Sustainable Tourism – The Need for a Comprehensive Methodological Framework

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ABSTRACT

Purpose – Aim of this paper is to provide a comprehensive methodological framework (holistic perspective on various dimensions) of sustainable tourism. The discussion with key practitioners authenticates the issues that have already been identified.

Design/methodology/approach – The paper combines analysis of government documents as well as insights from practitioners. The paper discusses issues of sustainable tourism, strengths of the industry, challenges faced and policy implications for the government.

Findings – The paper explores the economic and social importance of sustainable tourism of the Indian tourism industry. The paper has implications for the government and firms in terms of investment in hospitality education, infrastructure and better employment practices.

Practical implications – The paper provides a road map for some of the initiatives that government and tourism industry could adopt.

Originality/value – It combines a policy perspective for government and industry stakeholders.

Keywords Sustainable development, Tourism, Economic development, India

INTRODUCTION AND DEFINITION

In recent years the list of international organizations, NGOs and academics handling the concept of sustainable development has expanded dramatically. Such endeavors range from great hypotheses concentrated on producing a for most part acknowledged, "one-fits-all" theoretical and conceptual framework for sustainable advancement to more unobtrusive endeavors focused on particular issues or sectors. One of the particular regions of research focuses on the concept of sustainable tourism. Similarly as with others subfield of the manageable advancement writing, sustainable tourism is a range where the rundown of existing analyses is long and impressive.

Sustainable tourism will be tourism that minimizes the expenses and maximizes the benefits of tourism for natural environments and local communities, and can be completed inconclusively without hurting the assets on which it depends.

A common meaning of sustainable tourism is the one of the World Tourism Organization (WTO): "Sustainable tourism development meets the needs of present tourists and host areas

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while ensuring and enhancing opportunity for what's to come. It is conceived as prompting management of all assets in a manner that monetary, social, and aesthetic needs can be fulfilled while keeping up cultural integrity, vital natural procedures, organic diversity, and life supportive system.” [WTO 1998: 19]

'Sustainable tourism' is clearly a complex and differing issue, which as the world develops, will turn into an increasingly critical part of a developing tourism industry.

In other words, sustainable tourism advancement is naturally sustainable, monetarily sustainable and additionally morally and socially equitable. It regards the delicate natural adjust that describes numerous tourism destinations, especially in ecologically touchy zones; and it depends on a long term perspective.

Sustainable tourism is intentionally arranged from the earliest starting point to advantage local residents, regard local culture, conserve natural resources, and teach both tourists and local residents. Sustainable tourism can deliver the same benefits as customary tourism, yet a greater amount of the benefits stay with the local community, and the area's natural resources and cultural can be protected. As a rule, conventional tourism practices of the past have represented a major threat to marine preservation because of lack of management controls and effective planning mechanisms. Conversely, sustainable tourism purposely tries to minimize the negative effects of tourism, while contributing to preservation and the well-being of the group, both financially and socially. Conventional tourism does not regularly give sources of funding to both preservation projects and local communities, while giving incentives for protecting areas from practices and advancement that are hurtful to the natural beauty of area. Opportunities and threats must be controlled through very much arranged and oversaw sustainable tourism.

THE FORMATION OF SUSTAINABLE TOURISM

Liberalization, privatization and globalization have fuelled the formation of a quickly changing and highly competitive environment around the world. Countries, commercial ventures and firms are deliberately attempting to create sustainable competitive advantage across sectors. A large portion of the developing economies are in rapid travel towards getting to be "service economies" and hence, the relative aggressiveness of the service sector is developing as a urgent element as it impacts the overall competitiveness of a country (Dugar, 2005).

Playing a significant role here is the tourism business, the biggest and quickest developing industry on the planet, employing more than 260 million individuals and generating 10.7 percent of the world's GDP (Eco India, 2008).
As noted by the World Tourism Organization (2004), sustainable tourism principles refer to the natural, financial and socio-cultural aspects of tourism improvement. An appropriate balance must be set up between these three dimensions to ensure its long-term sustainability. Its importance lies in its objective which is to conserve resources and increase and preserve local cultures and traditions. In simple terms, **sustainable tourism is responsible tourism intended to generate employment and income, thereby reducing any deeper impact on the environment and local culture.**

The principles of sustainable tourism lay particular accentuation on the support of local communities at tourism destinations. Here, the active contribution of local individuals is the critical success factor variable in sustaining momentum. Ideally, local communities ought to profit from tourism development as reflected by the development of local business opportunities. Training and education program play an essential support role here as they enhance cultural heritage and the administration of natural resources.

