

The Role and Scope of Responsible Tourism in India

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Abstract-Responsible travel can defined as all types of travel that causes no harm to the environment and local culture. India is one of the prominent Ecotourism destinations with many natural attractions, national parks, wildlife sanctuaries, mountains, forests, deserts, mangroves etc. Travelling responsibly is the need of the hour since protecting and preserving our environment and culture only can sustain tourism activities in our country. Tourists need to be sensitized at the very first place regarding the places they visit and the norms they need to conform to. Being a responsible traveler means ensuring that your travel impacts are very low and positive and respect the local culture. It means behaving more responsibly towards the place you are in, giving respect and care towards the environment and the culture you are exposed to. Tourists need to make more sustainable choices regarding the places they visit and the activities they engage in. Travel is one of the most beautiful experiences. Responsible travel is bringing about a balance between the conservation of environment and visitor experiences. Tourists nowadays are behaving more irresponsibly without any concern or care for their natural surroundings. There should awareness programmes which should be initiated at the school level so that students can be moulded as more responsible citizens of the country.

Keywords: Responsible, Culture, Travel, Environment, Sustainable

INTRODUCTION

India is a rich and varied country known for her vast culture, languages, topography and customs. Tourism is definitely needed to ensure the economic welfare of the nation and India being a developing country has to divert more of her efforts towards preserving and protecting the environment. Responsible travel is the right equilibrium that balances both environment and well as visitor enjoyment. A responsible tourist should always leave no traces behind but only take memories with them. It is not the tourists who destroy a place but

their unsustainable practices which has to be taken care of. Some of the tourism practices that seriously impact our environment is littering, disposing plastic, garbage and solid waste, fuel emissions from different modes of transport, loss of natural habitat, reckless construction of hotels and resorts, scarcity of water due to larger water needs in hotels and resorts, diesel traces from houseboats that affects the marine habitat etc. India can offer unique experiences and opportunities to the coming tourists and so has to work more on this concept of responsible tourism. Any development needs to be in accordance with the carrying capacity of a particular region. There are environmental experts who can study this and give their valuable suggestions and guidelines for the same. The concept of responsible tourism is directly linked to sustainability where the resources are preserved and protected for future generations. It also reduces the carbon footprint and enables travelers to explore lesser known places and destinations. Responsible tourism is all about creating better places to live and visit. Responsible tourism also creates employment opportunities for the locals where they are entitled to a better standard of living and income. Responsible Tourism can ensure a long term economic viability, poverty alleviation and socio economic benefits.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- To understand the concept of Responsible Tourism in India.
- To study the prospects of Responsible Tourism in India.
- To explore the problems in the effective implementation of Responsible Tourism in India.
- To analyze and evaluate the concept of Responsible Tourism and sustainability.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Jithendran Kokkranikal (2012), the study examines the concept of responsible tourism. Not many case studies have been reported with regard to this. The study explores the state of tourism in the economy. The study stresses the need for research in responsible tourism and more responsible practices by the private sector.

Joobi V P (2018), the study investigates the role of women in responsible tourism and says women are actively involved in responsible tourism. It has contributed to women empowerment by creating more employment opportunities, increase in their decision making power, self confidence, social awareness and they get to attend seminars and workshops where they can expose their skills and abilities. It has particularly contributed to social and economic upliftment of the women community in Kerala.

Jithendran Kokkranikal (2015), the study argues that the concept of responsible tourism emerged from the rising tourist need to gain authentic holiday experiences. This has encouraged a critical thinking on part of the tourist. The interests of the local residents have also been emphasized in this study that may be available to them if responsible tourism is enforced in the right way.

Regi Francis (2020), the study explore the important initiatives and the contributions of responsible tourism particularly in the state of Kerala. In order to facilitate a strategic plan leading tourist destinations have been finding out ways to balance tourism development activities with the indigenous culture, livelihood and heritage. With respect to this the government of Kerala has been formulating many projects in the tourism sector. The success of the projects and the state's global position in the world market can ensure sustainability in the long run.

Alvaro Dias (2021), the study measures tourist responsibility in two dimensions- civic and philanthropic. It also creates a connection between the two concepts sustainability and responsible tourism where responsible tourism acts as an agent to promote the concept of sustainability. A tourist perception and attitudes vary significantly from their actual behavior. Even when they are aware of the consequences of their actions they are in no position to contribute positively towards it. The pandemic has brought significant

changes in the tourist behavior where they are in search of more innovative experiences.

Paul V Mathew(2019), the study tries to analyze won underlying concepts of sustainability and responsible tourism. While sustainable tourism is a broad concept responsible tourism focuses on the benefits that the host community derives from tourism. Where Sustainability emphasizes planning the latter contributes to implementation and action. It also defines the responsibility of all the stakeholders in tourism to adopt and resort to strategies that can contribute to the sustainable development and management of tourism destinations.

Mr. Shuhaibu H (2021), the study attempts to explore the sustainable destination management and responsible tourism practices in the industry and tourism destinations. The study has stressed on creating sustainable livelihood opportunities and employment for the local communities. The study has also made some policy suggestions useful for the stakeholders in the tourism industry. Sustainable tourism can increase the competitiveness and image of tourism destinations which can definitely the inflow of tourists to various tourist sites.

