Prospects of Oman as a Destination for Halal Tourism

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Abstract : Although a vast majority relates the concept of 'halal' or what is permissible in Islam to food only. However, halal industry covers many sectors such as food, fashion, transport, finance and even tourism. Halal tourism is not just about halal food; it is also about the overall experience, which is amenable with the Shariah (Islamic jurisprudence). Oman has a plethora of natural beauty and many places of interest for all types of tourists. It is one of the most secure and peaceful countries in the world. Having a well-developed Infrastructure, Oman is ready to take its tourism to new heights. The ever-hospitable Omanis are proud of their rich cultural and historical heritage. Thus, Oman appears to have all what it takes to become a prime destination for halal tourism. The objective of this study is to assess the prospects of Oman as a destination for halal tourism. Based on the interviews of experts like academicians, tourism professionals, officials and clerics, Oman's competitiveness as a destination for halal tourism was assessed by developing a Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT) profile. The findings of the SWOT were compared with the data from the Global Muslim Travel Index (GMTI) from the year 2014 to 2018. Based on the analysis, Oman is found to have the right mix of environment and enabling services for halal tourism. However, it is found lacking in public transport, communication and customer outreach. Oman is also found to be losing its rank among the top 10 destinations for halal tourism to close competitors like Qatar, Bahrain, Morocco, etc. The concerned authorities need to make conscious efforts to resolve these issues as it becomes imperative for Oman to revamp its tourism strategy.

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