

Chapter 15

Responsible Practices of Stakeholders for Sustained Tourism Destination Development

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ABSTRACT

Sustainability as a phrase is used differently in a number of frameworks and perspectives and is associated in a different manner by various people. The sensitivity of the sustainability paradigm is appraised due to the industry's juxtaposition to natural assets and closer association with the socio-cultural makeup at an attraction/destination. In the past studies, there is very little consideration given to understanding the stakeholder responsibilities taking into consideration all the stakeholders at an attraction/destination. However, a number of multi-stakeholder studies have supported the fact that there should be unidirectional planning of sustainable practices at an attraction/destination by all the stakeholder groups involved.

PREFACE

It is seen in the recent years that the sustainable tourism is comprehended in policy documents, strategic plans and the literature related to tourism (Bramwell & Lane, 1993; Muller, 1994; Hunter, 1997). In an actual scenario and from community viewpoint, the industry is assessed as the one that is responsible for creating job opportunities and in a way, increasing earning levels in the society (Hatipoglu, Alvarez & Ertuna; 2016). In addition, the industry's closer association with nature and a deeper socio cultural involvement of all the stakeholders adds a greater responsibility in its assessment. The excessive dependency of the tourism industry on natural resources makes it imperative to consider the tourist destination on a sustainable obverse. In addition, this closer association of tourism industry with the society brings in the need for considering balancing of the impacts and responsibilities of the tourism related activities. This chapter objectivises firstly to propose responsible tourism as not any form of tourism but a set of

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guidelines that are necessarily to be followed by all the forms of tourism including that of mass tourism, for a sustained tourism effort at a destination. Secondly, the study objectives are to empirically connect the concept of responsibility and sustainability in tourism scenario with the background approach that it is impossible to achieve sustainability without all the participating stakeholders readily take responsibility of the impacts of their actions.

INTRODUCTION

The term sustainability and a concept of sustainable tourism (ST) has a different outlook when considered in various contexts and scenarios. In tourism scenario with extensive body of literature in the area, its successful implementation is an emerging and important theme. A number of studies have raised minute aspects compounding tourism sustainability individually. However, studies have more or less stressed the need to consider looking at the problems associated with its implementation that are common to all. The Sustainable Tourism (ST) implementation is based on a condition of tourism based on the principles of sustainable development, taking “full account of its current and future economic, social and environmental impacts” (UNEP/WTO 2005: 11-12 as quoted in Waligo, Clarke, & Hawkins, 2013) and addressing the needs of all those involved. The three constituents of sustainability i.e. economic, environmental and social push forward the need for a responsible behaviour and is critical to implementation of sustainable tourism. Due to differences in the destination structures and the management in particular, the application of sustainability varies considerably.

It is imperative to consider destination managers and developers while planning sustainability implementation. Literature supports the important role played by stakeholders in destination development decisions (e.g. Dodds, 2007; Getz & Timur, 2005; Ryan, 2002). However, the multiplicity and heterogeneity of stakeholders at a tourist destination makes the process complicated. Different stakeholders at a destination together form an interdependent network (Cooper, Scott & Baggio, 2009; d’Angella & Go, 2009). Considering heterogeneity of the stakeholders’ roles in the implementation of sustainability, it becomes imperative to individually assess the scenario in which the sustainability principles are applied at individual destinations. All the planners and managers of a destination seek to collaborate for smooth functioning of a destination and represent a widely accepted approach to solving the problems associated with a lack of understanding and few shared common goals between the many stakeholders often involved in tourism development (Fyall & Garrod, 2005; Jamal & Getz, 1995; Ladkin & Bertramini, 2002). Inefficient and ineffective participation of destination planners and managers is considered as a major barrier to tourism sustainability. There is very little clarity as to how this problem can be resolved.

Thus, constant tourism planning should be combined with planning for social and economic development into an all-inclusive interactive system (Gunn, 1988). This interactive system should be designed in a way that can aid in stakeholder involvement at a destination in the implantation of sustainable tourism practices. In the following sections, we discuss the role of stakeholders in the implementation of sustainability of an attraction.

Importance of Tourism Industry

Tourism industry is recognised globally as a major industry for wealth distribution and driving local growth and development. As an industry, it is therefore officially distinguished as an agent of economic

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