

Factors affecting the Sustainable Development of Tourism Sector in Uttarakhand

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Abstract

Tourism as an industry has evolved as one of the largest and lucrative industry in Indian economy. It is regarded as one of the most effective instrument for national integration and harmony. Thus, leading towards social transformation and upliftment of the rural poor. The success of the tourism sector is highly influenced by the supporting industries such as hotels, transportation, communication, banking and so on. Sustainable tourism takes full account of its current and future economic, social and environmental impacts, addressing the needs of visitors, industry, environment and host communities. Importance of sustainable tourism is immense for poverty reduction, the protection of environment and preservation of cultural heritage.

Various stakeholders of sustainable tourism in Uttarakhand call for increase in productivity and efficiency of existing land, water, flora and fauna resources in a planned manner without jeopardizing their future use.

This paper primarily aims to enhance a common understanding and commitment about Sustainable Tourism, and to demonstrate how it is a vehicle to foster economic and social growth, through the achievement of development imperatives, while minimizing negative social, cultural and environmental impacts in the state of Uttarakhand. The conceptual paper comes to note that all of us have our own role to play in ensuring tourism as a catalyst for sustainable development.

Key Words: Sustainable, Development, Tourism, Uttarakhand

I. Introduction

Tourism is one economic sector in India that has the potential to grow at a higher rate and has the capacity to capitalize on the country's success in the services sector. Travel and tourism competitiveness report by World Economic Forum has ranked India among the top 10 destinations in

terms of natural and cultural attractions (WEF, 2011). Tourism in India is the largest service industry contributing up to 6.23 percent to GDP and providing 8.78 percent of the total employment opportunity in India (India Brand Equity Foundation, 2013). As per statistics updated by the Ministry of Tourism, Government

of India, the foreign tourist arrival in India continued to grow from 2.54 million in 2001 to 6.58 million in 2012. Travel and tourism industry is also one of the most profitable industries in India and it is credited with contributing a substantial amount of foreign exchange to the national exchequer. As per the Travel and Tourism Competitiveness Report 2011 by the World Economic Forum, India is ranked 12th in the region and 68th overall in its Travel and Tourism Competitiveness Index. India is well assessed for its natural resources (ranked 8th) and cultural resources (ranked 24th), with many World Heritage sites, both natural and cultural, rich fauna, many fairs and exhibitions and strong creative industries.

While tourism is referenced as a productive sector, it is important to note that tourism, as a trade in the services category, is identified by many developing countries and the LDCs in particular, as a key sector for poverty reduction strategies. Every tourist means more jobs in tourism and related sectors, higher income for families, increased investment in infrastructure and opportunities for development.

World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC) has identified tourism as the world's most rapidly developing industry. With the recent changes in the world, as perceived by various stakeholders of

tourism the sustainability is an issue regarded as of prime importance.

According to WTTC, India will rank sixth worldwide in terms of real growth of international tourists spend in the forthcoming decade (2006 to 2015) and Indian tourism is expected to grow at an impressive 8.6% for the same period. Further, WTO has estimated that there will be 1.6 billion international tourists by the year 2020 and Asia will emerge as the second region to be the most visited in the world. According to Indian Journal of Marketing Vol. XXXIX no.4 April 2009, contribution from services sector today stands over 45% of the total GDP in India. The sector currently employs close to 22 million people in India. Tourism industry in India has to its share 0.52% of world tourism and the receipts as 0.89% of the world receipts. Over the last fifty years tourism has become one of the largest economic sector globally, accounting for some 9% of the world's GDP and over 200 million jobs.

Tourism is defined as the sum of phenomenon and relationships arising from travel and stay of non-residents; so far, as they do not lead to permanent residents and they are not connected with an earning activity. Tourism is not one industry but many. Tourism is capable of providing economic growth in income and standard of living.

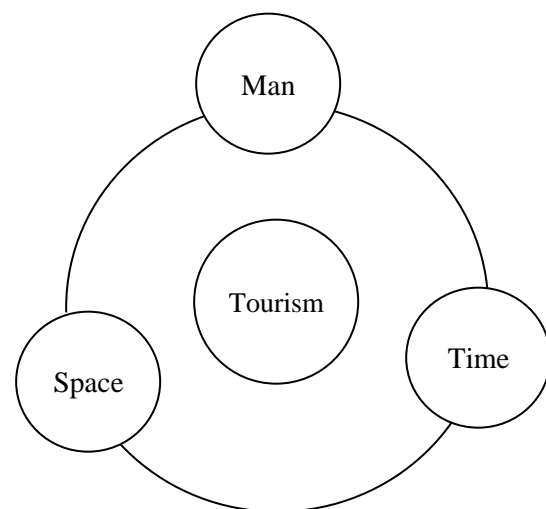
The new green model of economy demands improved human wellbeing and social equity, thereby significantly reducing risks to environment and making less impact on ecological abundances. Sustainable tourism takes full account of its current and future economic, social and environmental impacts, addressing the needs of visitors, industry, the environment and host communities. The success of sustainable tourism lies in poverty reduction, protection of environment and the preservation of cultural heritage.

