Emerging Challenges for Sustainable Tourism Practices and Conflict with Traditional approach in Garo Hills, Meghalaya

Abhimanyu Kumar[1*,] Sujay Vikram Singh[2], Rajeev Ranjan[3], and Prof. G. Singaiah[4]

[1] Research Scholar, Department of Management, North-Eastern Hill University, Tura Campus, Meghalaya, India.

[2] Research Scholar, Department of History of Art and Tourism Management, Banaras Hindu University, Varanasi, Uttar Pradesh, India.

[3] Research Scholar, Department of History of Art and Tourism Management, Banaras Hindu University, Varanasi, Uttar Pradesh, India.

[4] Professor, Department of Management, North-Eastern Hill University, Tura Campus, 794001, Meghalaya, India.

Abstract

The sustainable development addresses the key issues related to regional development in such a way that a properly controlled, extraction and utilization of resources will be done up to its carrying capacity level so that a kind of system will be developed to rejuvenate with continuous quality improvement. Tourism has the potential to deal with the major key issues facing the society in many parts of the globe but sustainable approach always has a conflict with traditional approach due to some loopholes in proper planning and practices. Thereby, this paper addresses the various issues through the approach of cost and benefit analysis so as to provide a big picture of various emerging challenges in Garo Hills, Meghalaya.

Keywords: sustainable tourism approach, traditional tourism approach, cost-benefit analysis.

Introduction

Tourism has been described as a dynamic, multi-sector and socio-economic process of development, which requires responsible use of natural resources based on cooperation and collaboration among government, transportation, accommodation, local residents, private sector entrepreneurs and others for significant development (McCool & Moisey, 2008; Sharpley & Telfer , 2002). It is a movement of financial operation which transfers money from visitors to the local place. Tourists exchange money in holiday destinations; therefore tourism is also a sort of transferring operation financially (Escobar, 1994). The economic dimension of tourism is related to the interconnection between tourism and economic development of destination. With the growth of income in different countries after 1970, international travel travels have grown enormously and consequently, tourism has been achieved as an alternative policy by different countries to support economic growth. Tourism has supported in providing foreign exchange earning to aid their import and economic development. Mill and Morrison (1992) argue that other than approaching the tourism sector as a tool for

development of the whole economy of or subsector from transportation to entertainment; from shopping to entertainment to accommodation. In the 21st century tourism has become one of the fastest growing industries in the world for the socio-economic development of many developed and developing countries. But the growth in tourism is difficult to quantify because few countries collect statistics in a way which separates purely rural forms of tourism (Seth, 2006).

Tourism in Garo Hills is an important source of foreign exchange earnings and has great perspective for economic development of the country. Due to the legacy of beautiful landscape, natural wealth, cultural, religious and archaeological sites, Garo hills is an important tourist destination in India. As the land of ecological biodiversity which is recently is part of the Tentative list of India in order to qualify for inclusion in the UNESCO World Heritage list. It comprises of three legally designated Protected Areas - Nokrek National Park (49.44 km^2), Balpakram National Park (220 km^2) and Siju Wildlife Sanctuary (5.18km^2); and the Reserved Forests of Tura Peak (4.19 km^2), lmangiri (8.29 km^2), Rewak (6.47 km^2) and Baghmara (43.9 km^2). The total core area of the proposed nomination is 337.48 km^2. The buffer area includes Baghmara Pitcher Plant Sanctuary (0.027 km^2), Angratoli Reserve Forest (30.11 km^2), and several Community-owned Forests and this also coincides with the boundary of Garo Hills Elephant Reserve. Despite huge potential, Garo hill has been unable to take full benefits of natural biodiversity, due to inadequate policies and fragile implementation. The sustainable development of Hill tourism relies on the government's plan and policies and efficient coordination between stakeholders. But the tourism policies have not been able to adequately address the tourism in Garo hills, and this lead to unbalanced growth of the tourism sector. Despite the implementation of a new tourism policy in 2012 adequate focus on mountain tourism is still missing. There is a lacuna of an adequate driving force in tourism policy and it has failed to address the vital area of nature and ethnic tourism. Hence, there is an instant need for specific and separate mountain tourism policy encompassing integrated approach.

