



Tourist Awareness About How to Travel Sustainably and Responsibly

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ABSTRACT

Responsible tourism is a term which can be used to describe many different kinds of tourism, such as sustainable tourism, green tourism, ecotourism, alternative tourism etc. Sustainability in tourism is buzz word now-a-days. Sustainability is achieved by combined efforts of all stakeholder of tourism such as industry, government, local community, tourist and Non-government Organizations (NGO's). Tourist is one among the major stakeholder of tourism. The responsible behavior of tourist towards the social, economical and environmental sustainability will lead to sustainable tourism. The present paper evaluates the awareness of tourists about the sustainable and responsible travel practices. The attempt is also made to enlist good practices carried out by the tourist visiting a destination. The present study is empirical study. The survey method was employed for collecting data. The analysis of data reveals that there is a lot of scope to educate tourists regarding responsible tourist practices to be followed by them in order to make the more responsible tourist and increase their participation in contribution of attaining the goals of responsible tourism.

KEYWORDS

sustainable tourism, responsible tourism, tourist behavior, responsible tourism practices etc.

INTRODUCTION: Tourism and sustainable development has become a prominent key area of research and as an agenda of concern for different stakeholders within developed and developing countries. Tourism branches into various specialties which includes rural tourism, religious tourism, cultural tourism, adventure tourism, sun and beach tourism , medical and wellness tourism, city tourism, ethnic tourism, business and conference tourism, space tourism.... and combination thereof (Singh, 2005). Term responsible tourism encompasses three major aspects social, economical and environmental sustainability. The history of Sustainable Tourism can be traced back to the report entitled Our Common Future, published by the World Commission on Environment and Development in 1987, in which sustainable development was defined as “meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs”. The concept of responsible tourism may be traced back to 1997 when John B. Elkington(1997) gave the concept of ‘triple bottom line’, which insists on the pursuit of economic, social and environmental sustainability. The concept of responsible tourism took its final shape after the Cape Town Declaration in 2002. Responsible tourism seeks to minimize negative social, economic and environmental impacts. According to Cape Town Declaration (2002) the characteristics of Responsible Tourism includes minimized negative economic, environmental and social impacts; generating greater economic benefits for local people to enhance their living conditions; making positive contribution towards conservation of natural and cultural heritage; provides more enjoyable experiences and greater understanding of local cultural, social and environmental issues by tourists; and provides access for physically challenged people. Responsible tourism is defined as “responsible travel to natural areas that conserves the environment and improves the welfare of local people” (Crest, 2010). The current existing responsible tourism product segments include nature-based tourism, cultural tourism (with community-based tourism), volunteer tourism and educational tourism, backpackers and youth, adventure tourism and high-end tourism, all of which practice strong ethical and social responsible concepts(Chan, 2010). The number of international tourists worldwide grew from 463 million to 763 million, and according to the UNWTO, by 2020, will reach 1.56 billion. In addition, four to five times as many people travel domestically, within their own countries. The large scale travel will certainly have impact on

every aspect like environment, social and economical framework of destination visited by tourist. The study was conducted with aim to assess the level of awareness about responsible tourism practices among tourists and to determine the responsible tourism practices undertaken by tourist.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY ANALYSIS AND RESULT: The present study is empirical study. The survey method was employed for collecting data. Target population of this investigation was individuals who have visited Lucknow during the period of study. A survey tool was constructed in two parts containing a total twenty nine items. The part ‘A’ of the questionnaire contains twenty items to assess the responsible tourism practices of tourists covering three major aspects like social responsibilities, economic responsibilities and environmental responsibilities of a responsible tourist. The part ‘B’ of the questionnaire contained the demographical data as per requirement of the needs of study. The data collected from the sample through schedules and sending questionnaire to visitors. The data was gathered by talking tourists at various tourist spots, like monuments, shopping complexes and tourist accommodation.

Demographic Information: Out of two hundred twenty respondents one hundred questionnaires were received back, making response rate of 45.45%. There were eighty questionnaires were found correct and usable. The data of respondents used for statistical analysis was 36.36%. Demographic profile of respondents is summarized in table 1.1.

