



Sustainable tourism development: A key to social peace

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Abstract

The very intentions of the Indian government to tap & care tourism sector is not very recent rather initiated almost in the mid of the last century and is still continuing with an objective to make India a world known destination. Going through the various social impacts of tourism, we today have a firm understanding that caring for tourism leads to a peaceful and growing harmonious community. The target of increasing the inflow of the tourists has now been coupled with the required and desired concept of sustainable tourism. We are hearing the words 'sustainable development' and 'sustainable tourism development' every now and then. But a common man here is still wondering on what does the terms exactly mean? A general perception of the term sustainability is taken as meeting the needs of the existing generation but without compromising the ability of coming generations to meet their needs. The truth is that the guidelines and management practices of sustainable tourism development are applicable to various forms of tourism in all types of destinations like mass tourism, adventure tourism, cultural tourism and rural tourism etc to mention a few. The objective of sustainable tourism is to implement all areas of sustainable development, may it be environment issues, economical issues or social issues in tourism wherein the aim is to set a suitable balance between these three dimensions to guarantee its long-term sustainability leading to peace in the masses. The paper here explains the significance of an appropriate approach for sustainable tourism development so that we are able to compete at the world level in tourism sector and project a real image of harmonious community with higher level of understanding.

Keywords: sustainable development, tourism development, sustainable tourism, peace

1. Introduction

Tourism looks quite easy going for travellers but is in fact, much a complex industry for the stakeholders that involves a broad range of businesses, organisations and government agencies working together at different levels to deliver a complete tourism experience. Each front in the chain contributes to the overall holiday experience of the customer in the name of visitors and tourists - from initial attractions through to the ground level know-how and linkages of the sector with other industries. The very intentions of the Indian government to tap & care tourism sector initiated almost in the mid of fourth decade of the last century and is still continuing with an objective to make India a world known destination. We have been sure enough till now to understand that caring and developing tourism leads to a peaceful and growing harmonious community. The sole aim of increasing the inflow of the tourists has now been coupled with the required and desired concept of sustainable tourism. We are hearing the words 'sustainable development' and 'sustainable tourism development' every now and then. But a common man here is still wondering on what does the terms exactly mean?

A part of its marketing strategy, "Incredible India" campaign had been initiated recently and consequently the rise in data and the status is significantly felt as an outcome for the same. So which fronts and factors, we should look into and work with better observantly while India enters the second phase of its tourism development? It becomes very important in this phase to build on to already running campaign. It is also much

imperative to get to the root of various issues such as infrastructure, superstructure, maintaining and developing heritage sites, education & training for the skill developing professionals but the very base for the same lies in marketing of destinations as equally significant rather than moving ahead aggressively with branding tourism and travel in the country. Implementing best international practices in tourism development with well marketed destinations is one of the significant tasks that should be keenly looked into with utmost care along with adopting the sustainable concept in letter and spirit.

2. Objective of the Study

The objective for this work is to know and understand the concept of sustainable tourism development and how it leads to peace and harmony in a social setup. The study of various impacts of tourism development explains the significance of social impacts of this phenomenon wherein peace and understanding among communities has been felt with better understanding among individuals who travel and visit to the varied destinations.

3. Knowing Tourism

Tourism has been observed differently by the scholars basically depending upon the sectors it involves in like the trade & commerce, the economy, the sociology, the history and the management etc. to mention a few. It thus becomes much pertinent to know and understand the concept of tourism

if we desire to see the impacts of the phenomena on to a social setup. While going through the various definitions of tourism, we find one of the earliest concept of tourism was provided by the Austrian economist *Herman Von Schullard* in 1910, who defined it as, "sum total of operators, mainly of an economic nature, which directly relate to the entry, stay and movement of foreigners inside and outside a certain country, city or a region."