Samy and El-Barmelgy (2005) argue that the principles of sustainable tourism development are composed of environmental, economic, and socio-cultural aspects and equilibrium among these three dimensions must be established in order to be successful in the long term. But, in the Garo hills, despite natural bequests, the hill resources have not been harnessed adequately. Sustainable hill tourism development encompasses different component viz. natural resources preservation on which tourism depends; promoting local communities' life quality; and augmentation of tourist satisfaction. However, there are different problems and hurdles related to these. tourism policy loopholes, imbalanced growth in tourism, the safety and environmental concerns, tourism infrastructure development, marketing initiatives for promoting tourism, labour migration for abroad jobs and reposition Garo Hills tourism image in national as well as an international market are key concerns. All these have resulted due to the inconsistent policies and lack of participatory planning and lacunae of an adequate driving force in politics. For sustainable tourism development, a number of question emerged. Have Garo hill realty been able to exploit its mountain tourism? What is the contribution of tourism policies towards the growth of Hill tourism? What needs to be done to balance development with potentially? It is only due to this, if these question s are

answered, Hill tourism can be developed in a sustainable manner. In this paper, attempts have been made to assess the importance of tourism development practices for sustainable Hill tourism development and to identify problems concerned and counsel measures for development of tourism in Garo Hills. Based on secondary data and personal observation, the key objective of this paper is to make an assessment of sustainable tourism development practices and traditional approach in Garo Hills.

Literature review

There was a time when there was a general consensus that development was about economic growth (Lee, C. C., & Chang, C. P, 2008) which, at least analytically, could be treated as a separate problem from other social, cultural, and political issues in society, however, The consensus view of the development process during the 1970s and 1980s, has also begun to break down. And nowadays there are two idealized views of development. The first, the "traditional view," maintains that development is about economic growth, which can be distinguished from other social, cultural, environmental, and political development issues in society. The second, the "modern view," maintains that development is an integrated process of change involving intertwined economic, social, cultural, political, and environmental dimensions. The differences between these two views revolve around a few key issues. The most relevant are: (1) the appropriate role and responsibilities of the state and the other actors in development decision-making; (2) whether development is primarily an economic processor is a holistic process of transformation; and (3) the relationship between international and national regulation in the development process (Bradlow, 2004).

At this time, there is no common agreement on how the diverse aspects of development should be dealt with in development decision-making. In fact, this is a burning topic that underlies the disagreements between (1) the various stakeholders in contentious development projects and policies; (2) the international economic institutions and their critics; and (3) the different participants in the discus over globalization (Bradlow, 2004). The two views of development, sustainable approach and traditional approach are discussed below.

A. *The traditional approach to development*

Elements of the business society, governments, and international organizations tend to support the traditional view. This approach assumes that development is primarily an economic process that consists of discrete projects (e.g., building a dam, a road, a school, a factory, a mine, or a telecommunications system) and specific economic policies. It recognizes that development has social, environmental, and political implications but argues that these should be dealt with separately from the economic aspects.

The proponents of this view divide decision-making about these projects and policies into two parts. First, there are broad policy issues in which decisions are made through the political process by the government and society in

which the policy or project will be implemented. Examples of broad policy issues include: (1) whether the budget should allocate additional resources to health and education or to energy and national defence; (2) whether to build a system of highways or public transport; and (3) whether to promote export-oriented or locally-focused industries.

The second category involves a specific project or policy decisions. Examples of these types of decisions include: (1) where a dam should be located and how it should be constructed, or (2) what exactly should be done to promote local industries. The responsibility of decision-makers in this second category is to evaluate each project in terms of its technical, financial, and economic feasibility. As long as all technical problems can be resolved, the economic and financial benefits exceed its costs, and it is expected to produce the desired rate of return, a project is justified and is treated as developmentally beneficial (Bradlow, D. D. 2004). The decision-makers' remaining duty is to execute faithfully and efficiently their contractual obligations in regard to the project.

