

A Study on the Awareness and Openness of Tourists towards Sustainable Tourism Practices in Chennai City

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Abstract:

Tourism has emerged as one of the important emerging sector in the current century. The contributions of the sector to the world and to the Indian economy make it as one of the most important sectors. The tourism sector contributed to 10.7% of the world's GDP. It employs around 260 million people around the world (Cernat & Gourdon, 2007). The tourism industry contributed to 7% of the GDP in India. Roughly around 9% of the Indian population is employed in this sector (Bhavani, 2016).

Keywords: Sustainable tourism, tourism practices.

I. INTRODUCTION

Tourism has emerged as one of the important emerging sector in the current century. The contributions of the sector to the world and to the Indian economy make it as one of the most important sectors. The tourism sector contributed to 10.7% of the world's GDP. It employs around 260 million people around the world (Cernat & Gourdon, 2007). The tourism industry contributed to 7% of the GDP in India. Roughly around 9% of the Indian population is employed in this sector (Bhavani, 2016).

II. REASONS FOR THE GROWTH OF THE TOURISM SECTOR:

The tourism sector is showing a significant growth owing to the changes in the environment.

1. Travel facilities:

People are ready to travel to any destination thanks to the developments in the transportation industry. The airline industry had made the travel less time consuming and more comfortable for the passengers. Reduction in the tariffs in the aviation industry has

also fuelled the growth of the tourism sector (Heymann & Stechert, 2018).

2. Improved disposable income of the people

The dual working families have resulted in the high disposable income for the families. People are interested in spending time in leisure activities which had resulted in the demand for the tourism products.

3. Changing mind sets of the people

The attitude of the millennial towards savings and spending had changed. The millennial want to earn, spend and enjoy (Anumeha, 2018). As compared to their previous generation who are very particular about the safety and security and creating assets for their younger generation, the current generation is more interested in spending and enjoying. They also are interested in exposing their kids to various new destinations and culture which improve their view of life.

4. Meeting the social media expectations

The increased use of social media like Facebook, Instagram and Twitter are also a reason for the

growth of the tourism sector. People see their peers and friends explore foreign destinations and they also would like to follow the path which has also led to the growth of the tourism sector.

III. CHALLENGES OF THE TOURISM SECTOR IN INDIA

As the industry grows in size, it is natural that it faces a lot of challenges as well. Tourism industry is found to result in lot of economic, social and environmental problems partly due to the misuse of resources and partly due to the lack of awareness. The following are the major challenges faced by the tourism industry.

1. *Conserving the biodiversity*

The need for food and accommodation for the travellers in the tourist destination leads to the destruction of the farmlands, forest and other natural structures like pond, lake etc (Wang & Lalrinawma, 2016). This leads to the loss of habitat for the animals and birds in the destinations. This leads to the loss of biodiversity in that area. Hence, the major challenge faced by the tourism industry is to protect this biodiversity in the destination

2. *Protecting the local culture*

Similarly the inflow of tourist to the destination leads to the influx of new culture in the destination. The existing community people and their local culture get affected due to this. Preserving this culture is a challenge for the industry.

3. *Reducing the waste in the destinations*

The tourist destinations face the challenges on the areas of waste disposal and management, increased use of natural resources like water, fuel etc. The use of plastics and other disposable items like paper cups, bags, spoons and paper plates add to the existing waste in the destination. The existing waste management system is unable to handle such a large volume of wastes in the destinations.

IV. SUSTAINABLE TOURISM:

As the industry evolves there is a need to consolidate, find solutions to the challenges faced by

the industry, evolve a method to grow without disturbing the natural eco system etc. Here is where the sustainable tourism practices have been identified as a solution to the problems of the industry. The major objective of sustainable tourism is to preserve the natural environment and the existing biodiversity of the particular destination. It also aims at reduction of the waste at the destination and the preservation of the culture of the local community people.

V. LITERATURE REVIEW

There is a research undertaken on the opinion of millennial about the sustainable tourism practices by the Cox and Kings (Anumeha, 2018). The survey is conducted among 5000 millennial aged 25-30 from major cities in India. Findings revealed that 87% of them strongly agreed on preserving the nature. Around 89% of them researched about sustainable practices before undertaking tours.

Another research by Mamhoori A on "Sustainable Tourism Development: An Empirical Survey of Tour Operators in India" tried to find out the role of tour operators in the development of sustainable tourism practices (Mamhoori & Nasim, 2015). The data is collected from 180 tour operators. The results of the study revealed that the environmental and economic factors are the predictors of sustainable tourism practices. Socio cultural factors don't show much impact on sustainable tourism practices.

VI. RESEARCH GAP

The review of various literatures on the areas of sustainable tourism showed that there is very less research on the areas of openness of tourist to sustainable tourism practices in India. Hence, the researcher has identified this gap and defined her research problem in this area to undertake the study.

