

# Responsible Tourism Practices And Their Impacts

*Mr. Mahesh Randhava (Ph. D)*

*Assistant Professor, Department of Hotel Management, Tilak Maharashtra Vidyapeeth, Pune-37*

*Mr. Nilesh Upadhye*

*Assistant Professor, Department of Hotel Management, Tilak Maharashtra Vidyapeeth, Pune 37*

## Abstract:

Tourism industry has shown a tremendous growth all over the world in the recent past and will continue the trend in future as well. Many reasons for the growth in the sector like dual income families, people are willing to explore new places, various motivators and purposes of travel, development of infrastructure and transportation facilities etc. India witnessed huge development in tourism sector in the recent past and the relevant infrastructure developed accordingly. Mass Tourism is a kind of tourism that indicates gathering a huge number of tourists in a destination. Mass tourism has led to displeasure among several tourists and them nowadays in search of alternate forms of tourism. Tourists are in search of destinations that are clean, peaceful, fulfilling their purpose of travel, and at the same time maintained responsibly not only by the local community but even everyone visiting the destination. Responsible tourism focuses more on the economic, social, and environmental features of tourism at the destinations. Considerations like green technology, reducing carbon emissions, biodiversity protection, and climate change are important parts of responsible tourism. As a comprehensive and universal industry, tourism can incorporate innovative practices of green growth to promote sustainable development. Responsible Tourism Practices (RTP) has become the most popular concept and principle for modern tourism development which will lead the sector in a sustainable way. RTP have shown some positive impacts like promote farming, fish farms and lotus cultivation, community awareness program and reduce plastic waste.

**Keywords:** Tourism, Responsible Tourism Practices, Need of Responsible Tourism, Impact of Responsible Tourism

## Introduction

From ancient times human being desires to explore, discover and undertake journeys to appreciate nature even facing various difficulties came across. As an industry, tourism is identifying places of interest and making these places better by creating physical infrastructure, facilities, offering various services and comfort for the tourists visiting. Definition of an international tourist is, "A person who travels in India on a foreign passport for a minimum period of 24 hours and the maximum period of 6 months is a tourist provided he or she does neither settle nor gets employed in this country." A domestic tourist is "Anyone who undertakes travel activities in his/her own country of residence". Tourism as a modern term applies to both international and domestic tourists and is the temporary movement of a person to destinations outside his/her normal place of work and residence.

The current tourism industry is a result of a variety of events in the past that occurred all over the world, such as development in transportation from the steam engine to automobile and modern air transport system at present. There are some factors or motivators which create a desire for people to travel. These may be cultural motivators (to know and learn about other cultures), physical motivators (rest, sports activities, and health), interpersonal motivators (meet new people, visit friends or relatives), and status and prestige motivators (esteem and status symbol, travel for business, education or pursuit hobbies).

Depending on the type of motivators or purpose the types of tourism can be categorized as, leisure or holiday tourism, visiting friends and relatives, cultural tourism, adventure tourism, sports tourism, religious tourism, business tourism, meetings incentives conventions, and exhibitions (MICE). While

alternative forms of tourism include special interest tourism, eco-tourism, rural tourism, ethnic tourism, senior citizen tourism, wildlife tourism, and space tourism.

### **Tourism Development in India**

The tourism industry is one of the important sectors in India for generating employment and revenue. The tourism industry has immense capacity to generate large-scale employment of various types which ranges from the most specialized to the unskilled jobs in nature. (Year End Review-2018: Ministry of Tourism). The industry is an important source of foreign exchange earnings and economic growth for many countries and India is no exception. As a nation, India is loaded with scenic beauties, heritage, and culture which make it the preferred tourist destination for everyone in the world.

- India ranks 8th on natural resources and 24th on cultural resources.
- India has 30 world heritage sites.
- Foreign tourists who arrived in India in 2018 were 10.56 million.
- In 2000 India's rank in International tourist arrival was at 50th position and declined to 54th position in 2002. There is a steady increase in the rank after 2002 till 2018 and India ranked 22nd in the year 2018.

Tourism Statistics (Year End Review-2018: Ministry of Tourism):

Foreign Tourist Arrivals (FTAs) during the period January-November 2018 were 93, 67, 424 as compared to 88,67,963 in January-November 2017 registering a growth of 5.6% over the same period.

During January- November 2018, a total of 20,61,511 tourists arrived on e-Tourist Visa as compared to 14,56,615 during January- November 2017, registering a growth of 41.5% over the same period.

Foreign Exchange Earnings (FEEs) during the period January- October 2018 were Rs. 1,58,846 Crore as compared to Rs. 1,41,965 Crore in January- October 2017 registering a growth of 11.9% over the same period.