Sustainability in Tourism involves basically three elements namely man (human element as the creator of the act of tourism), space (the physical element to be necessarily covered by the act itself), time (the temporal element which is compared by the trip itself and the stay at the destination).

Investment in green tourism, would stimulate job creation, especially in poorer communities, including new green jobs related to environmental management and Information and Communications Technology (ICT), with increased local hiring and sourcing and positive spill-over effects on many other areas of the Uttarakhand economy. Direct economic contribution of tourism to local communities would increase thereby maximizing the amount of

tourist spending that is retained by the local economy. Finally, a green tourism economy would ensure significant environmental benefits including reductions in water consumption, energy use and CO₂ emissions.

II. Literature Review



Ravichandran K (2008) studied the penetration of internet in travel and tourism industry and identified that the present outlook for travel industry is one of innovation, high occupancy rate and healthy competition at a higher rate. The study highlighted that a need for transformation into techno-centric business arena was felt where the consumers have different choices for customisation of their own product without any direct contact with an intermediary. It was further pointed out that the major aspect of concern for travelers is to search information faster, seek more options and choices that suits their budget and settling transaction online through the internet.

Reddy A.K.V.S (2008) opined that properly planned tourism will be a positive factor in national development, creating challenging employment and distributing wealth to all sectors of economy. If the positive effects of tourism are planned and co-ordinated on a regional basis, positive effects of tourism could be enhanced.

Rajasulochana N (2008) reviewed the rural tourism policy in Tamil Nadu context. It was pointed out that most of the ongoing schemes as well as proposed schemes are concentrating only on religious sites thus reinforcing 'temple' tourism rather than rural tourism. Other variants of rural tourism such as sports and adventure tourism, eco-tourism, farm tourism and nature tourism were ignored. The suggestion included that Tamil Nadu should learn destination marketing from Kerala and Goa. Innovation is required for destination marketing and Tamil Nadu should recognize the significance of branding, packaging, promoting and positioning of its products.

Dileep.M.R (2006) highlighted the fact that there is an urgent need for good information systems, especially at the destinations. Usage of IT at the destination in developed countries is very poor. Suggestions include formation of an expert group of IT, tourism and management professionals to eliminate the gap between technology evolutions

and market needs in the destination as well as government level in relation to tourism.

Aneja Puneet (2005) analyzed the growth of tourism in India by evaluating the present status of industry by stating the contributions of tourism GDP and employment. The barriers in development highlighted are private investment, absence of legislative support and unprofessional approach.

Bobby Simon and Sreekumar. N.V (2004) examined the need for ethics in tourism and its role in protecting the environment, cultural heritage, and tradition and value systems from the impact of factors related to tourism. Further they have discussed the measures taken globally to implement ethics in tourism.

Vijayan J. (2007) found out that the attitude of local people in tourism centers towards tourism development is positive and tourism has a major impact on the economic life of the destination population. From the study it was found out that the tourism officials have not succeeded in bringing awareness of benefit of tourism to the local people.

Sreejith.S (2005) studied the services rendered by ayurvedic health care centres to tourists and the

perception of tourists towards ayurvedic health care.

Sarngadharan M. and Unuskutty K.K. (2004) emphasized the importance of empowering youth as professionals of tourism industry for societal and national progress and development. In the era of globalization, liberalization and privatization, the youth requires support of the experts in securing skills to set up enterprises of their own and to serve as efficient managers of enterprise owned by others. Tourism is identified as new frontier towards which young generation can fulfill their aspirations economically and socially. For this three vital components are to be linked- prosperity of the economy, growth of entrepreneurship and education of youth.

At the national level, countries need to improve tourism competitiveness in areas such as human resources, regulation, infrastructure or accessibility. To ensure that the tourism sector is a major force for sustainable development that requires a robust and integrated policy framework, and effective, accountable and democratic systems of governance that enables and encourages multi-stakeholder collaboration on tourism planning, development and management. Improve the overall quality of products and services within the tourism industry (all tourism related accommodation, restaurants, tour guides, tour

operators, and other tourism-related Service providers); raise the levels of demand nationally, regionally and internationally; promote competitiveness within the industry; and provide valuable and reliable information on quality standards for tourist and travel industry.

