan region, mangroves—essential for coastal defense and fish reproduction—have been removed in certain sections to construct resorts, parking spaces, and other tourist amenities. Water quality concerns are widespread, as untreated sewage and wastewater from hotels, restaurants, and tourist vessels frequently discharge directly into the ocean (UNEP, 2009). This endangers marine life and poses health hazards to swimmers and local fishing groups, which rely on pristine water for their livelihood.

Another pressing issue is the **cultural commodification** of local traditions and heritage. Coastal villages often possess a rich intangible heritage, encompassing festivals, boat-making skills, fishing practices, and culinary traditions. However, when these are repackaged for tourism, they can lose their authenticity and deeper cultural meanings (Greenwood, 1989). For example, traditional fishing demonstrations or folk dances might be shortened or altered to fit tourist schedules, reducing them to mere performances rather than expressions of living culture. In Raigad, some festivals have been increasingly marketed to urban weekend visitors, shifting their purpose from community bonding to commercial entertainment. Coastal tourism also generates **social inequalities** and conflicts over the use of resources. Large-scale resorts and

second-home developments often outcompete residents for prime beachfront locations, driving up land prices and limiting access to traditional fishing areas (Hall, 2001).

Price et al. (2025) show how social enterprises act as laboratories for regenerative tourism, embedding community ownership, ecological restoration, and cultural revitalization within their operations. Their findings illustrate that small, locally governed tourism enterprises can generate "net-positive" impacts more effectively than large corporate models by reinvesting revenues in conservation and social projects. This aligns with the Regenerative 7A's accommodation and ancillary services dimensions, where cooperative structures and circular economies are central to achieving restorative outcomes.

In some cases, this results in the displacement of local populations or the marginalization of small-scale tourism operators. Furthermore, the profits from tourism often leak out of the local economy, especially when outside investors own businesses. This "economic leakage" reduces the multiplier effect of tourism income and limits the sector's potential to contribute to community development (Mitchell & Ashley, 2010). Climate change poses an additional **layer of existential threat** to coastal tourism destinations. Rising sea levels, coastal erosion, increased frequency of cyclones, and unpredictable weather patterns directly affect the stability of beaches, the safety of infrastructure, and the attractiveness of the destination (IPCC, 2021). In low-lying areas of Raigad, the combined effects of sea-level rise and unplanned coastal development exacerbate erosion and flooding risks. This threatens tourism assets and undermines the resilience of local communities that depend on them.

Conclusively, governance challenges obstruct the sustainable management of coastal tourism. Weak enforcement of environmental regulations, fragmented planning across multiple government agencies, and a lack of stakeholder collaboration often result in ad hoc and reactive development (Jamal & Camargo, 2014).

In Raigad, for example, responsibility for coastal zone management is shared among the tourism department, local municipal bodies, the Coastal Zone Management Authority, and environmental regulators. Short-term economic gains, rather than long-term ecological and social sustainability, tend to drive tourism growth in the absence of integrated planning frameworks. In sum, coastal tourism development issues are multifaceted, involving ecological degradation, cultural change, economic vulnerability, and governance gaps. Traditional tourism planning approaches, which prioritize infrastructure expansion and marketing over ecological and community health, cannot fully address these challenges. As the pressures of climate change, overtourism, and global market volatility intensify, there is a pressing need for tourism frameworks that embed **restorative and regenerative principles** into their core. This recognition sets the stage for exploring regenerative tourism as a viable alternative and for adapting established tools—such as the 7A's Model—to better serve the long-term resilience of coastal destinations like Raigad.

The concept of **regenerative tourism** has emerged recently as a progressive evolution of the sustainability paradigm, responding to growing concerns that "doing less harm" is insufficient in the face of escalating environmental and social crises (Pollock, 2019; Ateljevic, 2020). Whereas sustainable tourism aims to maintain resources at their current levels for future generations, regenerative tourism focuses on actively restoring, revitalizing, and enhancing the ecological, cultural, and economic systems in which tourism takes place. In essence, it moves from a philosophy of conservation to one of **restoration and net-positive contribution**. The urgency for such an approach is particularly acute in fragile coastal environments, where tourism pressures, climate change impacts, and cultural shifts converge.

Paddison et al. (2024)demonstrates how regenerative tourism practices emerge as critical responses during crises such as climate shocks and pandemics. Unlike sustainability, which often emphasizes damage limitation, regenerative strategies actively rebuild ecological and social resilience. Their study highlights that regeneration not only mitigates crises but positions tourism as a long-term catalyst for system recovery and transformation. This supports the argument that the 7A's framework must shift from a supply-oriented model toward one that embeds resilience and reciprocity as central planning principles.