In 2017, the number of Domestic Tourist Visits to the States/UTs was 1652.5 million as compared to 1615.4 million in 2016 showing a growth of 2.3% in 2017 over 2016.

### **Development of Tourism Infrastructure**

The development of tourism infrastructure is a priority to provide a better tourism experience to the tourists. SwadeshDarshan Scheme is designed for infrastructure developed in the entire country. A total number of 07 projects have been sanctioned during 2018-19 for a total amount of Rs.384.67 Crore. With this, a total number of 73 projects have been sanctioned to date for an amount of Rs.5873.99 Crore under this Scheme covering 30 States and Union Territories in the country.

Nine projects under the SwadeshDarshan Scheme have been inaugurated between August to December 2018 in the States of Manipur, Arunachal Pradesh, Andhra Pradesh, Nagaland, Chhattisgarh, and Madhya Pradesh. Facilities like Tourist Facilitation Centers, Eco Log Huts, Sound and Light Show, Helipads, Cafeteria, Wayside Amenities, Nature Trails, Jetties, Boat club, Adventure Zones, Interpretation Centers, Water Sports, Craft Villages, Tribal Thematic Villages, Illumination, etc. have been developed as part of the above projects.

Integrated development of identified pilgrimage destinations is being undertaken under the 'National Mission on Pilgrimage Rejuvenation and Spiritual, Heritage Augmentation Drive (PRASHAD) Scheme. One project has been sanctioned during 2018-19 for a total amount of Rs.39.24 Crore. A total number of 24 projects have been sanctioned to date for an amount of Rs.727.16 Crore under this Scheme.

Ministry of Tourism provided Central Financial Assistance for infrastructure development during 2018-19 to Cochin Port Trust and Mormugao Port Trust.

### **Carrying Capacity and Mass Tourism**

Carrying capacity is a theory applied in tourism since the 1960s. Carrying capacity was one of the earliest attempts to define the limits of tourism growth, as a concern over the impacts of the tourism

industry. Carrying capacity focuses on local factors when evaluating the limits to tourism development or tourism usage of a resource.

Every tourist destination or attraction has its carrying capacity. “Carrying capacity of a destination is the maximum number of tourist acceptable at any given time that can enjoy the attraction without harming the physical environment”

Mass Tourism is a kind of tourism that indicates gathering a huge number of tourists in a destination. It creates an enormous impact on its carrying capacity. It includes the assembly of visitors, tourists, or voyagers going to a similar destination. It is likewise considered as the easy approach to earn more profit in the destination and marketed as a packaged tour such as places of Manali, Shimla, Goa, Nainital as places of Mass tourism.

Irrespective of the type of tourism or motivation of tourists, mass tourism has led to displeasure among several tourists and them nowadays in search of alternate forms of tourism. Many of them are wish to discover more about the local culture.

### **Alternate Tourism**

In the present day, the tourists are more aware of destinations and attractions and have money to spend. They need a break from their everyday stressful living and take a short or long break to rejuvenate and relax or travel to fulfill some psychological or social needs. Sometimes travel may be related to business tourism. Service providers must know what motivates the person to travel.

Special interest tourism adds significant value to usual tourism by contributing what tourists are particularly interested in. Ecotourism - the alternative type of tourism undertakes only those activities which are in harmony with nature. These alternative forms of tourism facilities preserve the environment for future generations. Rural and ethnic tourism helped the tourist to appreciate the system of living of the host population.

Tourism and tourists are altering in today's world. Tourism is no more a concept of only visiting the attractions or leisure time. Tourists are in search of destinations that are clean, peaceful, fulfilling their purpose of travel, and at the same time maintained responsibly not only by the local community but even everyone visiting the destination.

### **Need of Responsible Tourism**

The tourism industry should contribute a sustainable growth in every socio-economic sector of the economy (Ashley, Boyd, & Goodwin, 2000; Briedenhann&Wickens, 2004; Hunt & Rogerson, 2013; Williams & Shaw, 1991). Furthermore, tourism should include the people from all credentials in the sector (all levels of stakeholders in tourism) (Black stock 2005; Reed 1997). Tourism can support local business opportunities and plays a key role in improving the value of life through better socioeconomic benefits and enhanced natural resource management (Frey & George, 2010). Tourism should focus on addressing the sustainability challenges in the destination.

Responsible tourism focuses more on the economic, social, and environmental features of tourism at the destinations. Literature available in the field has focused on the concept of socio-economic and environmental impacts which are influenced by the local population, availability of natural resources, and infrastructure at the destination.

