

CONTEMPORARY ISSUES AND CHALLENGES IN SUSTAINABLE TOURISM DEVELOPMENT: A REVIEW

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Abstract

Tourism is one of the largest and fastest growing industries across the globe. It is an important source of income, employment and wealth to many countries. However, its rapid expansion has detrimental environmental, economical and socio cultural impact, which has given rise to sustainable development in tourism. Sustainable development is development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. However, there are number of issues and challenges that are faced by the destinations managers across the globe while opting the concept of sustainable tourism development. The main endeavor of the present paper is to study the existing literature on the sustainability tourism development. This article also confers the various contemporary issues and challenges faced by the destination managers while opting the concept of sustainable tourism development. The research is qualitative in nature and the data was collected through secondary source by using online resources like Ugc inflibnet, Ebsco host and Google Scholar etc.

Introduction

Tourism is the activity or practice of touring, especially for pleasure. It is business industry of providing information, accommodations, transportation, and other service to tourists. Tourism is one of the largest and fastest growing industries in the world. It is an increasingly important source of income, employment and wealth in many countries.

Despite the ever-increasing and unpredictable shocks from terrorist attacks and political instability, to health pandemics and natural disasters, Travel & Tourism continued to show its resilience in the year 2016, contributing direct GDP growth of 3.1% and supporting 6 million net additional jobs in the sector. In total, Travel & Tourism generated US\$7.6 trillion (10.2% of global GDP) and 292 million jobs in 2016, equivalent to 1 in 10 jobs in the global economy. The sector accounted for 6.6% of total global exports and almost 30% of total global service exports. For the sixth successive year, growth in Travel & Tourism outpaced that of the global economy (2.5%). Additionally in 2016, direct Travel & Tourism GDP growth not only outperformed the economy-wide growth recorded in 116 of the 185 countries covered by the annual economic impact research (including in major Travel & Tourism economies such as Australia, Canada, China, India, Mexico and South Africa), but it also was stronger than the growth recorded in the financial and business services, manufacturing, public services, retail and distribution, and transport sectors (WTTC 2017).

Tourism has been recognized as one of the largest industries or major socio-economic activities in the world. Tourism acquires a significant position in eliminating contemporary socio-economic, environmental crisis, in addition to mitigating climate change and global warming challenges. In parallel, Sharpley, (2003) indicates that tourism has been used as a vehicle for development. Today it's one of the major sources of foreign exchange earnings and employment generation directly and indirectly in the world (Wunder, 2000; Mirbabayev, 2005; Kareem, 2008; UNWTO, 2011). Further, UNWTO (2002a) has accounted that the primary source of foreign exchange earnings in 49 Least Developing Countries' (LDC) is tourism and it is a principal export in 83% of developing countries. Since tourism is an industry to entail and connect people as host or guest globally regardless of their socio-cultural, demographical, economical, geographical and political differences it possesses potentials for wealth distribution very broadly.

Although tourism was giving a glamorous picture in socio-economic settings of generating countries and destinations, over visitation, unlimited resource utilization and negative impacts of tourism have led the destinations to rethink about tourism development. Rapid expansion of tourism has also had negative environmental, Economical (and socio cultural) affect and this has given rise to sustainable development in tourism. Sustainable development is development that

meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. The United Nations has designated 2017 the International Year of Sustainable Tourism for Development. As one of the world's largest economic sectors, Travel & Tourism creates jobs, drives exports, and generates prosperity across the world. The International Year provides an enormous opportunity to further showcase the tremendous economic, social, cultural, environmental, and heritage value that the sector can bring. But there are number of issues and challenges which are faced by the destinations managers across the world while opting the concept of sustainable tourism development. These issues and challenges rather can be the opportunity for the destination managers, if they are able to make them as their strength. Keeping in view the importance of these issues pertaining to sustainable tourism development present article provides the array of these issues.

