



Sustainable Tourism Development and Hotel Industry in Manali: An Exploratory study

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ABSTRACT

Sustainable tourism development has attracted the attention of both tourism theorists and practitioners. In fact, tourism developmental issues and challenges have become a pivotal aspect of all strategic policy implementation of all tourism stakeholders. Hoteliers play a central role in the tourism development especially sustainable industry. It is feared that present pace of unprecedented growth of hospitality industry has been by and large unfriendly to environment. Therefore, it is likely to cause physical and biological stability of the future generation. The wave of sustainable development arises to safeguard the present pace of development and future generation. It motives to conserve the resources and increase the value of local culture and tradition. Sustainable tourism is a responsible tourism intending to generate employment and income along with alleviating any deeper impact on environment and local culture. The main objective of this research paper is to examine the contribution of hoteliers in promotion of sustainable tourism in Manali. Thus, the findings reveal that hotel sector has scope to prepare, develop and market sustainable products and services that promote environmental awareness among the visitors.

KEYWORDS : Sustainable tourism, Commoditization, culture, environment, sustainable development

Introduction

During last two decades, tourism has become the largest industry worldwide in terms of employment and share of global gross domestic product. The tourism industry has been growing rapidly as well as changing at a fast pace. According to Pearce, Markandya and Barbier (1991), the concept of sustainability requires that the conditions necessary for equal access to the resource base be met for each generation. McIntyre (1993) opined that most successful tourist destinations depends upon clean physical surroundings, protected environment and often the distinctive cultural patterns of local communities. He further states that the destinations that do not offer these attributes are suffering a decline in quality and tourist use. Thus, the concept of sustainability is now widely recognized as a societal goal potentially consistent with conservation and protection natural environment. Thus the Hotel is an essential and dynamic component of the travel and tourism industry. The Hotel industry cover a wide range of tourism service accommodation, transport, money exchange, airline ticketing, this establishment may be owned and /or managed by independent operators, multinational chains, insurance company, pension fund, government and other investors. Thus, the hotel sector (i.e. hotels and restaurants) is an essential and dynamic component of the travel and tourism industry. The hotel industry covers a wide range of accommodation services from full-service luxury hotels to bed and breakfast operations, inns, all-suite hotels, and limited service and economy properties. These establishments may be owned and/or managed by independent operators, multinational chains, insurance companies, pension funds, governments and other investors. An industry of such magnitude inevitably has far-reaching impacts of a social, economic and environmental nature, as was confirmed by the second IH&RA White Paper (2000). This found that sustainable development and environmental issues had become key forces driving change in the hotel industry and an important yardstick against which the industry's development will be measured in the near future. Recently the State Government has aiming at promoting sustainable tourism, encouraging private sector to develop tourism related infrastructure in the State without disturbing the existing ecology and environment. In fact, addressing the challenges of tourism development in the Manali region, it require a strong co-operation among all parties, including those operating within and outside area boundaries, as well as those that can promote effective management of protected areas by ensuring that the appropriate planning and management tools are adopted.

Although, the goals of Hotelier's can be quite varied, tourism activities can only be sustainable if implemented with a common understanding and consensus-based approach to development. As intermediaries between tourists and tourism service suppliers' Hoteliers can influence the choices of consumers, the practices of suppliers and the development patterns of destinations. Thus, the aim of the present study is to focuses on the attitudes and awareness of the hotelier's

on the role of travelers achieving sustainable tourism in Manali. Interest in this area arose as the author himself visited and has observed the unplanned growth of travel and tourism sector. Moreover, this hill station has marvelous tourist appeal to attract both the tourists international and domestic. These issues have motivated the author to conduct an applied research on the topic "Sustainable Tourism Development and hotel industry in Manali: An Exploratory study".

Review of literature and Hypothesis Development

Shalinisingh (2008) presented herein testifies to the fact that planning and development agencies rationalize the violation of thresholds on the basis of tourism growth. The article commences with the argument that the discernment of the purpose and limits of destination development are crucial for its sustainability. Consequently, it is recommended that interest groups focus their attention on the long-term viability of the core product, primarily, to avoid unacceptable product innovation. An interesting study, reported by Cole (1999), statistically reveals the burden and continuing damage to Manali's landscape. Given the physical expanse of Manali (300 ha in 1995), the ecological footprint (EF) of Manali's residents was over nine times the actual area of Manali. Thus, by 1995, the EF had grown to be almost 25 times greater than the total land area of Manali. Zurburget *al.* (1995) found that there was an increase in consumer awareness of environmental issues and those hotel managers were facing increased societal pressure to take action on environmental issues. "In uncertain will have a greater degree of freedom and better possibilities for adaptation to change environment condition. Bhattacharya (1998) studied Darjeeling Himalayas in details and stressed on proper environment analysis and stated that the resources management calls for planning committees, administrative action and preservation. He presented a long list of do's and don'ts to the tourist resources of Darjeeling Himalayas. He advocated Government of the state should check the degradation of natural resources by implementing the proper environmental policies. Sharma (2006) identified a range of strategic determinants essential for the successful development of mountain tourism in India. He recommended some crucial aspects for the development of sustainable mountain tourism in the country such as ecosystem fragility, political and economic marginality and cultural diversity. It is, therefore, no longer optional but a matter of survival for hotels to consider their involvement in environmental issues. It is desirable that the tourism industry, including the hotel sector, adopt environmental practices aimed at promoting the sustainability of tourism (Collier, 1996). WTO (2004) stated that a lack of awareness among stakeholders can hamper sustainable tourism development outcomes and that is why it is so important to know the vision of the stakeholders for tourism development. Similarly, Ap and Pang (2002) pointed out that stakeholders' perceptions of sustainable tourism are important, because they can "lead to misrepresentation and abuse of the concept and further depletion of the environment especially with