Chandan Kumar, the paper examines the role of government in supporting sustainable tourism. Tourism is a major contributor to Income creation and employment opportunities to millions of people. Sustainability portrays a very positive image of the tourism destinations. The government has to work in collaboration with the different stakeholders in tourism industry to implement the sustainable goals. The study further gives its suggestions about the role of the government and citizens to effectively implement sustainable tourism.

Dr. Shilpi Saraswat (2022), the study reveals the crucial association between responsible tourism and destination sustainability. The attitude of the local community is an important factor in destination sustainability that includes environmental concerns, quality of life, community well being, local wellbeing and the health and safety of the local community. More infrastructural developments, modernization and green approaches can become some of the major factors contributing to responsible tourism and sustainability which in turn can improve the standard of living of the local communities.

Vinodan A (2008), the study attempts to formulate a proper mechanism to implement responsible tourism

from a destination oriented approach to tourism development. Involving all the stakeholders in this aspect would be impossible as they are always destination centric. Centralized management information is vital that can bring in coordination between the various parties. The responsibilities of each one should be properly communicated and the efforts need to be coordination for achieving sustainable development.

THE SCOPE AND POTENTIAL OF RESPONSIBLE TOURISM IN INDIA

Responsible Tourism can be defined as a kind of tourism while safeguarding the experience of travel fosters mutual understanding between people, prevent environmental and cultural degradation and above all the exploitation and dehumanization of the local community. It is a more caring form of tourism. Local community plays a very crucial role in responsible tourism and the visitors need to be sensitized about the places they visit and the norms they need to follow. Responsible tourism is also called Alternative Tourism. It is divided into two-

1. Counter Cultural Alternative Tourism- A tourist who does not travel for mere pleasure or entertainment but to explore the strangeness of the world, to experience the authentic life, spontaneously changes plans and participates in the conservation and protection of environment.
2. Concerned Alternative Tourism- This form of travel fosters mutual understanding between members of different communities. This is a just form of travel where both the parties equally benefit both personally and economically from the encounter.

Tourism is one Industry that can cause adverse impacts on the environment due to the infrastructure development but on the other hand it can be used a tool to preserve and conserve the environment. There needs to be a balance between infrastructure development and visitor enjoyment. Awareness programmes can be initiated at various levels since education plays a very important role in responsible tourism. Many states in India have introduced new policies and schemes in this regard. Travel in any form should benefit the local nature and the economy. There are many ecotourism destinations in India which can be promoted in a sustainable way by building up eco lodges and

sustainable home stays. Travelling responsibly means understanding and respecting the local culture, traditions and practices and engaging in activities that minimize harm on the environment. Community based travel needs to be promoted where tourists can be encouraged to stay with a local family which can give them an authentic experience of their culture and lifestyle. India has a huge potential for wildlife and adventure tourism. Yoga, ayurveda and wellness tourism can also be considered a part of responsible travel. Responsible tourism is important as it promotes conservation initiatives and helps the indigenous communities to earn revenue. There are still segments which lie unexploited that can be promoted by way of responsible tourism.

FINDINGS AND SUGGESTIONS

Responsible tourism is eco friendly travel benefitting both the economy and local community. It takes into consideration the sustainable concept. It is making people more ecologically committed. It protects the cultural, social heritage and diversity of India. It gives travelers a very positive experience by promoting more interactions with the host community. There are destinations still in India need to think on sustainable lines. Several projects have been initiated by the government not only to protect and preserve the environment but also benefitting the local lives. Counting more on sustainable practices is important to sustain the tourism industry and to give pleasant experiences to the coming visitors. Some of the responsible practices include

1. To be more energy efficient and to reduce the carbon footprint can travel mostly using public transportation.
2. Generating benefits to the local community by using home stays, promoting local guides and preferring the local cuisine.
3. Reducing the usage of plastics and avoid littering and garbage in the public places which can create aesthetic pollution.
4. Do not buy souvenirs made out of endangered flora and fauna.

Responsible Tourism is relatively a new concept which decides the future of the Tourism industry. The stakeholders in Tourism need to take efforts to promote this concept and encourage sustainable practices among the travelers. Responsible tourism minimizes impacts on the destinations, promotes the

welfare of the host communities and creates authentic enriching experiences for the travelers. Responsible travel creates better places to live in and better places to visit.

CONCLUSION

Responsible Tourism is indeed a responsible concept where one needs to think about the impacts of their travel choices on the customs and traditions of the local community as well as the environment. Visitors can choose the local home stays and opt for the local cuisine, respect the culture, traditions and customs wherever they go, reduce the carbon foot print by choosing mostly public transportation, reduce the use of plastics, do a little research when you are visiting very sensitive areas like forest, hill stations and beaches and support all sustainable and responsible tourism projects. Tourism industry is not immune to exploitation but if we don't think on sustainable lines it can definitely affect the survival of the tourism industry which generates major revenue for the nation. Tourists should be given awareness about the same by travel agents or tour operators who become their first point of contact. Responsible tourism can definitely change the way we perceive travel and culture and make sure we take only memories not leaving our visible foot prints.

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