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Green Tourism Practices: A Paradigm Shift in Sustainable Development

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Abstract

The concept of Green Tourism is a component of sustainable tourism. Developmental nations have been embracing green tourism, which has gained recognition as a viable means of sustainable development and is now an integral part of their economic growth and conservation initiatives. This. In the late twentieth century, the tourism industry has become more conscious of environmental concerns, which have led to a rise in awareness for both tourists and the general public. Research in this article seeks to explore how attitudes towards eco-friendly practices affect the intention of tourists to return to their chosen tourist destination in India. Revival of intentions is said to result in financial sustainability and profitability for the industry. It was found to be unreliable in determining the impact of green practices on intentions to revisit. Nonetheless, descriptive statistics indicate that a significant number of visitors believe that supporting green initiatives is crucial and should be promoted to the general public. The policy makers in India are being urged by this study to prioritize environmental sustainability.

Keywords: Green Tourism, Sustainable Development, Policy Makers, Financial Sustainability, Profitability.

Introduction

Travelling is the fastest and largest industry in the world. India is regarded as a country of great cultural significance. India, being the most sought-after tourist destination, is a unique country with ancient traditions that are not commonly found anywhere else in the world. India's thriving cultural heritage and impressive historical roots are closely linked to the growth of tourism. ". The impressive monuments attract travelers from all over the world. The Sanskrit literature has attributed the importance of "Aththi Devo Bhava" to the concept of hospitality, which states that guests are considered gods. Developing countries, such as India, recognize the importance of tourism development as a means of expediting economic growth. Despite the rapid

growth of tourism initiatives worldwide, there are alarming negative impacts on the environment, natural resources, biodiversity, and ecological balance in many areas. Hence, there is an amplified significance for the growth of eco-friendly tourism. India boasts a diverse range of natural wonders, including biosphere reserves, mangrove forests, deserts and mountains in the form of green belt water bodies. These eco-friendly drivers are the primary sources of green tourism. Sadly, there has been a surge in concrete structures like hotels, industries, and lodgings in environmentally fragile areas over the past few decades that have led to the poaching of rare marine and wild life without taking into account their environment or aesthetic appeal. The. Manali, a major tourist destination in Himachal Pradesh that has been frequented by both local and foreign visitors, is not only negatively impacting the environment but also losing its popularity due to unplanned development. Urban expansion has been uncontrolled in the hill resort for six years, resulting in numerous multi-story buildings being built around the town. The hotels have been causing water pollution by pouring sewage into the Beas river. The lush greenery of this municipality has dwindled rapidly, ruining the surrounding environment, and the pedestrian route has turned into an everyday motorway, leading to air and noise pollution. It is estimated that the river receives around 1.3 billion pounds of sewage and thousands of animal carcasses. Each day, industrial waste adds up to 260 million pounds of added volume from hundreds of factories on the banks. Kanpur-based ECO Friends' is using its slogan Think Green, Talk green & Act Green to reach out and rally the support of local people, students as well as children. The organization also promotes environmental consciousness.

Sustainable tourism can address the challenges of inclusive growth. Additionally, tourism's focus on returning to roots is connected to increased accessibility, greater emphasis on heritage and culture, and better access to information, all of which are linked to concerns about climate change.

Objectives of the Study

- To study the concept of green tourism under the broad perspective of tourism as an industry.
- To elaborate on the attributes, characteristics and future prospects of green tourism.
- To understand the principles and practices of green tourism.
- To understand the relationship between green and sustainable tourism
- To understand the Possibilities of Implementing green tourism nationwide and globally
- To study the challenges while implementing sustainable green tourism.

Green Tourism

The goal of sustainable tourism is to ensure that tourism remains environmentally sustainable for an extended period. Sustainable tourism holds great significance due to its efforts to conserve resources and enhance local culture and tradition. The goal of sustainable tourism is to create employment opportunities and generate income while minimizing the impact on the environment and local culture. Green tourism promotes travel practices that conserves environment, supports local economies and restores cultural heritage.

The key principles of green tourism can be reflected upon some major areas and they are:

- Reduction of wastes and emissions
- Promoting cultural integrity
- Awareness among travellers about sustainability.

Tourism accounts for approximately about 8% of global carbon emissions which consist of food, lodging, infrastructure and transportation. Therefore these leave a cumulative impact on the tourism industry.

The alternative to the situation would be adaption of sustainable measures and hence green tourism. Green tourism offers environmental protection, community benefits, personal enrichment.

Characteristics of Sustainable Tourism

This kind of tourism is characterised by preservation of environment and biodiversity. The major objective is to reduce the carbon footprint and wastage of resources. Conservation of ecosystems, species and minimize the negative impact on nature. Green tourism favours practices which are more responsible like usage of public transport, consumption of local food and commodities and accommodation sustainable places.

- Sustainable tourism strives to preserve the significance of local culture and tradition.
- Sustainability in tourism not only informs tourists about destinations but also helps in understanding their culture and civilization.
- The aim of this tourism is to conserve the resources of the places one visits.
- Sustainability in tourism seeks to increase local participation, which offers them the chance to earn a living. ". Sustainable Tourism emphasizes the importance of maintaining the integrity of tourist destinations.

Practices of Green Tourism for promotion of Sustainability

A preference to eco-friendly accommodations- choices for EcoBnb or Green key makes the difference towards environment.

Choice of public transport over private cars – this would encourage green mobility and hence reduction of carbon emissions.

Striving of local and indigenous market and commodities- encouraging local business would thrive the economy and promote tourism.

Respect to wildlife and natural spaces- maintaining the biodiversity is extremely important aspect of tourism.

