

A Study on Practices of Tour Operators and Development of Sustainable Tourism in Tamil Nadu

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Abstract

Tour operators are playing crucial role in developing sustainable tourism by adopting various sustainable tourism management practices and using their experiences very sensibly. The results show that the domestic tourists are agreed with tour operators minimize use of resources for operations, tour operators give highest economic gains to local communities, tour operators adopt sustainability principles for tourism activities, tour operators reduce harmful impacts on environment, tour operators use local suppliers on the basis of sustainable practices, tour operators offer fresh and local foods, tour operators provide opportunities to shop local arts and crafts products and tour operators showcase local culture and social values. Significant difference is there between practices of tour operators for development of sustainable tourism and personal features of domestic tourists. Level of sustainable tourism development is positively, significantly and moderately related with practices of tour operators for development of sustainable tourism. Thus, tour operators should provide larger social benefits to local communities and they must give local accommodations to tourists. Further, tour operators should encourage environment responsible behaviour of tourists and they must be harmonious with production and consumption activities and nature.

Keywords: Domestic Tourists, Practices, Sustainable Tourism, Tour Operators

I. INTRODUCTION

Sustainable tourism development represents and includes a group of philosophy, policy instruments, programmes, methods and management practices for development of tourism (Lane, 1994). Sustainable development of tourism creates harmonization among environment, human beings and tourism activities (Hunter, 1997) and it protects environmental and natural resources and unique features of tourism destinations for future development (Curtin and Busby, 1999). Sustainable development of tourism is mainly concentrating on conservation

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of environmental resource bases (Cisneros-Martínez et al 2018) which will allow development of tourism in a sustainable manner (Jones and Spadafora, 2017).

Sustainable development tourism is having social, cultural, economic and environmental impacts on local communities (Kuscer et al 2017) and it meets out requirements of existing tourists without neglecting future tourists (Kristjansdottir et al 2018). Sustainable development of tourism is largely depending on various players, viz., government, tourism departments, service providers, tour agents, tour operators, tourists and local communities (Dempsey et al 2011). Specifically, among them tour operators are playing crucial role in developing sustainable tourism by adopting various sustainable tourism management practices (Jaini et al 2012) and using their experiences very sensibly and they attain competitive advantage (Hassan, 2000). Therefore, it is necessary to study practices of tour operators and development of sustainable tourism.

II. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Budeanu (2009) mentioned that tour operators use sustainable tourism management practices of minimizing use of resources, energy saving practices, using recycled products and environment responsible activities.

Chen and Jim (2010) stated that cultural, social and economic features were affecting development of sustainable tourism. Sustainable management practices in tourism activities adopted by all stakeholders of tourism helped sustainable tourism development.

Beaumont (2011) found that awareness and consciousness on environment among tourists led to development of sustainable tourism and tourists, tour agents, tour operators and others had to adopt sustainable management practices for developing sustainable tourism.

Khairat and Maher (2012) concluded that tour operators implemented sustainable management practices in the areas of supply chain, creating positive image, reduction of negative impacts on environment and meeting demand of tourists in order to develop sustainable tourism.

Mamhoori and Nasim (2013) revealed that tour operators adopted sustainable tourism practices and provided local food items and accommodations to tourists. Besides, they created positive and sustainable impact on local communities and their developments.

Xina and Chana (2014) indicated that tour operators contributed to economic and social activities of local communities through sustainable tourism practices and they involved in conservation of nature and encouraged environment oriented responsible behaviour of tourists.

Mamhoori (2015) showed that tour operators provided sustainable services and used local resources efficiently and involved in culturally and environmentally responsible behaviour among tourists.

Hamid and Isa (2016) found that tour operators adopted sustainable management practices in development of products, providing social and economical benefits to local communities, reducing negative impact on environment and enhancing cultural values.

Font and McCabe (2017) concluded that tour operators followed sustainable management practices in arranging tour operations, providing services and benefits to local communities and reducing negative effect on environment.

Qian et al (2018) revealed that sustainable tourism provided social, economical and cultural values to local communities and tour operators were highly contributed to development of sustainable tourism by applying sustainable management practices in their tour operations.

Mackenzie and Gannon (2019) indicated that tour operators followed sustainable management practices in use of resources, tourism activities, offering services and delivering benefits to local communities.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- i) To study practices of tour operators for development of sustainable tourism.
- ii) To inspect difference between practices of tour operators for development of sustainable tourism and personal features of domestic tourists.
- iii) To investigate relation between practices of tour operators for development of sustainable tourism and level of sustainable tourism development.

HYPOTHESES OF THE STUDY

- i) There is no significant difference between practices of tour operators for development of sustainable tourism and personal features of domestic tourists.
- ii) There is no significant relation between practices of tour operators for development of sustainable tourism and level of sustainable tourism development.

