Issues and challenges in implementing sharing economy in tourism: a triangulation study

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Abstract

Purpose – The paper aims to analyse the issues and challenges in implementing and adopting the sharing economy concept in tourism. More specifically, the paper intends to identify critical factors for seeking possible pathways for achieving sustainable development of the Indian tourism industry.

Design/methodology/approach – This research work has adopted the triangulation approach involving a twofold study concerning the perspectives of both service providers and customers. To cull deeper insight, an inductive content analysis was carried out to identify the critical factors influencing sharing economy in tourism and establish them as key research areas for further study.

Findings – The study identified seven critical influencing factors, namely, affordability, consciousness, cultural involvement, status quo biasness, socio-environmental responsiveness, regulatory supervision and technological drivers concerning sharing economy in tourism.

Research limitations/implications – This study will expand the existing literature by exploring the critical factors relevant to the practice of sharing economy in the tourism industry. It will aid both marketers and policymakers to bridge the gap between what sharing economy concept demands, what consumers perceive and how service providers practise in reality. The present study limits its scope to qualitative analysis and geographical boundary within India. Further research with empirical study may be extended in future, with the research agendas presented in this paper.

Originality/value – The novelty of the study lies in the identification of both intrinsic and extrinsic factors affecting the implementation of sharing economy in tourism. To delve deeper into the ground reality, this qualitative study corroborates the perspectives of both the demand and supply side, which is a unique effort by itself.

Keywords Sharing economy, Indian tourism, Sustainability, Content analysis, Triangulation approach

Paper type Research paper

1. Introduction

The concept of "Sharing" is certainly not pristine anymore (Belk, 2010). Recent years have witnessed a significant boost in the concept of "sharing economy" that has been growing rapidly while impacting various aspects of today's socio-economic system. The term collaborative consumption or sharing economy (SE), first coined by Marcus Felson and Joe L. Spaeth (1978), means the shared use of goods or services. In case of a normal consumption, an individual pays a full cost for a particular good and keeps its ownership, whereas collaborative consumption allows multiple accesses and enables sharing of cost between the users. The socio-economic conditions that strive for better value creation of supply chain (Gansky, 2010) minimise the ecological impacts (Schor and Fitzmaurice, 2015), and responding to the growing customer's need for social connection and product ownership (Botsman and Rogers, 2010) account for the rapid growth of SE concept. Not only is the concept gaining popularity in terms of users or amount of investment by the business houses (Botsman and Rogers, 2010), but its competitive business model is also challenging conventional service providers. The concept of collaborative consumption or sharing

economy is not a niche trend anymore as SE has made in-roads in various sectors such as property, transportation, education, fashion, healthcare and consumer goods. Since inception, the impact of SE has been observed in mainstream practices in many aspects of the tourism and hospitality sectors. The contribution of SE in the tourism industry is not only confined to the accommodation sector, but visitors and residents also share cars, meals and local knowledge between them (Sigala, 2015). Through SE, visitors get a better value for money with reduced cost, meaningful social encounters with locals and an authentic tourism experience (Forno and Garibaldi, 2015; Sigala, 2015). From a supply perspective, SE has widened the supply of various tourism options. It has enabled easy access to set up a tourism business at a reduced start-up cost (Nadler, 2014), which allows service providers to market sustainable tourism products with self-employment opportunities. SE has facilitated start-ups to opt for online platforms to market their product and services at affordable rates compared to traditional service providers (Shaheen *et al.*, 2012). More importantly, through offering alternative tourism services, SE has enabled tourist destinations to respond to peak season demand while benefitting the local community financially (Juul, 2015). Acknowledging the benefits of SE, scholars, practitioners and policymakers across the world are also increasingly concerned with its unchecked and rapid growth (Cheng, 2016; Dredge and Gyimóthy, 2015). This has invoked a series of discourse regarding whether, in practicality, this disruptive form of the economy will achieve an equitable and sustainable growth (Martin, 2016; Schor, 2016; Leung *et al.*, 2019). Among the major concerns with sharing economy includes its increasing casualisation of the workforce, unfair competitions between traditional business and sharing economy participants, monopolisation of companies involved in sharing economy and evasion of government regulations (Cheng and Edwards, 2019; Leung *et al.*, 2019; Schor and Fitzmaurice, 2015; Williams and Horodnic, 2017). Being socially and culturally unique, India, a developing country, is fast adopting the concept of sharing economy in various fields like accommodation and transportation (Agatz *et al.*, 2012; Panda *et al.*, 2015). This study aims to delve deeper to identify the issues and challenges in the implementation of sharing economy at ground level by focussing on the level of understanding, openness to newer experience and so forth while exploring the factors affecting and influencing its growth or its failure for successfully practising SE. A triangulation approach of research is adopted that involve both customer and service provider to reconnoitre their perspective. Qualitative content analysis is carried out to extract meaningful factors from the data collected through a survey (customer) and in-depth interviews (service provider). The study intends to bring authentic inputs and establish them as critical factors that may aid the marketers and policymakers to craft a customer-driven marketing strategy benefitting each stakeholder in the tourism industry.

