An Assessment of Sustainable Tourism Development Practices: A Qualitative Study of Selected Resorts in East Coast Road in Tamil Nadu

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ABSTRACT

Sustainable Tourism Development (STD) is a worldwide phenomenon that mostly aims at providing well-defined guidelines to the tourism service providers to act responsibly towards the socio-economic and ecological milieu. Resort is a significant category of the primary accommodation that is typically known for alluring the leisure tourists for its location, facilities, amenities etc. As such, the East Coast Road (ECR) between the outskirts of Chennai and Mahabalipuram has witnessed an emergence of a good number of beach resorts with star facilities and amenities over the last one decade and these high-end and upscale resort properties are the primary users of electric energy and ground water to a maximum extent for the maintenance of resorts incorporating swimming pool and garden. As a part of pilot study-cum-field study, many issues pertaining to the sustainable practices of the resort operators were brought to the notice and attempts were made to present the hidden facts associated with the responsible role of the resort operators. Thus, the analysis of the qualitative study has revealed that resorts are not seemed to be responsive and sensitive towards the community development and ecological conservation as it is the mandate of the STD, following which the inclusive development as the ultimate objective of STD may not be achieved.

KEYWORDS: Tourism Impacts, Environmental Management, Sustainable Tourism Development Practices, Beach Resort, Community Development, Ecological Conservation

Introduction

Many tourists travel to particular destinations to enjoy pleasant or suitable weather while participating in various outdoor activities (Jopp et al., 2010). Since last 25 years, the larger hotels at the popular tourism destinations have been benefited from the volume of hotel bookings and occupancy rates (Sharma, 2002). The government of Tamil Nadu has laid down investment friendly policy guidelines for the establishment of more luxury resorts along the ECR between Chennai and Mahabalipuram. The government is pro-development and accords permission for the construction of beach resorts with an objective of creating employment and
building touristic infrastructure. As a result, the entire stretch of the area has been a finest attraction not only for its breathtaking scenic beauty but also for its pleasurable activities being provided in the beach resorts. The evolution of beach resort in the ECR was initiated in 1968 and since then, it has developed recreational activities like boating, canoeing, Theme Parks, Crocodile Park, picnic sites etc along with indoor recreational facilities in the resorts leading to create sporadic urbanization in the ECR.

Tourism is widely considered as a smokeless and invisible export-oriented industry. Almost all the nations are in recent times recognizing the importance of tourism and embracing it as a powerful economic force (Aniah et al., 2009). Tourism is a direct consumer of natural environments, historic buildings, urban infrastructure and local culture and these attractions are facing the danger of being overcrowded and overdevelopment (Dumont et al., 2005). Tourism is generally viewed as a highly consumptive industry with a substantial share of destinations operating less desirable eco-efficiency values than the global average (Gossling et al., 2005). Therefore, it is essential for the resorts in the ECR to adhere to the pattern of managing their resources for sustainable tourism development. Indeed, it is important for the tourism industry to understand its impacts, because its products often depend on the appeal of attractive natural capital – clean beaches and oceans, pleasant climate and wildlife (Kuo and Chen, 2009). As climatic conditions are a critical factor for tourism, a wide range of climate induced environmental changes have profound effects on tourism at the regional destination level (Simpson et al., 2008). Relationships of tourism with the environment mostly trigger considerable interest among various stakeholders to make debate and deliberations. Assessing the environmental consequences of tourism activity and developing appropriate monitoring and evaluative mechanisms have become an important issue globally (Jones and Munday, 2007). With this backdrop, an in-depth study of tourism activities being provided by the resorts in the ECR was conducted for finding out the prevailing practices and their long-term action plan. The resources being used by the hotel chains and other mainstream accommodation providers are critical factors to explain the sustainability of the business (Warnken et al, 2005). In this study, a list of selected resorts has been selected to assess their dependence and interdependence on the locally available resources to satisfy the tourist needs and comfort. The consumption per occupant of water and energy in hotels is much higher than that of a typical household (Deng, 2003). Thus, the success of any tourism destination mainly depends upon the good infrastructure, the quality of the natural and man-made environment, and its optimal utilization of resources for the long run (Altinay and Hussain, 2005). This research paper aims to find the current environmental practices of resorts for ensuring sustainable tourism development in the beach resorts.
Study Area