Principles of Sustainable Tourism

Tourism needs to be planned and managed appropriately, given the surge in tourist numbers. This is particularly important today. Tourism can only progress sustainably if it adheres to its set of guidelines and principles.

- Tourism should be initiated at any place with the aid of local people. The local community's involvement contributes to the sustainable development of tourism.
- The nearby populace must finance the direct outcome of thriving tourism in their vicinity.' Local businesses benefit from the connection with tourism, which results in economic benefits for local residents.
- The appointment of codes, ethics, and equitable guidelines is necessary to achieve significant growth in sustainable development. To enhance the value and management of heritage and natural resources, a training/education program should be implemented.

Relationship between Green Tourism and Sustainable Tourism

Green tourism is a sub-set of sustainable tourism. Sustainable tourism is a holistic and long-term approach towards maintaining ecological, economical, social and environmental impacts. Green tourism is the main focus of green travel, with a focus on protecting the environment and improving the well-being of local residents. The primary focus of green tourism is to inculcate eco-friendly practices for the growth and sustenance of the habitat where the tourism is concerned. Sustainable tourism involves all types of tourism such as eco-tourism, micro-tourism and many more which has the same function and it is focused on conserving resources and increasing local cultural and traditional significance.

The concept of “sustainable tourism” originated in 1987 in ‘Brundtland Commission Report’ which defined the phrase as ‘meeting the needs of the present without compromising on the future abilities and possibilities. Building on this fundamental point tourism sector was grossly considered under this vision in order to enhance the quality of experience tourists gathered over a period of time. Sustainable tourism had three criteria like social, economical and environmental. With the phase of time the theory developed into further detailed explanation where underlying concepts arise like green tourism, medical tourism and also ecotourism.

This underlying concepts have the main theory of development and sustainability only the point of difference would be addressing of unique and specific concerns like conservation of wildlife and its species, restoring the cultural heritage of certain places, or cultivation of local and indigenous products to maintain the livelihood of the residents.

The comparison between green and sustainable tourism can be referred in the following table:

Green Tourism	Sustainable Tourism
It takes into consideration environment only	It includes economy, environment and society
Specific concept	Wider or holistic concept
Have a severe impact on awareness and conservation of environment	Have a deep-rooted and long-term balanced impact on all the three aspects of sustainability
For Example:- Plastic-free hotels	For Example:- Community based development project.

Few examples of Green Tourism

- **Slow village** – its a network of few integrated villages in France offering tourists destination which allows slow travelling and enjoyment of leisure with majestic views and showing the local culture and habits of the inhabitants.
- **Bhutan**- the nation runs on the principle of having 'high-impact and high value'. The visitors are asked to pay a fee for the maintenance and development of infrastructure that would facilitate tourism.
- **Fiji**- the state in Japan operates thoroughly in solar power and eliminates use of all non-biodegradable products in order to accelerate the conservation of environment.

Global Initiatives

According to the Pacific Asia Travel Association (PATA), organized tourism can promote conservation and development goals, while also determining level of development. Environmental impact assessment is a crucial factor to consider when planning for implementing tourism projects at any location.' Environmental considerations are a top priority for the World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC) in its guidelines for comprehensive environmental programs. Additionally, it advocates for acknowledging the preservation of environmentally protected or threatened areas, species, and scenic aesthetics, enhancing landscapes as much as possible, using energy conservation and recycling waste.

Green Tourism Practised in India

- **Sikkim**- It is the first state in India to follow the policies of no plastic and promotion of organic farming in the country. The state heavily promotes

accommodation of tourists in home-stays rather luxury resorts. This enhances the growth and prosperity of community.

- Kerala- the spice village and coconut lagoon are pioneer examples of restoration of local habitat. The resorts and hotels developed in these areas provide a magnificent experience to the tourists enjoying this local attributes.
- Kaziranga National park- the conservation of the species has been major environmental impact of this zone. The natural habitat for such a rare species enables a unique experience of the tourist.
- Sunderbans- a unique mangrove forest with sundari trees make the place a biodiversity with a rich flora and fauna. The region is also inhabited with Royal Bengal Tigers which are a few left. Conservation to these eco-systems is the major concern of green tourism.

Challenges of Sustainable Tourism

Sustainable tourism and its underlying concepts are call of the hour yet it faces a lot of challenges and hindrances. The reason for being such a hard task is that this theory of sustainability requires practices, awareness and understanding the value of environment. In order to maintain our future generations the measures taken under sustainability is high requirement and should not understated for the betterment and development.

- Preserving natural and cultural resources
- Limiting negative impacts at tourist destinations, including use of natural resources and waste production
- Promoting the wellbeing of the local community
- Reducing the seasonality of demand
- Limiting the environmental impact of tourism related transport
- Making tourism accessible to all
- Improving the quality of tourism jobs

Conclusion

Sustainable development, conservation of natural resources, and incentives for citizenship are essential factors to drive tourism economic growth. A balance must be struck between sustainability in economic, socio-cultural, and environmental contexts to ensure long-term sustainability. An additional ethical element is the need to balance economic growth and sustainable development. Eco-development in the future will depend heavily on tourism, and it can only be developed with the participation of people. Our support for sustainable tourism innovation is of utmost importance.' Thus, it is clear that the sustainable management of tourism in the north east of India will not lead to revocation, but rather will encourage the preservation

and safeguarding of nature. If north India is to become an eco-tourism destination, communication must be improved to ensure people can connect with the unexplored rhythm of its paradise. To prevent environmental degradation, it is crucial to design, execute, and manage tourism-related activities in a manner that is environmentally friendly.

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