VII. RESEARCH PROBLEM

Till recently it is considered that tourism is an activity that is undertaken for the recreational and enjoyment purposes rather than for productive and useful purpose. This has resulted in lots of damages

to the ecosystem. Hence, we are in need of creating an alternative to this. There are various sustainable tourism practices that are adopted by the players in the tourism industry. However, the awareness of these practices are less among the tourists and the success of these practices are effective only when all the players in the industry like local community people, government, tourism operators, service providers and the tourists take part in the sustainable tourism practices. Hence, this has been identified by the researcher as the problem of the study and the researcher had taken efforts to learn how far the present day tourists are open to the sustainable tourism practices over their personal gains. The sustainable tourism practices can gain acceptance as long as people are aware that there is a solution to these problems.

VIII. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The following objectives have been set for the study

- To identify how far the tourists are aware of the sustainable tourism practices
- To test how far they are open to the sustainable tourism practices
- To identify the relationship between awareness and the engagement in sustainable tourism practices
- To find out the relationship between frequency of tours undertaken and the awareness levels and engagement in sustainable tourism practices

The study aims at defining what the sustainable practices are. It categorises the sustainable practices into three categories namely conservation of the ecology, preservation of the local art forms and the development of the economic conditions of the local community people and control of pollution. The study by the collection of data through primary sources tries to judge the awareness of the people about sustainable practices and intends to evaluate their openness to these practices.

IX. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The type of research undertaken by the researcher is a descriptive study as it describes about the state of affairs in the Indian tourism industry. The people who undertook tours at least once in a year were the population for our study. Since the exact population size is unknown, non-probability sampling was undertaken. As the identification of the exact target audience was difficult, the convenience sampling technique was adopted. A sample size of 100 was chosen for the study. A structured, close ended questionnaire was developed for the collection of the data from the respondent. The data had been collected through online mediums like email and Google forms. The Cronbach's alpha reliability statistics for overall sustainable tourism practices found out to be 0.936 for the variables. Inter consistency between the variables are also performed. The results show that excellent inter-consistency among the study variables. The results were presented below.

Table 1. Reliability test

Study variables	Alpha co-efficient
Awareness about sustainable tourism practices	0.731
Conserving bio diversity	0.901
Protecting local culture	0.812
Reducing wastes	0.868
Overall reliability	0.936

Source: Primary Data

Descriptive statistics is used to analyse the demographic variables. Correlation and One-way ANOVA were also performed to test hypotheses.

X. FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

The findings of the research are presented in the following section.

A. Descriptive statistics

Table No.1. Demographic Profile of the Respondents

Demographic Characteristics	Frequency (%)
Gender	
Male	31(31.0)
Female	69(69.0)
Educational qualification	
12th std	24(24.0)
Ph.D/M.phil	8(8.0)
Post graduation	27(27.0)
Undergraduation	41(41.0)
Occupation	
Employed	21(21.0)
Housewives/retired	3(3.0)
Others	10(10.0)
Student	66(66.0)
Income level(per month)	
Below 30000	41(41.0)
30001 – 60000	16(16.0)
60001-90000	38(38.0)
Above 90000	5(5.0)
Age	
17-28 years	71(71.0)
29-38 years	17(17.0)
39-48 years	12(12.0)

Source: Primary Data

The above table shows the demographic profile of the respondents participated in this study regarding their gender, age group, education, occupation and income level. Among 100 respondents, majority of the respondents (69%) are females and majority of the respondents (41%) were undergraduates. Most of the respondents (66%) were from the student community. Majority of the respondents participated in this study (71%) belonged to the age group of 17-28 years.

Table no.2. Frequency of touring activity in a year

Variables	Frequency	Percentage
1 time	39	39.0
2 times	18	18.0
3 times	22	22.0
more than 4 times	21	21.0
Total	100	100.0

Source: Primary Data

39% of the respondents have undertaken tour 1 time in the last year. 22% of them have undertaken three times in the last year.

Table no.3. Awareness level of the tourists regarding sustainable tourism practices

Awareness on sustainable tourism practices	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
I prefer not to stress myself with problems at tourist destination while undertaking a tour	36	26	24	6	8
I am aware that my touring activity has certain impact on the destination, people, ecology and the culture of the people	14	44	27	13	2
I am new to the concepts like plogging, homestays etc	5	58	15	16	6
It is important for the tourist to be a part in the upkeep of tourist destination	33	37	23	2	5

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I have heard of schemes that lead to the uplifting of the local people at tourist destinations	11	42	35	9	3

Source: Primary Data

From the table, it can be inferred that most of the people are not worried about the problems at the destination. Most of them (58%) are new to sustainable practices like logging, homestay etc. To a certain extent they are aware that their activities have impact on the destination (44%) and they are moderately aware of the schemes that are useful for the uplifting of the local people and culture (42%). The only aspect in which high level of awareness is seen on the up keeping of the tourist destination is the responsibility of the tourists (70%).