The traditional view allows the specific decision-makers to treat broad policy and other issues, particularly social and environmental issues, as externalities. These issues are perceived as the prerogative of the society or state in which the project is being built. This means that the specific decision-makers operating assumption are that the society or state in which the project is located will decide how it wishes to manage its own environment and to share the costs and benefits of the project among the various stakeholders. Specific decision-makers can treat these assumptions as background facts during the project negotiations and as fixed variables in their own planning.

To the extent that various other project stakeholders wish to be involved in the project's broader decision-making process, they will need to consult with the government because it has decision-making authority over the broad social, political, environmental, and cultural implications of the project. They will only need to consult with specific decision-makers if they are interested in technical issues related to the design, construction, or operation of the project.

The specific decision-makers may feel the need to consult with others before making any particular project decision, the range of people with whom they need to consult is limited. Because they are only responsible for technical and financial issues, they only need to consult with experts on these issues before making their decisions. The only aspects of a project that would require a broader consultative process involve issues regarding the social and environmental externalities that are the responsibility of the government and not the specific decision-makers.

Decision-making under the traditional view is likely to be "top-down." This makes it easy to identify to whom the different participants in the project are accountable. Project sponsors and contractors are only accountable to three groups: (1) government regulators for their compliance with the applicable regulations; (2) those who hired them for the performance of their contractual obligations; and (3) their owners or shareholders for their management of the enterprise (Henn, H. G., & Alexander, J. R. 1983).

Specific decision-makers will only be accountable to those adversely affected by their decisions in the following two situations: (1) when they have a direct contractual relationship with persons and have failed to perform their contractual obligations, and (2) when the sponsors or contractors have committed a tort against these other stakeholders.

The state, as the party with decision-making responsibility for the broader social and environmental aspects of the project, is accountable to the beneficiaries and those harmed by the project or policy. Accountability is imposed on the state through the political system and through whatever administrative or judicial procedures exist for private actors to challenge governmental decisions.

B. *Sustainable Development Approach*

Sustainable development is the organizing principle for meeting human development goals while at the same time sustaining the ability of natural systems to provide future dependent. While the modern concept of sustainable development is derived mostly from the 1987 Brundtland Report, it is also rooted in earlier ideas about sustainable forest management and twentieth-century environmental concerns. As the concept developed, it has shifted to focus more on economic development, social development and environmental protection for future generations, whereas sustainable tourism is a subset of sustainable development and it is the idea of visiting somewhere as a tourist and trying to create a positive impact on the environment, society, and economy. (What Is the Meaning of Sustainable Tourism? n.d). This view of development tends to be held by NGOs, civic organizations, and progressive elements in governments, corporations, and international organizations. It posits that the economic aspects of development cannot be separated from its social, political, environmental, and cultural aspects and that development should be seen as a holistic, integrated process.

There is now a broad consensus that tourism development should be sustainable; however, the question of how to achieve this remains an object of debate. Tourism involves basically transportation to the general location, local transportation, accommodations, entertainment, recreation, nourishment and shopping. It can be related to travel for leisure, business and VFR (visiting friends and relatives). Without travel, there is no tourism, so the concept of sustainable tourism is tightly linked to a concept of sustainable mobility. (Høyer, K. G, 2000). Two relevant considerations are tourism's reliance on fossil fuels and tourism's effect on climate change. 72 per cent of tourism's CO_2 emissions come from transportation, 24 percent from accommodations, and 4 percent from local activities. Aviation accounts for 55% of those transportation CO_2 emissions (or 40% of tourism's total). However, when considering the impact of all greenhouse gas emissions from tourism and that aviation emissions are made at high altitude where their effect on climate is amplified, aviation alone accounts for 75% of tourism's climate impact (Gössling, S., Hall, C. M., Peeters, P., & Scott, D, 2010).