Iddawala & Lee (2025) conceptualises regenerative tourism as a paradigm that goes beyond sustainability by embedding ecological restoration, cultural justice, and systemic transformation into destination planning. Their framework identifies regeneration as context-specific and inherently relational, stressing that regeneration requires active reciprocity between visitors, hosts, and ecosystems. Integrating these principles into the 7A's framework allows tourism planning to shift from resource extraction toward place-sensitive, future-resilient development.

At its core, regenerative tourism aligns with the principles of **regenerative development**, a concept that originated in architecture, agriculture, and systems thinking (Mang & Reed, 2012). Regenerative development seeks to design human activities that not only sustain but also improve the capacity of natural and social systems to thrive. Applied to tourism, this translates into experiences and operations that leave destinations in a better condition than before the tourist arrived. Anna Pollock (2013), founder of the Conscious Travel movement, defines regeneration as "creating the fertile conditions conducive for life to thrive," emphasizing the interconnectedness of all living systems. This philosophy challenges the extractive Model of mass tourism, which tends to externalize environmental and social costs, replacing it with a collaborative, place-based, and future-oriented framework.

Restoration is one of the foundational principles of regenerative tourism. This goes beyond preventing damage to actively repairing harm that has already occurred. In coastal contexts, this might involve replanting mangroves to stabilize shorelines, rehabilitating coral reefs damaged by diving activities, or revitalizing neglected heritage sites. Projects in places like New Zealand's Bay of Plenty and Costa Rica's Osa Peninsula have shown how tourism operators can integrate habitat restoration activities into visitor experiences, thereby blending conservation with recreation (Matunga & Urlich, 2020). This approach not only benefits the ecosystem but also deepens the tourist's connection to the destination.

Another key principle is **reciprocity**, which calls for mutual benefit between hosts and guests. In regenerative tourism, visitors are not passive consumers but active participants in creating positive outcomes. For example, tourists might contribute their time, skills, or financial resources to community projects, such as teaching digital literacy to local youth, participating in beach cleanups, or sponsoring renewable energy installations. In Raigad, such reciprocity could take the form of skill exchanges between tourists and local artisans or fishermen, fostering cultural exchange while enhancing community livelihoods. Reciprocity also builds goodwill, strengthens host-guest relationships, and supports long-term destination stewardship.

Co-creation is another central tenet. Rather than tourism products being designed solely by external developers or operators, regenerative tourism encourages collaborative design processes involving local communities, indigenous groups, and other stakeholders (Hutchins & Storm, 2019). Co-creation ensures that tourism development reflects local priorities, values, and knowledge systems, which enhances authenticity and resilience. In the context of Raigad, co-creation may involve developing cultural trails or food festivals in partnership with local women's cooperatives, ensuring that the benefits of tourism are distributed widely and in a culturally appropriate manner. This participatory approach also fosters community buy-in, which is crucial for the long-term success of regenerative initiatives.

The goal of regenerative tourism is to achieve a **net-positive impact**, meaning that the overall outcomes of tourism are beneficial rather than neutral or harmful. This concept challenges the "zero impact" goal of sustainability by asking, "How can tourism actively contribute to ecological and social regeneration?" (Hutchins & Storm, 2019). Measuring net-positive impact requires indicators that extend beyond economic metrics to encompass biodiversity health, carbon sequestration, cultural vitality, and community wellbeing. For example, a regenerative tourism project might aim to sequester more carbon through reforestation than it emits through transportation and operations or to increase the number of traditional cultural events held annually as a result of tourism funding.

Importantly, regenerative tourism is **place-based**. It is tailored to the unique ecological, cultural, and economic contexts of a destination rather than following a one-size-fits-all model (Pollock, 2019). This place-based orientation aligns closely with the needs of coastal destinations like Raigad, where the natural environment (beaches, mangroves, marine ecosystems) and the cultural environment (fishing traditions, forts, temples) are deeply intertwined. Regeneration in such contexts must address both ecological restoration and cultural revitalization, recognizing that they are mutually reinforcing.

Another distinguishing feature is that regenerative tourism requires **systemic thinking**. Tourism is not treated as an isolated sector, but rather as part of a broader socio-ecological system that encompasses local governance, supply chains, education, and infrastructure. Regenerative approaches aim to strengthen these interconnections, ensuring that tourism supports, rather than undermines, the resilience of the entire system (Mang & Reed, 2012). For example, integrating local agricultural production into hotel supply chains can reduce carbon footprints, enhance food security, and provide stable income for farmers.

