

IMPORTANCE OF THE SUSTAINABLE TOURISM

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ABSTRACT

Tourism is promoted and appreciated for its ability to promote and encourage “development”. This development is generally is attaining through the use of natural and cultural resources. “Development” is a growth or a stage of growth, it is a process of change and this change can be in many ways this article clearly deprives the importance of sustainability in tourism and the challenges faced to achieve the desired goals of sustainability and its importance.

Key words: Sustainable Tourism, Industry, Eco –environment, Challenges,
Tourism development, Demand Tourism, Optimum utilization

Introduction

Tourism as an industry has the greatest potential for growth and is the fastest growing industry of the world. In this pace of development of this industry there are many ethical and moral issues that need to be taken care of. Now there is a new side to this industrial development which is the political impact and development. The tourism industry generates huge money and this money should be again used to further develop and promote the tourist place.

Early development theories of both tourism and sustainability concentrated on the top down approach of economic development having more priority than other social or human needs, the concept of environmental safety in tourism was thought of much later. However, with the growing population, increasing demand for tourism and depleting resources, the concept of optimum utilization of the available resources and at the same time preserving the environment for future use has become very popular. This concept of sustainable development has caught the attention of not just the environmentalists but also the economists and the academicians. Slowly the concept of sustainability has been well received in all fields including tourism.

Sustainable development is one of the fundamental theories underpinning this research. Whilst this study specifically looks at the application of the concept within a tourism context, in order to properly understand the term and its key principles, it is first necessary to review the term from a broader stance. However, whilst the concept was the first to articulate the links between developments and the environmental, in practice, development has always impacted the environment, contributing to issues such as over-population, exploitation of natural resources and pollution. Various conservation movements were established in the late nineteenth century in response to the impacts of industrialisation and modernisation. It was not until the 1960s however, that environmental concern moved beyond the conservation and protection of natural areas and species towards a broader environmentalist ideology. The environmental problems associated with increased industrialisation (e.g. water and air pollution) did not adhere to national boundaries and what happened in one area of the world ultimately impacted societies in other areas. It was these realisations that led to the emergence of ‘environmental sustainability’. In this, developed countries are better placed to consider their environmental

impact because they have already undergone development and attained a level of self-sufficiency. However, committing to sustainable development, e.g. by changing resource usage to more environmentally friendly methods, is not so easy for developing countries and nor is it considered particularly fair. Throughout periods of intense industrialisation, western countries had no restriction on their environmental impact and were able to use their natural resources however they saw fit. In theory then, should developing countries not be afforded the same opportunities for growth and development? Indeed, the priority for many developing countries is their short-term survival and they rely on the use of natural resources in order to achieve economic development and overcome extreme poverty consideration of environmental impacts and the needs of future generations are therefore often a secondary consideration in poorer nations, making sustainable development somewhat difficult to operationalise. However, despite sustainable development being largely embraced as a development paradigm, one particular problematic issue is the interchangeable use of the terms sustainable development and sustainability. Although related, there are significant differences between them. Sustainability was originally a concept embedded in ecology where it was used to refer to the ongoing maintenance of the natural environment. Thus, sustainability can be viewed as the end goal, whilst sustainable development is the process of achieving that goal¹

“Sustainable tourism means accepting a commitment to providing healthy long-term tourism thoroughly integrated with the other elements of economy and with environment and society in such a manner that a policy change in one does not duly interfere with the optimal functioning of any of the others² Sustainable tourism now can be said to represent a set of principles, policy a plan of action and management methods that draw a path for tourism development in which there is an environmental resource base (including natural, built, social and cultural features) which is protected for future development”³ “Tourism, as it relates to sustainable development, is tourism which is developed so that the nature, scale, location and manner of development is appropriate and sustainable over time, and where the environment’s ability to support other activities and processes is not impaired, since tourism cannot be isolated from other resource use activities as a tourism-centric approach to sustainability.”⁴ “Sustainable tourism development is accepted as all kinds of tourism developments that make a notable contribution to or, at least, do not contradict the maintenance of the principles of development in an indefinite time without compromising the ability of future generations to satisfy their own needs and desires.”⁵ “Sustainable tourism development guidelines and management practices are applicable to all forms of tourism in all types of destination, including mass tourism and the various niche tourism segments.

