

# The Issues and Challenges in Sustainable Tourism Development with Special Reference to India

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## ABSTRACT

Tourism is one economic sector in India that has the potential to grow at a high rate and ensure the development of infrastructure at the destinations. It has the capacity to capitalize on the country's success in the services sector and provide sustainable models of growth. In today's scenario Sustainable tourism is a responsible tourism intending to generate employment and income along with alleviating any deeper impact on environment and local culture. "Tourism destroys Tourism"- has been observed through many case studies like Shimla and Mussoorie. That's why the need of the hour is that balance must be found between limits and usage so that continuous changing, monitoring and planning of the tourism destination ensures management of tourism for the longer run and for the generation. The term was coined by Hector Ceballos Lascurain in 1983 to describe nature-based travel to relatively undisturbed areas with an emphasis on education, culture, and employment opportunities into a scientific approach and develop a sustainable tourism. Therefore, an attempt has been made to focus on various issues and challenges in sustainable tourism development with special reference to India. This paper is based on two objectives: to find out the issues; and to identified the challenges of sustainable tourism development in India. Secondary data have been collected from books, magazines and journals, etc. The Issues are environmental, ecological, socio-cultural, economic, legal and various forms of pollution, all of which contribute to environmental degradation. Economic, social and environmental aspects of sustainable tourism development must include the interests of all stakeholders including local people or

communities, visitors, industry and government. The challenges are Maintaining carrying capacity, seeking community participation, implementing government policy and programmes, Monitoring the projects etc.

## KEY WORDS

Sustainable Tourism, Environment, Maintaining carrying capacity, Community Participation etc.

## 1.INTRODUCTION

The Tourism Industry lays increased attention to the principles of Sustainable Tourism and this has evolved into an important concept in modern times, in relation to tourism planning and development. With the growth of the Tourism Industry, sustainable tourism products are becoming increasingly relevant for all stakeholders (Hussain et al., 2015) and they have been found to have both positive as well as negative impacts on the community, economy, and the environment. According to Hunter (1997), there are mainly two approaches to Sustainable Tourism - Light Green and Dark Green approaches. The Light Green approach to Sustainable Tourism concentrates on the benefits, expansion and maintenance of tourism activities in the destination, market needs of the products, environmental action and stakeholders' involvement. The Dark Green approach focuses on the economic base, natural resources, environmental impact and training of stakeholders. Many studies have in recent times focused on sustainability as an effective instrument for achieving the highest position that any tourism destination can achieve, by focusing on the three most significant components of Sustainable Tourism, namely the environment,

economy and the community (Kimbu and Tichaawa, 2018). Therefore, if a tourism destination remains unplanned and underdeveloped, it would destroy the economic, environmental, and social aspects of the dependent community (Brokaj, 2014). Hence stakeholder participation in the entire tourism development process and cycle is necessary in order to implement the right values of Sustainable Tourism and achieve sound Sustainable Tourism Development initiatives (Turker et al., 2016). Without the active engagement and commitment of all stakeholders, it will be difficult for local government organizations to develop open and transparent institutional frameworks and share the costs and benefits among all stakeholders in an equal and equitable manner (Li and Hunter, 2015). It is also noted that the expertise and experience of all the stakeholders in tourism management, their participation in the tourism planning and development processes, and their long-term involvement play a significant role in the sustainable management of the tourism destinations. All stakeholders have different expectations and goals regarding the anticipated effects of Sustainable Tourism Development and its efficiency. It is also clear that the performance assessments used in Sustainable Tourism Development should be carried out and investigated from a multistakeholder perspective, so as to try, match, coordinate and maintain the views of all the stakeholders on the predicted Sustainable Tourism Development practices (Sigala, 2014).