Ultimately, regenerative tourism prioritizes long-term transformation over short-term fixes. This entails shifting mindsets among all stakeholders—from tourists to policymakers—toward prioritizing long-term

ecological and social health over short-term profits. It requires governance frameworks that prioritize restoration and community benefit, investment in capacity-building for local communities, and continuous learning to adapt to changing environmental and market conditions. For destinations like Raigad, this could mean embedding regenerative principles into tourism master plans, zoning regulations, and promotional strategies, thereby ensuring that the sector contributes to the regeneration of both nature and culture for decades to come.

The theoretical divide between sustainability and regeneration has been sharpened in recent discourse. While sustainability frameworks have historically emphasized conservation and harm reduction, scholars argue that such approaches are insufficient in the face of accelerating ecological crises.

Higgins-Desbiolles (2025) advances the discourse on regenerative tourism by examining its application in coastal Indigenous communities, highlighting the interplay between ecological restoration and cultural revitalization. Their study demonstrates that regenerative tourism is not only an environmental strategy but also a socio-cultural process that empowers Indigenous knowledge systems and community-led governance. In coastal contexts, they show how initiatives such as marine ecosystem rehabilitation, traditional food practices, and place-based storytelling foster both ecological resilience and cultural continuity. Notably, the authors argue that regenerative principles must be embedded within local cosmologies and values rather than imposed through external sustainability frameworks, ensuring authenticity and long-term community ownership. Their findings underscore the relevance of integrating Indigenous perspectives into regenerative destination planning, offering valuable insights for coastal regions like Raigad, where traditional livelihoods and cultural heritage are deeply intertwined with ecological wellbeing.

Recent scholarship on climate coloniality underscores the importance of situating regenerative tourism within broader discussions on justice and Indigenous futures. The lens of climate coloniality and settler colonialism underscores how dominant climate adaptation strategies often reproduce historical patterns of marginalization, dispossession, and extractive relations with Indigenous lands and communities (Islam et al., 2024). Such perspectives caution against universalized "sustainability" solutions that neglect local knowledge and perpetuate asymmetrical power relations. Instead, they call for decolonial approaches that recognize Indigenous sovereignty, prioritize cultural survival, and enable futures grounded in Indigenous epistemologies. In the context of coastal tourism, this means that regenerative initiatives must not only restore ecological systems but also address and challenge the structural inequities embedded in tourism governance and development. Integrating Indigenous futurities into regenerative models thus offers a pathway for truly transformative tourism that is socially just, ecologically restorative, and culturally grounded.

DECOLONISING INDIGENOUS TOURISM: RECONCILIATION, TRUTH-TELLING, WHITENESS AND WELCOME TO COUNTRY IN AUSTRALIA emphasizes that decolonising Indigenous tourism requires moving beyond surface-level inclusion toward processes of truth-telling, reconciliation, and critical engagement with entrenched structures of whiteness. Her work on "Welcome to Country" ceremonies in Australia illustrates how symbolic gestures can risk being co-opted into performative acts unless embedded within genuine structural change and Indigenous authority. Decolonisation in this context means centering Indigenous voices, acknowledging histories of dispossession, and ensuring that tourism practices contribute to self-determination rather than reinforcing settler-colonial narratives. For regenerative tourism, this perspective underscores that ecological restoration must be inseparable from cultural justice and reconciliation. By foregrounding Indigenous sovereignty and addressing power imbalances, decolonial approaches expand the regenerative paradigm, ensuring that tourism development in coastal contexts does not replicate extractive relationships but instead supports community empowerment and intercultural truth-telling.

Empirical perspectives from tourism destination planners further highlight the growing traction of regenerative tourism principles. A study conducted in Aotearoa, New Zealand, found that planners increasingly perceive regeneration as essential for addressing both ecological decline and community wellbeing, moving beyond sustainability's "not harm" ethos (Pung et al., 2024). Respondents emphasized that regenerative tourism requires embedding Indigenous values, fostering long-term ecological restoration, and prioritizing community benefit over short-term economic gain. Notably, the study revealed that while planners support regenerative ideas conceptually, practical challenges persist, including policy inertia, limited funding, and the dominance of traditional, growth-oriented tourism

models. These insights suggest that for regenerative frameworks, such as a reinterpreted 7A's Model, to be effective, they must be institutionalized in planning systems and accompanied by governance mechanisms that align stakeholders around restoration and reciprocity(Sharma et al., 2024; Tegelberg & Griffin, 2024)

Regenerative Tourism: Opportunities and Challenges (2023) identifies regenerative tourism as a critical evolution of sustainable tourism, emphasizing its potential to create net-positive impacts for destinations. Their study highlights opportunities such as integrating community wellbeing, ecological restoration, and cultural revitalization into tourism planning. At the same time, they caution that challenges remain, including limited stakeholder awareness, fragmented governance, and the risk of regenerative principles being diluted into marketing rhetoric. These insights underscore the need for structured frameworks, such as a regenerative adaptation of the 7A's Model, to operationalize regenerative tourism effectively.