Given the definitional difficulties associated with sustainable tourism development, it is perhaps more useful to interpret the concept according to its key objectives. The objectives are as follows: sustainable tourism development should:

- 1) To make judicious use of environmental resources to develop tourism and at the same time maintaining essential ecological process and helping to conserve natural heritage and biodiversity;
- 2) To encourage and accept the socio-cultural authenticity of host communities, conserve their cultural heritage and traditional values and contribute to inter-cultural understanding and tolerance;
- 3) To ensure stable employment and income earning viable, long-term economic operations, providing opportunities and social services to host communities and contributing to poverty alleviation.⁶

It is essential that tourism needs are met so that the destination can continue to attract visitors and support a long-term viable tourism industry. This issue is often neglected within sustainable tourism literature, with it taken for granted that destinations will inevitably experience tourism demand⁷. However, this is not always the case and it is important not to assume that there will a constant flow of tourists to a destination. Tourism is vital for many areas, with income providing financial support to ensure the continued existence of destinations and their related economies and contributing to broader development goals⁸. The challenge however, is in attracting enough visitors to keep the tourism industry active so that it contributes to wider development objectives, without attracting too many people so that the destination becomes over-crowded and physically and/or culturally exploited. There has been criticism that ecological aspects have been prioritised over social and cultural needs primarily because environmental issues have been on the public agenda for longer and thus,

are more marketable⁹. However, this is not the case everywhere. Indeed, tourism is ultimately a context specific industry. Each destination has its own unique environmental, cultural and social characteristics with complex economic, human and environmental interconnections. Thus, issues that may be deemed a priority for one area may not necessarily be relevant in other areas. Sustainable tourism development therefore needs to be interpreted with a certain amount of flexibility so that the individual needs of host environments and communities are catered for. Thus there may be conflicting interests, the primary concern for tourism industry professionals such as hoteliers transport and attraction providers, may be economic objectives as essentially, this is their income and source of employment. Host communities are likely to stress the importance of socio-cultural aspects so that they may improve their quality of life, alleviate poverty and preserve local culture and traditions. Environmentalists and charities however, may consider tourism harmful to the natural and physical environment and thus accentuate the protection of these natural assets.

Tourism as a system impacts both the environment and is impacted upon by the environment. Tourism can make or break the environment and to have a complimentary win – win for both the economic component of tourism and the environmental component of the resources available, wide ranges of approaches to environmental issues based on an understanding of the complexity of the tourism system and the interrelated nature of its components must be studied. Sustainability in tourism includes economic social cultural and environmental issues and thus it is multi dimensional. The essence of sustainability and sustainable development is that they are dynamic. Tourism development thus should be a go green progress and project so that all the developmental issues relating to Tourism should consider not just economic growth but a multi dimensional approach to planning and development of the resources to the optimum capacity with maximum benefits

Sustainability is nothing but a model made for the development of tourism industry which is aimed to satisfy the requirements of the society and business. The available natural resources have to be utilised for the growth of any organisation. Similarly in tourism industry the natural resources have to be utilised optimally for the industry to sustain for a long time. The development of tourism as an industry should not exploit or misuse the available natural resources. If it does then the industry cannot sustain for a long time. If classify resources they can be classified into natural, cultural and social resources and the major factors that are responsible for tourism industry are economic environmental and social hence for the development of tourism, a better environment is required. Hospitality industry which is a great part of tourism also depends on environmental factors for its development and growth. Hotels and food and beverages companies should take care of natural environment around them. This optimum and judicious use of all the resources to develop is sustainability and this can be achieved only with the development of th community in which they operate. The tourism industry, the community and the government agencies should work in unison to survive and at the same time get economic benefits without tampering and damaging the existing natural and cultural resources. Tourism development has to also look into improving the conditions for local communities and the development of infrastructure.