Review of Literature

Extended exploitation of socio-cultural and environmental resources has led the contemporary world to search for a fundamental shift from exploitative to a sustainable approach in tourism development (Prosser, 1994). Further, Gezici, et al (2004) and Gössling, et al (2008) argue that the adverse affects generated from mass tourism on socio-culture and environment, along with the pressure on economic return has required researches towards seeking solutions with the concept of sustainable tourism against all unfavorable development. Since the continued exploitation of non-renewable natural and socio-cultural resources intimidates irrevocable deformities and surpasses the positive impacts of conventional tourism development, ensuring the sustainability of the economy, socio-culture and environment has become a burning need of tourism planning and development.

Sustainable tourism has become an area of huge concern to both academia and industry over the past several years. The most commonly used definition of sustainable development is still that given in the report of the World Commission on Environment and Development (1987) ,i.e. sustainable development is 'a process to meet the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. Sustainable development is therefore about creating a better life for all people in ways that will be as viable in the future as they are at present. In other words, sustainable development is based on principles of sound husbandry of

the world's resources, and on equity in the way, those resources are used and in the way in which the benefits obtained from them are distributed.

Sustainable tourism is a kind of approach to tourism meant to make the development of tourism ecologically supportable in the long term. The very importance of sustainable tourism lies in its motives to conserve the resources and increase the value of local culture and tradition. Sustainable tourism is a responsible tourism aiming to generate employment and income along with alleviating any deeper impact on environment and local culture.

The concept has evolved since the 1987 definition, notably through Agenda 21, the plan of action which emerged from the UN Conference on Environment and Development (Rio, 1992), and the plan of implementation from the World Summit on Sustainable Development (Johannesburg, 2002). Three dimensions or 'pillars' of sustainable development are now recognized and underlined. These are:

- Economic sustainability, which means generating the prosperity at different stages of society and dealing with the cost effectiveness of all economic activities.
- Social sustainability, which means valuing human rights and providing equal opportunities for all in society.
- Environmental sustainability, which means conserving, preserving and managing the resources, especially those that are not renewable or are valuable in terms of life support.



Three Pillars of Sustainable tourism Development

Sustainable development recognizes tourism as a driving force and proclaims sustainability as a basic requirement of tourism planning and development. The needs of sustainable tourism development is well documented by many authors such as Inskeep (1991), McCool and Watson

(1995), Stabler (1997), Wahab and Pigram (1997), Hall and Lew (1998), Tribe et al (2000), McCool and Moisey (2008) along with many conference proceedings and reports (eg: World Commission on Environment and Development-WCED1987 Brundtland Report, WTO-1980 Manila Declaration; World Summit on Sustainable Development – 1999; Commission on Sustainable Development, 1999; Earth Summit-2002 Report; UNWTO-2002b Ecotourism is the Key to Sustainable Development; Tourism and Local Agenda-21, 2003). Choi and Sirakaya (2004) recognize that “Sustainable development” has become an internationally known term and the subject of thousands of books and papers. Besides, McMinn (1997) has observed that sustainable tourism and ecotourism have become ‘buzz words’ of travel agencies, tour operating companies and governments due to its philosophical base and public acceptance. When incorporating sustainable development into tourism, Butler (1999) argues that sustainable development is the single factor that has the potential to change the nature of tourism. Whilst, shifting paradigms for sustainable development (Gladwin et al, 1995) encounters tourism as one of the major drivers, Sharpley, (2000) has reported that sustainable tourism has been widely accepted and inserted into development policy and practice. At this juncture, World Travel and Tourism Organization – WTTO and International Hotel and Restaurant Association – IHRA (1999) register tourism as the first ever industry to incorporate Agenda-21 to envisage sustainable development. Certainly, sustainable tourism development caters to the need of the present generation, who may be host or guest born anywhere in the world, while preserving and conserving environmental and other resources of the local community for the future generation (WCED, 1987). Hence, integrating sustainability into tourism development will testify the long-term survival of the tourism industry, destination, and anticipation of needs of guests and hosts, while retaining the socio-cultural and environmental resources for future generation.

