

Sustainable Destination Development & Implications for the State of Jammu & Kashmir

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Abstract

The business of tourism has been seen as a key player in the uprising of any destination but at the same time, makes it vulnerable to numerous parallel threats where a destination strives hard for its sustainability in the long run. Thus the future competitiveness and strength to survive for any destination depends on its ability to survive in the longer run and stand sustainable in terms of economic, natural and cultural resources and at the same time to ensure, efficient and planned consumption of the same. To satisfy the same it becomes imperative for the destination planners to incorporate their policies as such that lowest minimal depletion of resources is observed and maximum sustainable development of the destination is attained. The involvement of various stakeholders or destination planners in the progression of development of the destination cannot be overlooked. The state of Jammu and Kashmir is one of the leading destinations in terms of tourist inflow and the contribution of the various planning agencies cannot be ignored as far the development of the destination is concerned in the long run. This paper is an attempt to highlight the contribution of the various planning agencies in the sustainable development of the state of Jammu and Kashmir. The study gives an outline as to the various practices that should be adhered by the agencies so as to augment the practice of sustainable development.

Keywords: Jammu & Kashmir, Sustainability, Stakeholders, Tourism

and remarkable socio-economic phenomena of the current era. From an activity enjoyed by a small group of few concentrated people, it has turned into a mass phenomenon, where people from all the borders of the globe show active participation in the same (WTO, 2007). With the advances in the lifestyles of the masses across the globe, it now influences progressively more number of people all over the world and can be well thought of as a vital facet of global integration. The tourism activity thus in an aggregate, is a bundle of opportunities but if not properly managed it can trigger a set of dangerous outcomes (Mowforth and Munt, 2008; McCool et al., 2001). Tourism without any doubt enjoys the status of being one of the dynamic industries of current times, but at the same time it puts various important resources of a destination at threat by directly exposing them to various potential brutalities. To overcome the same threat “sustainable tourism” is seen as a saviour for the growth and development of the destination.

Butler (1993) defined sustainable tourism as “tourism which in a form can maintain its viability in an area for an indefinite period of time”, further he explained it as an integrated approach towards improving opportunities, controlling damages and enhancing the attractiveness of a tourist destination. Furthermore recent trends and technological advancements of service culture has put an immense pressure on tourism destinations to better position their products in a highly competitive market either by price leadership or product variation. Thus managers and policy makers must focus on establishing such strategies and operational policies that lead to the achievement of sustainable development of a tourist destination (Franch et al., 2010).

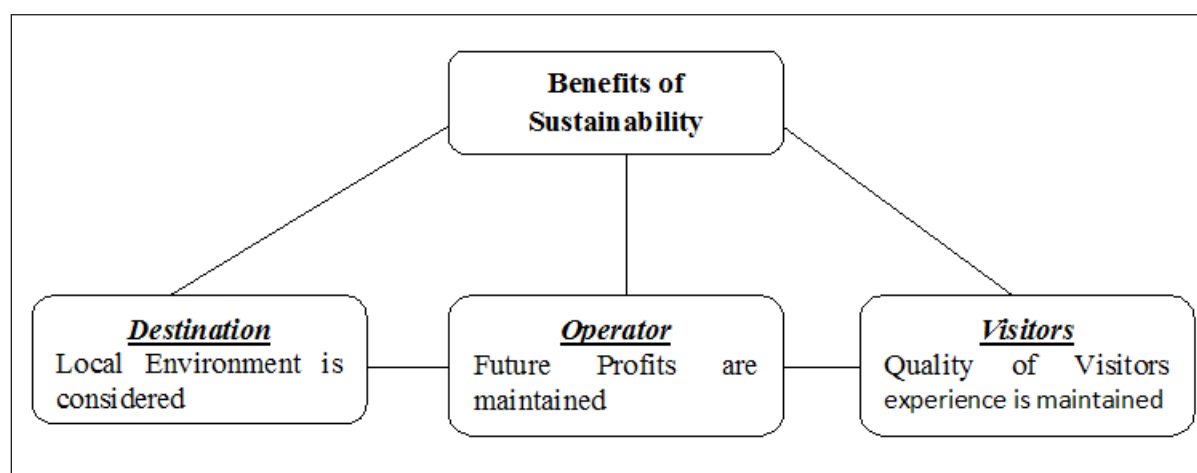
INTRODUCTION

Tourism industry is listed as one of the most significant

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Figure 1: Benefits of Sustainability