Table 1.1demographic profiling of respondents

VARIABLES		FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
Sex	Male	36	45
	Female	44	55
Age	Up to 25 Years	20	25
	26 Years to 40 Years	52	65
	41 years to 60 Years	8	10
Educational Qualification	No Formal Education	10	12.5
	Graduate	30	73.5
	Post Graduate and above	40	50

Occupation	Student	24	13
	Employed	35	43.8
	Un-Employed	13	16.2
	Retired	8	10
Marital Status	Un-married	20	25
	Married	60	75
Annual Income in Indian Rupees	Up to Rs 300000	25	31.2
	Rs 300001 to Rs 500000	16	20
	Rs 500001 to Rs 1000000	26	32.5
	Above Rs 1000000	13	16.3

The study revealed that 45% respondents were male and 55% respondents were female. According to age group the respondents were 25% up to 25 years, 65% were between 26 years to 40 years and 10% respondents were above 40 years of age. 12.5% of the respondents were having no formal education, 73.5% of the respondents were graduates, and 50% respondents were Post graduate and above in academic qualification. There were 13% students, 43.8% employed, and 10% were retired people. There were 25% un-married and 75% married respondents. 31.2 % respondents were having the income up to Rs. 3 Lakhs, 20% between Rs. 3to 5 Lakhs, 32.5% were having income range of Rs.5 Lakhs to Rs. 10 Lakhs and 16.3% respondents were having income above Rs.10 Lakhs per annum.

Awareness of responsible tourism practices among tourists: The analysis of data gathered from the respondents from section ‘A’ of questionnaire regarding the awareness responsible tourism practices among tourist’s reveals that, 83.8% respondents were using disposable packaging of articles for carrying to destination, 78.8% respondents were

Consuming food article packed in polythene, 72.5% respondents were dispose empty packets of eatables in dustbin, 76.3% respondents were collecting plants and shell etc. while walking in natural environment, 55% respondents were feeding animals while visiting on safari, 37.5% respondents were disturbing animals by shouting and making noise while viewing animals on safari, 36% respondents were washing their cloths using detergents in open stream, 12.5% respondents were using soap and shampoos while bathing in open streams, 78.8% respondents were frequent traveler for short vacations, and 15% respondents were stayed in eco-friendly accommodations. This clearly indicates that a great deal of awareness is required for improving eco-friendly behavior in tourists. 60% respondents had ate local food, 61% respondents consumed local beverage, 56.3% respondents purchased articles produced locally in the area of visit, 46.3% respondents purchased souvenir made by local people, 55% respondents stayed in local community run accommodations while visiting a destination, and 68% respondents taken the services of the local guide. This indicates that tourist is involved in helping the economy of the destination. 81.3%respondents had interacted with local people at destination, 81.3% respondents had ate in establishments where local people were eating, 46% respondents had acquired some basic knowledge about local customs and traditions of destination before visiting, and 76.3% respondents gave money or eatables to children at destination. This indicates that they also participate in reducing social pressure.

Responsible tourism practices demonstrated by tourists: There were a number of responsible tourism practices followed by tourist above mean level. These practices may be listed as well known and widely practiced responsible tourism behavior of tourists visiting in the area of study. These includes disposing empty packets of eatables in dustbin, not feeding animals while visiting on safari, not disturbing animals by shouting and making noise while viewing animals on safari, not washing their cloths using detergents in open stream, not using soap and shampoos while bathing in open streams, staying in eco-friendly and local community run accommodations, eating local food, consuming local beverage, purchasing articles produced locally in the area of visit, taking the services of the local guide, interacting with local people at destination, and acquired some basic knowledge about local customs and traditions of destination before visiting. This indicates that tourists have some basic inclination towards responsible tourism practices. Further analysis of data levels that on the ground of environmental responsibility only 48% respondents showed responsible behavior while 52% respondents shown less responsible behavior, 58% respondents shown responsible behavior towards economic aspect and 52.18% respondents shown responsible behavior towards social aspect and overall 51.87% respondent shown responsible tourist behavior.

CONCLUSIONS AND DISCUSSIONS: On the analysis of demographic data it was revealed that there was a mixed group of respondents from all parts of country. The study revealed that most of the respondents were un-aware about the various responsible tourism practices and also found that many good responsible tourism practices like disposing empty packets of eatables in dustbin, not feeding and not disturbing animals viewing animals on safari, not washing their cloths using detergents and not using soap and shampoos while bathing in open stream, staying in eco-friendly and local community run accommodations, consuming local food and beverages, purchasing articles produced locally by local people, taking the services of the local guide, and acquired some basic knowledge about local customs and traditions of destination before visiting at destination. The study reveals that though there is overall 52.18% respondents demonstrated responsible tourism behavior but a large chunk yet need to acquire and demonstrate acceptable responsible behavior as a responsible tourist. The lack in proper behavior may be due to non-familiarity with desired behavior and practices required to become a responsible tourist. The government, privet sector and NGO’s should take necessary steps to educate would be tourist about acceptable behavior through advertisement campaign and tour operators and travel agencies should provide checklist to their clients regarding responsible behavior expected from them to make responsible tourist.

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