mass tourism". Thus, it has become imperative to examine the role of hotels in Manali's tourism industry. To date, limited research has been undertaken to determine how hotels contribute to the sustainability of tourism in India. This paper focuses on the attitudes and awareness of the hoteliers on the role of hotels achieving sustainable tourism in Dalhousie. Interest in this area arose as the author himself visited and has observed the unplanned growth of hotel sector. Moreover, this small hill station has marvelous touristic appeal to attract both the tourists- international and domestic. These issues have motivated the author to conduct an applied research on the topic "Sustainable Tourism Development and hotel industry in Manali: An Exploratory study".

Objectives of the Study:

- To examine the role of Hotelier's in promotion of sustainable tourism in Manali region.
- To suggest the measure that can be adopted to promote strategies for promotion of sustainable tourism development in the study region.

Research Methodology

There were 650 Hotel in the study area however, for the present study only those tour operators selected which were registered by the Ministry of Tourism, Govt. of Himachal Pradesh. Thus, only registered tour operator 471 respectively were the total population for the study. Data were collected 300 hotel organizations located in Manali region. They represented a mix of industry, size, operation, and technology. Sample consisted of owner's managers who volunteered to participate in the study. For the development of questionnaire and data collection, the list of sustainable tourism development items was derived from past studies. A structured questionnaire consisting of 30 questions was personally collected from the sample travel agency located

in Manali region during June 2007. However, after deep scrutinizing only 120 questionnaires were found complete in all respects.

On the basis of the existing literature, two scales were used to measure the variables considered in this study. Likert -type scaled statements concerning specific environmental issues were used to indicate which attribute was considered more significant for environmental issues in the tour operator industry. Mean and SD were used to identify the agreement of respondents on the underlying sustainable development statements. The higher the absolute value of the mean, the greater was the intensity of the response.

Results and discussion

The analysis of table-1 reveals the attitudes of the tour operator about the environment issues in the Manali in Himachal Pradesh. the survey showed that the respondent encouraging others to support sustainable efforts (7, 0.65), 65.21% respondents Agreed and 26.08% strongly agreed and 8.69% neutral to this statement. Followed by hotelier's have work towards sustainable tourism as a guiding principles sound management of concern(7.06, 0.766). The respondents are committed to complying with local, national and international laws and regulations applicable to their business activities (6.6, 0.5) and endeavoured to prevent or minimize the negative impacts of tourism in the long-term interest of host community (7.2, 0.559). 78% of hotelier's encourage partners, suppliers and sub-contractors to improve their contribution to sustainable development and management of tourism, and work with them and share information to assist in this context and respondents have created the awareness and active involvement among their customers towards the natural, social and cultural environment of the places they visit (6.8, 0.584). Only 56.52% respondents thought committed to adopt conserving plants, animals, ecosystems and protected areas (biodiversity) (6.5, 1.07).

Table -1
Analysis of Sustainable Tourism Development variable
N=120

Sr. No.	Sustainable Tourism development Variable	Mean	S.D.
1	We regard Sustainable Tourism as a guiding concept for the sound management.	7.06	0.766
2	We define Sustainable Development as development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.	7.2	0.546
3	We are committed to developing, operating and marketing tourism in a sustainable manner.	6.86	0.500
4	We focus on all forms of tourism, which make a positive contribution to the natural and cultural environment, which generate benefits for the host communities;	6.53	0.673
5	We believe that we can be important contributors to Sustainable Tourism Development in the region	6.6	0.642
6	We will strive to anticipate and prevent economic, environmental, social and cultural degradation.	6.46	0.777
7	We will work towards integrating these considerations into our operations and activities.	6.33	0.899
8	We are entering into a partnership with the state govt. and other organizations especially for Environment Programmes to improve our performance in order to achieve sustainable development and management of tourism.	6.33	0.850
9	We recognize that tourism can contribute to the viability of local economies.	6.93	0.582
10	We recognize that tourism can have negative impacts on the economy, environment, nature, social structures and local cultures.	5.8	1.443
11	In the long-term interest of host communities and of our industry, we will endeavor to prevent or minimize these impacts.	7.2	0.559
12	We are committed to complying with local, national and international laws and regulations applicable to our business activities.	6.6	0.994
13	We oppose and actively discourage illegal, abusive or exploitative forms of tourism.	6.46	0.721
14	We are committed to a continual attempt to improve our performance in the context of sustainable development and management of tourism.	6.66	0.569
15	We will manage and monitor the environmental, cultural and social impacts of our activities.	6.26	1.25
16	We will strive to pursue the best practices in all our activities - internally and when forming business relationships with partners, suppliers and sub-contractors	6.4	0.765
17	We are committed to adopt responsible use of natural resources (e.g. land, soil, energy, water).	6.2	0.806
18	We are committed to adopt reducing, minimizing and preventing pollution and waste (e.g. solid and liquid waste, emissions to air)	6.6	0.911
19	we are committed to adopt conserving plants, animals, ecosystems and protected areas (biodiversity)	6.53	1.07
20	we are committed to adopt conserving landscapes, cultural and natural heritage respecting the integrity of local cultures and avoiding negative effects on social structures.	7	0.505
21	We are committed to adopt involving, and co-operating with, local communities and people.	6.73	0.640
22	We are committed to adopt using local products and skills.	6.2	0.906
23	We will encourage our partners, suppliers and sub-contractors to improve their contribution to sustainable development and management of tourism, and will work with them and share information to assist in this.	7.33	0.421
24	We will seek greater co-operation within the tourism industry and between this industry and the public sector in order to further Sustainable Tourism.	6.6	0.64

