

Responsible Tourism from the Perspective of Tourist

Ashok Kumar* Girish Nandani**

Abstract

Tourism is an essential element for cultural understanding and sustainable growth. Millions of people travel across the globe every day exploring, sharing and most of all understand each other's culture. Tourism development is affecting communities around the world. Agricultural land is being bulldozed to make way for hotels. Many destinations of Kumaun region are under assault as number of tourist rises exponentially every year. The result damages the sites, overcrowding, over development, pollution, threats to wildlife, erosion of culture and environment. Responsible Tourism "RT" is a new wave of Travel that protects the natural and cultural heritage of a place and benefits the local communities. In this research three of aspects of RT are analyzed, namely environmental, social and economic responsibility.

The present study is descriptive study. The survey method was employed for collecting data. The analysis of data reveals that there is a lot of scope to educate tourist regarding responsible tourism behaviour whenever they visit the destinations.

Keywords: Responsible Tourism, Tourist, Perception, Social Responsibility, Economic Responsibility, Environmental Responsibility, Host Community

Introduction

Tourism is a vehicle for development of any nation may it may be developing or developed. Simultaneously tourism bring with it negative scars that are hard to efface. Tourism activities all together have impacts both-ways on one hand it brings positive impacts but on the other negative impacts are also imposed on the destination environment. The behaviour of tourist along-with host community and the stakeholders plays a vital role on the

over-all conservation and development of the destination. The responsible behaviour on part of all the players of tourism can lead to a better and sustainable destination.

According to Manente (2014) Responsible Tourism would mean the adoption of a travel behaviour by tourists that push them to respect the places they visit and the people they meet during the holidays, and to promote/support the well- being of the host community. The present study is a descriptive study. Survey was conducted based on structured closed ended schedule for tourist. An effort was made to analyze the perception and understanding of tourist on the perspective towards responsible tourism. The current study focuses on the perception of tourist on responsible tourism understanding and their experience with various destinations of Ramnagar and Nainital. Tourist follows responsible tourism practices to sustain environment, socio-culture milieu and contribute into the economy of the destination.

Review of Literature

Krippendorff (1987) stated that origin of responsible tourism occurs due to requirement of such a holiday that can able to accomplish 'the satisfaction of social needs: contact with other people and self-realization through creative activities, knowledge and exploration'. Responsible tourism is also aims to provide more enjoyable experiences for tourists through more meaningful connections with local people, and a greater understanding of local culture, social and environmental issues (Cape Town Declaration, 2002). Responsible means more accountable towards one's action and effects of those actions. Tourists as a consumer have to bear

* Assistant Professor, Department of Tourism, Kumaun University, Nainital, Uttarakhand, India.
Email: ashok.tourism@gmail.com

** Research Scholar, Department of Tourism, Kumaun University, Nainital, Uttarakhand, India.
Email: girishnandani003@rediffmail.com

responsibility for purchase of their tourism products and services, as providers of tourism are also bear it (Leslie, 2012a). Tourist visited different destinations get experience of other's people places in their homes, get scintilla of host community daily life, their beliefs, music, arts and crafts, their dress, habits and attitudes (Goodwin, 2011).

It is difficult to change the behaviour of tourist towards any form of tourism activities. Volume, attention and nearness are important issues in shaping social and cultural impacts: in some environments tourist seek to be alone; in others such as festivals and markets, they enjoy the crowd (Goodwin, 2016).

The goal of 'ethical' or 'principled' behaviour by tourists would seem to create limitations or pressures on their behaviour in some form: for example, supporting local community involvement, equitable sharing of economic benefits, purchasing local products, not taking advantage and so forth. Based on such criteria, we can say that there are ethical tourists who take pains to display 'more responsible behaviour' (Scheyvens, 2002).

Responsible tourists are those who exercise responsible holidays through environmentally friendly behaviour, responsible behaviour towards local communities and their stay while benefiting the host community (Leslie, 2012b). Tourism created unjust and uneven relations between poor locals who are there to serve the rich tourist's and this is wrong and unethical (Crick, 1989).