**SUSTAINABLE TOURISM**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Planned with three goals: profit, environment, and community (triple bottom line)</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Usually planned in advance with involvement of all stakeholders</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Locally oriented</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Locally controlled, at least in part</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Focus on educational experiences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conservation of natural resources a priority</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appreciation for local culture a priority</td>
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<tr>
<td>More revenue stays with local community and MPA</td>
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</table>

Three dimensions or "pillars" of sustainable development are presently perceived and underlined. These are:

- **Economic Sustainability**, which implies creating the flourishing at various phases of society and dealing with the cost effectiveness of all economic activities.
✓ **Social Sustainability**, which implies esteeming human rights and giving equivalent chances to all in the society.

✓ **Environmental Sustainability**, which means conserving, preserving and managing the resources, particularly those that are not renewable or are significant as far as life support.

Nations and regions where the economy is driven by the tourism business have turned out to be progressively concerned with the environmental, and in addition the socio-cultural issues connected with unsustainable tourism. Subsequently, there is now increasing agreement on the need to elevate sustainable tourism development to minimize its ecological effect and to augment socio-economic advantages at tourist destinations. The concept of manageable tourism, as developed by the World Tourism Organization (WTO) with regards to the United Nations sustainable development process, alludes to traveler activities "leading to management of all resources in a manner that monetary, social and aesthetic needs can be satisfied while keeping up social respectability, key environmental procedures, natural differences and life support systems" *(UN, 2001)*

**LITERATURE REVIEW ON SUSTAINABLE TOURISM**

Sustainable tourism has turned into area of huge concern to both the scholarly world and industry in the course of recent years. Notwithstanding, are view of sustainable tourism and ecotourism literature uncovers that in the course of recent years, there has been little change as to the meaning of economical tourism/tourists or attributes that may distinguish environmentally friendly (and sustainable) tourists. Due this absence of understanding and enduring exploration discoveries, it would be normal that flow specialists/the scholarly world/industry would give an expansive number of suggestions for future work.

Most studies evaluating tourism activities regularly manage one part of tourism. For example, the economic impact of tourism exercises is typically evaluated on the premise of information on number of arrivals, receipt per traveler, average length of stay and other financial indicators. Keeping in mind the end goal to effectively estimated tourism movement and tourism's impact on national economies, a few studies have created tourism account strategies *(Frechtling, 1999)*.

Different studies have concentrated on the utilization of tourism resources (natural, cultural, etc). Nonetheless, a growing literature manages the maintainability appraisal, attempting to create pointers and give approaches to sustainable tourism. For instance, **Miller (2001)** concentrates on the improvement of indicators measuring tourism maintainability. Not at all
like numerous studies that cover just the physical and human environment, has Miller (2000) presented a few markers covering all parts of maintainability: ecological issues (physical and human), employment, financial leakages and customer’s aspects (satisfaction levels, etc.).

**CASE STUDY REGARDING INDIA AS A TOURIST DESTINATION**

**DATA AND METHODOLOGY**

India is a fabulous country of Asia and famous for tourist destination. This is not surprising if we are taking into account the variety of places of interest for tourists in India museums, parks, administrative buildings, heritage spots, temples, hotels restaurants, clubs, etc. In order to identify people’s opinions concerning the main ways of developing sustainable tourism in India we have formed a questionnaire. Most of the respondents are aged between 18 and 25 years (34% of the respondents), followed by respondents aged between 36 and 45 years (26% of the respondents), respondents aged between 26 and 35 years (25% of the respondents), respondents aged between 46 and 55 years (11% of the respondents), and respondents aged over 55 years (4% of the respondents). Regarding gender, 56% of the respondents are female, while 44% of them are male.