In summary, regenerative tourism provides a framework for transforming coastal tourism from an extractive, consumption-driven industry into a restorative, community-empowering force. Its principles—restoration, reciprocity, co-creation, net-positive impact, place-based design, systemic thinking, and long-term transformation—offer both a philosophical foundation and practical guidance. These principles set the stage for reimagining established tourism planning tools, such as the 7A's Model, to serve not only as an inventory of tourism assets but also as a blueprint for ecological and cultural regeneration.

Tourism destination planners have long valued the 7A's Model for its clarity, comprehensiveness, and adaptability. Its strength lies in breaking down the tourism product into seven interrelated components—**Attractions, Accessibility, Amenities, Accommodation, Activities, Available Packages, and Ancillary Services**—that can be systematically evaluated and improved (Morrison, 2013). However, as discussed earlier, its traditional application is rooted in a **supply-side, market-oriented perspective**, often emphasizing economic outputs and service readiness rather than long-term ecological resilience or community empowerment (Dwyer & Kim, 2003). In the context of coastal tourism, where environmental degradation and cultural erosion are pressing concerns, the 7A's framework requires a reorientation that integrates **regenerative tourism principles** into each element.

One of the key reasons the 7A's Model is a strong candidate for adaptation is its **structural familiarity** among tourism planners, policymakers, and destination management organizations. Because the Model is already widely used as a diagnostic and planning tool, incorporating regenerative elements into it can facilitate **mainstream adoption** of restorative practices without requiring entirely new frameworks. This approach allows destinations to retain the operational strengths of the Model—its ability to identify gaps, set priorities, and allocate resources—while aligning it with contemporary sustainability and regeneration imperatives.

Several scholars have attempted to embed **sustainability** into tourism planning tools, providing a precedent for regenerative integration. For example, Weaver (2006) incorporated eco-certification indicators into destination assessment checklists, while Miller (2001) developed sustainability metrics for tourism through a Delphi survey of researchers. Community-based tourism frameworks (Scheyvens, 1999) have also emphasized empowerment, equity, and cultural preservation. However, these adaptations often stop at **impact mitigation**—reducing harm rather than actively generating positive outcomes. Regenerative tourism, by contrast, seeks **net-positive impacts** through actions such as ecosystem restoration, cultural revitalization, and socio-economic reciprocity. The gap in current literature lies in **operationalizing** these regenerative goals within established, actionable models, such as the 7A's.

Each component of the 7A's Model has a **natural alignment point** with regenerative principles. For example, **attractions** can be reframed as "Restorative Attractions," emphasizing sites where tourism contributes to ecological recovery or cultural preservation—such as mangrove replanting experiences or heritage fort restoration projects. **Accessibility** can prioritize low-carbon transport solutions, such as electric ferries, bicycle lanes, and pedestrian-friendly beachside promenades. **Amenities** can be reimagined as eco-conscious facilities, powered by renewable energy and designed to minimize waste. In **accommodation,** the regenerative approach could promote community-owned homestays, cooperatives, and eco-lodges that reinvest profits into local regeneration projects.

Similarly, **activities** could focus on co-creative and participatory experiences, allowing visitors to engage directly in conservation work, cultural exchanges, or skill-sharing programs. **Available packages** could be curated to integrate environmental education, local craft workshops, and conservation volunteering, ensuring that tourism itineraries contribute to both visitor satisfaction and community wellbeing. Finally,

Ancillary Services could adopt circular economy principles—such as refill stations, recycling hubs, and local craft cooperatives—ensuring that supporting infrastructure also serves the regenerative mission.

The integration of regenerative principles into the 7A's framework would also **enhance its evaluative capacity**. Rather than merely assessing whether a destination has "adequate amenities" or "sufficient accommodation," the revised Model could evaluate whether those amenities and accommodations actively improve environmental quality, cultural vitality, and local livelihoods. This shift changes the definition of a "competitive" destination from one that maximizes visitor numbers and spending to one that maximizes **net-positive outcomes** for all stakeholders, including the natural environment.