Source: Strzelecki, 2012

The development of any destination should not be challenging for the future generation, but should be planned in a manner that it leads to continuous development for the ages to come. Sustainable destination development thus ensures judicious use of the natural resources so that they can be preserved for future requirements. McCool (1995) notified that growth of tourism needs to be well planned or else it might prove damaging to the various important resources including environmental, financial and societal, which form the basis of tourism in any community. He further mentioned that for the prosperous growth of the tourism, the resources need to be well planned and handled in a sustainable way. The developmental benefits of sustainability can be well illustrated as shown through Figure 1.

From past many years the number of tourists visiting the state of Jammu and Kashmir has multiplied in numbers and the numbers are doubling with every passing year. The increased inflow has resulted in creating immense pressure on the tourism resources of the state, which can be easily witnessed at any popular tourist destinations. In order to overcome the adverse effects of the same the intervention of the various stakeholders is highly recommended, so as to ensure sustainable development of the state.

Through the proposed paper an attempt has been made to highlight the previous work carried out in the study area, by going through the relevant previous literature available in the concerned field. The state of Jammu and Kashmir has always stood as an epitome when it comes to boosting the tourism sector of the country and has contributed

directly to the overall growth of the economy of the India. With the increase in the overall progress of the tourism industry and mounting pressure on the tourism resources it is very primary for the various active organisations to keep a check on utilisation of the these resources in order to make it sustainable in the longer run and to eliminate any negative effect.. For the achieving the same the active participation of various agencies/stakeholders is highly recommended, who are directly or indirectly associated with the tourism activity. Thus through this paper we have tried to make an attempt to highlight the contribution of various stakeholders / planning agencies towards the sustainable development of the state of Jammu and Kashmir. Further the authors have come up with various suggestions that should be adhered or incorporated by the various planning agencies of the state in order to augment the sustainable development of the state of Jammu and Kashmir.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The concept of the sustainability was first coined in 1987 which defines sustainable development as the development that “meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of the future generations to meet their own needs” (WCED, 1987). sustainability in its wide meaning, consists of three basic elements of social, economic and ecological importance, referring to the cultural and civic standards of the host community, viability in terms of possible profits or other marketable objectives, the carrying capacity of the ecosystem of the concerned destination respectively (Sreekumar and

Parayil, 2002). Any destinations that allows tourism industry to advance without suitable planning policies eventually goes through societal and ecological concerns and diminishing competitiveness as visitor spots (Dowling, 1993). Sustainable destination development as seen by some, acts as a way of conserving the ethnic and natural environment for the future generations, while as others see sustainable development as a way of promising a continuous and long term sustained growth of a destination without compromising its future glory.

Sustainable development equilibrium industry's profit seeking target with the wants of the Environment and stakeholders (Bramwell, 2006). Sustainable destination development is a long well planned approach that encourages economic sustainable tourism activity without rescinding the environment or society of the host destination while at the same time guaranteeing just dissemination of charge and profit (DBEDT, 2006 a). Tourism development at a destination be it for the purpose of leisure or pilgrimage alter the environment and puts extensive pressure on the resources of a place, keeping in this view there is a lot more responsibility of the interest holders to keep a check on the same and make sure that the development goes in the right track. Stakeholder assistance is indispensable for sustainable development of the destination, or else merely the most dominant will benefit (Dyer, Gursoy, Sharma, and Carter, 2007).

Stakeholder contribution in plan development is associated with the primary concepts of the community and public participation that are the essential part of important democratic dogmas (Fiorino, 1990). It has thus become very imperative for the destinations to follow a proper planned map so as bring a long term and sustainable reaping benefits. The major partners of sustainable destination development include the industry as in itself, various environment support groups, last but not the least community/local authority (WTO, 1993). Further to add through adaptive resource management plans, tourism framework would enhance and will eventually help to identify management priorities, facilitating the creation of objective goals among the various responsible authorities / stakeholders for conservation and development (Lincoln, Lasson, and Poudyal, 2012). Thus in order to progress tourism effectively and make it constructive for the social order, it has to be planned and controlled in a proper planned manner (Butler et al., 1998; Oliveira, 2003).

