

Standard IX

Action Research Project Topic for 2017–18

Sustainable Tourism

Introduction

Tourism is one of the fastest growing industries in the world and is a major source of income for many countries. Being a people-oriented industry, tourism also provides jobs which have helped revitalise local economies.

Tourism is defined as activities of persons identified as visitors. A visitor is someone who is making a visit to a main destination outside his/her usual environment for less than a year for any main purpose like holidays, leisure and recreation, business, health, education etc.

Tourism is in essence a technical concept measured by available statistics of visitor movements and expenditure (demand) and estimates of the number of a wide range of visitor facilities (supply).

Types of tourism/tourists:

- **Incentive tourism:** Go on travel after getting reward from company (place of work) as a part of competition etc.
 - **Health or Medical:** In some under developed states/countries, advanced medical treatments are not available. People from such places seek special treatment in other states/countries. Sometimes, people go to other state/
- country for having a special treatment at comparatively economic cost.
- **Business:** Conference centres, business hotels cater to needs of these category.
 - **Education:** For further study, skill development, workshop, field trips, excursions etc.
 - **Adventure:** Mountaineering, rafting, sea-surfing etc.
 - **Cultural:** To visit heritage sites, art fests etc. E.g. Taj Mahal, Ajanta-Ellora etc.
 - **Eco-tourism:** For nature lovers, destinations not affected by pollution. E.g. Himalayas.
 - **Leisure:** Break from routine, vacations etc.
 - **Religious tourism:** Hajj, Mecca, Varanasi, Vatican City etc. People go for pilgrimage.
 - **Sports and recreation:** People go for Wimbledon, FIFA World Cup, River Canoe Race etc.
 - **Backpacking/Youth tourism:** Minimum luggage and limited budget.
 - **Special interest tourism:** Travel for particular passion like book fairs, car shows, bird watching, food fests etc.
 - **Agro tourism:** Visit farms, cherry picking. E.g. Tarpa at Gholvad, Saguna Baug at Neral etc.

Positive impacts (benefits) of tourism:

1. Economic:

- Creates jobs.
- Creates opportunities for small scale enterprises.
- Generates extra tax revenues.

2. Social:

- Improvements in amenities due to tourism are available to local community.
- Encourages preservation of traditions and customs, local arts like handicrafts.
- Can create global awareness of issues like poverty through host-guest interactions.

3. Environmental:

- Conserves wildlife and natural resources such as rainforests.
- Leads to improved environmental management and planning so that there is least harm to natural resources.
- Raises environmental awareness by bringing people in closer contact with nature. This leads to environmentally-conscious behaviour.
- Leads to creation of national parks and wildlife sanctuaries as such pristine and natural places attracts more tourists
- Protects ecology of eco-sensitive tourist attraction by restricting maximum number of visitors visiting during a particular time frame. Such restrictions result in mutual benefit of visitors and environment. E.g. Kaas Plateau

Negative impacts of tourism:

Negative impacts occur when level of visitors is greater than environment's ability to cope with this use.

1. Economic:

- Jobs created by tourism are generally seasonal and poorly paid.

- Development of tourism depends upon developing basic infrastructure like roads, water supply etc., cost of which usually falls on local/state/national government.
- Money generated by tourism does not always benefit locals as it can go to multinational chain of hotels.

2. Social:

- Visitors' behaviour can affect quality of life of host community.
- May lead to overcrowding and congestion.
- Possibility alcohol and drug abuse.
- Increased crime level can occur.
- Locals may get displaced to make way for hotels or may get barred from using local beaches.
- Can erode traditional culture and values.

3. Environmental:

- **Depletion of natural resources:** Tourism generally leads to overuse of water for hotels, swimming pools, golf courses and personal use by tourists. This leads to shortage and degradation of water resources and increase in volume of waste water generated out of these activities. In dry areas like Rajasthan, this problem is severe.
- **Local resources:** Local resources like energy, food and other raw materials are at stake. These are over-exploited during peak season.
- **Land degradation:** Increased construction for tourism and recreational facilities put pressure on land resources and scenic landscapes. Forest suffer due to fuel wood collection and land clearing.
- **Air pollution:** Increase in transport and energy consumption leads to increased emission of greenhouse gases and increase

in particulate matter. These impacts are quite specific to tourist industry at times. E.g. In too hot or too cold places, tourist vehicles often leave their motors/ engines running while tourists go out on excursion as they want comfort of air conditioned bus when they return.

Noise pollution from cars, buses, aeroplanes and recreational activities:

This not only harms humans but causes distress to wild life especially in sensitive areas. They may be forced to change their natural activity patterns.

Solid waste and littering: In areas with high concentrations of tourist activities, waste disposal becomes a serious problem and improper disposal spoils environment. E. g. cruise ships, trekking tourists. Tourists leave garbage, Oxygen cylinders, camping equipments behind. This puts pressure on remote areas that have poor facilities for collection and waste disposal.

Sewage: Increased tourism increases sewage load. Sewage can cause damage to coral reef, cause eutrophication. Sewage pollution can threaten health of humans and animals.

Aesthetic pollution: Often tourism fails to integrate its structure with natural features and indigenous architecture of destination. Lack of land use planning and regulation damages the beauty of the place.

Physical impacts of tourism:

Attractive tourist places like lakes, rivers, beaches and mountains are often transition zones, characterised by species-rich ecosystems. Tourism related land clearing and construction as well as continuing tourist activities cause harm. This can cause trampling.