2. Literature review
The literature review section has been subdivided into three major sub-sections which are sharing economy, tourism and sharing economy and motivating drivers nurturing SE concept in India.

2.1 Sharing economy
Aided by social network technologies and driven by shared values, customers across the world are increasingly embracing the concept of sharing economy and indulging themselves in collaborative consumption (Bardhi and Eckhardt, 2012; Lamberton and Rose, 2012). Botsman and Rogers (2011) have defined the concept of sharing economy or collaborative consumption as the sharing of goods and other resources among multiple users during their useful life span. Sharing allows existing goods and resources to be used fully without letting

them stay dormant and unutilised (sharing of car, house, peer-to-peer interactions). A wide array of definitions on sharing economy is available in the literature (Richardson, 2015). Belk (2010, 2014) has defined the sharing economy as a socio-economic system, where acquisition and distribution of resources are coordinated with each other. This creates a triadic exchange among customers (tourists), service providers (residents having underutilised/spare accommodation and transportation facilities) and service platforms provider (Airbnb, Uber) (Benoit *et al.*, 2017). Dredge and Gyimóthy (2015) tabulated 17 terms in relation with sharing economy, which include sharing economy, collaborative consumption, social sharing and peer-to-peer economy. They conceptualised sharing economy based on three factors: models of economic systems, human coexistence and efficiency. Frenken and Schor (2019) also characterised sharing economy based on three facets which are consumer-to-consumer interaction, physical goods and temporary access.

2.1.1 Benefits of sharing economy. According to Bellin (2017), the economic benefits of SE are twofold. Extra income to owners forms the primary benefit, and reduced cost and risk of ownership to clients is the second benefit. Schor (2016) categorised the SE process into four main facets, which are recirculation of goods, increased utilisation of durable assets, exchange of services and sharing of productive assets. SE ensures products are reused to its complete life cycle, thereby reducing the impact on the environment. SE's contribution to societal issues is not only restricted to the environment, but it instils trust among community members. The trust-building initiative offered by SE sees one another as equal and builds constructive relationship which never existed before. Collaborative consumption, or SE as we interchangeably refer to the concept, offers economic benefits for everyone involved. SE offers an extra source of income where people can work from the comfort of their home and increase more business opportunity. Service providers like Ola, Uber and OLX have presented sharing services for consumers, bringing in more job opportunities, utilising unused resources and providing more scope for cost-saving options while maintaining a desired lifestyle. SE eliminates the cost of ownership, reduces expenses and secures valuable financial support for a novel business idea which may not have been fundable otherwise. Without sacrificing on quality, business houses are increasingly bringing in collaborative platforms that benefit every stakeholder involved. Its rapid growth and substantial impacts on various socio-economic aspects have stimulated public interest in the last five years. Researchers focussed on the marketing of SE (Liu and Mattila, 2017), pricing and price determinants of SE services (Chen and Xie, 2017), traveller's behaviour (Priporas *et al.*, 2017), travel experiences and value co-creation (Brochado *et al.*, 2017), the interaction between host-guest (Karlsson *et al.*, 2017; Paulauskaite, *et al.*, 2017) and competition with hotels (Gutiérrez *et al.*, 2017). Benefits of SE have been represented in Figure 1.
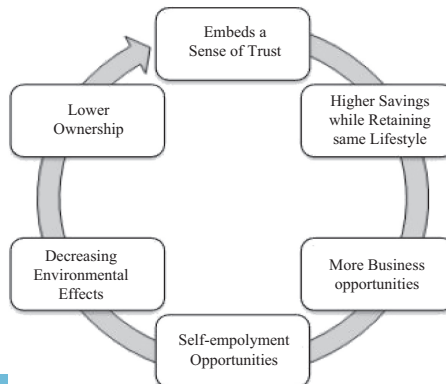