From a governance perspective, embedding regenerative elements into the 7A's Model encourages **multi-stakeholder collaboration**. Coastal tourism development often involves local governments, private investors, community groups, and NGOs. The regenerative 7A's framework could serve as a **shared language** for aligning these actors around common goals, making it easier to secure funding, coordinate policies, and monitor progress. For instance, in Raigad, such a framework could guide joint initiatives between the tourism department, local fishing cooperatives, and environmental NGOs to ensure that development projects support both ecological restoration and community livelihoods.

Adapting the 7A to a regenerative lens also provides **policy leverage**. Many tourism policies are currently framed around infrastructure provision, investment promotion, and marketing campaigns. By incorporating regenerative criteria into each of the seven components, policymakers can create incentives for businesses and communities to adopt restorative practices—through tax benefits for eco-certified accommodations, grants for cultural preservation projects, or priority marketing for destinations with verified regenerative initiatives.

In conclusion, the 7A's Model, while traditionally focused on market readiness and visitor experience, has the structural flexibility to be **transformed into a regenerative planning tool**. By aligning each "A" with principles such as restoration, reciprocity, co-creation, and net-positive impact, the Model can help coastal destinations like Raigad transition from extractive growth to **restorative development**. This integration not only fills a theoretical gap in tourism literature but also provides a **practical, scalable framework** for policymakers, planners, and communities seeking to balance tourism development with the regeneration of their ecological and cultural heritage.

3. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The literature review established that while the **7A's Model** has been a valuable tool for tourism destination planning, its traditional application does not sufficiently address the pressing ecological, cultural, and socio-economic challenges faced by coastal regions. At the same time, the emerging paradigm of **regenerative tourism** offers a transformative approach that goes beyond sustaining resources to actively restoring and enhancing them. The **conceptual framework** proposed here integrates these two strands of scholarship, adapting the 7A's Model to incorporate regenerative principles and provide a practical tool for planning and managing coastal tourism development. The rationale behind re-examining the 7A's Model is grounded in three key reflections. First, the **increasing vulnerability of coastal destinations** like Raigad to environmental degradation, climate change, and overtourism demands a planning framework that prioritizes restoration and resilience alongside market readiness. Second, the **proven operational utility** of the 7A's Model makes it an ideal platform for integrating new sustainability and regeneration criteria without discarding the familiarity and acceptance it enjoys among policymakers, tourism boards, and practitioners. Third, there is a **gap in the literature**: while various sustainability indicators and community-based tourism frameworks exist, none have systematically embedded regenerative tourism principles into the 7A's structure.

The **Regenerative 7A's Model** retains the original seven components but redefines them to emphasize ecological restoration, cultural revitalization, and equitable community benefit. Each "A" is reframed to reflect regenerative priorities, ensuring that tourism development is not only economically viable but also socially and environmentally restorative.

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Table 1 Traditional vs. Regenerative 7A's

Traditional 7A's	Regenerative Adaptation	Illustrative Examples (Coastal Context)
Attractions	**Restorative Attractions**—Attractions that contribute to environmental and cultural regeneration.	Mangrove reforestation tours, heritage fort restoration volunteer programs, and marine biodiversity conservation zones.
Accessibility	**Low-Impact Accessibility**—Transport options that minimize carbon footprint and protect sensitive habitats.	Electric ferries, cycling networks, pedestrian-only beach access, and eco-friendly shuttle services.
Amenities	**Eco-Conscious Amenities** – Facilities designed for minimal environmental impact and community benefit.	Solar-powered public lighting, zero-waste beach cafes, composting toilets, and rainwater harvesting rest areas.
Accommodation	**Community-Owned and Regenerative Accommodation refers to lodging** that reinvests profits into local restoration and welfare projects.	Eco-lodges run by fishing cooperatives, homestays funding beach cleanups, and renewable-energy guesthouses.
Activities	**Co-Creative and Participatory Activities**—Experiences where tourists and locals collaborate to generate positive impacts.	Coral reef restoration dives, cultural skill-sharing workshops, and coastal cleanup drives.
Available Packages	**Regeneration-Centered Packages**—Itineraries that integrate learning, restoration, and cultural immersion.	Week-long regenerative tourism programs, including conservation volunteering and cultural exchanges.
Ancillary Services	**Circular Economy Services** – Supporting infrastructure that reduces waste and promotes local economic cycles.	Refill stations, recycling hubs, community craft cooperatives, and local organic produce supply chains.

