Chapter 13

From Earning Profits to Sustainability:
A Critical Evaluation of CSR Initiatives in Tourism Sector

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ABSTRACT

In India the potential of tourism sector is considerable in terms of earning foreign exchange. That is why the government has initiated many programmes and schemes to attract foreign tourists. It has also given a rise to the allied industries to earn profits and diversify may it be hotel industry or aviation sector. As the means of communication are developing and the countries are becoming more open and globalised the tourism industry has got new impetus and dimensions. The spread of education and the development of internet have widened the scope of this industry. This new trend has made the tourism industry a very potential industry in many terms for a developing nation like India. But on the same hand it has posed a great threat to the natural resources also and the stakeholders involved in this sector has started responding to such initiatives through CSR measures. For measuring such initiatives no specific parameters have been defined and they are subjective to a great extent. Therefore a need arises to analyse such initiatives and their growing need for creating sustainability.

INTRODUCTION

Tourism sector worldwide contributes for around 6-7 per cent of global employment (direct and indirect) and 5 percent of global income as per the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), Tourism Highlights 2012 edition. It is one of the major generators of employment across the world and women account for 70 per cent of the workforce in the travel and tourism industry. Hence it generates more inclusive growth than other sectors. World wide it is discussed and is an issue of concern that whatever we do we should analyse its impact on its stakeholders. The stakeholders may be any, govern-

ment, public, shareholders or even our own mother nature. India considers tourism to be a "Industry of Potential". Whatever is invested in this industry gets good return but on the same hand whatever we invest in this industry costs our environment, depletes our natural resources, may pose threat to the heritage sites, endanger flora and fauna, may be harmful to various species of animals etc if such investments are not well thought of and well considered.

In India we have plenty of cultural attractions and healthy climatic conditions for various types of tourists throughout the year. It is perhaps only country where tourists can get every type of climate to enjoy. Therefore the potential of this sector of earning profits is reasonably quite high.

Economic growth and development has always been a precedence in developing nations which is indispensable for the continued existence. Development and growth should be in such a way that it is not only plateful for the present purpose but also creates payback and opportunities for the future generations.

For the conversion of development into sustainable development it is necessary to pay attention on the issues of sustainable development. Sustainability and Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) are interconnected to each other in such a way that it is difficult to achieve sustainability without CSR which is true for tourism sector too. Sustainability can not be achieved if we do not keep in mind our actions which have direct or indirect effect on the resources to be used and left for future generations. Human has always been selfish in using the natural resources as well as using the man made things in such a fashion that the effect of the products on society at large is always neglected. But now a change is coming over and sustainability issue is gaining momentum. Sustainable development has been defined as a tactic of fulfilling the needs of present without compromising the ability as well as the capacity of future generations to meet their own needs in many aspects. Social, economical and environment issues are of major concern for the achievement of sustainable development as all these factors have direct bearing and a direct linkage with one another. Development is concept of bringing change within the lives of people by fulfilling their basic needs and in India Tourism sector is giving plenty of opportunities to the masses for earning their livelihoods. For being sustainable it is necessary that country should develop economically and socially as well. With the objective of tackling the problems like poverty, unemployment, health issues, overall human welfare sustainable development is incomplete without including the environment issues. Corporate Social Responsibility involves the same issues which are included in the Sustainable Development. UN has made efforts and introduced three pillars for the achievement of Sustainability Development:

1. Social Sustainability.
2. Economic Sustainability.
3. Environment Sustainability.

UN report of the World Commission on Environment mentions that for achievement Sustainable Development the societies should conform the individual requisitions and at the same time must provide equal opportunities for all, which is quite a larger and wider concept to be viewed critically.

Objectives

1. This chapter tries to investigate how CSR in tourism activities can lead to attain the objective of sustainable tourism.

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