Figure 1.
Benefits of SE

2.1.2 Rising concern with sharing economy. Along with the rapid growth of the SE, there is also a rise in concern among the academicians that has triggered a discussion on the trade-off between its merits and drawbacks (Schor, 2016). In spite of SE's contribution towards the income for the hosts, it will still result in the casualisation of labour, with no security coverage, and will be only dependent on a single source of income (Schor and Fitzmaurice, 2015). There is also a rise in apprehension among the policymakers and regulatory authorities as they fear that many start-ups embracing the SE concept will eventually default and bypass government regulations. This will have a series of impacts on compliance standards, affect safety and security of consumers and workers and jeopardise the process of upholding consumer's rights (Juul, 2015; Rauch and Schleicher, 2015). Bellin (2017) also listed safety regulation, employee identity, consumer protection issues and tax obligations among some of the challenges offered by SE. Critics of SE has denounced it on the grounds of its confusing definition, lack of regulation, overdisruptive power and for its predatory and exploitative nature (Gonzalez-Padron, 2017). Companies adopting the SE concept have been treated as a threat to safety and displacement of residential communities with the creation of housing shortages and tenant problems (Edelman and Geradin, 2015). In some cases, the intermediaries or start-ups are found to be involved in tax evasion and unfair competition. In regard to market competition, hoteliers perceive companies embracing the concept of SE as a threat to traditional tourism and hospitality businesses, mainly concerned with low-priced budget hotels. Additionally, researchers argue that the concept of SE largely benefits privileged middle-class people who possess a high level of cultural capital rather than those who are unemployed or living in rural areas (Schor and Fitzmaurice, 2015). Further, in addition to it, Dredge and Gyimóthy (2015) argued that the authentic tourist-host interactions only exist between privileged and like-minded members of the society.

2.2 Motivating drivers nurturing SE concept in India

India being a developing country is socially and culturally unique and is speedily adapting international trends. Being one of the largest storehouses of millennial population, India bears enormous opportunity to prosper in both the travel and tourism industry. According to Bernardi (2018), millennials form positive taste and preference for personal growth and life experience, can influence the consumption behaviour of each other and have increasing purchasing power. Having more than 65% of the population under the age of 35, millennials in India hold immense potential to embrace the concept of SE and shape the development of their economy. Urban areas along with tier-1 and tier-2 cities are witnessing a spurt in ride-sharing services. Tourist destinations have also witnessed a rise in accommodation sharing, generating additional income. In comparison with the Western counterparts, per capita purchasing capacity of an individual here is still very low, which makes more sense for Indians to go for rental or pre-owned products. Among the other drivers that will enable India to make the SE concept a more viable option are its high population density and increased urbanisation. To deal with this dual pressure, SE concept is a boon in disguise which makes efficient utilisation of available resources in hand. India has progressed in embracing SE concept as consumers these days are buying pre-owned goods from one another (OLX, eBay), opting for shared travel services and rental services (Ola, Uber, Zoomcar) and having increased preference for home-stay facilities over costly hotel chains (Airbnb, Oyo). All these companies depend heavily on their digital platform to connect with their consumers (Gonzalez-Padron, 2017). Although sharing cab services like Ola and Uber has been brought under the motor vehicles act, the provisions are still not so stringent. This demands more regulations, effective implementation and continuous supervision. Even in shared accommodation perspectives, apart from Airbnb and Oyo, there are numerous small and unauthorised room aggregators who hardly serve standard quality service (Kaushal, 2018).

There is also a rise in environmental concern among the Indian population (Gupta *et al.*, 2018; Gupta and Racherla, 2018), which has prompted them to embrace the SE concept quite seriously.

This study aims to identify the contemporary issues and challenges concerning the implementation of SE concept in tourism industry with a focus on Indian tourism market. The emerging issues will be categorised into important factors, and in turn classified under the intrinsic and extrinsic categories.