Theo bald (1994) suggested that etymologically, the word "tour" is derived from the Latin term '*tornare*' and the Greek term '*tornos*,' meaning '*a lathe or circle; i.e. the movement around a central point or axis.*' The meaning changed in modern English to represent 'one's turn.' The suffix -ism is defined as 'an action or process; typical behaviour or quality' whereas the suffix-ist denotes one that performs a given action. When the word tour and the suffixes-ism and-ist are combined, they suggest the action of movement around a circle. Therefore, like a circle, a tour represents a journey that is a round trip or a circular journey i.e., the act of leaving and then returning to the original point, and therefore, the one who takes such a journey, we refer as a tourist.

United Nations definition

The United Nations (WTO) in 1994 categorised three aspects of tourism in its Recommendations on Tourism Statistics as:

1. Domestic tourism, involving residents of the given country travelling only within this country;
2. Inbound tourism, involving non-residents travelling in the given country;
3. Outbound tourism, involving residents travelling in another country.

Over the decades, tourism has experienced rapid and continued growth deepening diversification to become one of the fastest growing economic sectors in the world. Tourism has now become a thriving global industry with the power to shape the developing countries in both positive and negative ways. No doubt, it has today become the fourth largest industry in the global economy.

Similarly, in developing countries like India tourism has become one of the major sectors of the economy, contributing to a large proportion of the National Income and generating huge employment opportunities. It is the fastest growing service industry in the country declared with great potentials for its further expansion and diversification. However, at the same time we must not ignore the pros and cons involved with the development of tourism industry in the country.

Components of tourism

Tourism comprises a number of activities of people travelling to and staying in places outside their usual environment for not more than one consecutive year for the purpose of leisure, business and social, recreational, and knowledge seeking purposes. One of the main components of tourism, accessibility, refers to the ability for tourists to get to the destination. This mostly includes transportation and various modes types of travel like surface, water and air travel, which needs to be regularly scheduled, economical, safe and comfortable. Depending on the destination, this includes cars and buses, boats and ships, trains and airplanes.

The second significant component of tourism is

accommodation, meaning thereby that tourists always need to have a space to rest and stay upon reaching the destination and a service to get food & beverage. Much like accessibility, accommodation also needs to be economical, safe and comfortable. The type of accommodation varies according to the requirement and location at the attraction site. For instance, a stay in the mountains may require a cabin or a place to pitch tents. Other accommodations include hotels, motels and floatels etc. whereas the technical arrangements today include capsule and condominiums.

The third and arguably most important component of tourism is attraction. This means that the destination needs to have some draw that makes tourists pull and want to visit. In some cases the draw is scenic, like mountains and lakes. In other cases the draw might be historical relevance or some academic and scientific site.

The tourism industry is primarily service and people oriented sector; it is an amalgamation of businesses and organisations belonging to various other industries and sectors. It is an interplay among these businesses and organizations / persons which offer remarkable "travel experience" to tourists and visitors. The tourism industry thus comprises hospitality (related to accommodation and dining), travel (transportation services through different modes), and various other businesses which offer services and products to tourists.

Tourism today is the world's well known largest and fastest growing smokeless industry. It is an invisible export, which earns valuable foreign exchange without any significant or tangible loss of internal resources. It is an affirmatively rich source of earning revenue and providing directly and indirectly employment to millions. There are countries in the world whose main source of revenue is nothing but tourism just like Thailand. India, since times has always been recognised a country with great potential for tourism and for everyone in all seasons & for all reasons. In addition to the sites of ancient, historical, monumental and archaeological interests, the varied wild life sanctuaries and national parks, beach resorts and winter sports attract tourists from all over the world. India Tourism Development Corporation (ITDC) is a public sector undertaking, whose main task is the development of a sound foundation of tourist infrastructure in the country. Founded in 1966, the Corporation has made a noteworthy phenomenal progress during the last two decades. It has come up with unique and appealing range of tourist services for both at domestic as well as international fronts.

4. Sustainable Tourism

United Nations Environment Programme in 1987 explained the concept of sustainability as: "Sustainability is broadly defined as meeting the needs of the present generation without compromising the ability of future generation to meet their needs." The four basic principles epitomising the concept of sustainability are thus explained as:

1. The idea of holistic planning, cross- sectored planning and strategy making.
2. The importance of preserving essential ecological processes.
3. The need to protect both human heritage and biodiversity and
4. The requirement that development should be carried out so

that productivity does not deplete resources for the long term and future generations.