According to the World Tourism Organization (2004), sustainable tourism principles refer to the environmental, economic and socio-cultural aspects of tourism development. An appropriate balance must be established between these dimensions to assure its long-term sustainability. Its importance lies in its objective which is to conserve resources and increase and preserve local cultures and traditions. In general, sustainable tourism is responsible for tourism intended to generate employment and income, in that way reducing any bigger impact on the environment and local culture (Kaul, H., & Gupta, S. 2009). The principles of sustainable tourism lay special emphasis on the participation of local communities at tourism destinations. Here, the active involvement of local people is the critical success factor in sustaining momentum. Ideally, local communities should reap direct benefits from tourism development as reflected by the expansion of local business opportunities. Training and educational programs play an important support role here as they help to improve cultural heritage and the management of natural resources.

Garo people and their environment

Garos are the second largest tribes in Meghalaya, India and neighbouring areas of Bangladesh, who call themselves A. chik Mande(literally "hill people," from a.chik "hill"+mande "people") (Maikhuri, R. K., & Gangwar, A. K. 1993). There are many theories about the origin of the tribe 'Garo' name are: (1). The Europeans and Bengalis first approached the Garos hill from Mymensingh District (now in Bangladesh) who lived in the southern part of the hills of Meghalaya, which is very close to Mymensingh. A division of the tribe calls themselves the name 'Gara', which has become Garo over a time. (2). The tribe migrated to these hills from Tibet and the original leader of the migration called 'Garu' give his name to the tribe. In fact, in one of the old songs, there is mention of the country of their origin as Garu-a song or the country of the Garu. They never call themselves Garos except in conversation with any outsider, but always call themselves 'A.chik' the hillmen. Therefore, it may be surmised that the term Garo has been given to them by others.

The lifestyle of the Garos:-

1. *Occupation*- The Garos are basically farmer and loves to dig the soil. Agriculture is the principal occupation for their existence and they devote all his energies into it. Trading for him is restricted to bartering his produce in the market place, now in currency, though some do trade in their favourite white beads, 'daos' (choppers), swords, cloth, timber bamboo. Industry for the Garo means blacksmithing and weaving. Every housewife has a rough loom.

2. *Crops -* The most prevalent form of cultivation yield excellent results is 'jhum'. All crops are sown after the first rains in April or May. The land is not hoed, but holes are dug with a pointed stake at regular intervals and a few seeds put in each. For millet, the grains are simply transmitted into the remains. In the first year, a number of crops are sown in the same field and gathered as they ripen, millet coming first, followed by rice and lastly cotton. In the case of forestland, fields are weeded twice during the rains and three times in places where bamboo is

grown. The most important crop grown by Garos is rice from the forest clearings. They also grow maize, job's tears, chillies, melons, pumpkins, some yams, sweet potatoes, ginger and indigo. Orange trees are grown in some areas. Another important cash-crop is cotton, which is sold in markets along the borders of the district and at Tura. 'Lac' is also a profitable product, though it is confined to some portions of the hills.

3. **_Food and Drinks_ -** The Garo is a true 'carni-herbivorous'. they will eat almost any animal for meat usually raising goats, pigs, fowl and ducks in the village and buying cattle from the plains people. Snakes, lizards and even small ants with wings are eaten and a favourite food item is dried fish, 'na.kam' – some of which they prepare themselves and some procured from the plains. 'Gran', a dried version of beef or any meat is preferable. The staple cereal is rice with millet, maize and job's tears are eaten boiled. On a journey, rice is cooked in hollow bamboo vessels, split open after cooking, and each person's share of rice put into plantain leaves and folded over. Garos eat quite a few vegetables and many edible roots and creepers from the forest. Bamboo shoots are considered a delicacy and eaten boiled, as a vegetable or used for special dishes. Bamboo shoots are sometimes collected and put into a big cone made of split bamboo. The inside is lined with plantain leaves and cone erected with the top down. The potash-rich sap in the shoots slowly seeps out and is collected and used to boil vegetables. They use salt but no fat for cooking. Normally the Garos eat three meals a day but on festive occasions, they really let their appetites free. Guests sit in rows, servers with baskets move around dispensing tempting pieces. They are followed by the liquor-bearers who carry 'bek' or 'pongsim' a kind of gourd holding liquor to wash down the food. Garo women have the food first then give it to their children, a custom is known as the 'chochoa'. Gaors drink only brewed liquor, never distilled. The base ingredients could be rice, millet, maize or job's tears. Liquor obtained from job's tears is the most potent of all. 'Wanti' is a compound of a number of herbs and fruits such as chillies, sugarcane and fruit.