3. Methodology

The present study adopts the triangulation approach of research to get insight into the applicability of the SE concept in the tourism sector. The term "triangulation" as a research approach was first introduced in social science discipline by Webb *et al.* (1966) and inducted into the tourism research through the works of Seaton (1997). Social scientists have defined triangulation as a process of using multiple methods to approach a research question and "zero in" on the answers or information sought (Singleton *et al.*, 1993). It also refers to the application and combination of various research methods to study the same phenomenon (Jonsen and Jehn, 2009), which is equally gaining importance in tourism field as a "new" research method (Ingram *et al.*, 2017; Molina-Azorín and Font, 2016; Oppermann, 2000). Researchers argue that shortcomings in any one of the method can be overcome by amalgamating it with other methods and thus capitalising on the individual strength of different approaches (Blaikie, 1991) Triangulation method allows researchers to use different sources of information or collect data through multiple methods that help in overcoming the problem of biasness (Ingram *et al.*, 2017) and increase the level of validity and credibility of the research (Bogdan and Biklen, 2006). Greene *et al.* (1989) discussed triangulation as multi-strategy research that seeks convergence and corroboration of results from various methods studying the same phenomenon, which increases validity and credibility of the findings (Gorard and Taylor, 2004; Greene *et al.*, 2005). The cross-validation complementarity enabled by triangulation process allows the researcher to seek elaboration and a better understanding of the research problem (Hesse-Biber, 2010; Yauch and Steudel, 2003). Paradoxes and contradictions are easily spotted using a triangulation approach that helps in framing research questions and sometimes in restructuring of design and objectives (Greene *et al.*, 2005). Triangulation approach enables researchers to detect shortcomings and advantages of one method, which, in turn, helps in developing and design other methods (Singh *et al.*, 2012) and enhances the breadth, depth and scope of research (Denzin, 1970). Denzin (1978a, b) categorised `triangulation' approaches into four distinct types, namely, methodological triangulation, data triangulation, investigator triangulation and multiple triangulation. Methodological triangulation includes approaching and measuring an object of interest with multiple research methods, for example, conducting a focus group session as well as surveying the participants with questionnaires (Decrop, 1999). Data triangulation mainly consists of applying the same approaches for different data sets to verify or falsify the generalisable trends identified in one single data set. Koc and Boz (2014a, b) emphasised on using more of triangulation study and have urged editors and publishers to encourage researchers to place greater focus on data triangulation. Investigator triangulation uses different investigators to collect and analyse data (Pansiri, 2005), and multiple triangulation process mainly involves using a combination of at least two of the above-mentioned triangulation methods Koc and Boz (2014a, b). The study here follows the multiple triangulation method by integrating methodological and data triangulation methods (Denzin, 1978a, b) to obtain relevant knowledge and achieve a critical understanding of the SE phenomenon.

The research follows a twofold study. Study 1 focussed on the service providers, whereas Study 2 focussed on the customers or the tourists. The rationale behind such measure is to corroborate the views and opinions from both the studies to reach a better understanding level of the current issues and challenges prevalent in the Indian tourism sector with regard to sharing economy. Study 1 comprises of in-depth interviews with 47 randomly selected tour operators and local service providers like guides, travel agents and home-stay facilitators. Respondents were interviewed in Darjeeling and Jalpaiguri districts of West Bengal (India). Darjeeling and Jalpaiguri have rich tourism resources which not only attract domestic tourist but also draw international tourist across the globe. The natural beauty, rich biodiversity and forests promote several forms of tourism like ecotourism, tea tourism, rural tourism, adventure tourism apart from mass tourism. These districts have UNESCO World Heritage Sites and have immense scope for home-stay tourism. A semi-structured questionnaire was developed to cull deeper insights into the issues and challenges of sharing economy. Open-ended questions enhanced the scope of gathering unstructured contents from the respondents. These were later probed using qualitative content analysis technique to downsize both structured and unstructured responses into factors or important factors that effectively represented the content and have supported the key arguments. Although the researchers have previous knowledge about sharing economy and its impact on the tourism sector, the study still follows an inductive content analysis to understand the issues and challenges impacting the implementation of sharing economy concept in the Indian tourism sector. This approach involved three main stages: preparing, organising and reporting of results which can also be described as open coding, category creation and abstraction (Elo and Kyngäs, 2008). Responses drawn from both the structured and semi-structured questionnaires were initially critically appraised with a thorough reading followed by the creation of categories in the first round (Burnard, 1991). The second phase organised those categories into broader categories based on their similarities and dissimilarities (Downe, 1992). The final phase named the broader categories based on their content or characteristics (Polit and Beck, 2004). The factors/factors identified in the initial phase were validated from a different data source point (consumers) following a different data collection method (survey). Study 2 considered survey of 325 tourists across various demographical characteristics, randomly chosen at a tourism fair in Kolkata (June 2019). This second phase of the study used structured questionnaires to probe the respondents. Further data cleansing yielded 265 correct responses, which were again filtered with qualitative content analysis technique to arrive at major factors/factors (Bernard *et al.*, 2016).

4. Findings
Observations along with authentic remarks from the respondents from the two studies have been presented in this section that depicts the ground-level status of applicability of SE concept in the tourism industry. Further analysis of the observations will surely present better insights for future researchers to work on.

4.1 Study 1
Study 1 involved in-depth interview with tour operators and local service providers like guides, travel agents and home-stay facilitators, who have been providing shared services to consumers.

Barring few, most of the tour operators had never heard of sharing economy concept. Briefing them with the basic notion of SE and gaining their confidence on the subject matter, the researchers gathered critical insights from them which have benefitted the present research.

Few of the operators responded that "*Keeping with the changing needs and preferences of customer*, we *provide environmentally and socially responsible products in our tour packages*".

On being enquired about the scope of applicability of SE concept in tourism, few operators acknowledged that *"We have specialized packages where tourists stay in the local accommodation, buy local artefacts, gets interested with local cultural projects, consumer local cuisine that directly contributes towards community development. Our tours run across the country benefiting local communities both economically and socially"*.