The purpose of sustainable development is to enhance a common understanding and commitment about sustainable tourism, and to demonstrate it as a vehicle to foster economic and social growth, through the achievement of development imperatives, while minimizing negative social, cultural and environmental impacts.

Over the last decades, tourism has experienced continued growth and increased diversification, becoming one of the fastest developing economic sectors in the world. These dynamics have turned it into a key driver for socio-economic progress in nations worldwide.

Today, tourism is one of the major sectors in international trade and one of the main wealth creators for many developing countries. Tourism means jobs, poverty eradication, gender equality, and the protection and promotion of our natural and cultural heritage.

Recognition of the importance and potential contribution of tourism in national development strategies and in the global development agenda is also becoming a reality. It provides the basis for informed decisions on priorities and actions that need to be taken to ensure tourism's ever growing contribution to the three dimensions of sustainable development – economic growth, social inclusion and environmental preservation

Tourism with multi-dimensional activity has evolved as one of the largest and lucrative industry of the new millennium. It is therefore worthwhile to examine the position of India in the world tourism map. But the success of the tourism sector is highly influenced by the supporting industries such as hotels, transportation, communication, banking and so on.

III. Popular Forms of Tourism

Determining Sustainable Tourism in India

Today global tourism has so many diverse forms to sustainable tourism which are discussed below:

Agri Tourism: It is a style of vacation in which hospitality is offered on farms. Agri-tourism is widespread and includes any farm open to the public at least part of the year. Tourists can pick vegetables, fruits, ride horses, taste honey and much more. In Uttarakhand it is being developed as a valuable component of a business model to support many agricultural entities when the farm

products they produce are no longer economically competitive otherwise.

Adventure Tourism: It is a type of niche tourism involving exploration or travel to remote areas, where the traveler should expect the unexpected. It may involve the performance of acts that require significant effort and grit and may also involve some degree of risk. Uttarakhand is full of these places for sustainable tourism suitable for adventure.

Cultural Tourism: It generally focuses on traditional communities who have diverse customs, unique form of art and distinct social practices, which basically distinguishes it from other types of tourism. Cultural tourism includes tourism in urban areas, particularly historic or large cities and their cultural facilities such as museums and theatres. It can also include tourism in rural areas showcasing the traditions of indigenous cultural communities and their values and lifestyle.

Disaster Tourism: It is the act of traveling to a disaster area, not to help, but to look with interest upon the devastation. It can become a nuisance if it hinders rescue, relief and recovery operations. Uttarakhand after natural calamity is full of these sites where researchers and other tourist can look for the options.

Eco-Tourism: It means ecological tourism; where ecological has both environmental and social connotations. It is defined both as a co incept-tourism movement and as a tourism section. Generally speaking, eco-tourism focuses on local cultures, wilderness adventure, volunteering, personal growth and learning new ways to live on the planet.

Garden Tourism: It is a type of niche tourism involving visits or travel to botanical garden and places which are significant in the history of gardening. Garden tourists often travel individually in countries with which they are familiar, a bit often prefer to join organized garden tours in countries where they might experience difficulties with language, travel or finding accommodation in the vicinity of garden.

Cultural Heritage Tourism: It is the cultural attractions that plays an important role in tourism at all levels, from the global highlights of world culture to attractions that underpin local identities. Cultural heritage tourism is a branch of tourism oriented towards cultural heritage. Cultural heritage tourism is important for various reasons, it has a positive economic and social impact, it establishes and reinforces identity, it helps preserve the cultural heritage, with culture as an instrument, it facilitates harmony and

understanding among people, it supports culture and helps renew tourism.

Neo-tourism is a term that describes the newly changing trend of tourism which satisfies individual interests and purposes appearing with post modern social change. It further avoids environmental destruction and ensures experiencing the un-touched nature. It also manages various matters such as gathering information and making reservation through internet.

Literary tourism is a type of cultural tourism that deals with places and events from fictional texts as well as the lives of their authors. Literary tourists are specifically interested in how places have influenced writing and at the same time how writing has created place. In addition to visiting author and book sites, literary tourists often engage in bookstore tourism, browsing local bookshops for titles specifically related to the sites as well as other regional books and authors.

Medical tourism is the act of travelling to other countries to obtain medical, dental, and surgical care. Here people travel to other countries to obtain medical care while at the same time touring, vacationing and enjoying the attractions of the countries which they are visiting at the cheaper cost and better services as compared to other countries.

