

Environmental Responsibilities of Hospitality Sector in Responsible Tourism

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ABSTRACT

The hospitality sector is one of the key elements in tourism and plays a significant role in creating economic value and integrating environmentally sustainable business practices. For the last few years hospitality sector is experiencing a growth in implementing responsible tourism guidelines to ensure the conservation and preservation of natural as well as cultural resources to protect the physical environment of the destination. The reviews of literature show an inevitable link between tourism activities with physical environments. It implies that tourism has far reaching negative impacts that must be mitigated for the sustainable growth of the industry as a whole. The mitigation of these negative impacts appears essential in order to sustain the quality of tourism services. This paper makes an attempt to establish a link between hospitality sector and physical environments by focussing on the environmentally responsible tourism activities of the businesses. The study found that the hotels and resorts play a significant role in ensuring the sustainability of various resources and conservation of natural attraction by practicing responsible way of tourism activities.

Keywords: Responsible Tourism, Environmental Responsibility

INTRODUCTION

Tourism is one of the largest industries which contribute significantly to the global economy. Being an industry that offers predominantly resource based activities, the success of tourism relies principally on varied environments of the society where it operates. The reviews of literature show an inevitable link between tourism activities with physical environments. Though the reviews show a drastic growth in the hospitality sector, it implies that tourism has far reaching negative impacts that must be mitigated for the sustainable growth of the industry as a whole. It is indicated that a slow integration of responsible environmental considerations

into planning and development due to lack of consensus about the importance of sustainable tourism as the industry's new direction, lack of a single comprehensive meaning of sustainable tourism to ease operationalizing the concept, and the flawed acceptance of alternative tourism as the answer for all tourism ills[1].

The link between tourism and the physical environment implies that tourism's survival depends highly on its ability to minimise its negative impacts on these environments and societies. And also, the quality of tourists' interaction will be diminished considerably, if the natural setting of tourism activity is polluted, degraded or loses its aesthetic qualities as a result of a poorly planned tourism development. Therefore, the mitigation of these negative impacts appears essential in order to sustain the quality of tourism services. In this context it is necessary that the tourism as well as hospitality sectors are well planned to create significant economic value and to impress other industries in embracing environmentally sustainable business practices. In the last decade, many hospitality businesses have favourably responded to the growing calls from responsible movement provided to more environmentally friendly and also socially responsible approach to their respective operations. Responsible tourism is viewed as a responsible path to sustainable future. It is not a product, but an avenue for sustainable tourism. This paper makes an attempt to establish a link between hospitality sector and physical environments by focussing on the environmentally responsible tourism activities of the businesses.

REVIEW OF LITERATURES

(Kasim.et.al, 2007) have undertaken a study to establish the connection between tourism and physical environment. They also suggest the need for a new way of thinking that takes into consideration the fragmented nature of the industry and a collective and conscious effort of all tourism business, government policy makers and planners as well as the key stakeholders to prioritise environmental issues in their daily undertakings. The study also highlights the environmental impact of a hotel operation and stresses the need for hotels, as one of the key tourism businesses to deal with its environmental obligations [2]

(Musavengane et.al, 2013) have made an attempt to establish Cape Town hotels are well informed on CSR and environmental responsibility initiatives. And also raises the question on the effectiveness of South African National Department of Tourism when educating, promoting and communicating responsible tourism requirements and practices in hospitality sector [3]

OBJECTIVES

1. To study the environmentally responsible activities of the hospitality sector
2. To understand the perception of the managers of hospitality sector on environmental responsible activities.
3. To assess the impact of responsible tourism activities on environment.

HYPOTHESIS

Ho: There is no link between responsible tourism activities and physical environment

H₁: There is a link between responsible tourism activities and physical environment

RESPONSIBLE TOURISM IN KERALA

Responsible tourism can be defined as tourism that is respectful of the natural and cultural environment and which contribute in an ethical manner to local economic development [4]. Responsible tourism initiated in Kerala in 2008 focussing on economic, social and environmental responsibilities of tourism activities. It tries to observes basic eco ethical tenets. Fundamental rights like the right to exist or to live in peace, right to pure air and pure water are basic rights even for wildlife, indigenous people as well as for nature as a whole.

ENVIRONMENTAL RESPONSIBILITY OF HOSPITALITY SECTORS IN KERALA.