3.1. Core Principles Embedded in the Model

Each redefined "A" incorporates the **core principles of regenerative tourism** identified in Section 2.3:

- **Restoration**—Ensuring that all tourism activities contribute to repairing ecological and cultural damage.
- **Reciprocity**—facilitating mutual benefits for visitors and host communities.
- **Co-Creation**—Designing experiences collaboratively with local stakeholders.
- **Net-Positive Impact**—Generating measurable improvements in ecosystem health, cultural vitality, and community wellbeing.
- **Place-Based Orientation** – Tailoring interventions to the specific environmental and cultural context of the destination.
- **Systemic Thinking**—Integrating tourism planning with broader community and environmental systems.
- **Long-Term Transformation**—Prioritizing strategies with enduring benefits over short-term gains.

3.2. Visual Model

The **visual structure** of the Regenerative 7A's Model can be represented as a **concentric framework**:

- *At the **core**:* Community wellbeing *and* Ecosystem Health, *representing the twin goals of regenerative tourism.*
- In the **middle ring**: The seven regenerative "A's," each redefined as per the table above.
- In the **outer ring**: Stakeholder collaboration and policy support mechanisms that enable the implementation of regenerative practices.

Arrows connect each "A" to the central core, emphasizing that every tourism component should contribute directly to ecological and social regeneration.

3.3 Theoretical Contribution

The proposed Regenerative 7A's Model contributes to tourism theory by **operationalizing regenerative principles** within a widely recognized planning framework. It addresses the criticism that regenerative tourism,
while

philosophically compelling, often lacks actionable tools for implementation. By retaining the clarity of the original 7A's while embedding restoration and reciprocity into each component, the Model bridges the gap between theory and practice.

3.4 Practical Relevance

For destinations like Raigad, the Regenerative 7A's Model offers a **roadmap for transition** from extractive tourism development to regenerative destination management. It can be applied as

1. An **assessment tool** to evaluate the current state of tourism components in regenerative terms.
2. A **planning guide** to prioritize investments in infrastructure, training, and product development.
3. A **monitoring framework** to track ecological and cultural indicators alongside economic performance.

3.5 Application Scope

While the framework is designed with coastal destinations in mind, its principles are adaptable to other tourism contexts, including rural, heritage, and adventure tourism. The Model's flexibility allows it to be customized for different ecological zones, cultural settings, and governance structures, making it a potentially universal tool for regenerative tourism planning.

4. METHODOLOGY

This study employs a conceptual and theoretical research design to develop an adapted tourism planning framework—the Regenerative 7A's Model—by synthesizing insights from the literature on the traditional 7A's Model, coastal tourism development issues, and regenerative tourism principles. Conceptual research designs are increasingly recognized as essential for advancing theoretical frameworks in tourism studies. Jaakkola (2020) argues that conceptual papers contribute by integrating fragmented knowledge, proposing new models, and setting the stage for empirical testing. In this context, developing the Regenerative 7A's Model as a theory-building exercise is aligned with scholarly calls to strengthen conceptual contributions in tourism planning literaturPositioned within an interpretivist paradigm, the research is qualitative and theory-building in nature. It relies exclusively on secondary data sourced from peer-reviewed journals, policy reports, industry publications, and relevant case studies from both global and Indian coastal contexts, accessed through databases such as Scopus, Web of Science, JSTOR, and

Google Scholar. Tourism research has long utilized secondary data sources such as policy reports, industry publications, and statistical compendiums to build theoretical models. Jaakkola (2020) highlights that secondary data analysis is particularly useful when empirical fieldwork is constrained, allowing researchers to synthesize diverse insights into coherent frameworks. This approach is therefore appropriate for reconceptualizing the 7A's Model using global and Indian coastal tourism cases.The analytical approach followed a **thematic synthesis**, enabling the identification of conceptual intersections between the 7A's Model and regenerative principles such as restoration, reciprocity, co-creation, and net-positive impact. Thematic synthesis has emerged as a valuable method for reviewing and interpreting qualitative literature. Thomas & Harden (2008) define it as a systematic approach that codes findings from existing studies, identifies themes, and builds higher-order constructs. In tourism research, this technique has been applied to link diverse sustainability concepts into unified frameworks, making it well-suited for integrating regenerative principles into the 7A's Model.The framework development process unfolded in three stages: deconstructing the original 7A to understand its component functions, mapping regenerative tourism principles to each "A" based on conceptual compatibility, and reconstructing the Model to integrate ecological, cultural, and community wellbeing objectives. This literature-based synthesis is justified as the research problem is theoretical in nature, the contribution sought is a framework rather than an empirical case, and the study serves as a foundation for future empirical testing. However, the approach has limitations, as the proposed Model has not yet been field-tested, and its applicability may vary depending on contextual factors. As such, future research should adopt mixed-method empirical designs to validate and refine the Model in real-world coastal tourism destinations.