In addition, tour-operators have disclosed the fact that "*Initially customers are reluctant to even opt for home-stay facilities, but after convincing them, showing pictures and reviews, they happily go for home-stay accommodation facilities*".

Few of them also reported that *"Our tourists had many unpleasant experiences which even reached to the extent of altercation among them. Since then we ensure that consumers are served well and are treated well"*.

On being enquired about package cost, affordability and inclination for shared services, few operators responded as "*Social status and financial affordability act as deciding factors in availing shared facilities. High-end tourists usually prefer to stay in lavish resorts rather opting for a home-stay facilities and favour personalised hassle-free travel over group travel*".

A sense of collective belongingness or social belongingness amongst Indians makes them quite united in every action or activities they perform, which have emerged time and again through various researches (Lee and Robbins, 2000), has also been reflected through the communication with the tour operators. They responded like " *We engage tourist in various forms of community festivals, cultural programmes and they happily participate in those. . .Our aim is to maintain universal brotherhood and to provide a shared experience among the tourists while ensuring minimal impact on environment and on local community*".

Some of the challenges that have emerged out of the research are the low level of awareness, dearth of minimum skills and training, minimum infrastructural penetration and cultural differences among the local communities providing shared facilities to the customers. Many of them have voiced grave concern about service standard and quality of the home-stay facilities as they mentioned that "*Anyone can register their home-sty facilities and start tourism business. There is no control mechanism or even customer grievance handling facility is also missing there*".

Few of the home-stay facility providers mentioned that "*Customers knowingly ignore service rules and guidelines, behave recklessly and do not respect their culture and lifestyle. Often they complain about facilities and services. Their expectations are very high and are not ready to listen or accept our style of living*".

Sharing few memorable experiences with foreign tourists, few home-stay service providers remarked that *"Indian tourists are more ill-mannered as compare to foreigners"*.

Even few guides also mentioned "Tourists especially younger generations coming in groups do not respect local art and culture, often misbehaves with local service people and are more concerned with their own lifestyle. They make noise pollution and are reluctant to abide by the local norms and values".

Local travel providers responded that "*High-end customers mainly prefer private vehicles for them. They hardly travel with other fellow tourist or any local people in shared transport facilities. They also maintain their exclusivity while in travel. They do not mix with localities and often prefer secluded from others*".

Apart from sharing the positive impacts of SE and the rising concern with its applicability in tourism industry, they unanimously supported the immense potential SE concept holds for future tourism development. They suggested that setting aside the negative elements out of the system, SE concept can be efficiently nurtured by all the stakeholders for the betterment of the industry and society at large.

4.2 Study 2

Study 2 involved surveys of 265 (final) customers/tourists categorised under two broad groups. The first category comprised of tourists who have experienced shared accommodation, accessibility and attractions, and the second category belongs to those who did not. In these two sets, there was overlap of subsets. There were respondents who had not experienced shared accommodation but experienced shared accessibility support or attraction. But these overlaps were very insignificant and can be ignored to understand the general conceptualisation and acceptability of the SE concept.

With the advent of SE concept, consumers get equivalent products or services at an affordable price. Without owning anything, they can consume a product/service at a substantially reduced price. This has resulted not only in economic and social development of the area but also has enriched tourist's experience on a positive note.

Almost cent per cent of the respondents who have availed shared services have echoed one common opinion that SE concept eliminates the cost of ownership and reduces expenses. Majority of the respondents commented: *"Who wants to have a lavish stay at a premium hotel at an exorbitant price?"* Many respondents have also shared that "*The premium tariff that bigger hotels charge are not justifiable*"

Majority of the tourist have added that "*We enjoy the local cultural events, love local cuisines and buy local artefacts*". The respondents who have experienced shared services even mentioned *"We try to stay in local home-stay facilities as they are decent, affordable, have a homely atmosphere*".

They have unanimously agreed that apart from cost savings as a reason of considering home-stay facilities, it is the thrill of living with strangers that acts as a major motivating factor behind choosing shared accommodation over hotel. As they commented like "*We like to explore how it feels living with an unknown family, dining with them, spending some time and sharing our cultural experiences with them*". They also highlighted that in this process, the involvement with the host community makes the stay more enjoyable and explorative. As reported by many respondents, "*Local people including local guide, local home-stay facilitators provide an authentic tourism experience, presents an invaluable glimpse of local culture which justifies the concept of intermingling and spending quality time with local people*".