4. _Tribal Organization_ - The Garos can be segmented into two broad classes – those who live in the hills and those who reside in the plains. Besides geography based subdivisions, the Garos are divided into three exogamous septs or clans – _Momin, Marak_ and _Sangma_**.** Later, _Areng_ and _Shira_ separated themselves as distinct clans.

5. _Marriage_ - Garos' marriage is performed in different septs or clans – A Sangma cannot marry a Sangma, a Marak a Marak or Momin a Momin. That makes the Garos exogamous in marriage. Children always belong to the mother's sept and motherhood. This is a ground rule. Anyone who breaks it and marries within his clan is considered a social-sinner, but no taboo or punishment is levied for such occurrences nowadays but was strictly observed in olden days. Proposals for marriage come from women. She does not arrange the engagement but indicates her choice and father, uncle, brother bring about the alliance. Garo unmarried women have high moral standards. In Garo society, a man may have as many wives, but the number is restricted to three. He may marry two sisters, but the elder before the younger. He also seeks the permission of his first wife when he wishes to marry a second. The chief wife is called 'jikmamong'. The other 'jik-gite'. No money is paid as the price of the bride or groom, presents are also not customary. In case of the son of a wealthy man or 'nokma', he may receive

gifts of a sword, shield and spear, perhaps a cow or bull but nowadays, parents present gifts on the wedding day of their son.

Matrimonial bonds, however, are loose and adultery is common. The punishment was severe in the old days but that has changed. Divorce is permitted when – the husband and wife mutually consent to separate; when either one is guilty of adultery; or when either one of them refuses to work for the household. The separation case is heard by village elders and actual divorce takes place in a ceremony called 'bolsckidena', held in front of an assembly of villagers. Husband and wife pick up handfuls of dust and swear by Mane, the Earth, to have no dealings with and to claim nothing from each other. After the oath, the priest takes a sword or chopper or spear, strikes a tree with the weapon and calls upon it as a son-of-the-earth to stand witness. Nowadays, court divorces are not uncommon.

6. *Inheritance-* follows the system of 'motherhood' which divides Garos into clans where descent is attributed to a common ancestress and through the mother alone – and is, therefore, restricted to the females of the tribe. Men cannot inherit property under any circumstances. But parents are at liberty to present gifts. The property once owned in motherhood, cannot pass out of it. A women's children are all of her 'ma.chong', and since property may pass out of it, if a son marries another clan woman and his children would be their mother's sept, the daughter must, therefore, inherit and her daughters after her, and in case of no children, to another woman of the clan, duly appointed by its members. During the lifetime of a woman' husband, he can fully use her property with complete authority, but cannot will it away. However, 'matriarchy' in the strict sense of the word, is not part of Garo law. The women simply act as a vehicle for the inheritance of property from generation to generation.

Conclusion

The main objectives of the current study were to address the emerging challenges for sustainable tourism practices and conflict with the traditional approach in Garo Hills. The Government of India has introduced The Hill Area Development Program (HADP) to initiate socio-economic development in the hill areas of India since the inception of the Fifth Five Year Plan (Planning Commission, 2010). The main objective of this program is to ensure „sustainable" development of hill areas, keeping in view the basic needs of the hill people and generating ample livelihood options for the local community. With the progress of the Five Year plans, the focus has been shifting to the preservation of biodiversity and rejuvenation of hill ecology.

