

A Study on Sustainable Tourism Focusing on Examples From India

Mrs. Naveena Suresh

Assistant Professor
Sree Narayana Guru College Of Commerce
Chembur, Mumbai-89
Email -naveenal984@gmail.com
Contact No. 9969874177

Abstract

Sustainable tourism is the concept of visiting somewhere as a tourist and trying to make a positive impact on the environment, society, and economy themselves or in their administration. Nowadays when we are moving towards becoming more conscious towards a greener environment, the concept of sustainable tourism is also gaining importance. There are several stakeholders who can play a major role in converting normal tourism into sustainable tourism thereby allowing our future generations also to enjoy the same benefits which the earlier generations enjoyed. The Novel Corona virus or in short COVID 19 has created a major setback and completely shattered the tourism industry. Tomorrow sustainable tourism or responsible tourism would be the key word to rejuvenate our lost tourism sector.

Key Words-Sustainable tourism, Future generations

Introduction

The term sustainable development was coined in the paper *Our Common Future*, released by the Brundtland Commission. Sustainable development is the kind of development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. Sustainability or responsibility can be applied in various spheres of the economy like environment, education, fleets, tourism etc.

The concept of sustainable tourism emerged during the 90's. It was first emerged in the first issue of the Journal of Sustainable Tourism in 1993 (Weaver 2006:10; Hunter 2002:3; Dodds and Butler, 2009: 43), which included six articles, two articles and a book review. Sustainable tourism is the term coined similar to responsible tourism whereby we become more aware of our physical surroundings and also contribute with stakeholders like government, tour operators, local people etc to create a niche in the areas of protecting the environment and thereby taking a step towards going green. Sustainable tourism helps in preserving ancient cultures, ecology and biodiversity and also respecting local cultures and traditions. It involves environmental sustainability, socio-cultural sustainability and also economic sustainability. In

fact sustainable tourism provides a more joyful experience to tourist because it makes them connect to the nature in a friendly manner. It helps us to learn to embrace nature in a positive way and thereby uplift the message of becoming eco-friendly. Post Covid 19, there are several challenges which may occur in tourism sector. It may take years for this sector to come back to normality. During this period the stake holders can give a complete revamp to the existing tourism. They can make it more eco friendly because ultimately nature has to win.

Literature Review

Pandya, M.T. & G.M Oza (1994) in their study titled ‘Biodiversity for the masses’ emphasized that conservation & sustainable use of earth resources is the need of the hour. It is our moral duty to conserve biodiversity and live in harmony with nature.

Murthi & Kumar (1989) in a study observed that the problem of mass tourism is closely related with the issues of environment conservation. The tourism problem, according to them is more pronounced in the areas like Gulmarg, Pahalgam, Sonamarg, Amarnath and Vaishanodevi, which are some the major centres of tourist activities.

Ap, j., (1992) studied residents’ perceptions on tourism impacts, and felt that the perceptions and attitudes of residents toward the impacts of tourism are likely to be an important planning and policy consideration for successful development, marketing, and operation of existing and future tourism programs.

Discussion

India is fast growing country when it comes to tourism. In the year 2018, tourism generated 16.91 lakh crore or 9.2% of India's GDP. The concept of sustainable tourism has gained great importance in India with respect to several factors like avoidance of plastic usage, use of energy saving devices in hotels and restaurants, proper waste management etc.

The below examples site few areas where sustainable tourism has been extensively implemented and became successful.

1. Khangchendzonga National Park- This magnificent place is famous for both its cultural and natural heritage and is home to the world’s third highest peak. It is home to red pandas and snow leopards, the park covers around a fourth of Sikkim’s area and borders both Nepal and China. This place works actively on nature and landscape protection, which is a unique experience for the visitors. The park has initiated Zero Waste Management Project where a partnership between

NGOs and the government led to an initiative to monitor the garbage left behind on the trails by trekkers. There is also involvement of locals in the park's management.

2. Parambikulam Tiger Reserve-The Parambikulam Tiger Reserve and Wildlife Sanctuary is located in Kerala in the southern Western Ghats. The Reserve is an important wildlife corridor and was recognized for its "community-based ecotourism model" which involves indigenous communities in tourism and anti-poaching efforts. Tigers, lion-tailed macaques, elephants and 124 butterfly species (including 34 that are endemic to the region) can all be found here. Interestingly, the Reserve is home to the world's oldest and largest teak tree named Kannimara, which is over 350 years old.

3. Khonoma Village, Nagaland- About 20km from Kohima, the capital of Nagaland, is a 700-year-old emerald landscape known as Khonoma Village. Since the Naga tribes have always been dependent on hunting as a means of sustenance, about 300 Blyth's tragopans, the state bird and an endangered species, were killed in 1993 alone. In addition, timber merchants carried out unchecked deforestation over large parts of the area around the same time. The residents of Khonoma had bravely defended their land against British invasion in the 1800s and it was now time to do the same against a different kind of enemy. So the concerned villagers put a complete ban on hunting and logging, and since then Khonoma has become renowned as Nagaland's 'green village'.