A trip along the ECR gives rise to a spectacular scenic beauty with beaches, Buckingham Canal, Muttukadu boat house, Mayajaal, an entertainment destination, VGP Golden Beach, MGM Dizee World, an amusement park, Mahabalipuram Shore Temple, Tiger Cave and several resorts on either sides of the ECR. These tourism spots in the ECR make the visitors to enhance the stay longer in the resorts. The Study area is identified from Thiruvanmiyur to Mahabalipuram which runs parallel to the sea shore containing around 25 resorts. Of which, the sustainable tourism practices of three beach resorts such as the Buharis Blue Lagoon beach resort in Pallavakam, the VGP Beach Resort in Injampakkam and the MGM Beach Resort in Muttukadu were studied along with three non-beach resorts such as the Green Meadows Resort in Pallavakkam, the Kailash Hotel & Resort in Injampakkam and the Green Coconut Resort in Muttukadu. All these resorts with 315 rooms cater to the mid-segment budget category of tourists. These resorts are preferred for enormous facilities and high-quality services, thus registering good occupancy rate.

Literature Review

The 1980 Manila Declaration explicitly outlines the protection of environment and natural resources at the tourism, historical and cultural sites for the global tourism development and the satisfaction of tourism requirements must not be the prejudicial to the environment (WTO, 1980). Cater (1993) stated the objectives of sustainable tourism as meeting the needs of the host population for increased standards of living in the short and long term by dealing with growth in tourist numbers and safeguarding the natural environment. Liu (2003) critically assessed not to limit growth but to manage growth in a way that is appropriate to the tourists, the destination environment and the host population. Finally, he suggests for transforming the results of research on sustainable tourism to a more scientific level and a system perspective and an interdisciplinary approach are indispensable. Hardy et al (2002) argues that more emphasis has often been given to tourism's effects upon the environment and economy rather than to the factors related to its effect on the community. As Brohman (1996) suggests that the appropriateness of tourism development should be measured according to the changing interests and conditions in the host community and the development should conform to the long-term interests of the majority over an elite minority’s short-term goals. The locals are subjected to be viewed and interacted with, or settings for tourist activities, and their attitudes and behavior constitute the ‘hospitality’ resource of a destination (Smith, 1994). According to Jenkins (1991), a country formulating a tourism policy needs to address the following issues: the role of the government (active or passive); ownership and control (public or private); international versus domestic tourism; the scale of tourism development and integrated versus enclave tourism.
Sharpley and Telfer (2006) suggested that if tourism industry is to be a viable force in the economy in the future, it must fit into a community and has to be sustainable and use resources sensibly. Moreover, they recommended that local community members must have the opportunity to participate in the planning and operation of the tourist industry. Aniah et al. (2009) addressed some of the critical issues on domestic and international patronage of tourist resort and the recreational facilities provided in each resort and revealed that accommodation is the major facilities provided by the resorts. Meade et al (1999) described about the water conservation efforts with the use of low-flow showerheads, faucet aerators and water saving toilets and the adoption of linen and towel reuse programs. Chararaa et al. (2011) studied the water use efficiency of Barbadian hotels and found that it uses more water than the general population (756 vs. 240L/cap-d) and water savings would improve the overall water balance. They further suggested the ways to use water resources wisely for keeping the expense on water under control. Zubair et al. (2011) researched through an analysis of Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) and reported that sustainable tourism is a crucial commercial reality and the implementation of a more appropriate EIA process is crucial as the Government leases more islands for tourism resort developments. Goodall (1995) acknowledged that tourists, as consumers of environment, can damage the every resources which form the basis of the tourism industry. The tourism firms should take initiative by themselves with the help of environmental auditing to assess their environmental performance, identifying any negative environmental impacts and evaluating the opportunities to change current practices in order to improve its performance. He emphasized the advantages and procedures of environmental auditing and the factors influencing the adoption of environmental auditing by tourism firms. The empirical research on beach resorts with its positive and negative impact is relatively limited and is not as exhaustive and intensive. Some important studies were conducted in New Zealand (Beckens et al., 2001; Becken & Simmonds, 2002), Hong Kong (Deng & Burnett, 2000), the Caribbean (UK CEED, 1998) and Australia (Warnken et al, 2005) on the per capita resource consumption and the comparison between the performance of fully certified eco-resorts and non eco-resorts. Therefore, this study aims to fill the gap by studying positive and negative impacts of non-accredited resorts in ECR, Chennai with regard to the practices of sustainable tourism principles for sustainable resort tourism management.