It is familiar that wide acceptance of the concept of sustainable development in many cases is misinterpreted, and very often related to simplistic phrases without accepting its binding implications. Accordingly, there are also some critical views and doubts that concerns the interpretation and implementation of sustainable development. Wilbanks (1994) claims that “sustainable development is, predominantly, not more than just a slogan or a curtain behind which resources are allocated and decisions were made, regardless if the relevant term is interpreted properly or not”. Critical attitude toward sustainable development is expressed in Butler’s (1999) opinion as well, who doubts in global support of the concept, noting that the

existence of sympathy for the goals of sustainable development cannot guarantee the acceptance of all costs and sacrifices that are necessary to be invested into this concept in real life. Wall and Mathieson (2006) represent the view that sustainable development becomes a form of ideology, philosophy, process and product and that it is often treated as political phrase, depending on the context in which it is used.

However, still the destinations are unable to incorporate sustainable tourism development process successfully. Among many obstacles that sustainable tourism faces, the lack of a clear and widely accepted definition is mentioned in the literature as one of the main challenges to its implementation (Berno & Bricker, 2001). As Butler(1999) contends, “ the very success of the term lies in the fact that it is indefinable and thus has become all things to all interested parties”. The problems facing in tourism and sustainable tourism for countries are diverse as each country has its own touristic feature, level of development, national development priorities and policies (Dabour, 2003). The achievement of optimal satisfaction of all stakeholders, is the key issue in sustainable development of tourism..

Taking into account the conflicting interests of the participants in the tourist economy, sustainable development in the context of tourism, i.e. development of tourism which is fully based on the principles of sustainable development, resembles a remote target that is difficult to reach. However, sustainable tourism, meaning tourism that is developed in such a form that can be maintained for an indefinite period, is evidently possible, as confirmed by the practice of tourism development: tourism in many regions has been developing in such a form that can be maintained for an indefinite period. A concept of tourism destinations as complex adaptive systems, also, indicates that sustainable tourism can be achieved. This concept implies the capability of destinations to adapt to external and internal factors, which allows tourism to be maintained for an indefinite period. However, it is questionable whether such a form of tourism that is being developed for an indefinite period of time corresponds to the principles of sustainable development. It seems that we can discuss ‘sustainable tourism’, but ‘sustainable development in the context of tourism’ seems to be a fluid and elusive concept.(Jovičić, D. 2016)

Research Objectives

1. To study existing literature on the sustainability tourism development.

2. To study the various issues and challenges of sustainable tourism development.

Research Methodology

The paper is qualitative in nature and secondary data has been used during the study. Content analysis was undertaken to review and analyze existing literature involving sustainable tourism development contemporary issues and challenges.

The procedure of content analysis includes categorizing articles into six main components: (a) unitizing, (b) sampling, (c) recording/coding, (d) reducing, (e) inferring, and (f) narrating. (Krippendorff 2004), the first four components constitute the process of “data making,” and the last two use the information generated from the previous four components (Krippendorff, 2004).

A number of research papers and articles were reviewed in order to conduct the Content analysis. 98 full research papers and articles were selected and the other various abstracts and thesis were consulted out of total 170, which contemporary issues and challenges in sustainable tourism development.

Sampling criteria	
Topic selection	Sustainable development, Sustainable tourism, Issues and Challenges in sustainable tourism
Data Type	Articles in academic journals (Offline and online)
Data Source	Database searching (EBSCO, UGC INFLIBNET and Science Direct) and Google scholars.
Keywords	Sustainable development, sustainable tourism
Publication Date	1987 to 2017

Discussion

1. Carbon and other emissions

Tourism sector may not be one of the major greenhouse gas contributors, the development of international travel and an increase in air traffic has contributed to its carbon footprint. An increasing regulatory burden may affect companies' future profitability, while the elimination –

and eventually recycling of – restaurant grease and efforts to limit cruise ship exhausts illustrate other operational concerns that must be noted.

The Travel and Tourism (T&T) sector’s current contribution to global greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions is 5% of global anthropogenic emissions. Travel and Tourism, excluding aviation, is responsible for about 3% of GHG emissions. It is estimated that CO2 emissions from tourism (excluding aviation) will grow at 2.5% per year until 2035. Aviation contributes 2% of total manmade CO2 emissions.