Therefore, Sustainable Tourism Development cannot be accomplished without considering the interests of all the stakeholders (Moral-Cuadra et al., 2019). According to UNWTO (1998), a stakeholder refers to “a national or local government with specific competence in tourism matters, tourism establishments and tourism enterprises, including their associations; tourism employees, tourism professionals, and tourism consultants; tourism education and training centres; travellers, including business travellers and visitors to tourism destinations, sites and attractions; and local population and host communities at the tourism destinations through their representatives. Therefore, any group or person who may be affected by the accomplishments of the goals at the tourism destinations can be termed as a stakeholder. Moreover, other interest groups and individuals, especially the residents and the indigenous

population, also need adequate recognition as stakeholders. Stakeholders’ interests in their surroundings can affect their preparedness to promote tourism (Gursoy et al., 2002). Understanding stakeholders’ perceptions during the various stages of the decision-making processes are seen as an essential strategy for achieving Sustainable Tourism Development. But there is often a lack of involvement of local stakeholders in decision-making, mainly because of very strict legislations and restrictions. Hence stakeholders’ perceptions can be considered as an important indicator for measuring Sustainable Tourism Development, as it can be an aid and a significant factor in the growth of any tourism destination. More optimistic perceptions can develop when people have more close and frequent interactions with visitors and when they share more information about tourism (Janusz et al., 2017).

## **2. NEED FOR SUSTAINABILITY IN TOURISM**

Environmental protection became a major issue in the 1990s after the introduction of the concept of sustainable development by the Brundtland Commission (World Commission on Environment and Development) in *Our Common Future* (1987). This report was seen as an expression of the increasing environmental awareness toward the latter part of the 1980s. Tourism as an economic activity has an inevitable effect on the environment of the destination. The environment is often regarded as the major pull factor of tourist movements, contributing to the desirability and attractiveness of a tourist destination. As the environment is an indispensable asset to the tourism industry, the protection and conservation of environmental resources (which include natural, cultural and historic resources) are prime considerations for the tourism industry, upon which it depends as primary inputs in the production of the tourist output. (Christine Lim, 2002).

Upon the passage of time when tourism became an international product, an environmental concern through an organisation such as green globe and etc. Have raised to its par in order to give a new spear to tourism and environment with the support of the world and termed it as sustainability. The evidences from conceptual notes clearly depicts that sustainability in tourism is achieved by allowing

space to eco-tourism initiatives or simply the implementation of nature-based tourism protocols applied on the field.

Ayala (1995) defines eco-tourism as “tourism that educates the human for the protection of the green, accompanies the enjoyment with an understanding of the destination and promoting the value of preserving and conserving the resources.

As the world’s population becomes increasingly urbanised, the demand for tourist attractions which are environmentally friendly, serene and offer amenities of a unique nature, has been growing rapidly (Christine Lim, 2002). Thus, an academic action, sponsored interventions of practitioners, policy makers decisions on this regard, public’s involvement in adhere to policies of nature protection, the local residents’ practices of applying the theory of environmental protection for their own well-being should be well-addressed so that the globe will be green protected. When the bridges are connected between sustainability and one of the important destination to be serviced, served and protected for its abundance of beauty, and natural resources of various natural and manmade tourism destinations of India, because of its huge number of tourist destinations, attractions, tour operators, tourist visiting schedules, revenue generating package of tours available like adventures, trekking, river rafting, cool stays, family fun, fishing, honey moon spots, escalation of enjoyment and entertainments through well planned and well-structured home stays, guest houses, lodges and resorts. When connections are made between tourism and sustainability, we find few hardening facts that the natural resources of various tourism destinations are explored and many times exploited because of the greediness of travellers, tour agents and policy holders also. Being high profit motives, the natural resources are exploited more than what is actually deserved to be used or utilised. This situation is giving a raise to another phenomena is called ecological imbalance.

