Research Article

Demystifying The Nature of Tourism Through Social Sustainability Lens: A Literature Review

Ms. Neha Mishra[1*], Dr. Anindya J Mishra[2]

[1*]Ph.D. Research Scholar, Department of Humanities and Social Sciences, Indian Institute of Technology, Roorkee, Uttarakhand, India, Email: neha.mishra1293@gmail.com, ORCID id. 0000-0001-8654-7581
[2]Professor, Department of Humanities and Social Sciences, Indian Institute of Technology, Roorkee, Uttarakhand, India, Email: anindya.mishra@gmail.com

ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT
	The specific goal of this research is to provide a contribution to the social sustainability aspect of tourism, which has received little attention in discussions about sustainability. Regarding the evaluation, interpretation, and conceptualization of social sustainability in the context of tourism, there is no universal agreement. Furthermore, this study aims to comprehend the ways in which social sustainability has been conceived and implemented within the framework of sustainable tourism. The paper looks at how the scant research on social sustainability has underemphasized the significance of social sustainability in tourism and concentrated on socio-cultural components. It also demonstrates how the literature on social sustainability is more dispersed, since various academic disciplines have attempted to understand the notion in different ways, resulting in a variety of conceptualizations of social sustainability.

Introduction

There is a close connection between the ideas of sustainable development and sustainable tourism (Saarinen, 2006). Sustainable development is viewed as nature-friendly, nature sensitive and has become a guiding principle across the globe (Zeman, 2013). Sustainability is comprised of three interconnected objectives: social, environmental, and economic sustainability (Goodwin, 2001). Economic sustainability emphasis on creating prosperity and mainly focuses on cost and benefit analysis of various economic activities. In this sense, environmental sustainability deals with protecting the natural environment and managing renewable resources for future generations. The third aspect of sustainability, i.e., social sustainability stresses on creating equal opportunities for all human beings and protecting their rights. In the longer run, it is emphasized that sustainability should treat all three aspects equally.

Sustainable development focuses particularly on the interdependence and equal treatment of these aspects. However, as per the literature reviewed so far, the situation that prevails in reality, is different. Literature suggests that the term "social" was added later. The social pillar has received very less attention as compared to other dimensions- environment and economic (Cuthill, 2009; Keitsch, 2010; Woodcraft, 2012). For example, Pearce and Barbier (2000) have argued that in the blueprint for a Sustainable Economy, several chapters are dedicated to environmental and economic sustainability and there are just a few pages that deal with social sustainability.

Murphy and Price (2005) viewed that sustainable development principle has also been applied to tourism as well. When it comes to tourism. Nasser (2003) emphasized the tourism should become sensitive towards environment, i.e., it's viable for the economy and as well as culturally appropriate for society, if it really wishes to contribute to sustainable development. Nonetheless, there is a distinction between the actual perception of tourism and the idea of sustainable tourism (Trousdale, 1999). Likewise, Teo (2002) states that sustainable tourism has not been investigated rather the only thing that has been stressed upon is that the tourism is in imbalance state and that needs to be addressed.

Nevertheless, it has to be understood that social sustainability is a crucial aspect of sustainability as other two aspects i.e., environmental and economic sustainability issues cannot be addressed by people until and unless their essential basic needs are fulfilled and the social impacts are taken care of (Vallance et al., 2011). At the same time, the achievements of the economy and environmental sustainability depend on social sustainability of tourism as both environmental and economic sustainability can only be achieved if there is a participation

of all stakeholders and support from the groups (Hall & Lew, 1998). The crucial elements of social sustainability are participation from individuals, and equal distribution of opportunities and maintenance of cultural diversity and fulfilment of basic needs (Colantonio, 2007). Social sustainability as a concept is significant as it places people at the centre in sustainability issues that reflects the deeper relationship between people, environment, and economy, and therefore can help in bringing sustainability in the area of tourism in true sense.

The research firstly examines the changing nature of tourism in global and Indian context and addresses the need for sustainable tourism thereof. Secondly, the concept of sustainable tourism concerning international and national context is discussed and debated. Thirdly, the field of social sustainability has been reviewed and lastly, some empirical studies are discussed.