Stanford (2006) identified and categorized factors which influenced or constrained responsible behaviour as internal, originating from the tourist. These factors are culture, values and attitudes; ethics and motivations; and mindfulness and mindlessness, and external, emanating from the destination, which included marketing; visitor management; and information and communication. ICIMOD (2014) prepared 34 guidelines for travelling responsibly in the Kailash sacred landscape improve local conservation while communities are benefited through responsible tourism activities.

Fatin et. al, (2015) identified that cultural and environment factors has a significant impact towards responsible tourism and tourist to understand the responsibility towards destination by preserving it. Awareness and involvement among host community about responsible tourism encourage them to protect their destination from the negative impacts of tourist activities (Kumar, 2016).

Environmental knowledge or awareness of the tourist does not necessarily convert them to follow environmentally responsible practices and take responsibility for their act. There is necessity of information proliferation among tourist so they can become more environmentally responsible. Accommodation establishments should disseminate their green initiative and fair trade among tourist at the time of booking accommodation (Bob, 2016).

Research Questions and Objectives of The Study

The present study was undertaken with following objectives:

1. To ascertain the existence of Responsible Tourism at destination.
2. To find awareness of Responsible Tourism behaviour among tourist.

Research Methodology

The present study is descriptive in nature and survey was conducted based on structured closed ended schedule for collecting primary data. The research was carried out in Ramnagar and Nainital of Kumaun Region because these destinations attract large number of tourist round the year except rainy season. The study is carried out in the month of February, May and June, 2016. This area is selected for the study as it receives maximum tourist along with diverse motivational factors.

A research tool was developed to assess the level of awareness of responsible tourism among the tourist. The Survey tool contained 22 items. The respondent were ask to choose their options. Five point likert scale was used where respondent were asked to select from strongly agree, agree, undecided, disagree, strongly disagree. The tool is divided into three segments which include social responsibility, environmental responsibility and economic responsibility of tourist towards destination. There was several items related to demographic information of the respondent. The tool was analyzed for its reliability and the cronbaca found .831 establishes its reliability.

The data gathered from the respondent were analyzed for their frequency and cumulative percentage. It was decided

that if individual score of respondent exceed mean value their exist awareness about responsible tourism among tourist.

Data Analysis and Interpretation

A total of 167 schedules were collected. Only 150 questionnaires were found correct and usable. Table 1.1 represents the demographic profile of respondents. The study reveals that 79.3% respondents were male and 20.7% respondents were female. The population was studied based on the age group which reveals that 15.3% were up to the age group of 20 years, 65.3% were between 21 to 40 years, 12.7% were between 41 years to 60 years,

6.7% respondents were above 60 years of age. as far as educational qualification of the respondents is concerned the data reveals that 18.7% were up to high school, 52.7% were graduates, 12% were post graduate and 16.7% respondents had professional qualification. Demographic study on type of occupation of the respondent reveals that 20% were student, 44% were employed, 26% were self-employed, 3.3% were homemaker and 6.7% were retired. 18% respondents were having the annual household Income up to Rs.1,00,000/-, 13.3% between Rs.1,00,000 to Rs.3,00,000/-, 33.3% were having income range of Rs.3,00,000 to Rs.5,00,000/-, 28.7% between Rs.5,00,00/- to Rs.10,00,000/- and 6.7% respondents were having income above Rs.10,00,000/- per month.

Table 1.1: Demographic Profile of Respondents (N=150)

Variables		Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Sex	Male	119	79.3	79.3
	Female	31	20.7	100.0
Age Group	Up to 20 Years	23	15.3	15.3
	21 to 40 Years	98	65.3	80.7
	41 to 60 Years	19	12.7	93.3
	Above 60 Years	10	6.7	100.0
Educational Qualification	Up to High School	28	18.7	18.7
	Graduate	79	52.7	71.3
	Postgraduate	18	12.0	83.3
	Professional Education	25	16.7	100.0
Occupation	Student	30	20.0	20.0
	Employed	66	44.0	64.0
	Self-employed	39	26.0	90.0
	Home-maker	5	3.3	93.3
	Retired	10	6.7	100.0
Annual Household Income	Up to Rs.1,00,000	27	18.0	18.0
	Rs.1,00,000 to Rs.3,00,000	20	13.3	31.3
	Rs 3,00,000 to Rs5,00,000	50	33.3	64.7
	Rs.5,00,000 to Rs 10,00,000	43	28.7	93.3
	Above Rs 10,00,000	10	6.7	100.0

Table 1.2: Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	No of Items
.831	.825	22

The cronbach's alpha analysis of table 1.1 was done to find out the reliability of the data collected through

the tool developed. The analysis reveals the value .831 establishes its reliability.