4. Mawlynnong Village, Meghalaya- Best known as the cleanest village in Asia, Mawlynnong leads by example. The use of plastic has been banned here and so has smoking. Keeping the spirit of eco-friendliness alive, the streets are lined with bamboo dustbins and, unlike in most parts of India, there's hardly every any litter to be found. What's more, many of the guest houses are constructed of bamboo. Composting and nourishing tree plantations are also common practice in the village. The Living Roots Bridge, a UNESCO World Heritage Site and a must-see structure, is at the neighbouring Riwai Village, which is a short hike from Mawlynnong. The Khasi tribes of Meghalaya created these natural bridges by weaving together the roots of ficus trees.

5. Thenmala, Kerala- Thenmala, which has the meaning Honey Mountain, is the first planned eco-tourism destination in India. It is surrounded by dense evergreen forests, rich in timber and a thriving rubber plantation. The biodiversity of the region is evident at Butterfly Safari Park, the Deer Rehabilitation Centre. For tasting adventure, Thenmala has activities such as biking, rock

climbing, hiking, abseiling and camping. There are also sprawling tea plantations soothing the eyes.

6.Lahaul Spiti, Himachal Pradesh- This area provides very little means to sustain a livelihood thanks to its harsh climate. A few organizations such as Spiti Ecosphere are on a quest to preserve this vulnerable ecosystem by developing sustainable tourism in the region, which also helps in fuelling the local economy. Tourists enjoy trekking at the thrilling Pin Parvati Pass, biking through challenging Himalayan trails or having a spiritual experience in humble meditation centers.

7. Coorg, Karnataka- This is home to the Kodava tribe which is one of the indigenous tribes in India. This area is profusely supplied with plant and animal species. It is having vast expanse of elements of nature and has flourished as another eco destinations in India that is located on the western spur of the Western Ghats. It comprises of three wildlife sanctuaries and one national park that includes the Brahmagiri, Talakaveri, and Pushpagiri Wildlife Sanctuaries, and the Nagarhole National Park that is mostly dotted with bamboo, rosewood, teak, sandalwood, silver oak, and spice plants and housing some of the endangered mammals, reptiles, insects and amphibians. There are also adventures and leisure activities in Coorg include trekking, hiking, rock climbing, boating etc.

8.Tyda, Andhra Pradesh - It is one of the unexplored places in India set in the Eastern Ghats at an elevation of 700 meters (approximately).and thus springs up as an eco-tourism getaway in India with a rich bed of exotic flora including medicinal and aromatic plants. The region is also home to several endemic animals and birds such as the chital, sambar, Panther, Wolf, Wild Dog, Hyena, Sloth Bear, Gaur, Black Buck, Chinkara, Chowsingha, and Nilgai amongst the mammals AND red-chested pod chards, pintails, herons, egret

Significance and Scope of The Study

The subject under study is pertaining to the ways on how world is moving towards becoming sustainable with few examples. And tourism is the area where it can be applied a lot because tourism and its prospects never end. It shows how to respect other's country, and enjoy the visit without hurting or posing any harm to the environment.

Research Methodology

The study is confined to understanding the sustainable practices in tourism followed in India with few examples. Secondary research methodology has been adopted.

Secondary Sources means the published sets of literature's or data available for getting important information regarding any kind of research. Data with respect to sustainable practices are available in the form of journals, online literature, government reports, statistics by different institutions etc. Majority of the data have been collected through websites. The study is descriptive in nature.

Limitations Of The Study

The topic of study is a vast one. The concept covered under the study emerged recently in the world. Apart from that, data was collected mainly from websites and newspaper articles and not through any renowned publishers or through primary data.

This made it a bit tough to write this paper. Time constraint was another major issue.

Findings Of The Study

The study has tried to bring into light the importance of sustainable development and various ways on how we can achieve sustainability. It can be used as a model for other areas too to focus on saving our environment and spreading the message towards future generations.

1. Local community plays a major role in imparting lessons of sustainable tourism.
2. Sustainable tourism helps to promote the local culture and traditions.
3. It's an opportunity to uplift the local community by helping them sell their local products like art and crafts, honey from the forests, natural medicines etc.
4. Simple steps like reducing the usage of plastic, water conservation methods, reducing the usage of harmful chemical, pesticides, adopting organic farming etc can be adopted to sustain the environment.

Suggestions

- Workshops or seminars can be conducted to advocate sustainability in eco friendly areas by various NGOs or government agencies.
- Incentives can be provided for agencies, especially local community members who are closely working with the nature.
- There is ample scope for skill development of the local community and thereby improve their lifestyle.
- Steps can be taken to preserve the heritage buildings and sensitive areas.

Conclusion

The above study has shown few ways on how an area can be sustainably developed without harming the environment. The role of communities is very much important in bringing sustainability in tourism sector. All the stakeholders will have to play a give and take role in incorporating such practices in tourism sector like avoiding of plastics, scientific waste management process, using energy saving devices for usage, protecting wildlife against poaching & hunting etc. As seen now the world is grasped by a pandemic. It may take days for the world to revive and come back. But by keeping patience, we can rebuild our economy, maybe more cautiously and carefully this time. Sustainability would definitely be the punch word ahead. The results of the positive activities may not be reflected now but it would definitely take the globe ahead.

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