Challenges for Sustainable Tourism Development

The major factors or challenges for sustainable tourism is lack of potential for the development of tourism, There may also be lack of technical knowhow and knowledge. In many organizations the major challenges that is faced by sustainable tourism development is lack of awareness. Thus the challenges can be summed up as

- Lac of awareness
- Lack of knowledge and expertise
- Lack of promotional activity
- Lack of tourism infrastructure
- Lack of investment
- Lack of policy decisions
- Safety measures and lack of precautionary methods

Planning For Sustainability

The major stages of sustainable tourism development are

- A detailed analysis of the available resources, the strengths and weakness needs to be evaluated.
- Success factors and economic returns can be assessed.
- Factors required for development needs to be assessed and evaluated like transportation , level of hospitality , cultural diversity
- Larger goal setting like community development , increasing economic growth and focusing more on infrastructural development
- Performance evaluation in all levels social economic cultural and environment
- Requirement to improve based on the performance criteria.

Issues to consider in sustainable Tourism

Sustainable tourism is constantly balancing the potential profitability as against how sustainable and responsible its business model is. When it comes to the tourism sector, this makes for a complex investment strategy.

The tourism sector has various sectors within its frame work like the hotel industry, resorts, theme parks and even all the travel and tour operating sectors, there are certain common issues that affect the whole sector. Changes in climate, depletion of resources depletion or hazard to health and wellness will have impact on tourism and its attractiveness climate. Thus there are certain key issues to consider while dealing and discussing about sustainable tourism like.

Air pollution and carbon emissions

The development of tourism industry has indirectly contributed to the increase of greenhouse gases particularly carbon due it increase in transportation due to tourism . Although tourism development goes hand in hand with transport development, few restrictions and cautions can be taken to protect the air pollution.

Resource exhaustibility

Hotels have very high energy consumption and the increase in star rating , the increase in the use of energy levels . Heating and cooling are the major source of energy drain in hotels , there are also other luxury services like heating the pool of the spa , laundry services indoor games and recreation all contribute greatly to the increasing energy levels . Extra amenities mean that hotels with these facilities consume almost twice as much as the other hotel without these facilities.

Job creation and contribution to local economy

Many emerging communities are regions are dependent on tourism and leisure as there major economic activity a source of income. Thus any organization starting a tourism industry in a region has to take into consideration the locals players also. .

Working conditions

Sometimes, the tourism industry also exploits the local communities and there is low income levels and tough working conditions. There are several employers who are working for longer duration and there employment rules and labour laws are unorganised. As a result, companies often suffer from a shortage of skilled workers and face difficulties in retaining qualified staff.

Responsible sourcing

Most hotels depending on outsourcing and suppliers for the needs and services and sustainability needs to consider these outsources units and suppliers as well. Sustainable development should definitively consider companies' purchasing criteria, with a particular focus on the restaurant and catering segment. Looking at food servicing, a major part of the environmental footprint is at the upstream level.

Franchising and hotel network values

Many hotels have come up in the franchise model and these changes in ownership models also effect the management and functioning especially in higher needs of maintaining sustainability

Health and wellness

New interest in organic foods and health has created new strategies for food production and many hotels are now concentrating on these healthy new trends to make their hotel more unique. Some big fast food restaurants chain have even spent millions to offer alternative cooking methods delivering same taste with less salt, or guaranteeing non-use of hydrogenated oils. Many restaurants are now popularising their product on the basis on using healthy ingredients and in India especially many old food products are attaining new cooking styles in the name of preventing obesity and maintain health.

Food safety

There is more transparency in the products used by the restaurants and contamination in any form is highly looked into and most hotels want to maintain their standard and reputations by using only branded and approved ingredients and products. Compliance to regulations, crisis management plans and proactive measures should all be examined.

E-security

New digital technology has also resulted in new forms of breaches and there should be utmost protection of physical security to the client Sustainability in tourism should look at how prepared companies are to prevent attacks on clients' confidential data. The smallest of breach could result in negative reputation to the tourism industry itself.

Conclusion

Thus this article clearly prohibits the importance of sustainable tourism for any nations economy need to be generated, sustainable tourism plays a pivotal role, optimum resources need to be identified marking the potential segmentation markets related to tourism environment plays its own part

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