### **3.CONCEPT OF SUSTAINABLE TOURISM DEVELOPMENT**

The concept of sustainable tourism development involves balanced economic, social and cultural development without endangering the environment, which enables the development of the same or higher level. Sustainable development is a process

that allows development to be achieved without degradation or depletion of those resources on which it is based. That, generally speaking, can be accomplished or resource management so that they can renew the extent and used, or with greater representation and use of resources in which the regeneration period is short. This approach, resources can be used in future to the same extent as the current generation. (UNEP, 1994)

The concept of sustainable development is based on four basic principles, namely:

- ✓ The principle of environmental sustainability, which provides development to be compatible with the maintenance of vital ecological processes, biological diversity and biological resources,
- ✓ Principle of social sustainability, providing development be compatible by traditional values of a community, while adding strengthening of their identity,
- ✓ The principle of sustainability, provides cultural development to be compatible with the cultural values of human community, which also has an impact on the strengthening of their identity,
- ✓ The principle of sustainability-economic development to provide a cost effective and resource to be managed in a way they can use and future generations.

The concept of sustainable tourism development involves more dimensions showing the relationship of economic, social and cultural development and its compliance with the needs and constraints of the environment.

(Hall, C. (1998): Historical antecedents on sustainable development: New labels on old bottles?, In Sustainable Tourism: A Geographical Perspective (C.M. Hall and A.A. Law, eds), Longman)

### **3.1 REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

In order to meaningfully evaluate tourism systems in terms of sustainable parameters, the ITY framework is proposed. At its base are tourist, financial, economic, environmental, social, and cultural areas (Northcote, J., & Macbeth, J. (2006). Stakeholders’

participation can to a great extent affect the destination's values, beliefs, and success in terms of Sustainable Tourism Development in India (Kumar and Nandini, 2013). Stakeholders must focus on their destinations in order to create a more strategic edge, so as to construct a thriving and prosperous tourism industry (Amoako et al., 2021). Their attachment to the destination, tourism experiences, proximity to the tourism centres, personal dependency on tourism, level of involvement in leisure activities, demographic variables such as marital status, age, gender, language, seasonality, tourism taxes, the community's perceived future and the growth stage that the tourism industry is in, will all influence the stakeholders' views on tourism (Brida et al., 2011). All these factors will also play a significant role in decision-making during the planning and policy-making processes (Lee and Hsieh, 2016). Taking into consideration the stakeholders' views will also allow the tourism managers and administrators to adopt more holistic responsive mechanisms towards Sustainable Development in India. They can be used as important indicators to measure sustainability issues (Eshliki and Kaboudi, 2012) and they can also act as strong guidelines to improve Sustainable Tourism in the destinations. Indrianti (2016) believes that if a destination completely depends on the Tourism Industry to sustain itself, the local communities in that place will have a major role to play in conserving the area's sustainability through their attitude, perception, support, and involvement, all of which will need to be continuously assessed. But many a time, a very low degree of cooperation exists among the various stakeholders because they have different views of Sustainable Tourism. Local stakeholders do not seem to share the same boundary nor do they seem to be working towards a shared goal, thus undermining the long-term viability of Sustainable Tourism (Bregoli et al., 2016). It has also been found that the local community are reluctant to offer their services and financial support to government organizations that are concerned with the sustainability issues (Strydom and Mangope, 2019). Therefore, the community participation on Sustainable Tourism development is very important while trying to relate their support and involvement in various tourism activities in India.

### **3.2 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

It is pivotal to maintain sustainability in tourism in order to achieve the quality in engagement and enriching the tourism value and label as a best spot in the minds of tourist patron and nextly to have continuity of usage of resources available both man-made and natural resources to its best without the thought on exploiting for the sake of immediate gain. Thus, the research addresses the issues and challenges related to sustainable tourism development in India for the gain of the self, reaching to win-lose (human-environment) without worrying much about the possible negative reactions of the environment in future and likely causes thereby. Hence, the current research is narrated on the "The issues and challenges in sustainable tourism development with special reference to India"—A need for a closer look'

### **3.3 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

3.3.1 To measures the significance of sustainable tourism development in India.

3.3.2 To identified and examine the issues of sustainable tourism development and suggest appropriate measures in terms of design policies and guidelines to address the issues in India.