5. FINDINGS

The conceptual synthesis carried out in this study confirms that while the **traditional 7A's Model** remains a valuable framework for tourism planning and destination assessment, its conventional orientation is largely grounded in **supply-side economic metrics**, with insufficient mechanisms to address the complex socio-ecological challenges faced by contemporary coastal destinations. The analysis of existing literature on coastal tourism development revealed recurring issues—such as carrying capacity breaches, habitat degradation, cultural commodification, economic leakages, and vulnerability to climate change—that are insufficiently captured in the original 7A's framework. Concurrently, the review of regenerative tourism scholarship indicated that principles such as **restoration**, **reciprocity**, **co-creation**, **net-positive impact**, **place-based design**, and **systemic thinking** hold significant potential to reorient tourism planning toward long-term ecological and community resilience. The juxtaposition of these two knowledge domains demonstrated that each "A" in the Model could be reframed to embed regenerative imperatives without compromising its functional clarity for practitioners.

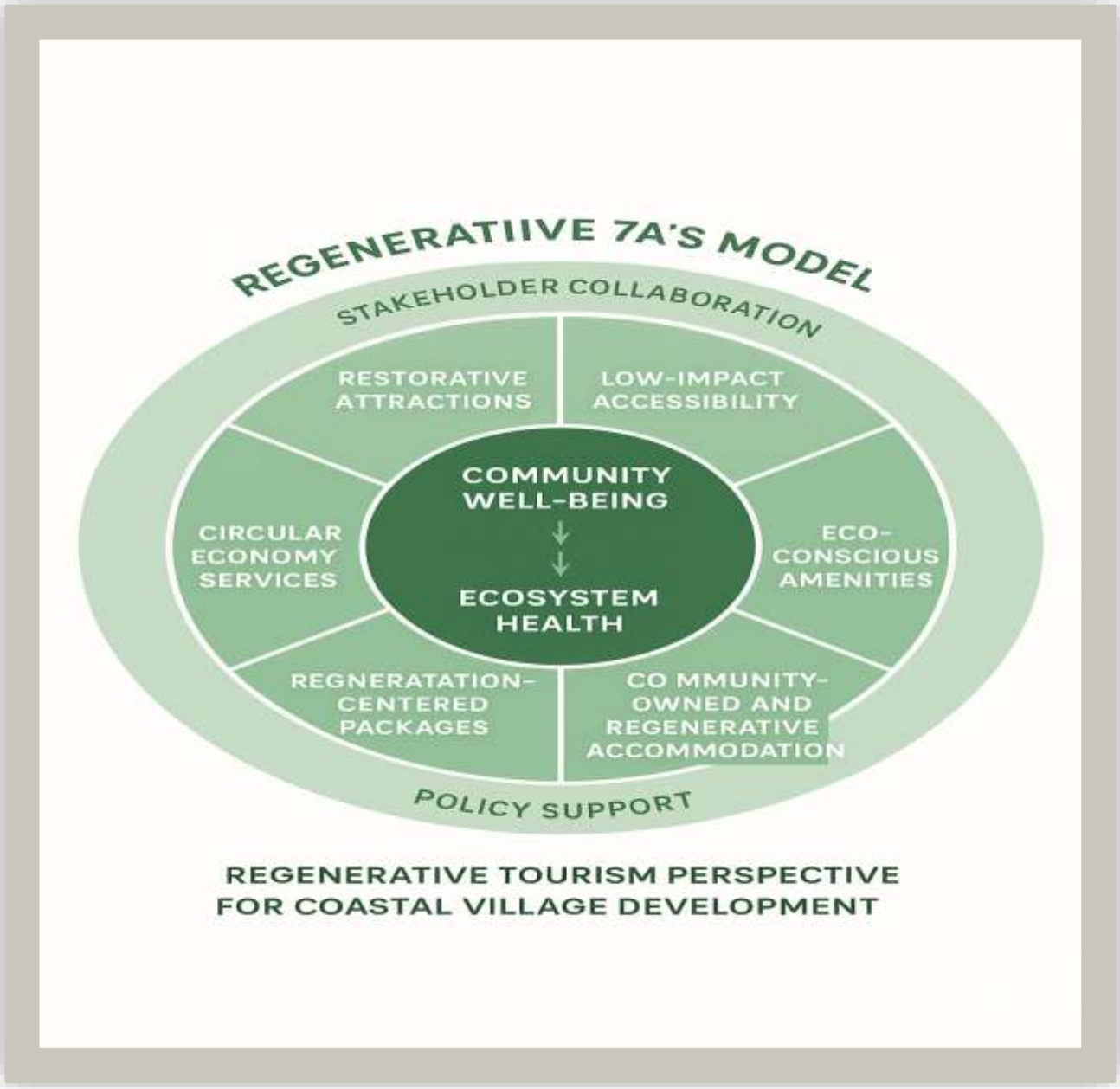
Specifically, **attractions** can be reconceptualized as *restorative attractions* that serve as both tourism draws and sites of ecological or cultural renewal—such as mangrove reforestation programs, coral reef rehabilitation dives, or heritage fort restoration initiatives involving visitor participation. **Accessibility**, traditionally focused on physical connectivity, can be broadened to *low-impact accessibility,* prioritizing low-carbon mobility solutions, environmentally sensitive infrastructure placement, and equitable transport access for both locals and tourists. **Amenities** can be redesigned as *eco-conscious amenities,* integrating renewable energy systems, water conservation technologies, and zero-waste operations, thereby transforming them from basic visitor services into catalysts for regenerative practice.