Tourists using same trail over and

over again trample vegetation and soil, eventually causing loss of biodiversity, this can be severe when visitors frequently stray off established trails. Trampling can lead to -

- Loss of organic matter in soil, reduction in soil micro-porosity.
- Decrease in air and water permeability.
- Increased run-off and increase in soil erosion.
- It can also cause breakage and brushing of stems of plants, reduced regeneration of plants, loss of ground cover and change in species combination.

When flora is damaged, dependent fauna is also affected. Tourist activities in marine areas can cause damage to sensitive ecosystems like coral reefs, lagoons, shorelines etc. Anchoring, snorkelling, sport fishing, scuba diving, yachting, cruising can cause direct impact of marine ecosystem and have subsequent impacts on coastal protection and fisheries. This underlines the need for sustainable tourism.

What is sustainable tourism?

Sustainable tourism is the concept of visiting a place as a tourist and trying to make only a positive impact on environment, society and economy. Tourism can involve transportation to a location as well as local transport, accommodation, entertainment, recreation, nourishment and shopping. It is the tourism that respects both local people and the traveller, cultural heritage and environment.

It is environmentally responsible travelling that promotes conservation, has low visit impacts and provides for beneficially active socio-economic involvement of local populations.

Requirements of sustainable tourism:

- Sustainable tourism requires informed participation of stakeholders and leadership to ensure wide participation and consensus building.
- Constant monitoring of impacts, introducing necessary preventive and/or corrective measures whenever required.
- Maintain tourist satisfactions and ensure meaningful experience to tourists raising awareness about sustainability issue.

Sustainable tourism should -

- make optimal use of natural resources that contribute to tourism development, maintain essential ecological processes and help conserve natural heritage of the host.
- respect socio-cultural authenticity of the host community, conserve cultural heritage and traditional values and contribute to inter-cultural understanding and tolerance.
- ensure viable long term economic operations, stable employment, fair distribution of benefits among stakeholders and contribute to poverty alleviation.

How it can be done?

Sustainable tourism is about re-focussing and adapting. Balance must be made between limits and usage. It requires long-term thinking (10/20+ years ahead) and realising that change is often cumulative, gradual and irreversible.

Key areas to be considered:

- Sound financial and business planning, environmental management.
- Sensitivity to cultural and social dynamics.
- Efficient training and customer service.
- Consideration and inclusion of all stakeholders.

holders.

- Long-term vision and good governance.
- Marketing and communication programmes to showcase positive elements.

Role of tourism:

Tourism industry is meant for tourists. But as a tourist or visitor it is an individual's responsibility to maintain certain self-discipline so that the visit turns out to be enjoyable, respectful and sustainable activity.

Signs of a responsible visitor:

- Should be considerate of communities and environment he/she is visiting.
- Should not litter.
- Try to avoid excessive waste creation.
- Reduce energy consumption (leaving fans/air conditioner on for drying cloths when you are away from hotel room).
- Conserve water.
- Educate yourself before going to the tourist place.
- Respect cultural difference, don't try to change the essence.
- Must not purchase/eat endangered species or products (E.g. Turtle egg soup, snake skin handbags etc.).
- Prefer sustainable food.
- Support local economy.
- Eat local, seasonal food to decrease your carbon footprint.
- Travel by public transport, direct flights.

Few examples of various aspects of tourism:

- Development of tourism by activities like 'Save Turtle' at Velas, 'Pustakanche Gav' at Bhilar.
- Restriction on industrial development near Taj Mahal.

- Restriction on number of visitors to Galapagos islands or Tadoba National Park.
- Kaas Plateau biodiversity conservation.
- News we read about cleanliness drives by responsible trekker groups and huge collection of waste.
- Facilities provided by government at several places and events like Hajj, Amarnath Yatra, Kumbh Mela etc.
- Tiger reserves, crocodile conservation centre, mangrove park, national park and zoos at various places in India.

Some aspects of tourism that can be studied:

- Analysing vacation/holidays pattern of family/school/office and finding means to make it sustainable.
- Benefits of local and seasonal food in sustainable tourism.
- Plan to convert existing infrastructure into eco-efficient establishment.
- Bringing sustainability in energy, fuel consumption during travelling.
- Plan for developing a nearby unexplored place into tourist spot sustainably.
- Creating pamphlet for sustainable resort highlighting facts about how eco-friendly it is.
- Effect of tourism on flora/fauna of a place.
- Study of waste creation and disposal at any tourist place. e.g. *Bhuttawalas* at Mahabaleshwar, *Chaat* counters at chowpatty, littering by people at any tourist spot.
- Customary activities at religious places e.g. breaking coconuts, at temples etc.
- Effect of tourist movements on land resources e.g. horse-riding, clearing activities to provide for roads and parking facilities.
- Effect of noise on bird movement (e.g. High volume speakers at rain-dance facilities)
- Food facility and change in trends. E. g. Chinese joints, Bombay *Chaat* and *Pav Bhaji* and *Dhabas* have become a common thing.
- These are just examples. Students can study any 1 aspect of tourism from sustainability point of view in detail.

What students have to do?

- Read the text/pamphlet carefully.
- Select any 1 aspect of tourism.
- Observe/survey at home/school/native place as per the selected theme.
- Study exiting travel plans/infrastructure/environmental condition etc., as per area of work.
- Focus on aspects where there is a scope for sustainable change.
- Make a plan to bring about the change. It should be feasible and economically viable.
- Try to implement the plan.
- Analyse result, draw conclusions.
- Write a detailed report.
- If you are making a pamphlet about sustainable tourism of a place/resort, background information, methodology for planning and relevant data should be mentioned in the project report along with designed pamphlet/travelogue.

(Ref: www.google.com)