Table no. 4. Expectation out of tour

Variables	Frequency	percentage
Fun with friends and family	8	8.0
Learning about the cultural aspects of the destination	15	15.0
Protection of nature	8	8.0
Recreation	10	10.0
Relaxation	59	59.0
Total	100	100.0

Source: Primary Data

When asked about what do they expect in a tour, most of the people said that they undertake tours for relaxation purposes (59%). Around 15% of them are interested in learning about the culture at the destination. Another 10% visit the tourist places for

recreational purposes. A meagre 8% of them undertake tours for protecting and preserving nature.

A. B. One way Analysis of Variance

Null hypothesis (H_0): There is no significant difference between the number of tours undertaken by the respondents towards awareness on sustainable tourism practices, conserving bio diversity, protecting local culture and reducing wastes in the tourist places.

Alternate hypothesis (H_a): There is a significant difference between the number of tours undertaken by the respondents towards awareness on sustainable tourism practices, conserving bio diversity, protecting local culture and reducing wastes in the tourist places.

Table no. 5. ANOVA

		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Awareness on Sustainable Practices	Between Groups	.279	3	.093	.175	.913
	Within Groups	51.153	96	.533		
	Total	51.432	99			
Conserving biodiversity	Between Groups	2.458	3	.819	1.120	.345
	Within Groups	70.228	96	.732		
	Total	72.686	99			
Protecting culture	Between Groups	1.413	3	.471	.968	.411
	Within Groups	46.713	96	.487		
	Total	48.126	99			
Reducing wastes	Between Groups	6.002	3	2.001	4.538	.005*
	Within Groups	42.324	96	.441		
	Total	48.326	99			

*significant at 5% level

Source: Primary Data

It is clear from the above table that, the p values are higher than the significant level (0.05) except the variable reducing wastes in tourist places. This shows that the null hypothesis is accepted for the three factors awareness on sustainable tourism

practices, conserving bio diversity and protecting local culture except for the factor reducing wastes. Hence, it may be concluded that there is no significant difference between the numbers of tours undertaken by the respondents towards awareness on sustainable tourism practices, conserving bio diversity, protecting local culture except the factor reducing wastes in the tourist places.

B. C. Correlation analysis

Null hypothesis (H_0): There is no significant relationship between the awareness on sustainable tourism practices and conserving bio diversity, protecting local culture and reducing wastes in the tourist places.

Alternate hypothesis (H_a): There is a significant relationship between the awareness on sustainable tourism practices and conserving bio diversity, protecting local culture and reducing wastes in the tourist places.

Table no.6 Correlations

	Awareness about Sustainable Practices	Conserving Biodiversity	Protecting Local Culture	Reducing Wastes
Awareness on Sustainable Practices	1	.754**	.500**	.691**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000
	N	100	100	100
Conserving Biodiversity		1	.648**	.839**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000
	N	100	100	100
Protecting Local Culture			1	.540**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000
	N	100	100	100
Reducing Wastes				1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000
	N	100	100	100

Reducing Wastes	Pearson Correlation	.691**	.839**	.540**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	
	N	100	100	100	100

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Source: Primary Data

It can be inferred from the above table that, the p values shows significant at 1% level for all the variables. The resulting correlation co-efficient is 0.754 & 0.691 shows that there exists a high degree of positive correlation between awareness on sustainable practices towards bio-diversity and protecting local culture and also the result 0.500 shows that there exists a moderate degree of positive correlation with the variable reducing wastes in tourist places. It is evident from the results that there exists a high degree of positive correlation between the variable conserving bio diversity towards protecting local culture (0.648) and reducing wastes (0.839). Hence, it may be concluded that the null hypothesis framed for this analysis is rejected and it is proved that there is a significant relationship between the awareness on sustainable tourism practices, conserving bio diversity, protecting local culture and reducing wastes in the tourist places. The result highlights the importance of creating awareness on sustainable practices to general public.

XI. IMPLICATIONS OF THE STUDY AND CONCLUSION

The results on the awareness of the tourists regarding sustainable tourism practices reveal that the tourists are aware of the pollution levels at the destination. However, their awareness levels with reference to sustainable tourism practices are very less. Further, it can also be understood that the openness of the tourist for the sustainable practices are very less. Only 8% of them are interested in the protection of the nature. And only a 15% of them are interested in learning about the local culture of the destination. 59% of them are undertaking tours for recreational purpose only. The correlation results reveal that the creation of awareness among the

tourist will result in the engagement of people on sustainable practices like conservation of biodiversity, protection of local culture and reduction of waste and pollution at the destination. The ANOVA results reveal that the number of tours undertaken have no significant difference on the awareness of sustainable tourism factors, conservation of biodiversity or preservation of the local culture. However, the number of tours undertaken has significant difference on the reduction of the pollution levels at the destination. This could be due to the reason that when the people undertake more number of tours they see the levels of pollution at destination which creates awareness and results in the engagement in activities related to its reduction. Similarly, if awareness on the other sustainable practices like conservation of biodiversity and preservation of local culture is created, people may engage in those sustainable practices as well.

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