The communities that adopt to tourism as a tool for commercial progress must articulate guidelines for community development that are sustainable (Oliveira, 2003). The fundamental approach to implement the development of sustainable tourism in a social order is through the needed assistance of stakeholders, (e.g. industrialists, residents and community leaders) (Gunn, 1994). Great importance is also placed on the travel arrangement that consist of many stakeholders that are swayed by tourism and includes groups such as , inhabitants, commercial interests holders , and public establishments, so that they will get a chance to work together in order to progress a shared vision for tourism development (Jamal and Getz, 1997; Ritchie, 1993).

METHODOLOGY

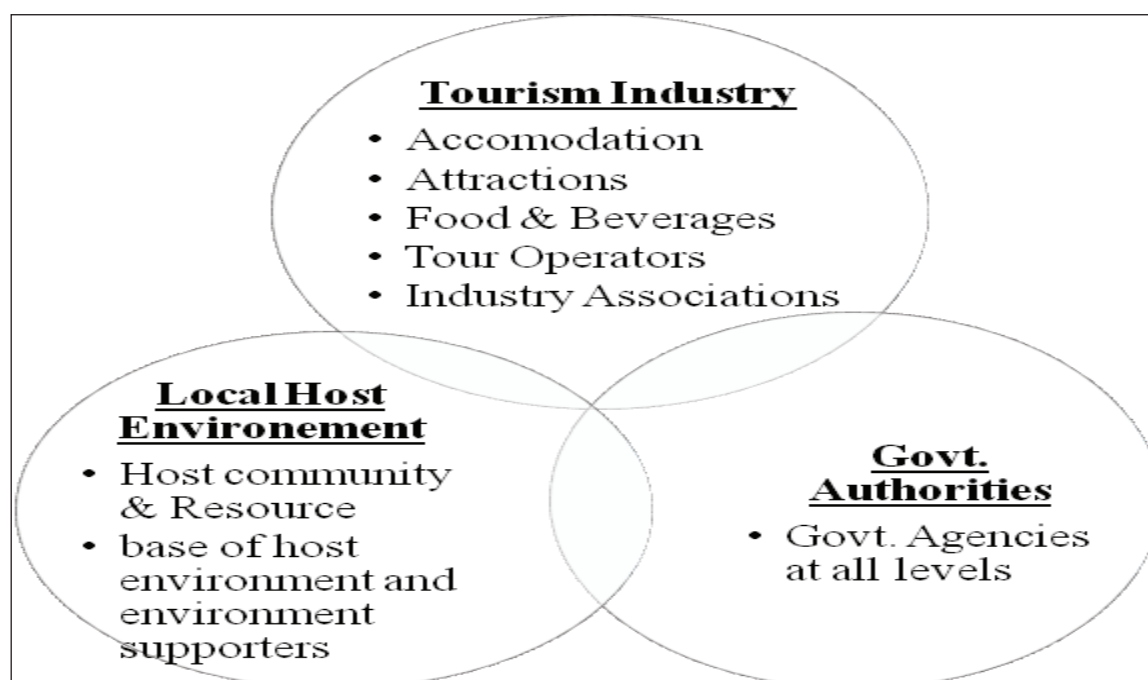
The research on the topic required multiple methods of data sourcing. The descriptive research design is used to understand the various attributes of destination development and its implications. Data sources such as hospitality and travel journals, various books, URL of various hospitality majors were refereed.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To highlight the role of various stakeholders towards the sustainable development of the state of Jammu and Kashmir.
2. To suggest the various steps that should be adhered by the interest bearers so as to augment the practice of sustainable development in the state of Jammu and Kashmir.

STAKEHOLDERS AND THEIR ROLE IN SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN JAMMU & KASHMIR

One of the famous definition for the stakeholders hold it out as "Any group of persons or a single person, who may put any affect or is affected by the achievement of the goals of the industry" (freeman, 1984). To ensure that stakeholders are satisfied with tourism development and the overall development of their community, their environs and ethos must be protected (Ahn et al., 2002; Hjalager, 1996). A government that efficiently manages the tourism activity at the destination creates benefits for