In the same way, consumers having preference for cultural tourism have indicated that *"The most important excitement of shared accommodation is the local delicacies offered by the host"*. This indispensable exchange of culture creates a long-term memory and builds a strong connection between the host and the guest. As shared by some of the customers/ tourists: "*You'll get a chance to learn more about culture and language and human beings in general, than you would have in any classroom setting*".

Along with the positive inputs about SE concept, respondents also highlighted few of the concerns with shared facilities, as some mentioned *"The information about the family is very rarely available on the site while booking the accommodation". "A tiny picture or just one or two lines are not really appreciable information",* was pointed out by some tourists.

"*Awkward moments and misunderstandings are almost inevitable when you're in tight quarters with new acquaintances who may not speak your language*" was the concern of few respondents. One of the tourists shared one of their bitter experiences when the host yelled at them for something that happened by mistake.

Some reported privacy issues and expressed their dissatisfaction by stating that "*Privacy is not there at all and we somehow felt embarrassed while staying in a home stay facility*". They also commented that "*While travelling in a shared travel arrangements we have encountered several delays and break journeys due to the trouble caused by other fellow passengers*".

Some of the respondents have also mentioned that the hygiene is an issue, and minimum standard was not ensured; one of them mentioned that "*We complained many times to clean the toilets but they delayed it for more than 24 h , we got angry and left the set-up the next day*".

Some of them have indicated that "*The members of a home-stay facility needs to learn the minimum decorum and should get training before commencing the business*". Few of the respondents disclosed that "*Our guide was not so helpful and was charging us exorbitant amount*".

Respondents who have not experienced the shared facility services have voiced their concern saying that "*Though in general the idea behind the business is fantastic but we doubt the way this businesses are run. We think there are no rules and regulations and also there is no control mechanism*". Important remarks made by few of the respondents are that "*We doubt about the level of privacy, service standard, lack of facilities and customer compliant settlement facilities available at a home-stay setup*".

Through most of them feel it is less expensive and cost-effective than staying at a hotel, but that it is not worth in comparison to the comfort and value they perceive as offered by a hotel or resort accommodation. Hence, many customers are unwilling to experience the shared facility services.

5. Discussions

Sharing products and services among individuals is nothing new in itself. However, the advent of Internet and easy access to digital platforms have made sharing easier than ever.

Its advocates and its critics both have argued that SE concept has a mixed impact on tourism (Juul, 2015). Developed against a backdrop of rapid growth of international tourism growth, SE is gaining popularity across the world community (Scheyvens, 2002). Transformation in tourist's characteristics has made them more open to self-guided holidays (Bruner, 1991). Many tourists use online/digital platform and social media to plan, review and purchase their holiday packages wherein they seek information and share their own experiences (Dredge and Gyimóthy, 2015). Demand for sustainable tourism products has also enabled the applicability of SE concept in tourism which calls for an authentic personalised tourism experience (He *et al.*, 2018). Furthermore, various socio-economic factors like economic recession, unemployment and reduced purchasing power have pushed many to pay more serious consideration on savings and more focus on value for money products. Flexible work opportunities with added scope for extra income generation have made people accept the idea of sharing products and services with others. All these antecedent factors have favoured the growth of SE in tourism industry.

Corroborating the views of service providers and customers, this study presents a comprehensive synopsis of the observations made by the researchers. General understanding among ground-level stakeholders about SE concept has been found to be inadequate. Consumers view SE as an opportunity to get access to a wide variety of services usually of higher quality and at an affordable price. Service providers see SE as an array of opportunity to start a new tourism business set up with a minimal capital investment (Bhuiyan *et al.*, 2013). Value for money services, saving unnecessary expenditures and generating additional income are some of the primary incentives for opting SE concept. Reviewing the responses, one key argument emerged: service quality standard. Consumers across demography have admitted that they are concerned with the standard of service being offered at home-stay facilities, which has also been reflected from the responses received from the tour operators. Consumers have openly complained about the level of knowledge and voiced their demand for the need of training for the service people at home-stay facilities and other shared service (Liu, 2006). Time and again, service providers and customers have raised one common issue of mutual understanding that actually benefits the interaction and affinity towards each other. Since SE involves social connection (Schor, 2016), it demands social acceptability, and there lies the crux of the problem. Since cultural diversity varies across population, tourists and service providers often maintain a social distance from each other,

which hampers the growth of shared culture in the economy. It has also been observed that customers having affinity towards local art, culture and cuisines mainly favour shared service during a holiday. Sense of belongingness and social interactions among them are found to be more prominent which actually help in promoting SE concepts in tourism. One important and novel aspect that emerged out from the responses is that of social status, which is our relative social position within a society, and which can be a deciding factor for the growth of SE concept (Hong and Lee, 2018). Reviewing the literature and deducing the missing links out of the findings, the paper submits few future research agendas in the following section.