Similarly, **accommodation** can evolve into *community-owned and regenerative accommodation,* where ownership structures and operational models ensure that a significant portion of tourism revenue is reinvested into local restoration projects, skills development, and livelihood diversification. **Activities** can shift from passive entertainment to *co-creative and participatory experiences* that position visitors as active contributors to ecological restoration and cultural preservation. Available packages can be restructured into regeneration-centered itineraries that combine immersive cultural learning with hands-on conservation engagement. Finally, **ancillary services** can adopt a *circular economy approach,* ensuring that supporting systems—from waste management to souvenir production—are designed to minimize resource extraction and maximize local value retention.

The *Regenerative 7A's Model* emerging from this synthesis thus represents a **dual-function framework**: it retains the operational strengths of the traditional 7A for inventorying and assessing tourism resources,

while simultaneously embedding measurable regenerative objectives into each component. In doing so, it bridges a critical gap in the tourism planning literature by operationalizing regenerative principles into a practical and scalable model. Hypothetical application to the coastal context of Raigad, Maharashtra, demonstrates that the Model can be used not only as a planning guide but also as a **strategic tool for policy integration**, community engagement, and investment prioritization. By framing tourism components as vehicles for regeneration rather than mere economic assets, the Model offers a pathway for transforming coastal tourism from an extractive growth paradigm into a **restorative, place-sensitive, and future-resilient development approach**.

Conceptual Framework



6. CONCLUSION

This study set out to reconceptualize the traditional 7A's Model through a regenerative tourism lens, with a focus on its application to coastal village development. The first objective—to critically examine the limitations of the traditional 7A is in addressing the interconnected challenges of environmental degradation, socio-cultural erosion, and unequal economic distribution—was achieved through a

comprehensive thematic synthesis of literature on tourism planning, coastal tourism issues, and regenerative tourism principles. The second objective—to develop the *Regenerative 7A's Model* as a practical yet theoretically robust framework—was fulfilled by systematically embedding regenerative principles such as restoration, reciprocity, co-creation, and net-positive impact into each "A" of the original Model. The resulting framework retains the operational clarity and familiarity of the traditional 7A's while transforming it into a tool that guides destinations toward ecological restoration, cultural revitalization, and community wellbeing.

The findings demonstrate that the Regenerative 7A's Model offers both theoretical and practical value, enabling policymakers, planners, and community stakeholders to transition coastal tourism from extractive growth models to regenerative, place-sensitive, and future-resilient pathways. However, as a conceptual model, its application remains untested in the field, and its effectiveness will depend on destination-specific contexts, governance structures, and stakeholder engagement. Future empirical research is therefore recommended to validate the Model across diverse geographic and socio-cultural settings, refine its components based on real-world application, and develop measurable indicators for tracking regenerative outcomes over time. **Recommendations** arising from this study include integrating the Regenerative 7A's into official tourism master plans; providing training and capacity-building programs for local communities to participate in regenerative tourism activities actively; incentivizing businesses that adopt regenerative practices through policy support and financial mechanisms; and establishing multi-stakeholder platforms to ensure co-creation and continuous feedback in destination management. **The limitations of this research stem primarily from its conceptual nature, reliance on secondary literature, and lack** of empirical validation. Additionally, while the Model has been illustrated in the context of coastal tourism in Raigad, its transferability to other contexts may require significant adaptation to account for local ecological, cultural, and economic conditions. Despite these limitations, the study successfully addresses the identified research gap and fulfills its stated objectives, providing a solid theoretical foundation for advancing both academic discourse and practical strategies in regenerative tourism planning.

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