3.3.3 To find out the challenges of sustainable tourism development in India.

### **3.4 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

Research Methodology - Due to nature of the study, a quantitative research approach was used to examine the study. The study is basically descriptive in nature. The research methodology adopted is based on the secondary data from the reliable sources along with books, related articles in journals, newspapers and electronic sources relating to study area. Thus, the findings and analysis are based on evidences and data gathered from secondary source and literatures.

### **3.5 A CONCEPTUAL NOTE ON ISSUES AND CHALLENGES TO SUSTAINABILITY EVIDENCE FROM THE LITERATURE**

There are a number of obstacles that have been associated with sustainable tourism development in India such as Lack of real data for tourist facilities, Small powers of local government, Unorganized,

segmented and uncoordinated marketing, local community Perception towards sustainable tourism, Lack of developed information system, failing to implement the law on sustainable tourism and hospitality, lack of information among others etc.

Following are the factors suppressing sustainable tourism development in India,

3.5.1 Lack of awareness: The local people residing in the tourism destination is not aware about the benefits of the sustainable tourism in terms of community development, regional development and employment opportunities.

3.5.2 Absence of Ministry of Tourism: The government has not taken the adequate initiation in terms of promoting the sustainable tourism at the destination level.

3.5.3 Lack of national strategy for sustainable development of tourism: There is a lack of national strategy for sustainable tourism development in the national level. The ministry of tourism has to take care of the implementation of the strategies.

3.5.4 Unevenly developed tourist infrastructure in all parts of the municipality: The tourism destinations are lacking in terms of Connectivity and basic amenities like electricity, drinking water facility and parking area for visitors.

3.5.5 Lack of organization and coordination of the tourism sector: This is one of the biggest issues what the tourism industry is facing, there is a lack of proper coordination between the tourism stakeholders.

3.5.6 Discontinuity in the cooperation between SMEs, local government, national and foreign institutions, agencies and companies.

3.5.7 Lack of media support for the positive examples, ideas and initiatives for sustainable tourism development.

3.5.8 Slow implementation of development plans and programs in tourism which has been introduced by the ministry of tourism at the national level.

3.5.9 Lack of public, business and civil society about the importance of the authenticity of the cultural, natural heritage, environment and sustainability.

3.5.10 Underutilized natural resources: India has lot of natural and manmade tourism attractions but many destinations are not utilizing properly.

3.5.11 Seasonality: Seasonality in tourism is one of the major problems which needs to be overcome and is also one of the challenges in sustainable tourism development.

3.5.12 Lack of proper infrastructure and amenities: The destinations are lacking in terms of Connectivity and basic amenities like electricity, drinking water facility and parking area for visitors.

3.5.13 Cultural Barriers: The local community was lack of awareness in terms of the benefits the tourism provides, and community was misunderstood about the Cultural Barriers in terms of tourist inflow towards the destination.

3.5.14 Lack of sewage system: The sewage system for the waste disposal is not proper in the destinations. The government has not taken any initiation to provide proper sewage system in the destinations.

3.5.15 Environmental Threat: Due to overflow of tourists there is always some kind of threats from the environment in the destinations.

3.5.16 Insecurity and Environmental Pollution: The destination is also lacks in terms of security facilities provided for the visitors. The tourism related activities may also cause certain extent the environment pollution due to the lack of security and safety measures at the destinations.

3.5.17 Grey economy: In India the tourism destinations are lacking in terms of Unregistered and untaxed activities like local shops, hotels, home stays, parking places, travel agency and tour operators etc.

3.5.18 Lack of Public / Private Partnership: The government is not providing the opportunity for private sectors to participate in the tourism destination promotion and sustainable development of the destination in all possible manners to attract the tourists towards the destinations.