Research Methodology

This study was based upon the qualitative research conducted during the field visit. De Vaus (1991) mentioned that descriptive research deals with questions of what things are like and not why they are that way. Good description is required before formulating a sound theory. Primary data were collected by using 50 open-
ended questions to understand the respondent’s attitudes towards environmental management. The field-visit aimed at capturing the techniques of water management and the effective use of renewable resources. A stratified random sampling technique was used to make proper representation of different categories of resorts. As many as six resorts were surveyed physically to experience the practices of sustainable tourism. The sample unit or the resorts surveyed with more than 20 rooms. This study was carried out by undertaking an in-depth interview with the resort managers using a structured questionnaire and data collected were analyzed and interpreted by using simple percentage and bar charts.

**Analysis of Results**

The tourism places of interest in the ECR stretch have innumerable potentials and comprise of scenic beauty, amusement parks, urban-cum-rural environment and the proximity of cultural attractions to spellbound passerby of ECR. Both the domestic and international tourist arrivals in ECR are witnessing positive growth in the last five years. The profile of resorts, as it is presented in Table 1, indicates that majority of beach resorts have been established in the last 10 years. About 33 per cent of resorts have chains of hotels at other places. Almost all the resorts have developed the facilities and amenities for both the domestic and international tourists. On the contrary, around 17 per cent of the resorts aimed at domestic tourists only. About 50 per cent of resort operators witnessed significant inflow of the domestic and international visitors with the primary purpose of rejuvenation during weekends. The growth, as opined by the resort managers, is registered owning to the impact of brand campaign in overseas. Moreover, the resort managers have experienced the large share of the domestic market due to the rising demand of corporate executives in the weekend. As many as 33 per cent of the resort managers are satisfied with business, while 16.7 per cent of them found the average growth in the business and suggested for further addition of amenities in the resorts for satisfying the tourists interests. Across the surveyed resorts, the number of staff members has increased as compared to five to six years ago. Almost 50 per cent of resorts employed less than 20 per cent of the local people as against around 33 per cent of the resorts have hired local community members as the staff constituted about 21 per cent to 40 per cent. However, 16.7 per cent of the resorts employed about 41 per cent to 60 per cent from local villages and towns in their resorts. These resorts have relatively less number of total employees as compared to other resorts in this study area.
## Table 1: Resort Profiles

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Profiles</th>
<th>Categorization</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Year of Establishment</strong></td>
<td>Less than 10 years</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>11 to 20 years</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>16.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>21 to 30 years</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>16.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>More than 30 years</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>16.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Other Branches</strong></td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>33.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>66.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Target Market</strong></td>
<td>Domestic Tourist Only</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>16.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Domestic &amp; International Tourist</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>83.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total No. of rooms at Present</strong></td>
<td>Below 25</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>33.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>26 to 50</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>16.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>51 to 75</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>33.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>76 to 100</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>16.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Growth in the last 5 years</strong></td>
<td>Very Good</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Good</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>33.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Average</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>16.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>No. of Employees working at Present</strong></td>
<td>Below 50</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>16.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>51 to 100</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>33.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>101 to 150</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>33.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Above 150</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>16.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Percentage of Local people working at present</strong></td>
<td>Below 20</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>21 to 40</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>33.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>41 to 60</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>16.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Average length of Stay of domestic Tourist in different resort</strong></td>
<td>One day</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>16.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Two days</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Three days</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>33.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Average length of Stay of International Tourist of different resorts in days</strong></td>
<td>Below Ten days</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>11 to 20</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>33.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>21 to 30</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>16.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: Compilation from the Primary Data Collected During Field Visit*
All these figures indicated that the job opportunities offered by the resort management to the host population are seemed to be meager and insignificant when compared to the resort development. While finding out the average length of stay of guests from the domestic market in India, about 50 per cent of the resorts receive guests with an average length of stay for two days, whereas 33 per cent of resorts used to have guests with an average length as maximum as three days, followed by the remaining 17 per cent of resorts with guests staying one day on an average.

As against the average length of stay of domestic tourists in the resorts, the results of the average length of stay of international tourists revealed that 50 per cent of resorts receive the guests from the overseas tourism market with an average length of stay is less than ten days while about 33 per cent have the average length of stay from 11 to 20 days, followed by the remaining 17 per cent resorts have the average length of stay of as maximum as 30 days. The analysis presents the fact that the average length of stay of international tourists is more as compared to the domestic tourists.