Table 1.3: Item Wise Analysis of Frequency and Percentage of Respondents Level of Agreement with Each Item(N=150)

Sr	Item	Strongly Disagree		Disagree		Un-decided		Agree		Strongly Agree		Remarks
		f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	
1	Does responsible tourism benefit host and visitor?	12	8	66	44	54	36	6	4	12	8	
2	Do you believe responsible tourism understanding is important for guests visiting the destination for suitable development?	24	16	33	22	42	28	30	20	21	14	
3	Do you think responsible tourism can be the best alternative for suitable development of destinations?	36	24	45	30	27	18	6	4	36	24	
4	Mass tourism is a curse for destination and responsible tourism can override the effect of mass tourism in any destination?	30	20	27	18	54	36	3	2	36	24	
5	Do you agree to respect the local traditions of the area being travelled?	36	24	42	28	42	28	6	4	24	16	
6	Do you agree to show responsible behaviour towards host community?	9	6	30	20	66	44	6	4	39	26	
7	Do you agree that the tourist should wear local attires of the destination or wear attire that fits into the environment of the destination visited?	51	34	36	24	18	12	6	4	39	26	
8	Are you interested in having the experience of music, food, art, craft, customs, habits and attitude of the host community?	15	10	45	30	45	30	6	4	39	26	
9	Do you think as a tourist you have attitude of acceptance and respect for the diversity of religion & moral beliefs of the destination?	21	14	42	28	42	28	12	8	33	22	
10	While travelling new destinations you experience societies and communities with different values & tastes?	21	14	18	12	60	40	9	6	42	28	
11	Do you believe that responsible tourism is an attempt to make tourism an inclusive social experience?	30	20	30	20	63	42	9	6	18	12	
12	Do you believe that responsible tourism provides more enjoyable experience through more meaningful connection with local cultural, social and environmental issues?	33	22	18	12	66	44	3	2	30	20	
13	Responsible tourism creates respect between tourist and host.	15	10	63	42	54	36	3	2	15	10	
14	Do you believe social media forms of media generate positive perception in the mind of tourist?	12	8	66	44	45	30	0	0	27	18	
15	Do you agree with the fact that responsible tourism can play a vital role in conserving the environment?	00	00	87	58	34	22.7	15	10	14	9.3	

Sr	Item	Strongly Disagree		Disagree		Un-decided		Agree		Strongly Agree		Remarks
		f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	
16	Responsible tourism can help in re-shaping of already degraded destination,	00	00	47	31.3	71	47.3	10	6.7	22	14.7	
17	Do you agree street market festivals any destination is the best event to understand the host community and their culture?	100	66.7	29	19.3	5	3.3	11	7.3	5	3.3	
18	Do you believe that destination belongs to the people who live there, hence major share of tourism benefits (direct/indirect) be percolated between them?	75	50	36	24	13	8.7	11	7.3	15	10	
19	Do you prefer to buy local handicrafts or souvenirs instead of outside stuff to support local economy?	64	42.7	56	37.3	5	3.3	10	6.7	15	10	
20	Do you agree that the tour operator should encourage the tourist to spend in the local economy?	84	56	22	14.7	18	12	10	6.7	16	10.7	
21	Do you support charity for upliftment of the host community?	81	54	38	25.3	5	3.3	10	6.7	16	10.7	
22	Do you agree that responsible tourism destination should be promoted through experience instead of advertising?	66	44	42	28	10	6.7	5	3.3	27	18	