III. METHODOLOGY

The current study is carried out in Tamil Nadu state. Domestic tourists from Chennai, Coimbatore, Tiruchirappalli, Madurai and Tirunelveli cities are selected by applying convenience sampling method. Data are gathered from 250 domestic tourists from these cities by using questionnaire. Personal features of domestic tourists are examined by percentages and practices of tour operators for development of sustainable tourism are studied through mean and standard deviation. Difference between practices of tour operators for development of sustainable tourism and personal features of domestic tourists is inspected by applying ANOVA and t-tests. Relation between practices of tour operators for development of sustainable tourism and level of sustainable tourism development is investigated by using simple correlation analysis.

IV. RESULTS

4.1. PERSONAL FEATURES OF DOMESTIC TOURISTS

The personal features of domestic tourists are illustrated in Table-1. Higher than half of domestic tourists are male (52.40 per cent) and more than one third of domestic tourists is in age category of 31 – 35 years (34.80 per cent). One third of domestic tourists is under graduates (33.20 per cent) and larger than one third of domestic tourists is in monthly income group of Rs.40,001 – Rs.50,000 (34.00 per cent) and nearly four fifth of domestic tourists is in married.

Table-1. Personal Features of Domestic Tourists

Personal Features	Number	%
Gender		
Male	131	52.40
Female	119	47.60
Age		
21 – 25 years	34	13.60
26 – 30 years	78	31.20
31 – 35 years	87	34.80
36 – 40 years	51	20.40
Education		
Higher Secondary	39	15.60
Diploma	58	23.20
Under Graduation	83	33.20
Post Graduation	70	28.00
Monthly Income		
Rs.20,001 – Rs.30,000	48	19.20

Rs.30,001 – Rs.40,000	68	27.20
Rs.40,001 – Rs.50,000	85	34.00
Rs.50,001 – Rs.60,000	49	19.60
Marital Status		
Married	196	78.40
Unmarried	54	21.60

4.2. PRACTICES OF TOUR OPERATORS FOR DEVELOPMENT OF SUSTAINABLE TOURISM

The practices of tour operators for development of sustainable tourism are illustrated in Table-2.

Table-2. Practices of Tour Operators for Development of Sustainable Tourism

Practices of Tour Operators	Mean	Standard Deviation
Tour operators minimize use of resources for operations	.91	0.86
Tour operators give highest economic gains to local communities	.94	0.82
Tour operators adopt sustainability principles for tourism activities	.88	0.89
Tour operators provide larger social benefits to local communities	.38	1.11
Tour operators reduce harmful impacts on environment	.84	0.96
Tour operators use local suppliers on the basis of sustainable practices	.86	0.94
Tour operators offer fresh and local foods	.81	0.99

Tour operators give local accommodations	.40	1.08
Tour operators provide opportunities to shop local arts and crafts products	.79	1.02
Tour operators showcase local culture and social values	.76	1.05

The domestic tourists are agreed with tour operators minimize use of resources for operations, tour operators give highest economic gains to local communities, tour operators adopt sustainability principles for tourism activities, tour operators reduce harmful impacts on environment, tour operators use local suppliers on the basis of sustainable practices, tour operators offer fresh and local foods, tour operators provide opportunities to shop local arts and crafts products and tour operators showcase local culture and social values, while, they are neutral with tour operators provide larger social benefits to local communities and tour operators give local accommodations.

4.3. PRACTICES OF TOUR OPERATORS FOR DEVELOPMENT OF SUSTAINABLE TOURISM AND PERSONAL FEATURES OF DOMESTIC TOURISTS

The combination between practices of tour operators for development of sustainable tourism and personal features of domestic tourists is illustrated below..

4.3.1. Practices of Tour Operators for Development of Sustainable Tourism and Gender

The combination between practices of tour operators for development of sustainable tourism and gender of domestic tourists is illustrated in Table-3.

Table-3. Practices of Tour Operators for Development of Sustainable Tourism and Gender

Gender	N	Mean	Standard Deviation	t-Value	Significance
Male	131	37.21	4.10	4.410**	.000
Female	119	40.97	3.86		

** Significant in 1% level

Mean value of practices of tour operators for development of sustainable tourism for male and female domestic tourists are 37.21 and 40.97 successively. This explains that practices of tour operators for development of sustainable tourism are good for female in compare with male domestic tourists.

The t-value is 4.410 and it displays that significant difference is there between practices of tour operators for development of sustainable tourism and gender of domestic tourists.

4.3.2. Practices of Tour Operators for Development of Sustainable Tourism and Age

The combination between practices of tour operators for development of sustainable tourism and age of domestic tourists is illustrated in Table-4.

Table-4. Practices of Tour Operators for Development of Sustainable Tourism and Age

Age	N	Mean	Standard Deviation	F-Value	Significance
21 – 25 years	34	36.85	5.26	5.356**	.000
26 – 30 years	78	37.56	3.97		
31 – 35 years	87	38.86	3.37		
36 – 40 years	51	40.35	3.97		

** Significant in 1% level

Mean value of practices of tour operators for development of sustainable tourism for domestic tourists in 21 – 25 years, 26 – 30 years, 31 – 35 years and 36 – 40 years are 36.85, 37.56, 38.86 and 40.35 successively. This explains that practices of tour operators for development of sustainable tourism are good for domestic tourists in 36 – 40 years of age in compare with others.