## **3.6 FINDINGS AND SUGGESTIONS**

The guidelines of sustainable development for tourism in India should determine the directing and the control of the development of tourism, to

determine the developmental pace, which would also aim at successful avoidance or decrease of the negative impacts of tourist development on the environment. Given that sustainable tourist development should enable the needs of all parties involved in the process, meaning those who consume the services, i.e., the tourists, and those who create the demand and certainly the domestic population, then it is clear that the activities for guideline setting should include all these factors. Therefore, the second part of the research refers to the determination of the aspirations of the receptive population aimed at sustainable development of their tourist destination. Finally, the conclusions drawn from results of the undertaken analysis should be implemented in the planning processes for tourist development and should be included when drafting the development strategy, as a coordinated framework within which tourism will develop in the future. Namely, from the results of this part of the research, it may be concluded that there is a need of:

Undertaking measures and activities for protection of certain areas in India where protection is needed

3.6.1 Undertaking activities for encouraging local population for greater involvement in planning activities for sustainable tourism development.

3.6.2 Private investors should partner with all levels of government to foster visible sustainable tourism development since government cannot meet all the yearnings of people.

3.6.3 Creating conditions that will ensure greater realization rate of plans for tourism development.

3.6.4 Improving the organization of tourist activities at the destination level.

3.6.5 Government should facilitate sustainable based tourism seminars, conferences and workshops in order to create awareness on the relevance of sustainable tourism attractions in the study area.

3.6.6 Funding projects that would enable better exploitation of tourist opportunities.

3.6.7 Engaging human resources with relevant and appropriate professional education in tourism activities.

3.6.8 Rural communities should participate on tourism policy formation and execution

3.6.9 Undertaking activities for improving spatial destinations and sustainability of high level of hygiene.

3.6.10 Undertaking measures for reducing and correction of negative phenomena for the sustainable tourist destination development.

3.6.11 Undertaking measures for stimulating positive phenomena for tourist destination development.

3.6.12 More tourism promotional festivals organized by Department of Tourism, Govt. of India are a platform to show case a destination and its tourism potentials.

3.6.13 Well organized and effective marketing of Indian tourism destinations.

3.6.14 There is an urgent need for the destination to take the initiative to adopt sustainable tourism development approach to attract the tourists towards the destination.

3.6.15 The Government should take necessary steps for the Capacity Building programs relating to the aspects of sustainable tourism destination promotion and development.

All these activities should be undertaken in order to direct the development of tourism towards achieving sustainability, meaning that the principles that ensure the environmental, social, cultural and economic sustainability must be respected, because the concept of sustainable tourist development implies economic, social and cultural development without endangering the environment. With this approach tourist resources could be protected and used in the future by the upcoming as well as the present generations. Finally, the prospects for developing the sustainable tourism development in India are existent, if we take into consideration the existing opportunities for valorisation of resources, that are not included in the tourist offer of the India, and if we successfully manage them.

(Bramwell, B., Lane. B. (1993): Sustainable tourism: an evolving global approach, *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*, 1, 1-5)

#### **4. CONCLUSION**

In order strategic objectives for sustainable development of India as a tourist destination to be

feasible, we should respect certain principles. They should be based on the importance of sustainable tourism destination, profitability-which refers to the increasing use of the index of accommodation and the index of the attendance of certain objects or attractiveness. Also needed is a clear determination of priority investments, which will enable the correct allocation, selection and guidance investments, and running target marketing that actually means that different target groups or target the tourism market should be taken by various marketing activities. Sustainable development can only work successfully when four of its constituent elements, economic, social, cultural and environmental components have approximately equal importance and strength and conditioning and interconnection without the domination of any part of these elements. Sustainable tourism development mainly depends on the ability of the environment to ensure a stable and lasting basis for development. Finally, the prospects for developing the sustainable tourism development in India are existent, if we take into consideration the existing opportunities for valorisation of resources, that are not included in the tourist offer of the India, and if we successfully manage them.

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