Going through the concept of sustainability, we thus can be sure enough that the objective of sustainable tourism is to implement all areas of sustainable development (ecology, economy, social issues, and cultural issues) in tourism. Sustainable tourism development guidelines and management practices are applicable to all forms of tourism in all types of destinations, including mass tourism and the various niche tourism segments. Sustainability principles thus refer to the environmental, economic, and socio-cultural aspects of tourism development. Thus sustainable tourism should:

1. Make optimal use of environmental resources that constitute a key element in tourism development, maintaining essential ecological processes and helping to conserve natural heritage and biodiversity.
2. Respect the socio-cultural authenticity of host communities, conserve their built and living cultural heritage and traditional values, and contribute to inter-cultural understanding and tolerance.
3. Ensure viable, long-term economic operations, providing socio-economic benefits to all stakeholders that are fairly distributed, including stable employment and income-earning opportunities and social services to host communities, and contributing to poverty alleviation.

Sustainable tourism development planning requires the informed and active participation of all relevant stakeholders, as well as strong political leadership to ensure wide participation and consensus building. Achieving sustainable tourism is a continuous process and it requires constant monitoring of impacts, introducing the necessary preventive and/or corrective measures whenever necessary. Sustainable tourism should also maintain a high level of tourist experience and satisfaction ensuring a meaningful act to the tourists, awaking and raising their awareness about sustainability issues and promoting sustainable tourism practices amongst them.

There are a number of terms generally used to discuss tourism that relates in a way or the other similar to sustainable tourism.

- Ecotourism - tourism that respects the environment by focusing on environmental protection or appreciation of the environment in some form.
- Geo tourism - tourism that sustains, or even enhances, the geographical character of a place, such as its culture, environment, heritage, and the well-being of its residents.
- Responsible tourism - tourism that creates better places for people to live in, and better places to visit through.
- Voluntary tourism - is a form of travel where one volunteers on projects which give back to the community.



Fig 1

5. Social and Cultural Impacts of Tourism

Tourism is an interface for knowledge and cultural exchange, facilitating the interaction between the involved communities and visitors (domestic and international). Economic benefits aside, outside contact draws attention to the host community. People want to interact with others and their cultures, learn and understand their traditions and even confront themselves with new developments and perspectives on life and society. It has been said that travel is a means to “discover those things unknown or forgotten within ourselves.” Tourism is largely an experience driven industry, and local culture is a unique experience – more so local personality, hospitality and food than “built attractions.” The more one knows and learns about a destination, the more fulfilling the experience will be.

Tourism can be used as a tool for raising awareness. Branding of local product and achievements creates regional identity both nationally and internationally. Tourism can also raise awareness of local issues and needs. There is a global trend towards investment in interpretation of natural and cultural resources. Attraction to natural and heritage icons often helps fund conservation efforts and provides opportunities for effective management of sensitive and significant areas. However, cultural attractions are not the sole draw card for visitation but provide one of many experiences.

The interactions and exchange of know how through movement of people thus causes various impacts on communities which can be summarized as various impacts of tourism:

1. **Favourable impacts:** Developing friendship and mutual positive attitude Reducing negative perceptions Increasing self-esteem of hosts & tourists satisfaction with interaction and learning
2. **Non-favourable impacts:** Increase in tension, hostility, and suspicion Overdevelopment Conflict Assimilation

6. Tourism Leading to Peace

For a peace loving society there should be cordial and affectionate human relationship among its various units. A person having the knowledge of self or Brahman sees and promotes oneness everywhere. There is no duality or separateness in the existence of individuals and the whole world is observed like one family, '*Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam*'. Such a person overcomes duality and there is absence of egoism and selfishness. If a person thinks other as belonging to him or her then chances of conflicts are lesser. When a person thinks other as belonging to different group than his or her own then interpersonal relation may not be cordial relationship. A man is never happy when he is alone, signifies that the deeper truth of life is joy and it cannot be realized in isolated individuality. It can be realized only in inner spiritual non-duality and integrity which can concretely and empirically realized in a diversity of beings. Many of the present problems can be solved by following such principles in our day to day life. Egoism, arrogance and selfishness are the root cause of various problems in this world like increase in divorces, environmental problems, family problems etc. Diversity is one of the features of today's world community, with globalization people belonging to diverse culture are coming closer to each other, interacting with each other and tourism, no doubt is the leading force for the movement of individuals and groups.