**Sustainable Practices**

Tourism is a highly consumptive industry as it is evident from its diverse consumption of energy and resources. The average consumption of electric energy varies from one resort to another when they make the payment for consumption of the energy. Table 2 depicts the existing practices of the resorts in the ECR. About 67 per cent of resorts pay an average of more than Rs. 2 lakhs per month for electric bill, while the remaining 33 per cent of resort pay the monthly electric bill on an average of less than Rs 2 Lakhs. The amount of monthly bill itself tells volume about the heavy consumption of conventional source of energy and these six resorts do not seem to practice the energy saving devices and use the renewable energy in order to minimize the monthly payments towards the electric bill.

While bringing out the dependence and consumption of water by the resorts in the ECR, about 50 per cent of the resorts use more than 45,000 liters of water per day, while 33 per cent use with in the range of 30,000 to 45,000 liter per day, followed by the remaining 17 per cent makes use on an average of less than 30,000 liters of water per day. Hence, most of the resorts have more than one water tank and its overall water storage capacity is more than 50,000 liters. As most of these resorts are located in the area of good aquifer, their primary means of exploring ground water is expected to be from the under ground as it was revealed during the interactions with the resort managers. Possibly, the exploration of under ground water for resort maintenance gives rise to evade the payment of tax. The existing practices in the resorts have sufficiently disclosed the fact that there is an imperative need for effective environmental management system by each beach resort and non-beach resort in ECR for saving the coastal aquifer; otherwise, it
results in the salinity of water in the future. The use of transport by tourists at each resort is one of the key indicators explaining the practices of sustainable principles in the ECR. About half of the resorts (50 per cent) shared that 10 per cent of their guests using public transport to reach at the resorts as against about 33 per cent of the resorts had the guests reaching the resorts is about 11 per cent – 20 per cent by using public transport service, followed by 17 per cent of them receive the guests by public transport is about 21 per cent - 30 per cent and the same percentage make use of the resort’s cab for sightseeing.

As one of the principal objectives of sustainable tourism is focused on the extensive use of goods produced locally, about 50 per cent of the resorts procure less than 10 per cent of goods from the local areas. As many as 33 per cent of resort managers shared that their purchase goods produced in the local areas is more than 20 per cent. However, about 17 per cent procure purchase 11 per cent to 20 per cent of locally produced goods to meet the requirements.

### Table 2: Sustainable Practices

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicators</th>
<th>Classification</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Average Electric Energy Consumption per month in Rupees</td>
<td>Above 2,00,000</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>66.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Below 2,00,000</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>33.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average Water Consumption per day in Liter</td>
<td>Below 30,000</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>16.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>30,000 to 45,000</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>33.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Above 45,000</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage of Tourist arriving by Public Transport to resort</td>
<td>Below 10</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>11 to 20</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>33.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>21 to 30</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>16.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage of locally purchased goods like cleaning materials produced by SHG’s etc.,</td>
<td>Below 10</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>11 to 20</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>16.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>More than 20</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>33.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: Compilation from the Primary Data Collected During Field Visit*

### Remedial Measures for Supporting Sustainable Practices

Figure 1 illustrates the various indicators of sustainable tourism practices by the resorts in the ECR. The data seek to explain to what extent the resorts in the ECR are involved in their practices towards mitigating the environmental degradation. It further reveals that one third (33 per cent) of the resorts using the renewable
energy through solar lights in the garden and solar water heaters. About 50 per cent of the resorts are using energy saving devices in the electric appliances, for example, CFL bulbs and less energy consuming electric appliances such as refrigerator, air conditioner in rooms, reception and meeting halls. Nevertheless, about 17 per cent of the resorts are regularly monitoring the consumption of electric energy by cross-checking the electric meter readings with electricity bills of previous months. Similarly, consumption of water resources is also examined by the storage capacity of water in the overhead tanks which are used for swimming pools, kitchen, rooms, restaurants and bar. Furthermore, about 33 per cent of the resorts are recycling the kitchen waste to the garden as organic manure. Surprisingly, all the resorts do not have the mechanism for accurate estimation of solid waste generated by different departments of the resort. More importantly, a little less than one fifth (17 per cent) of resorts have the provision of waste water treatment plant and use the recycled water for gardening.