Direct carbon emissions: Carbon emissions from sources that are directly engaged in the economic activity of the T&T sector are considered direct emissions. These are, for example, emissions from the usage of electricity by hotels and resorts and emissions from passenger aircrafts and railways. All direct emissions have been included in estimating emissions baseline and forecast for the T&T sector.

Indirect carbon emissions: Indirect carbon emissions are produced as a consequence of the activity of the companies in the T&T value chain, but occur from sources not directly engaged in the economic activity within the T&T sector. For example, emissions from electricity usage in airline or travel agent offices, and emissions from transportation of hotel consumables, such as food or toiletries. Indirect emissions are beyond the scope of this project. Indirect emissions have not been included in the emissions baseline and forecast for the T&T sector.

Direct Emissions¹ (in scope)
Passenger rail, use of cars and bus for travel & tourism

Clusters (Direct Emitters)			Indirect Emissions² (out of scope)	
	Land Transport	Emissions from commercial airlines		Use of rail, cars and bus for commuting, rental car offices, and railway stations
	Air Transport	Cruise lines, River cruises, Recreational boats		Airports, Maintenance centres, Offices of passenger airline companies
	Water Transport	Emissions due to energy consumption in Hotels, Lodges and Resorts		Transportation of food and other consumables to cruise lines
	Accommodation	Amusement parks, Ski areas, etc		Transportation & production of hotel consumables (e.g. food, toiletries)
	Tourism Activities			Transportation & production of activity equipments (e.g. skis)

Figure: Direct and Indirect Carbon Emissions Sources for each T&T Cluster

2. Energy consumption and water

waste

The tourism sector tends to have high energy consumption levels, particularly at hotels. A strong positive correlation is usually observed between a hotel's star rating and the energy consumption per room. While heating and cooling remain the main source of consumption, luxury services such as a heated pool, spa, golf or laundry services all increase energy bills. Extra amenities, combined with changes in consumer patterns, mean new hotels consume twice as much energy as the average hotel built in the 70s. Similar trends are observed in tap water consumption levels. The mass tourist flow at a destination has also led to the waste water and moreover the water pollution. The rivers, lakes, springs, tributaries have been badly affected e.g. it has been seen that during the period of *Amarnath Yatra* at Pahalgam (J&K), the river *Lidder* has noticed increase in Biological oxygen Demand (BOD) which ultimately has effected its aquatic life and freshness. After the Yatra is over BOD gradually decreases and comes to its normal position.

3. Job creation and contribution to local economy

The leisure industry is a major source of income for many emerging and developed countries. A recent report by *The World Travel Organization* found tourism represented more than 9% of global GDP. The quality of a company's ties to local communities should also be under SRI investors' scope. The stability of partnerships with local authorities is often a key competition factor.

4. Working conditions

While the tourism industry might be a significant source of employment, it can also be synonymous with tough working conditions, low-level remuneration and part-time contracts, particularly in the hotel and restaurant segments. As a result, companies often suffer from a shortage of skilled workers and face difficulties in retaining qualified staff. These challenges can result in a high turnover rate (in some cases 150% for employee position), which is responsible for high recruitment costs and declining productivity.

5. Health and wellness

Obesity prevention and food allergies are both driving new consumption patterns as well as growing attention from health authorities. 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. Operations and marketing practices are deeply affected by these considerations, as companies don't want to be targeted by regulators or miss a new consumer trend.

6. Food safety

Food safety was first introduced in the *2000 Dietary Guidelines for Americans*, and the recognition of the importance of food safety continued through the 2010 report. Catering and restaurant companies must now ensure full product traceability and well implemented hygiene measures to prevent outbreaks. Chemical and bacterial contaminations are high-profile and consequently impact companies' reputations. Compliance to regulations, crisis management plans and proactive measures should all be examined by SRI investors.