The hospitality sector is one of the world's fastest growing sector and plays an important role in tourism. The hotel business sector is one of the key elements of the tourism industry; and has several social and environmental consequences. Tourism has an impact on nature and create environmental hazards in the destination. Responsible tourism enterprises took up many environmentally friendly programs to ensure the protection of the environment [5]. The hospitality sector considers development plans in relation to the lowest possible ecological impact. It focusses on the maximum use of sustainably harvested, local materials and minimise operational water use, energy use and material use. It also considers the impact of the location, size, construction and features of the building on local people and operates in an environmentally friendly way.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study is in descriptive nature based on both primary and secondary data. The primary data collected from the managers of hotels and resorts in four pilot RT destinations in Kerala. The

secondary data comes from various published sources like journals and books. The sample of the study consists of 45 hotels and resorts. Among these 13 are hotels and 32 are resorts in nature. The study is confined to 4 RT pilot destinations namely Kovalam, Kumarakam, Thekkadi and Wayanad. The researcher used Interview schedule for collecting the primary data. The environmental variables such as Environmental Protection and Conservation, Waste Utilisation and Recycling, Energy Conservation and Nature Protection were taken for the purpose of data analysis and interpretation. The collected data were subjected to Exploratory factor analysis (EFA) and Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA). The statistical test like One sample t test and ANOVA are used for data analysis. One sample t test was used for testing the hypothesis. 5% significance level was used for testing the result. The variables after EFA and CFA are depicted in Table 1.

Table 1

Variables After EFA and CFA

Environmental Responsibilities of Hospitality Sector	Environmental Protection and Conservation, Waste Utilisation and Recycling, Energy Conservation and Nature Protection	0.915
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DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

For the purpose identifying the link between responsible tourism activity and environment, the perception of managers of hotels and resorts on the factors or variables influencing the environmental responsibility in tourism were taken into account. All the managers responded positively towards the factors. The data was analysed with the help of one sample t test and the null hypotheses was rejected with the help of p value. The details of the test result are explained in the Table 2.

Table 2

**Perception of Managers on The Factors of Environmental Responsibilities of
Hospitality Sector in Responsible Tourism**

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	test value	t value	p value
Environment Protection	45	7.73	2.44	6	4.76	.000
Waste Minimisation	45	54.29	11.56	39	8.87	.000
Energy Conservation	45	20.51	5.97	18	2.82	.007
Nature Protection	45	11.33	3.57	9	4.39	.000
Environmental Responsibility	45	93.87	14.76	72	9.94	.000

Source: Survey data

It is understood from the table 2 that the mean score of the factor environment protection is 7.73 with SD 2.44 which is higher than the test value (6). The mean score of the indicator waste minimisation is 54.29 with SD is 11.56 which is higher than the test value (39). The mean score of the factor energy conservation is 20.51 with SD 5.97 which is higher than the test value (18). The mean score of nature protection is 11.33 with SD 3.57 which is higher than the test value (9). Among the factors waste minimisation shows the highest mean score (54.29). The mean score of the overall environmental responsibility is 93.87 with SD 14.76 which is higher than the test value 72. The calculated t value of each indicator is higher than the table value 1.96 at significant level 0.05, which indicates that there exists a significant difference between the mean score obtained of the factors of environmental responsibility and test value.

RESULT OF HYPOTHESIS

The null hypothesis is rejected as the p value is less than the significance level .05. This means that there exists a link between responsible tourism activity with environment.

A destination wise comparison was also made to know the environmental responsibility of the four RT destinations. The result of the test is explained in Table 3.

Table 3

**Destination wise Comparison of Environmental Responsibilities of Hospitality Sector
in Responsible Tourism**

	Frequency	Mean	Std. Deviation	f value	p value
Kovalam	10	87.80	10.08	9.155	.000
Kumarakam	15	84.27	13.64		
Thekkadi	10	104.40	12.02		
Wayanad	10	103.80	10.14		
Total	45	93.87	14.76		

Source: Survey data

The table (3) above depicts a destination wise comparison of the environmental responsibility of hospitality sector. Among the destinations Thekkadi shows the highest mean score 104.40 with SD 12.02. Kumarakam shows the lowest mean score 84.27 with SD 13.64. The f value is 9.155 with p value .000 which is less than the significant value 0.05. It is understood that there is a significant difference on the environmental responsibility of hospitality sector with regard to destination.

CONCLUSION

Hospitality sector is an important element in tourism as it interacts with the environment particularly in terms of resource consumption. The sector plays a major role in contributing to environmental sustainability. From the study it has been found that responsible tourism activities of the hospitality sector have a positive impact on the nature and physical environment in the destination. Responsible tourism enterprises took up many environmentally friendly programs to ensure the protection of the environment. The core area of environmental responsibility are environmental protection and conservation, waste utilisation and recycling, energy conservation and nature protection. It has been concluded from the study that the hotels and resorts play a significant role in ensuring the sustainability of various resources and conservation of natural attraction by practicing responsible way of tourism activities.

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