Social Sustainability in Tourism in the Global Context

Increasing locals' standard of living, creating amenities for both tourists and locals, and making sure the development types align with the government's and the host area's cultural, social, and economic philosophies are all components of community involvement that should be present in tourist development (McIntosh et al., 1995, p. 342). Muller (1994), who presented the "magic pentagon" of sustainable tourism, made a compelling case for the inextricable connections between the happiness of locals and that of tourists. The five pillars of sustainable tourism—economic health, local population well-being, visitor/tourist satisfaction, preservation of natural resources, and preservation of local culture—are assumed to be in harmony by the magic pentagon. The destination and its community determine the extent to which tourists' influences, which may be both positive and harmful, manifest (Travis, 1982; Smith, 1990). We have classified the affects into four main groups. To start, it's possible that the destination community may alter due to tourism. When prices go up, it usually hits young people and those with lower incomes the hardest. More well-off populations may eventually displace the indigenous inhabitants, especially if patterns of land, company, and property ownership continue to shift. Furthermore, unless minimal visitor numbers are sustained, tourism often detracts from a destination's amenity value, which therefore impacts locals' quality of life in several ways. There may be positive effects from newly constructed or improved facilities, infrastructure, recreational options, and employment, and negative consequences from changes like a decline in environmental quality and "engineered" alterations to the destination's physical character. Economically, the destination town might feel the pinch of opportunity costs and new tourism-related businesses popping up. Restructuring often changes a community's economic character as a result of job and entrepreneurial opportunity effects. In relation to these elements, a destination's character may vary in a variety of ways: people live faster, which brings new options and more complicated ways of existence. New infrastructure and buildings, more traffic and crowding, more entertainment options, and higher usage of public amenities are all side effects of tourism. Local governments, and by extension, taxpayers, often foot the bill for infrastructure upgrades to meet the demands of an influx of visitors.

Concerns over the proper planning of destinations to maximize fair benefits for local populations and minimise negative consequences have been raised by the fast rise of tourism in developing nations. A. Silva; G. Silva, V. (2010) Opponents of traditional protected area (PA) design argue that it is inefficient, immoral, and not focused on the local community, which in turn causes problems including resource scarcity, tensions between PA officials and residents, and the forced removal of locals. There is a growing consensus that ecotourism-a more sustainable kind of tourism can significantly improve local communities' quality of life and environmental footprints (Garzelli, 2013). Olsen examined the role of public participation (PP) in the Greenland's offshore oil exploration and found that stakeholders' differing views on PP's purpose led to disagreements over what constituted successful performance and the ideal degree of involvement (Alonso, 2020).

Using three separate case studies, Frazer et al. determined how participatory procedures affected the establishment of sustainability indicators and environmental management. In addition to providing useful databases for management decision-making, the results imply that defining and collecting sustainability indicators presents a chance for community empowerment. If decision-making platforms do not explicitly include multi-stakeholder procedures, stakeholders and policy-makers may disregard them. McAlpine (2006) explores the significance of BESR in the tourist sector, drawing attention to the interplay between the built and natural environments as well as the people who work in them. In addition, it delves into the importance of research-policy partnerships in fostering socially inclusive planning procedures within urban forestry. As part of its Neighbour Woods initiative, researchers from all around Europe examined different methods of public engagement in urban woodlands. Factors including preexisting dispute, public sentiment toward the forest, and perceived risks influence the public's readiness to engage. A policymaker's openness to participating is contingent upon their own political goals, their level of familiarity with public involvement procedures, and their faith in the facilitators. Malik, M. (2021) goes on to talk about how difficult it is for the European people to become involved in technical and scientific matters like agricultural biotechnology. Efforts by state authorities to address public problems via participatory exercises have been underappreciated. In order to examine these processes, the article proposes integrating theories of critical technology, deliberative democracy, performative encounters, and neoliberal governance. These authors also argue that tourism has the potential to do double-edged swords: damage culture and save the downtrodden. Taking into account the responsibilities of communities, businesses, NGOs, and the government, it seeks to present, define, and analyse the idea of CBTIs. Sustainable urban design, according to Mado et al. (2010), relies heavily on public input,

especially in the case of protected landscape regions. Local agents, stakeholders, and the general public are encouraged to take part in decision-making via the Malveira da Serra and Janes Plan's public involvement process.