The F-value is 5.356 and it displays that significant difference is there between practices of tour operators for development of sustainable tourism and age of domestic tourists.

4.3.3. Practices of Tour Operators for Development of Sustainable Tourism and Education

The combination between practices of tour operators for development of sustainable tourism and education of domestic tourists is illustrated in Table-5.

Table-5. Practices of Tour Operators for Development of Sustainable Tourism and Education

Education	N	Mean	Standard Deviation	F-Value	Significance
Higher Secondary	39	36.66	4.85	5.732**	.000
Diploma	58	37.40	4.70		
Under Graduation	83	38.69	4.63		
Post Graduation	70	40.90	4.17		

** Significant in 1% level

Mean value of practices of tour operators for development of sustainable tourism for domestic tourists with higher secondary, diploma, under graduation and post graduation are 36.66, 37.40, 38.69 and 40.90 successively. This explains that practices of tour operators for development of sustainable tourism are good for domestic tourists with post graduation in compare with others.

The F-value is 5.732 and it displays that significant difference is there between practices of tour operators for development of sustainable tourism and education of domestic tourists.

4.3.4. Practices of Tour Operators for Development of Sustainable Tourism and Monthly Income

The combination between practices of tour operators for development of sustainable tourism and monthly income of domestic tourists is illustrated in Table-6.

Table-6. Practices of Tour Operators for Development of Sustainable Tourism and Monthly Income

Monthly Income	N	Mean	Standard Deviation	F-Value	Significance
Rs.20,001 – Rs.30,000	48	35.42	4.81	5.924**	.000
Rs.30,001 – Rs.40,000	68	37.39	4.75		
Rs.40,001 – Rs.50,000	85	38.91	4.39		
Rs.50,001 – Rs.60,000	49	40.38	3.88		

** Significant in 1% level

Mean value of practices of tour operators for development of sustainable tourism for domestic tourists in monthly income of Rs.20,001 – Rs.30,000, Rs.30,001 – Rs.40,000, Rs.40,001 – Rs.50,000 and Rs.50,001 – Rs.60,000 are 35.42, 37.39, 38.91 and 40.38 successively. This explains that practices of tour operators for development of sustainable tourism are good for domestic tourists in monthly income of Rs.50,001 – Rs.60,000 in compare with others.

The F-value is 5.924 and it displays that significant difference is there between practices of tour operators for development of sustainable tourism and monthly income of domestic tourists.

4.3.5. Practices of Tour Operators for Development of Sustainable Tourism and Marital Status

The combination between practices of tour operators for development of sustainable tourism and marital status of domestic tourists is illustrated in Table-7.

Table-7. Practices of Tour Operators for Development of Sustainable Tourism and Marital Status

Marital Status	N	Mean	Standard Deviation	t-Value	Significance

Married	196	40.94	3.66	5.649**	.000
Unmarried	54	36.68	4.75		

** Significant in 1% level

Mean value of practices of tour operators for development of sustainable tourism for married and unmarried domestic tourists are 40.94 and 36.68 successively. This explains that practices of tour operators for development of sustainable tourism are good for married in compare with unmarried domestic tourists.

The t-value is 5.649 and it displays that significant difference is there between practices of tour operators for development of sustainable tourism and marital status of domestic tourists.

4.4. RELATION BETWEEN PRACTICES OF TOUR OPERATORS FOR DEVELOPMENT OF SUSTAINABLE TOURISM AND LEVEL OF SUSTAINABLE TOURISM DEVELOPMENT

The correlation analysis is employed to investigate relation between practices of tour operators for development of sustainable tourism and level of sustainable tourism development and the result is illustrated in Table-8.

Table-8. Relation between Practices of Tour Operators for Development of Sustainable Tourism and Level of Sustainable Tourism Development

Particulars	Coefficient of Correlation
Practices of Tour Operators for Development of Sustainable Tourism and Level of Sustainable Tourism Development	0.58**

** Significance in 1% level

The correlation coefficient between practices of tour operators for development of sustainable tourism and level of sustainable tourism development is 0.58 and it makes clear that both are positively and moderately related with each other.

V. CONCLUSION

The findings of this study explicate that the domestic tourists are agreed with tour operators minimize use of resources for operations, tour operators give highest economic gains to local communities, tour operators adopt sustainability principles for tourism activities, tour operators reduce harmful impacts on environment, tour operators use local suppliers on the basis of sustainable practices, tour operators offer fresh and local foods, tour operators provide opportunities to shop local arts and crafts products and tour operators showcase local culture and social values. Significant difference is there between practices of tour operators for development of

sustainable tourism and personal features of domestic tourists. Level of sustainable tourism development is positively, significantly and moderately related with practices of tour operators for development of sustainable tourism. Thus, tour operators should provide larger social benefits to local communities and they must give local accommodations to tourists. Further, tour operators should encourage environment responsible behaviour of tourists and they must be harmonious with production and consumption activities and nature.

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