The biggest measure that we have constructed to move forward for the society or a country is development. We have conceded that through development only human beings will rise and move forward and in this way, the blind rat race of development started, but at what cost is this development? Are we forgetting that the Earth has a carrying capacity before which if we go then this earth will not be able to live? In the 1960s, when we got the consciousness that the wheel of development on which we have adopted industrialization, our environment is suffering due to this. We realized that the resource of our nature is limited. We began to fear that the natural resources should not end and our economic activities and production system should not be stopped. The people's

existence was not in danger, then we felt for a model of development which is according to the carrying capacity of nature. This leads to the concept of sustainable development i.e. the process of development which should take care of the needs of the existing generation along with the needs of the future that means such a situation of development that will be sustained forever.

For the development of tourism in Garo Hills the sustainable approach and the traditional approach are complementary to each other but from the regional development point of view traditional approach should be the basic structure of development program and all the modern approaches of development can be practised very carefully. If it will be done so then, it would be easy to sustain the specialty and the authenticity of Garo hills.

References

- Bradlow, D. D. (2000). The World Commission on Dams' Contribution to the Broader

- Bradlow, D. D. (2004). Development decision-making and the content of international development law. *BC Int'l & Comp. L. Rev.*, *27*, 195.

- Debate on Development Decision-Making. *Am. U. Int'l L. Rev.*, *16*, 1531.

- Escobar, A. (1995). Imagining a Post-Development Era. In Jonathan, C. and Rutledge, F. (Ed.) *Power of Development*, the USA: KY.

- Gössling, S., Hall, C. M., Peeters, P., & Scott, D. (2010). The future of tourism: Can tourism growth and climate policy be reconciled? A mitigation perspective. *Tourism Recreation Research*, *35*(2), 119-130.

- Henn, H. G., & Alexander, J. R. (1983). Laws of Corporations, St. *Paul, Minn: West Pub. Co.*

- Høyer, K. G. (2000). Sustainable tourism or sustainable mobility? The Norwegian case. *Journal of Sustainable tourism*, *8*(2), 147-160.

- Kaul, H., & Gupta, S. (2009). Sustainable tourism in India. *Worldwide Hospitality and Tourism Themes*, *1*(1), 12-18.

- Lee, C. C., & Chang, C. P. (2008). Tourism development and economic growth: A closer look at panels. *Tourism management*, *29*(1), 180-192.

- Maikhuri, R. K., & Gangwar, A. K. (1993). Ethnobiological notes on the Khasi and Garo tribes of Meghalaya, Northeast India. *Economic Botany*, *47*(4), 345.

- Mill, R.C. and Morrison, A.M. (1992). *The Tourism system an Introductory Text*. New Delhi: Prentice Hall of India.

- Planning Commission. (2010). Report of the Evaluation Study on Hill Area Development Programme in Assam in Assam and West Bengal.

- Report on Sustainable tourism. What Is the Meaning of Sustainable Tourism?, (n.d). Retrieved February 10, 2019, from http://traveltips.usatoday.com/meaning-sustainable-tourism-2297.html

- Samy, K.M., & El-Barmelgy, H.M. (2005). Sustainable Tourism versus Sustainable Development: Attempting Sustainable Tourism Development for Egypt. Helwan University and Cairo University, Egypt.

- Seth, P. N. (2006). *Successful Tourism: Volume II: Tourism Practices* (Vol. 2). Sterling Publishers Pvt. Ltd..

- Simpson, M. C. (2008). Community benefit tourism initiatives—A conceptual oxymoron?. *Tourism management*, *29*(1), 1-18.

- Telfer, D. J., & Sharpley, R. (2002). *Tourism and development: concepts and issues*. Clevedon [England]; Toronto: Channel View Publications.

- World Tourism Organization (2004), Sustainable Development of Tourism Conceptual Definition, (n.d). Retrieved February 10, 2019, from World Tourism Organization, Madrid, available at: www.world-tourism.org/sustainable/concepts.htm

- Zhang, J. (2008). Understanding host community attitudes towards tourism and resident-tourist interaction: a socio-behavioural study of Melbourne's urban-rural fringe.