Figure 2: Stakeholder Group for Sustainable Destination Development

Source: WTO Report, 1993

all stakeholders (Jamal and Getz, 1995). In case of Jammu and Kashmir there are a number of active players who are directly or indirectly associated with each other and influence the overall development of the state in terms of tourism and ensure that their actions and plans have a sustainable effect on the growth of the destination. The stakeholders of the state have a very crucial role to play in the sustainable development of the destination, as they are the ones who have very critical role to play in implementing various policies that augment the overall growth of the state. The active stakeholders that have a strong role to play in the overall sustainable development of the state. The various important stakeholders at any destination are well illustrated through below drawn figure:-

Tourism Industry

In the state of Jammu and Kashmir tourism industry serves as a key contributor towards the economic and social development of the state. Tourism industry is further accredited as the largest generator of employment in the state. This set mainly includes Travel and Tour operators, Hotel and Restaurant Associations and various other such collaborations where direct relationships exist between the industry and host destinations. The active

players of this industry have understood the importance of sustainable development and have placed their focus on social, environmental and economic aspects of the destination.

The tourism industry in the state is an integration of various number of agencies involving small tour operator who plan the tours to hospitality industry who cater to the various advanced demands of the customers ranging from transportation to accommodation facilities. With the increasing popularity of the sustainable destination development, the tourism industry has shown more concern by extensively involving in such practices which are of more of eco-friendly in nature. The tourism industry in the state is expected to act in a more responsible manner by adhering to various initiatives that will lead to reduce pollution and noise impacts, by implementing a proper ways of waste disposal programs for hotels by implementing energy consumption plans and other such parallel steps. The industry in the state is seen to organise such plans and workshops which help in raising awareness towards environmental issues. The state tourism sector should further try to maintain the quality of the destination by educating all their allies towards the promotion of sustainable destination development and the benefits rising from it thereon.

The main challenge for the tourism industry in the state or across the country has been making tourism buyers more sensitive to environmental problems during their trips/holidays. There is a not much popular trend seen in the tourism buyer's readiness to pay additional for environment protection and environmentally friendly products, including "green" Travel & Tourism. Therefore, the main challenge for the companies in tourism industry is to motivate the consumers of the industry and its members that it is entirely for their benefit to accept and endorse a sustainable attitude in their activities and purchasing decisions. Education programs which will provide a common platform for the tourism industry and its buyers, is need of the hour which should be backed up by widespread acceptance of codes of Conduct, which would be a great contribution by the tourism industry for the sustainable development of the destination. Once this message has been properly conveyed, the next important step is to back this up with the required information to enable consumers to make well informed choices.

P1:- In the light of the facts stated above, it is clearly evident there is an active and most crucial role played by the tourism industry in enhancing the overall tourism operations of the state as they act as the ultimate channel for marketing of the tourism products, thus there is a need to upgrade their potentiate resources from time to time.

Government Authorities

The state government of Jammu and Kashmir is seen as a key stakeholder towards the long term sustainable development of the state. The state government is an active player in fostering and working out the new plans towards the development of the tourism sector of the state and streamlines much of its tasks through the state tourism development cooperation. The state government through its new initiatives have tagged much of its destinations a eco destinations and is promoting the concept of green tourism. The state government has further taken the initiative of putting a limit as to the number of visitors/pilgrims visiting the state in view of carrying capacity of various ecologically sensitive places.

The state of Jammu and Kashmir has shown a considerably approach towards the sustainable development of the state by promoting the state of Jammu and Kashmir as eco-friendly destination and having a long vision of developing the state as a sustainable one. The government at all levels

is expected to promote cooperation and coordination, enacting legislation, policy setting, education and training and monitoring in order to achieve the goal of sustainable development of the destination. The state government should ensure coordination and cooperation among the different agencies, authorities and organisations concerned at all levels and moreover wherever these institutions exist their authorities and responsibilities are properly stated and they complement each other. It is further the responsibility of the state government to ensure that tourism and environment are mutually supportive at regional level and implement common approaches to environment policies and sustainable tourism development. It is the duty of the government authorities to support implementation of sustainable tourism through an effective legislation framework that establishes standards and laws for appropriate use of land use, tourism facilities and investment in tourism projects.

P2:- The government authorities being the major part of the setup, should come up with such plans that would certainly augment the overall growth of the destination and enhance its sustainable impacts for longer period of time.

Local Host Environment

Local host environment cover all the sections who have a direct bearing of the plans and policies that are carried out by the tourism industry and the government agencies. It involves the set of local communities i.e. the residents, the host environment local organisations etc. with the increasing awareness of the concept of sustainability a massive involvement of the local governing agencies has been observed in gearing up the developmental plans of the destination in context of viable sustainability and further community participation has been seen as a positive landmark towards the same.