The study identified seven critical influencing factors, namely, affordability, consciousness, cultural involvement, status quo biasness, socio-environmental responsiveness, regulatory supervision and technological drivers concerning sharing economy in tourism (Figure 2).

6. Agenda for future research
This section includes future research agendas, which can be extended further. These are classified into both intrinsic and extrinsic factors.

6.1 Intrinsic factors
This section is concerned with the intrinsic factors that impact stakeholders thought process, cognitive thinking and rational decision-making. Stakeholders include here both consumer (service takers) and service providers.

6.1.1 Looking beyond affordability. Taking a look from the supplier's side, home-stay facilitators mainly indulge in this tourism business to earn additional income by sharing their excess resources at hand. For them, it is affordable as it is less expensive to get into this business by letting out their existing accommodation or other resources to tourists. "Affordability" refers here as the ease of getting into the tourism business with minimal capital investment. Considering the consumer's point of view, there is a growing perception that shared economy facilities are not meant for the affluent class, but rather for those who cannot afford premium facilities. Hence, the term "Affordability" in shared economy caters to a section of the society which needs to be explored further and applied across every section of the society. Hence, future researchers may look at this misconception and explore whether
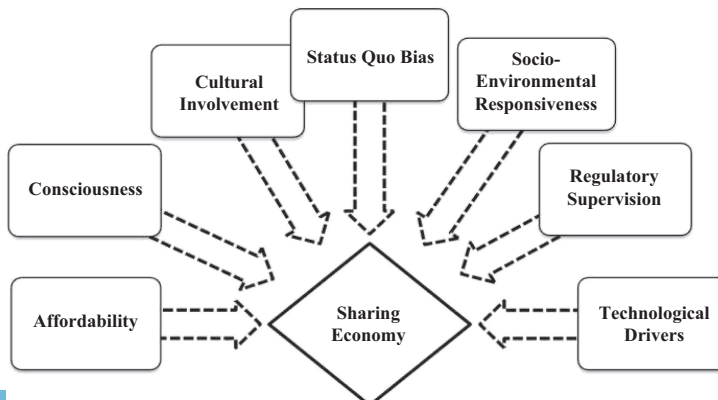
Figure 2.
Critical factors
influencing sharing
economy

shared economy concepts apply only to the middle- or lower-class consumers or whether it applies to every section of the society.

6.1.2 Augmenting the level of consciousness among stakeholders. Conscious consumption is based around increased awareness of the impact of purchase decision on the well-being of one's self, community and society at large. Conscious consumers essentially want to create a global impact and hence endorse their purchases to support the businesses that promote such values, which consumers perceive as important. Reviewing the responses from both the point of view, namely, service givers and service takers, the true understanding of SE concept is still at a nascent stage. "Profit maximisation" and "Cost effective" travel motive still rule the understanding level of service providers and tourists, respectively. Future researchers, marketers and policymakers together need to look at the ways to augment the level of consciousness among the stakeholders.

6.1.3 Encouraging cultural involvement. Culture is viewed as a custom, art and social interaction of a particular country, its people or other social groups. It can also be interpreted as an appreciation for arts and human intellectual achievement. Culture has been a foremost driver of tourism, and traces of it have also been found from the observed responses. Tourists who indulge in local cultural events, love local cuisines and buy local artefacts are found to proactively embrace the SE concept. The SE concept has so far not been linked with cultural involvement, and hence future researchers may explore this construct and can empirically validate the influence of cultural involvement.

6.1.4 Dealing with social quo bias. The status quo bias is regarded as a type of cognitive or emotional bias wherein an individual prefers to keep the current state of affairs as it is. The rationale behind such a move is they consider the present state as a baseline, and any change from it is perceived as a potential loss. In the realm of decision-making, this phenomenon is more impactful, as an individual while making a decision seeks more familiar choices over the less familiar ones. Consumers tend to opt for more beneficial options, favouring one's present environment and situations. Sharing economy talks about social development, with a minimal impact on the environment. Hence, this emotional bias needs to be removed as tourists need to remove the sceptical attitude and embrace SE concept with open hands. Researchers argue that this phenomenon works as a barrier which prevents many progressive social measures, including environmental changes. It is even found to impact the adoption of the SE concept, the disruptive innovation that the present papers talk about. Future research may focus on this construct and bring in measures to tackle the impact of status quo bias on the adoption of the SE concept.