**Figure 1: Percentage of Resort Initiative in Environmental Practices**

![Percentage of Resort Initiative in Environmental Practices](image)

*Source: Primary Data*

Figure 2 found that about 67 per cent of the resorts are laundering the room clothes regularly and out of which, 75 per cent of them are regularly washing the linens of the unoccupied rooms by their own dobbey once in every two days or three days. Though all the resorts have built the pit for the rain water harvesting and use the harvested water for washing and watering the garden, their contributions to the increase in ground water level is, however, negligible due to excess of ground water extraction for various purposes. Contrarily, the remaining other 33 per cent of resorts are outsourcing laundry services, thereby helping curtail the consumption of water and also put off the laundering of unused rooms. Figure 2 presents the various initiatives for sustainable practices as part of social commitments.
As far as the funding of the resorts to the community projects is concerned, about 33 per cent of resorts are engaged themselves in various village developmental activities or temple festivals. About 50 per cent of the resorts order for organic food from the contract food suppliers from the market. Majority of the resort managers, who are at the helm of affairs for ensuring the sustainable practices, do not have agenda for social responsibility in respect of purchasing goods produced by host community members. It is revealed from the survey that all the resort operators, which are concerned for eco best practices have done their responsibility with putting some conventional warnings like “No Plastic Please” and “Save Water, Save Nature” in the form of wall hangings, sign boards etc., for their guests.

**Discussions and Suggestions**

The increasing mechanized system of life coupled with the rising disposable income, a large number of people wish to take a break from their routine life and prefer to have maximum leisure at short span of time i.e. within two or three days with comfort accommodation of all supportive facilities for eating, entertainment, peace, moving about etc. All these requirements of the guests satisfied by the resorts certainly shift from the reasonable use of resource to the optimal use of resources. Further, the growth of tourist arrivals in the ECR for the past five years increased the number of rooms and beds in resort from 112 to 315 and led to extend more to satisfy the demand of their guests or customers. It is in fact quite significant that the increase in tourist arrivals in ECR with an addition of rooms in the resorts could generate 902 additional jobs in the accommodation sector. The development of resorts typically brought some business opportunities for various
stakeholders at various stages of the economy. The government gets benefited from the taxes being generated from the tourist expenditures. However, the revenue percolating to the local economy has all possibilities for alleviating economic and social problems of the host population. The resort operators have no option but to increase their profits by satisfying the demand of the guests. As a result, the local villages take advantage of job opportunities that brought about the migration of people and increase in the land price.

However, the field visit and in-depth interviews with resort managers clearly revealed that job opportunities obtained by the people around the locality of the resorts is relatively insignificant when it is compared to the employment opportunities grabbed by the migrated employees. Majority of employees of these resorts have recruited local people for housekeeping, food and room services and gardening work. The Government of Tamil Nadu and the beach resorts are giving much importance to the revenue generation from various forms of tourist expenditures without giving heed to the direct impact on the socio-cultural and ecological aspects as Lomas et al (2008) pointed out that the higher the rates of tourism can mean the higher the level of urbanization which can alter the land use plan and obstruct the ecological balance of land and sea bed ecosystems. This study is not an exceptional in its finding that all the resorts in the study are making use of the groundwater for the maintenance of the resort as the study carried out by Vassallo et al (2009) indicated that too much economic development increases the risk of exceeding the limits of the coastal ecosystems.

The lack of environmental management system in the resorts of ECR, in all probabilities, may not sustain their businesses in the long run by the given prevailing practices. Significant number of studies has empirically proved that pumping out of excess groundwater from the coastal regions can certainly lead to increase the saltwater intrusion into the mainland as it has already occurred in many parts of Chennai along with the ECR. The survey, however, divulged that one third or 33 per cent of resorts having environmental management as an integral part of their sustainable practices and rest of resorts creates more damage to the environment. The environmental actions taken by this type of resorts are mainly associated with the simple, low-cost measures and established priorities and practices and the resort operators do not get involved in the active and innovative environmental works (Hobson & Essex, 2001). Further, energy and materials for entertainment and souvenir purchases are cited as an important contributor to the tourism impact (Becken and Simmons, 2002; Peeters and Schouten, 2006). Due to the lack of responsiveness and improper management of resources, the net usage of resources cannot be obtained. Recreational tourism spots and resorts are interested to provide more facilities and even excess for satisfying the material fulfillment of their guests or clients. Since, the attitude of tourists is to consume more from the
available resources at the tourism destinations than the natives and that consumption would be more when compared to that of host community consumption level (Akama, 1999; Cole and Sinclair, 2002; Patterson et al, 2007).