The research sufficiently reflects gender distribution in India in statistical terms. The information collected was processed using Microsoft Excel worksheet both for centralizing and analyzing data. The next division of the article briefly presents the results of the survey, emphasizing people’s opinions regarding the main attractions of India as tourist destinations, recreational facilities and sources of information about them, institutions involved in promoting sustainable tourism in Indian urban areas, and the role of various authorities in promoting sustainable tourism.

Table 1: Frequency table on types of places chosen by the respondents to visit in India

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MOST LIKED PLACES</th>
<th>RESPONDENTS</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>C.F. %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>FORTS AND PALACES</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>45.4</td>
<td>45.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HERITAGE SITES AND HISTORICAL PLACE</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>25.6</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PARKS, FOREST, MOUNTAINS</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>125</td>
<td>100</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Graph 2: Frequency graph on types of places chosen by the respondents to visit in India
Regarding the preferences of the respondents among the responses to the question “What do you like to visit in India? The most common answer of the respondents was “forts and palaces”, with 45.4 % of the responses followed by “heritage sites” together with “historical center”, each accounting for 25.6% of respondents. At the next pole, the “parks, forests, valley and mountains” are preferred by 29% of the respondents.

Table 2:- Frequency Table on Institutions Promoting Sustainable Tourism in Urban Areas

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Institutions Promoting Sustainable Tourism</th>
<th>frequency</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>c.%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Regional And Local Public Authorities</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central Public Authorities</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Governmental Organizations</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Citizens</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Institution</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>125</td>
<td>100</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Graph 2:- frequency graph of Institutions involved in promoting sustainable tourism in urban areas
Regarding the role of various institutions in promoting sustainable tourism in urban areas a majority of respondents (60%) consider that the public administration (regional and local public authorities –36% and central public authorities –24%) are in the best position to implement programs to promote and develop sustainable tourism in urban areas. In second place came the non-governmental organizations (19% of the respondents), followed by citizens (16% of respondents) and others authorities are 5%.

Sources of Information:- The Internet is the main source of information regarding tourist destinations for the respondents participating in the study, with maximum of them choosing it. Way behind as information source are television, radio, and newspapers.

SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT OF TOURIST DESTINATION

The execution of various key activity focuses will enormously advantage the tourism development in India. It is basic to gain control of environmental, natural and environmental hazards and social debasement and spotlight on sustainable tourism. The government likewise perceives that over the top introduction of biologically delicate zones to human impedance can prompt environmental degradation. Check the indiscriminate development of tourism; the local populace must be persuaded of the need to support directions in light of a regulations concern for long term sustainability. Large portions of India's hill resorts have endured because of absence of concern toward capacity management.

- Ease bureaucratic obstacles.
- Local tourism can shape the premise of a feasible and supportable tourism industry in India (Planning Commission, Government of India, 2002).
As the tourism develops it is vital to control its improvement by means of effective planning and management. Besides, it is key to moderate the biodiversity of tourist destinations by means of sustainable tourism – an organized effort to monitor assets, esteem nearby culture and tradition and add to the economy all in all (Eco India, 2008).

Increase room supply in order to cater to the ever increasing inflow of tourists.

Open skies to increase air limit with a specific end goal to react to existing interest for air travel and stimulate new demand.

More prominent contribution of the private segment by means of a more helpful environment for investment. The development in this sector is reliant on all around incorporated and co-composed arrangements together inside a steady, predictable strategy structure.

A sustainable tourism industry is firmly related with the advancement of a better integrated service environment. This requires collaboration by every one of the partners – government; the private sector; street, rail and air system administrators; training institutions or more all the host community.

**CONCLUDING REMARKS**

While attracting in just a little proportion of international visitors with respect to its massive populace base, India has a standout amongst the most differentiated tourism profiles of any Asian nation. Domestic tourism in India has been developing at twofold the rate of international tourism, supported by the extension and liberalization of aviation network and progressively rich populaces after a managed time of stellar financial development. It can be seen that for India to tap its colossal tourism potential and to contend all inclusive and inside the Asian tourism market, it must offer world-class tourism services and destinations. There should be sensitization so as preserve the environment, local society and inclusion of local communities. There is also a requirement for a more robust educational system that can prepare the labor required for the business.

**REFERENCES**


➢ **UN, 2001a.** Sustainable development of tourism, Report of the Secretary-General (Document No.E/CN.17/2001/ PC/21), New York, UN.