For ascertaining the existence of Responsible Tourism at destination in view of tourist the following criteria was established. There were twenty two items in the tool for ascertaining level of responsible tourism. The individual can score minimum 22 and maximum 110. The mean point was calculated and was found 66. It was decided to divide the score in five equal parts. Part A comprises of score 22-40, Part B comprises of score 40-58, Part C comprises of score 58-76, Part D comprises of score 76-94 and Part E comprises of score 94-110. Part A indicate almost absence of phenomenon of Responsible tourism, Part B indicate very low level of responsible tourism, Part C indicates low level of Responsible tourism, Part D indicates fairly good responsible tourism existence and Part E indicates well developed responsible tourism at destination in view of tourist visiting the destination. The score obtained by each respondent was recorded and groped in table 1.4 below:

Table 1.4

Sr.	Scores	Frequency	Percentage
1	22-40	11	7.33
2	40-58	75	50
3	58-76	43	28.66
4	76-94	21	14
5	94-110	0	00

The data presented in table 1.4 reveals that, more than 85% scores falls in part A, B and C which indicates low level of responsible tourism at destination in view of respondents only 14% respondents score are in Part D and none could score to fall in Part E; this clearly indicates that concept of responsible tourism is at it infant stage in area of study. Further in a general item of the tool it was asked to the respondents that weather they are aware about the concept of responsible tourism the frequency analysis of the item is presented in table no. 1.5 below:

Table 1.5: General Awareness about Concept of Responsible Tourism Among Tourist (N=150)

Item		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Do you know about the responsible tourism?	No	140	93.3	93.3	93.3
	Yes	10	6.7	6.7	6.7

The data presented in table 1.5 reveals that, more than 93% tourists were unaware about the concept of

responsible tourism. This is a clear picture of alarm as if we really want the fragile and sensitive environment of

mountainous region to be sustainable it's the high time that we should focus on promoting and developing the destination in a responsible way. This is a herculean task because it needs a cumulative efforts of all the players may it be tourist, host community or the stakeholders. Understanding of the environment, awareness generation and finally adopting responsible behaviour by all would lead to sustainable development of any destination. It's not only the government that should be held responsible for unplanned or haphazard development of destination all of us are equally responsible for the same. If we really looking forward for a better tomorrow we should behave in a responsible manner. So lets join hand and understand the necessity of responsible behaviour. The study shows that responsible tourism is still not practiced by tourist.

Conclusion

Tourism and environment are the counterparts of each other on one hand tourism can flourish in a beautiful environment and on the other environment can be conserved with responsible behaviour of the tourism players all together may it be tourist, host or the industry stakeholders. Socio-economic development through promotion of tourism is the focus of every state or country but not at the cost of degradation of a destination is well understood. Tourism practices are still focused on economic and social development of the country and the counterpart of tourism that is conservation is much at stake.

In an effort to associate tourism service providers such as hotels, resorts, restaurants, tour operators and souvenir shopkeepers in various activities related to conservation, community welfare and visitor satisfaction, the paradigm of responsible tourism has gained significant acceptance worldwide and yielded tangible results in the creation of income and employment of local people. (Swain, S. 2016).

The study focussed on the understanding of responsible tourism in Nainital district among the tourists, host community and the industry stakeholders was carried out and to a large extent it was found that RT concept is either completely missing among the population of study or the negligible amount of awareness is exactly not conforming with the norms and regulation of RT. The population who are aware of the concept but are not conforming with the norms and regulations of RT is not because they are

deliberately doing it but because of the fact that they have the understanding but lack of facilities and amenities and alternative measures available in the region compels them to unknowingly or unwillingly adopt measures that are not at par to the norms of RT.

Awareness level in the region regarding RT is quite low, which is an alarming situation as Nainital is a mountainous region having very sensitive and fragile environment that needs to be taken care. RT can be an effective and efficient tool for a sustainable future of the destination. Awareness among all the players in totality should not be the sole responsibility of the government but at the greater side the host community should take the lead in doing so as they would be the major loser in this particular perspective.

The results of the study is on a negative note and this is the time for awakening of each and every players of tourism may it be government, tourists, host or the industry stakeholders that a positive, effective and efficient practical steps should be improvised and implementation should be done to make this destination sustainable and an example for other such mountainous destination to awaken at the right time.

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