The attitude of tourists and their sensitivity towards the local culture, ecology and environment can be changed when captions and short quotes pertaining to the responsive role of the tourists for sustainable development are displayed at the reception, restaurant, swimming pool, meeting rooms and Spa center. Only 16.7 per cent of the resort management insists on the guest to adhere to the eco-best practices and the insistence does not receive any positive response from the tourists. Even if the resort mangers are positive and supportive of eco friendly products, their actual commitments are still subject to the requirements of tourist’s interest and demand. Thus, tourism planning should not be carried out in seclusion and it should take into consideration the relationship of tourism with other activities and processes along with the human and physical environment in which tourism business is operated (Butler, 1993).

The local people in coastal stretch of ECR are engaged in various traditional occupational activities like agriculture, fishing, salt extraction, aquaculture etc. The lack of well-defined sustainable tourism practices may disturb the livelihood of those people employed directly or indirectly in tourism and other occupations. As sustainability is a fundamental objective of tourism businesses in the ECR, the resort managers should monitor and evaluate the usage of resources and act as a responsible stakeholder by taking several initiatives like conserving natural resources, using eco-friendly products and supporting zero waste campaign for the promotion of sustainable tourism development. Also, instead of buying the organic food products from the contractor or supermarket, they should offer training programs to the nearby farmers in the villages as a social responsibility for the production of organic crop or vegetables to sustain the soil quality and to provide them benefit by selling their crops directly to the purchasers of hotel and resort industry. This will ultimately help open the scope for the income of farmers by selling the crops directly to the consumers as well as encourage organic farming among the farmers. Within the accommodation sector, many of the larger businesses have introduced initiatives to promote the principles of sustainability because they possess the capacity and resources and have the ability to draw an appropriate expertise to introduce environmental measures (Hobson & Essex, 2001).

As ECR has potential to create a center of attention for diverse categories of people only few resort provides vehicles to tourists for sight-seeing which helps to reduce the air pollution by curtailing the number of private mode of vehicles passing in ECR often. Subsequently with the scheduled maintenance of vehicles in the resort will further cut air pollution and noise pollution and promote a peaceful.
travelling in ECR. The increase in more number of comfort tourist buses from the
government with frequent bus stops and promotion of environmental management
system with sustainable development principles will attract more number of
travelers in ECR which ultimately increase the potentials of the resort as a strategy
for sustainable tourism development.

**Conclusion**

The most important and crucial attractions of any tourist place is pleasant and
salubrious weather with warm sunshine (Sharma, 2002). It is adequately available
in the ECR and attracts a large number of visitors with its finest beaches and other
outdoor recreational activities. The primary aim of tourism planning is to ensure the
opportunities for tourists to derive enjoyable and satisfying experiences from their
visits and stay and at the same time, to provide a means for improving the way of
life for residents and of destination areas (Matheisom and Wall, 1982). For
sustaining the aesthetic beauty of ECR with all its natural and cultural attractions,
the Coastal Regulation Zone Act should be implemented to help conserve and
preserve the coastal stretches and to ensure livelihood security to the fishing and
agriculture community. The resort tourism should be developed and managed in a
sustainable manner by optimal usage of resources with modern and scientific
technologies. Dasmann et al (1973) supplements that more the local people get
benefited from tourism, the more would be the commitment of the local people
towards the preservation of environment. The local communities should be
empowered to actively participate in the decision-making process of tourism
development. It ensures their inevitable stake in the promotion of sustainable
tourism development practices with the increasing number of resorts in the ECR.
Since the Rio Conference on Sustainable Development (UNEP, 1992) and the Agenda
21’s accreditation schemes, eco labels and environmental friendly certification
programme came into the practice in developed countries, sustainable tourism
practices will be carried out regularly with regard to the estimation of energy and
water usage. It further helps to mitigate the production of waste and wastewater. By
mandating environmental friendly certification such as ISO 14001 and accreditation
schemes in tourism, the management of beach resorts ought to delegate authority to
the resort managers of the ECR to introduce the best practices that can help reduce
environmental degradation and helps prohibit over consumption of resources in the
coastal areas. The accreditation will certainly enforce rigorous commitment to be
extremely careful towards the amount of emissions and consumptions, thereby
minimizing the adverse impacts on environment by practicing 7 Rs such as reduce,
reuse, recycle, report, rethink and re-educate principles. The policymakers and
government officials should act as a responsible watchdog to promote tourism in a
sustainable manner and to prevent the establishment of unaccredited beach resorts,
hotels, guest house and swimming pool near the shores.
REFERENCES