Considerations like green technology, reducing carbon emissions, biodiversity protection, and climate change are important parts of responsible tourism. As a comprehensive and universal industry, tourism can incorporate innovative practices of green growth to promote sustainable development.

Responsible Tourism can help in resolving environmental sustainability issues at the tourist destination. It is necessary to evaluate the positive and negative impacts of development in tourism at any destination. Further, it helps to understand the perceptions of the local community, government officials, and tourism stakeholders.

The World Commission on Environment and Development states that “sustainable development is a development that meets the needs of the present without comprising the ability of the future generations to meet their own needs” (Brundtland, 1987, p. 29). Responsible tourism tries to

determine the existing socioeconomic and ecological problems at the destination for sustainable development. Responsible Tourism is a step towards making better places in favor of community to live in and better places for tourists/ travelers to visit' (Cape Town Declaration, 2002). As per the Associazione Italiana Turismo Responsabile (AITR) members in 2005 (Miryala&Gade, 2016, pp. 39-40) Responsible tourism promotes interaction between the local community, tourists industry, and the travelers. It also helps to minimize harmful impacts on the environment, economy, and social aspects. Responsible tourism considers improving tourist experience and protection of natural and cultural heritage through improving the well-being of the host / local community. The participation of local people in the decision-making of any development at tourist destinations helps to minimize the negative impacts on their lives.

### **Responsible Tourism Practice (RTP)**

RTP has become the most popular concept and principle for modern tourism development. RTP promotes the protection and conservation of the natural environment, local cultures and contributes towards a better quality of life (QoL).

Responsible tourism practices may include the following,

1. **Avoid air travel:** Flights use a lot of fuel and are bad for the environment. Choosing a closed destination if possible and using overland travel options are better, although every time it is not possible. Finding opportunities to travel in groups and using mass transport facilities like buses, taxis, and trains are the best options.
2. **Respect culture:** Tourists should take the information of culture of the place they are visiting. Tourists should respect the cultural norms of the destination they are visiting and follow the local cultural norms.
3. **Use Local Resources:** Spending on local products and services offered at tourist destinations to support local companies, creating local employment and destinations infrastructure indirectly to boost. Furthermore, support products preserve natural resources.
4. **Dispose of the trash responsibly:** Limiting yourself to the use of plastic and generating trash should be the first step required. It is necessary to hold on to the trash until you can dispose of it responsibly. For the same, you can use local facilities available. Take extra efforts to find out if recycling is available.
5. **Choosing activities carefully:** As a tourist, one should analyze the effect of activity undertaken on the local community, environment, and economy of the destination.
6. **Spending at tourist destination:** Spend wisely at different places so that more businesses/families can get benefited. Local or regional community organizations are better to spend on rather than multinational companies.
7. **Traveling in the off-season:** Over Tourism/ Mass Tourism has negative impacts in many ways at most of the popular destinations in the world. Environmental degradation, pollution, traffic all year-round are the common issues to name a few. Traveling in the off-season can help to reduce the stress at these tourist destinations.

### **Positive Impacts of Responsible Tourism**

#### **1. Promote farming**

Many people have left the agriculture field due to low yield, increasing cost, and many other issues. Responsible tourism motivated people to develop such uncultivated agricultural lands into vacation spots. Furthermore, it can initiate cultivation and developing resorts and lodges after surveys/ mapping the potential of a place. Moreover, the vacation spot additionally promotes natural farming to protect the surroundings. So, it enables the local people to improve their point of view in the direction of farming and agricultural cultivation. It enables to generate earnings and higher livelihoods for the neighborhood people.

#### **2. Fish Farms and Lotus Cultivation**

Initiatives and projects like Fish Farms and lotus cultivation have rejuvenated many ponds. These projects created a source of income for the local community and also preserved environmental resources.

### 3. Community awareness program

Responsible tourism practices have a focus on awareness programs for the local community. In the tourism industry, the community should take a clean environment by identifying and preventing illegal activities.

### 4. Reduce Plastic Waste

It is one of the important issues at any tourist destination that destroys nature. The tourists using plastic bags, bottles, and cans which are not disposed of properly are destroying the beauty of nature. Responsible tourism initiatives take steps to reduce plastic waste in tourist destinations and even help to make it a plastic-free zone.

## Responsible Tourism for a Better Future of Tourism Industry

Considering the continuing growth in Tourism Industry, overcrowding at tourist destinations is a common scenario all over the world. After the break of Covid 19 pandemic, the industry is rebounding at a great speed. Taking into account all positive and negative impacts of growth in tourism industry, it is the time to educate all stake holders in the industry about responsible tourism and follow the RTP every time, every place, every sector in tourism.

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Mahratta