Today, tourism is one of the largest and dynamically developing sectors of external economic activities. Its high growth and development rates, considerable volumes of foreign currency inflows, infrastructure development, and introduction of new management and educational experience actively affect various sectors of economy, which positively contribute to the social and economic development of the country as a whole. Most highly developed western countries, such as Switzerland, Austria and France have accumulated a big deal of their social and economic welfare on profits from tourism.

Some of the other potential favourable impacts of tourism include

- Tourism as a force for peace
- Strengthening communities
- Revaluation of culture and traditions

Tourism as a force for peace

1. Travelling lets people travel and contact with each other and, as tourism has an educational element, it can foster understanding between peoples and cultures and provide cultural exchange between hosts and guests.
2. This interaction and exchange of culture leads to the increased chances for people to develop mutual sympathy and understanding and to reduce their prejudices and
3. Finally, sympathy and understanding can lead to a

decrease of tension in the world and thus contribute to peace.

Strengthening communities

1. Tourism can add to the vitality of communities in many ways.
2. One example is that events and festivals of which local residents have been the primary participants and spectators are often rejuvenated and developed in response to tourist interest.
3. The jobs created by tourism can act as a vital incentive to reduce emigration from rural areas leading to a stable locality.
4. Local people can also increase their influence on tourism development, as well as improve their job and earnings prospects, through tourism-related professional training and development of business and organizational skills.

Revaluation of culture and traditions

Tourism can boost the conservation, preservation and transmission of cultural and historical traditions of communities, which often contributes to the conservation and sustainable management of natural resources, the protection of local heritage, and a renaissance of indigenous cultures, cultural arts and crafts.

According to recent studies and statistics, tourism directly and indirectly provides more than 10% of the world's income and employs almost one tenth of the world's workforce. All considered, tourism's actual and potential economic impact is astounding. Many people emphasize the positive aspects of tourism as a source of foreign exchange, a way to balance foreign trade, an "industry without chimney". But there are also a number of other pros and cons of tourism's economic boom for local communities, which have not always been considered by advocates of tourism perspectives.

Socially tourism has a great influence on the host societies and can be both a source of international amity, peace and understanding and a destroyer and corrupter of indigenous cultures, a source of ecological destruction, an assault of people's privacy, dignity, and authenticity on the opposite side. So, social contacts and cultural exchange between tourists and local people may result in mutual appreciation, understanding, tolerance, awareness, learning, family bonding respect, and liking. In a great act, residents are awaked and educated about the outside and unknown world without leaving their residences, while their visitors significantly learn about a distinctive culture and remote traditions. Local communities are benefited through contribution by tourism to the improvement of the social infrastructure like schools, libraries, health care institutions, internet cafes, and so on. Besides, if local culture is the base for attracting tourists to the region, it helps to preserve the local traditions and handicrafts which maybe on the link of the extinction.

For example in Uzbekistan, particularly in such famous regions as Samarqand, Buhara, and Horezm tourists contribute significantly to the preservation of traditional handcrafting wood carving, hammered copper work, handmade silk and carpets, and of course to preservation and maintenance of architectural and historical monuments. Since Uzbekistan proclaimed its independence in 1991, many museums and monuments were renovated or opened to promote the national

culture and traditions. Growing interest in this culture makes the local people proud of their way of life. On the other side tourism can increase tension, hostility, and suspicion too if not well planned. In this context economic and social impacts on the local community depend on how much of the incomes generated by tourists go to the host communities. In most all-inclusive package tours more than 80% of travellers' fees go to the airlines, hotels and other international companies, not to local businessmen and workers. On the other hand large hotel chain restaurants often import food to satisfy foreign visitors and rarely employ local staff for senior management positions, preventing local farmers and workers from reaping the benefit of their presence.