7. Environmental Issues

There are many issues that can be regarded as threats to the environment. Starting from the damage to the, besides the consumption of large amounts of natural resources, the tourism industry also generates considerable waste and pollution. Disposal of liquid and solid waste generated by the tourism industry has become a particular problem for many developing countries and regions that lack the capacity to treat these waste materials. Disposal of such untreated waste has, in turn, contributed to reducing the availability of natural resources, such as freshwater. Apart from the contamination of freshwater from pollution by untreated sewage, tourist activities can also lead to land contamination from solid waste and the contamination of

marine waters and coastal areas from pollution generated by hotels and marinas, as well as cruise ships. It is estimated that cruise ships in the Caribbean Sea alone produced more than 70,000 tones of liquid and solid waste a year during the mid-1990s (UN, 1999a). This has led to calls for “the enforcement of environmental protection ‘level playing field’ across the world’s oceans and between the world’s maritime tourism destinations” (Johnson, 2002).

In addition, since tourism tends to be an energy intensive activity, its energy-related environmental impact can be considerable, notably at the local level. Relatively high levels of energy consumption in hotels — including energy for air-conditioning, heating and cooking — as well as fuel used by tourism-related transportation often contribute significantly to increased air pollution in many host countries and regions. Similarly, tourism can lead to the indiscriminate clearance of native vegetation for the development of new facilities, increased demand for fuel wood and even forest fires. Ecologically fragile areas, such as rain forests, wetlands and mangroves, are threatened by intensive or irresponsible tourist activity.

Moreover, it is increasingly recognized that, the rapid expansion of nature tourism (or ‘ecotourism’) may pose a threat to ecologically fragile areas, including many natural world heritage sites, if not properly managed and monitored. The delicate ecosystems of most small islands, together with their increasing reliance on tourism as a main tool of socio-economic development, means that this environmental impact can be particularly damaging since the success of the tourism sector in these islands often depends on the quality of their natural environment (UN, 1999b).

In addition, tourism in many destinations could be threatened by external environmental shocks, notably the potential threat of global warming and sea-level rise. Significant rises in sea level could cause serious problems to tourism related activities — notably in low-lying coastal areas and small islands — including:

- accelerated processes of coastal erosion;
- Loss of land and property, including tourist facilities;
- Dislocation of people;
- More frequent storm surges and coastal flooding;
- increased saltwater intrusion into scarce freshwater resources; and

- High financial costs associated with attempts to respond and adapt to these changes.

Conclusion

In view of the above discussion, as tourism is the largest rapidly growing industry and a significant tool for sustainable development. It can be concluded that, the tourism industry may not be considered one of the major contributors to greenhouse gas, but at the same time on the contrary the development of international travel and the growth in air traffic has pitched in to its carbon footprint. There is a constant upward thrust in regulatory burden which may affect companies' profitability index, whereas the elimination and ultimately the recycling of restaurant wastes and efforts to limit cruise ship exhausts illustrate other operational concerns that must be noted. The tourism sector poses high energy consumption levels, typically in hotels. There is strong positive correlation observed between a hotel's star rating and the energy consumption per room at par. Where the heating and cooling is the main source of consumption, luxury services offered in high end hotels, such as a heated pool, spa, golf or laundry services all contribute in high energy bills. Amenities that a hotel provides other than basic facilities when combined with changes that occur in consumer patterns, means new hotels consume double the energy as compared to the average hotel built in the back date. Same is the case with the water consumption. It should also be noted under SRI investors' scope that the quality of a company's ties to local communities is healthy affair. The existence of partnerships with local providers is often a basic competition factor. Moreover, the tourism industry is also known for the job creation, where the industry faces certain challenges like the retention of skilled labor and low attrition levels. Other challenge faced by the industry is providing the food that meets the standard quality levels, keeping in view the current health issues.

All the stakeholders, who are linked with the discussed issues and challenges, while opting the concept of sustainable tourism development should play their role to trounce them. A sustainable approach to tourism development and management is all about planning for the long term, working together, checking on outcomes and adapting to change. Effective communication is fundamental to this. A move towards more sustainable tourism should be widely trumpeted and celebrated, amongst tourists, host communities and the participants in the industry. The achievement of optimal satisfaction of all stakeholders is the key issue in sustainable development of tourism.

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