6.1.5 Developing socio-environmental responsiveness. The concept of social-environmental responsiveness can be broadly described as a person's obligation to contribute to the welfare of others and the environment in particular. Consumers these days are increasingly motivated to be more environmentally conscious. They intend to raise their voice, exercise their powers and are often found to adjust their shopping habits and consumption pattern. Service providers also need to act on this line and share the onus with the consumers. Though SE concept and its adaptability are still in the nascent stage, future researchers may explore some of the ways that will consider the combined initiatives from both the stakeholders in adopting the SE concept on a larger scale and bring in socio-environmental development in the society.

6.2 Extrinsic factors

This section is concerned with the extrinsic factors that are beyond the control of the markers and consumers. Issues concerning the extrinsic factors cannot be handled by them; rather, policymakers and regulatory authorities have to intervene and play an important role in mitigating the negative impacts of these factors and successfully implementing the SE concept in the tourism industry.

6.2.1 More focus on regulatory supervision. Albeit sharing cab services like Ola and Uber has been brought under regulatory supervision (Motor Vehicles Act) in many countries, the provisions are not so stringent, which demand more regulations and its effective implementation. Even in shared accommodation perspectives, apart from Airbnb and Oyo, numerous small and unauthorised room aggregators hardly serve standard quality service. Such providers not only regulate genuine reviews from being posted on their website, but they also evade tax and pass the benefits to the tourists as an economic package. Several of these unauthorised home-stay facilities have become a den for illegal activities and crime, where safety and security of the occupants are compromised. Hence, the need of the time is to bring in all these unaccounted service providers under the rules and regulations and supervise them continuously. Proper government rules and regulations can only be a probable solution to such social problems which are presently being experienced in many parts of the world like New York, Paris and Barcelona, as well as in India. Future researchers in collaboration with marketers and policymakers need to address this serious matter and bring in probable solution to check the illicit growth of shared service providers.

6.2.2 Upgrading the technological drivers and infrastructure. Respondents and researchers over the years have attributed the expansion of the SE on the availability of disruptive technologies. Distributed networks, digital platforms and apps have facilitated people to share and build a business around this economic model. When it comes to SE, the digital supply chain is an important issue for the service providers to match demand and supply trajectory. Using big data analytics, ride-sharing apps like Uber and Ola have been using predictive modelling and leveraging on real-time information to match the consumers' demand with the available resources with the partners. The above technologies come in the form of apps. Although websites are still popular among travellers, in today's world, which is saturated by smartphones, apps are handy. With technology becoming a driver for the growth of SE, connectivity is imperative to support the digital platforms and apps which are beneficial to track inventories and creating feedback loops. Looking at the spread of the Internet in the developing countries and the related technological infrastructures, the expansion of SE in tourism lies in the proactive initiatives of the policymakers and regulatory authorities to upgrade the technological infrastructures and enable remote access of Internet together with easy access to smartphones.

7. Research implications

The implication of the research is multifaceted. The outcome intends to guide future researchers, marketers and policymakers to bridge the gap between what sharing economy concept demands, what consumers perceive and how service providers practise in reality. The study presented seven future research agendas that address the present issues and challenges related to the effective implementation of SE concept. Focussing on the Indian tourism sector, the factors can be classified into intrinsic and extrinsic categories. Key areas like affordability, consciousness, cultural involvement and social quo bias mainly address the intrinsic part, whereas regulatory supervision and technological drivers form the extrinsic category. The research agendas presented here will bestow future researchers to address the issue with a focussed approach to deal with the missing links in literature. Marketers also benefit from the outcome of the study wherein existing lacunas in the marketing strategy can be refurbished with a socio-economic perspective. Policymakers need to intervene seriously, and the present paper provides them with an array of opportunities to undertake suitable policy guidelines for both the consumers and the service providers to make them socially and environmentally responsible. This paper aims to make sharing ecosystem both resilient and sustainable which will not only grow and expand on its own but also create an environment for future generation to survive and prosper.

8. Conclusion

In today's socio-economic condition, sharing economy is a popular subject matter in public discourse. Being a complex phenomenon, it is equally difficult for academia, marketers and policymakers to understand, conceptualise, strategise, adapt and implement sharing economy across various sectors of the economy. Through the triangulation study and employing a qualitative content analysis (Cheng and Edwards, 2019), the present study discusses the issues and challenges concerning sharing economy. It also seeks possible pathways for achieving sustainable development of the Indian tourism industry. The novelty of the study lies in the identification of seven major critical factors, namely, affordability, consciousness, cultural involvement, status quo biasness, socio-environmental responsiveness, regulatory supervision and technological drivers which are classified into both intrinsic and extrinsic categories. While contributing towards the existing literature, the study brings forth both the positive and negative strands of the SE concept. To address the intricacy of this phenomenon, this qualitative study delved deeper into the ground reality and corroborates the perspectives of both the demand side and supply side, which is a unique effort by itself.

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