25	We shall encourage and seek to co-operate with national and local authorities, local communities, or any other interested party, to develop and implement the integrated planning and management of destinations in order to preserve the quality and sustainability of these destinations.	6.2	.55
26	We will develop these principles into a corporate policy. As part of this we will define measurable goals, and will monitor and report publicly on our progress.	6.73	0.64
27	We wish to create awareness and active involvement among our customers towards the natural, social and cultural environment of the places they visit.	6.8	0.584
28	We wish to encourage host communities and our customers to develop a better understanding and mutual respect for one another.	6.73	0.768
29	We will endeavor in our public communication and advertising to promote behavior and activities compatible with the principles of sustainable development and management of tourism.	7.06	0.585
30	We will encourage other hotelier's organizations to support sustainable efforts.	7	0.655

Based on Likert scale: 1= Agreed, 2= strongly agreed, 3= Neutral, 4= Disagreed, 5= strongly Disagreed

The national and local bodies/authorities play important role in the development and promotion of sustainable tourism therefore, this question was asked from the hotelier's. It has observed the hotelier's encourage and seek to cooperate with national and local authorities, local communities, or any other interested party, to develop and implement the integrated planning and management of destinations in order to preserve the quality and sustainability of these destinations. However it has found that 17.39% of respondents Agreed, 69.56% strongly agreed and 13.04% are neutral. The mean & S.D. were (6.2, 0.5) show that the travel and tour operator are very much committed to developing sustainable tourism in the Manali region. 73.91% respondents understand that Sustainable Development as development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs and hotelier's committed to adopt responsible use of natural resources (e.g. land, soil, energy, water) (6.2, 0.8). This statement shows the lower mean, which indicates the less intensity of the respondents. Moreover, it indicates the intention and involvement of hotelier's in the social awareness program. Low valued mean (5.8) mean show that hotelier's are not more inclined to variable respondent were assured that tourism can have negative impacts on the economy, environment, nature, social structures and local cultures. The calculated value of mean & S.D. indicate that (6.73, 0.768) encouragement host community and tourist to develop better understanding Further indicates that 52.17% respondents Agreed and 39.13% strongly agreed and 4.3% neutral toward encouragement host community and tourist to develop better understanding.

The result suggests that respondents develop strategies that encourage sustainability and protection of the environment, provide an opportunity for the hotel sector to attract more tourists, displaying sensitivity to the environment in their daily operations which will increase occupancy as well as enhance attractiveness to tourists and awareness of the environmental issues may enable respondents to develop sustainable practices. Hence, hotels that adopt these strategies should be in a stronger position to enhance their competitiveness as ecotourism destinations.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Every possible effort has been made by the researcher to complete the present research work in all its aspects. But, because of a number of uncontrollable factors the research has its limitations. The research study covers the various aspects of hotelier's and their role in sustainable tourism development. The data have been collected from various available sources even then; in some of the cases complete information was not available. The present research study has been restricted to travel agencies working in the Manali Region only. Therefore, the observations made on the basis of the present study cannot be generalized to all hotels working in the industry.

The research reveals that Manali hoteliers can further develop its attractiveness to both international and domestic tourists. Most of the results that relate to the environmental questions reveal mixed perceptions of the hotel sector as a whole. Results indicate that there was strong support for the adoption of an environmental code of conduct. This is one avenue for hotels to promote sustainable practices. This is a crucial point, particularly for hotels located in Manali region. The hotel sector can use this indicator to prepare, develop, reprise and market sustainable products and services that promote environmental awareness as well as educating the guests. This shows that hotel and the environment are interrelated and interdependent in complex ways, and together they could provide a sustainable economic base for development of tourism in the region. In light of these observations, tourism and hotel policy-makers, managers and planners must address the issues of environmental management of hotel development in a sustainable manner. In nutshell, the findings suggested the need for the hotel sector to respond to the environment through implementing sustainable management practices.

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