Through proper participation from all the active members of the host community it is possible to reach to some point where natural resources can be properly conserved and at the same time development of the destination can be geared up. The perceived hospitality of the residents play a major role towards the effective development of the tourism plans. Hospitality includes the warmth of the local residents, ease of communication, willingness of the host community to provide information to the tourists and their attitudes towards the overall development of

the place. The local host community involves a set of environment supporters also who should undertake the task to evaluate the impact of tourism on the ecology and environment of the destination. One can see through community participation that a number of local agencies have taken up initiatives to ensure the protection of various natural and cultural resources.

The local host environment within the state should extensively participate in the home stay schemes where exchange of cultures between the host and tourist can take place. Specific organisations within the community should take clear responsibility for checking the use of natural resources with the tourist destination and should avoid such practices that can damage the ecosystem of the place.

P3:- Local host community is the nucleus of any destination setup; thus the active and responsible participation from the various sections of the society is very much essential to protect the very natural and cultural heritage of the destination.

DISCUSSION AND SUGGESTIONS

No doubt tourism industry brings industrial boom to a destination but at the same time it is not where it halts. The outcome being it alters the total environment of a destination and makes it prone to various unidentified threats. The total ecosystem of a destination gets dilapidated which includes soil degradation due to excessive use of manmade materials, depletion and eroding away of soil, deforestation and what not. This effect is quite evident in our state as overburdened tourism has threatened our tourism resources to a very large extend. To overcome this gap the industry needs the responsible management of resources. Proper strategies should follow that show more respect not only towards the environment but at the same time should encourage mutual understanding between the locals and the visitors. Tourism industry should remain credible and sensitive towards their commitment for the sustainable development of the destination and be responsive towards the environment which can be achieved through the proper collaboration with various stakeholders especially the state government. In order to position Jammu & Kashmir as a destination for sustainable developed destination, policy makers had to take care of plenty of issues as discussed.

The tourism industry should be evenly distributed across the geographical area of a destination, rather than putting so much of pressure at one particular place, i.e. it should consume such places evenly. Implementation of environmental management programmes should be taken up in collaboration with all the allies of the tourism industry, so that adverse impact on natural resources can be minimized timely. Increasing awareness among the tourist clients in terms of “Responsible tourism” and making them active contributors towards the sustainable development of a destination. The marketing strategies should be drafted in accordance with the guidelines that follow the pattern of sustainable development. Thus the better Participation of tourism boards in sustainable development efforts is needed. Capacity building measures and programmes should be taken up for local people and various interested agencies, in order to develop among them sense of responsibility and have a participatory approach towards the sustainable development of the destination. Carrying capacity of the places should be properly checked and the tourist inflow should be controlled accordingly. Take strong and appropriate actions through proper implementation of various strong legislation laws against any illegal, offensive or manipulative tourist activity, including sexual exploitation

CONCLUSION

In the present context although tourism is seen as major component of development not only in terms of economic development but also in context of knowledge and human prosperity. No doubt it contributes extensively to the socio economic development of a destination but at the same time the uncontrolled tourism growth can lead to environmental degradation, destruction of fragile ecosystems and social and cultural conflicts taking over the benefits thereon. Therefor sustainable development of a destination will ensure a low alien impact on the environment and local culture as possible. The main theme of sustainable development is thus to ensure growth which will bring a peaceful harmony between tourism and environment. As previously discussed the importance of various stakeholders in the development of the state, it becomes imperative to educate them about the importance of conservation of our natural resources and ecology at the same time. The stakeholders should understand that the real essence of tourism in the state

of Jammu and Kashmir relies much on natural resources which need high preservation and attention. The state government should keep a regular check on the various plans and policies that are related to the development of tourism infrastructure of the state where the natural resources are the not damaged and are consumed properly. The allies of the tourism industry should keep a constant check on the inflow of tourists coming to the state and keep intact the quality of services without affecting the acting environment .last but not the least it the ultimate duty of the local host environment to keep check on the utilization of the resources and to ensure that the resources are not depleted over the time. Certainly we have to protect our home for our future generation to enjoy what we are valuing and enjoying today.

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