Leisure Tourism: Some tourists visit Uttarakhand only for fun or enjoying their leisure. They usually visit hill stations, beaches, waterfalls, zoological parks, etc.

Pilgrimage Tourism: Tourists especially senior citizens are interested only in visiting temples and offering worship to their favourable deity. They move to tourist centers only if time permits and provided the trip is easy on the purse. It requires planning and meticulous follow up for the sustainability in Uttarakhand Char Dham Yatra.

Heritage Tourism: Tourists irrespective of their varied interests, have one thing in common i.e. they would like to go around heritage monuments which are in plenty in Uttarakhand.

Cemetery Tourism: Due to past influence of British period Uttarakhand is a tourist place for many Cemeteries in and around Dehradun, Mussorie. Tourists are interested in visiting these places owing to its historical value associated with cemetery.

Rural Tourism: Rapid industrialization has forced the people to move out of villages. This has a great potential for Uttarakhand tourism. Rural tourism, in recent years, recorded an upward trend in terms of tourism demand. This has led tourism and services operators for the rural communities to have a new economic and social perspective. Rural

tourism offers different alternative consequences of massive urbanization, represented by keeping the particularities of the local community with everything that involves life in rural areas. As a result, people especially children do not know what constitutes a village. The parents are keen to show their children the idyllic surroundings of native villages. In a country like India, rural tourism deserves special attention. It involves visiting existing rural environments for recreational experience. It can be participation in rural activities, mingling with local people and experiencing the rural culture expressed in customs, values, beliefs, traditions, economy, history, agriculture, etc. Rural tourism signifies the tourist's interest in the customs of the indigenous and exotic people. Foreign tourists are deeply interested in local customs, festivals, dances, rituals and in fact, the very lifestyle of the indigenous people intrigues them. Rural tourism development is community-based where the environment is not to be spoilt. It needs to be protected and promoted. Places with bio-ethnic diversity, mountains, lakes, valleys, rivers, tea estates, handicrafts, dance and music etc has ample scope for developing rural tourism.

Responsible Tourism: Growth of tourism shall ensure overall development of the destination. While promoting tourism, the carrying capacity of destination, civic amenities, waste management,

socio cultural values, ecology, environs and energy management will be kept in mind to ensure positive and sustainable growth.

IV. Marketing of Tourism for Sustainable Tourism in Uttarakhand

Marketing in the tourism industry is a part of the process that starts with the desire for travel in people. Marketing in tourism is concerned with the needs of identifiable consumer groups. It includes product/service development, place (location and distribution), and pricing. It requires information about people and the product to offer. Marketing role is to match the right product or service with the right market or audience. Tourism is an intangible product. In tourism, certain facilities are made available for a specific time and for a specific use. There is close link between production and consumption of tourist services. Since consumption once begun cannot be stopped, the risk for the customer is high and his need for reliable pre-purchase information is strong. The tourist product cannot be provided by a single enterprise. Each of the components of a tourist product is highly specialized and together make the final product.

The role of information technology is immense in the sustainable tourism of Uttarakhand. Tourism is a complex industry because of its multi-faceted activities which together produce the 'tourist

product'. Its marketing lies in the tourism promotion in its various forms directed at large number of people in various lands of different socio-economic structures, having different needs, expectations and behavior patterns. Tourism marketing can be defined as the systematic and coordinated efforts exerted by the Uttarakhand Tourist Organisations and the tourist enterprises at international, national levels to optimize the satisfaction of tourists-groups and individuals, in view of the sustained tourism growth. The main marketing functions in Uttarakhand tourism sector include:

1. Market research
2. Product formulation and development
3. Analysis and selection of target markets
4. Distribution networks
5. Product promotion

Effective marketing of tourism in Uttarakhand needs constant gearing up of infrastructure to international standards and presupposes its co-ordination with the tourism suppliers.

V. Conclusions

Current practices of voluntary sustainable tourism were considered to be ineffective. Many regulations to prevent environmental degradation, and abuse of the market by 'free-riding' tourism organisation that act irresponsibly in environmental or financial terms. The government

should check over these that would enable sustainable tourism to be more readily applicable to the mass market. Future research may focus on participatory regulation involving business, governments, host communities and campaigners with a greater view to common ground of sustainable tourism. Hence, the achievement of sustainable tourism may therefore depend on a change in discourse of both campaigners and industry in order to identify common ground more easily, and to communicate this more effectively to the marketplace. All of us have our own role to play in ensuring sustainable tourism to work as a force for our economic well-being and social progress.

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