Tourism has the power to affect cultural change leading to various modifications and merging of cultures. Successful development of a resource can lead to numerous negative impacts too if not well cared likewise overdevelopment, assimilation and conflict etc. While presenting a culture to the visitors and tourists may help preserve the culture, it can also dilute or even destroy it. The point is to promote tourism in the region so that it would both give incomes and create respect for the local tradition and culture. However, from the ecological point of view tourism is often more acceptable and preferable than any other industrial production, as it is environmentally friendlier. The big hurdle is that it is a slow process and is not easy to change the traditional way of life of the local communities. Undoubtedly in some regions or countries the alternative industries are even more harmful to the environment than tourism. Besides that in many countries of Asia and the Pacific, for example in Cook Islands, Samoa and others, tourism is the main source of income or the friendliest to the environment. It is at least better than chopping down the forests or destroying coral reefs which are a main source of livelihood for the local communities and their harmonious settlement.

Social considerations are another important reason. Government participates in tourism development in order to maximize the socio-cultural benefits of tourism (such as cultural exchange, revival of traditional crafts and ceremonies, rural development etc.). The state may also have a general responsibility to protect the social well being of individuals by minimizing tourism's adverse socio-cultural effects (such as deterioration of important historical and archeological sites, social degradation, overcrowding of tourist attraction and facilities). Furthermore, excessively high visibility of foreigners can lead to anxieties on the part of the local people and a tendency to blame local problems on them, and thus to a social rejection of the growth of tourism and other unfavourable impacts.

A very significant factor in sustainable tourism development is the tourist carrying capacity of the destinations, in both environmental and social terms. At peak periods, visitors are known to outnumber nationals by multiples in several of the attractions world over. Whereas in larger destinations local concentration of tourism often give rise to localized problems of carrying capacity, such as overcrowding of beaches, traffic congestion, noise pollution, increased incidence of drugs and crime, and the spread of diseases brought in from outside just as has been observed in Goa, Shimla, Nainital and many other tourist spots in India.

7. Conclusion

India has become only the third country in the world to improve its Travel and Tourism Competitive Index by double digits in a single year. Ranked 52 in 2015, India climbed up by a healthy 12 places to be ranked 40 this year. Marketing and promotion of India as a major tourist destination is critical for the industry to achieve its potential. Lack of adequate budgetary support for promotion and marketing, compared with competing tourist destinations, is a major reason for India lagging behind as a tourist destination. Marketing under the "Incredible India" campaign helped place India as a good tourist destination on the global tourism map. Newer tourism concepts, which include cruise tourism, adventure tourism, agri tourism or rural tourism, are emerging in India and these require support to develop and flourish. Hence, greater marketing push for these different products is required. To remain competitive in the fiercely competitive field, India needs to change its traditional marketing approach to a more competitive and modern approach. There is a need to develop a unique market position and the brand positioning statement should capture the essence of the country's tourism products: i.e., they should be able to convey an image of the product to a potential customer as a frequent destination for the tourists from across the world. The mission "Make in India" is certainly boosting the campaign "Incredible India" to be a promotional campaign for the image of the country at international level and stability in the Indian social set up.

The study indicates that tourism can aid and assist in preserving customs and cultures by providing incentives to invest in and promote them. If properly planned, managed and promoted, local cultures can be given an impetus by the presence of tourists may be national or international. Thus, going through the various concepts of sustainable tourism, one can know that the impact of tourism on local communities can be favourable and non-favourable, when it comes to social and cultural effects depending to which extent tourism is developed in a particular region and destination. Every region has its bearing capacity, that is to say the limit of the incoming influence that does not harm and does not go against the host community. If we overcome that limit, negative impacts of tourism follow.

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