In their 2012 study, Mutti et al. investigate how CSR programmes have affected Argentina's mining sector. Using two case studies of contentious mining operations, the article lays forth a framework for CSR policies that aim to resolve conflicts. In cases of poor governance, the research found that networks of social and institutional stakeholders often fought against the voluntary self-regulation that CSR implies. To create competitive tourist destinations, spatial planning and sustainable tourism are important, according to Risteskia et al. (2012). There will be major repercussions for the economy, cultural identity, and the environment as a result of the expansion of tourist markets and locations. All parties involved in developing tourist offerings and mitigating overpopulation concerns must adjust, according to the publication. To measure the standard of living on tiny volcanic islands, Petrosillo et al. (2013) suggest a set of subjective social-environmental indices. The research emphasizes that quality of life is greatly influenced by the mix of natural and social capital, and that these two factors alone do not provide a complete picture. Cantador et al. (2020) suggests a computational method to explore online digital platform citizen engagement by characterising specific topics and discussions using data mining methods. This method shows that voters are in favour of measures that target huge majorities, while they are against other crucial concerns that impact minority groups. When it comes to nature-based solutions which try to boost health and wellbeing via green infrastructure the research also stresses the need of good communication, participation, and feedback. Participation from stakeholders and citizens in nature-based solutions is becoming more and more acknowledged as a promising strategy, according to a survey of 142 articles by Ferreira et al. (2020). Nevertheless, there is a dearth of research in relevant fields.

Sustainable Tourism in India's Context

Within the context of India, the tourism sector continues to be the backbone of the country's economic prosperity. India's tourism industry is built on a variety of natural features, including rivers, mountains, and a rich religious legacy. This makes the tourism sector a promising industry with an enormous capacity for growth. There are lots of challenges that are emerging with the growth of tourism industry in India. For instance – NITI Aayog Report (2018) highlights that with the development of mass tourism in Indian Himalayan region, has resulted into severe stress on the ecosystem and ecology as well as on social structures of the local people. The report also highlights the need for an action-oriented path. With the growth of mass tourism in India, there has been an expansion of hotels, infrastructures and road networks which have added to the stress. Kasim (2006) explained how tourism has negatively impacted the physical as well as social environments. He has focused on the role of joint participation among government, non-government organizations and hospitality sector for sustainable development of the tourism sector. The negative impacts of tourism made the government think about the tourism policy that can encourage and promote sustainable tourism and can be seen in various Five-Year Plans. In the tenth five-year plan (2002-07), the Incredible India campaign was launched. Public support and legislative support were seen as essential for sustainable development of sustainable development. Later, the Twelfth Five Year Plan (2007-12) came up with sustainable tourism criteria for India. Plan emphasised the need for participation of various stakeholders like government authorities, local people and the private sectors. The government also came with the National Tourism Policy 1982, 2002 and 2015.

Social Sustainability Field

As already discussed above that social dimension in sustainable tourism has been neglected and is least recognized. In the last 10 years, McKenzie (2004) pointed out that the scholars have started focusing on social sustainability dimension by engaging themselves in defining the term. Dempsey et al. (2009), that theoretical concept of social sustainability is unclear. It is so because the concepts on which the social sustainability pillar stands such as- community, inclusiveness, society, themselves lack clear and clarifies the definition. Despite various definitions, an all-encompassing definition is still lacking. Various scholars have defined it differently. Coming to indicators of social sustainability, Vallance et al. (2011) elaborated on the socially sustainable pillar by including key elements like-social homogeneity, employment, cultural and political sustainability and so on. Social sustainability conceptualizations are often accused of not being rooted in theory. Here, Littig and Griessler (2005) consider basic needs like food, housing, healthy environment and also incorporate other elements like-education, recreation, self-fulfilment, and social relationships. They also stress the role of 'work.

Empirical studies related to socially sustainable tourism

Zhang et al.(2017) in their work in China studied the social aspect of the tourism by using comparative case studies of Hakka Tourism destinations. They explored the factors that led to ethnic tourism in China that were socially sustainable. Factors that were involved are-the extent of involvement by the local communities, benefits that are received by ethnic community control of the tourism product and authenticity considerations. They tried to highlight the importance of public sector policy with due attention to its democratic character and effectiveness. They also emphasize that social sustainability needs that local people are involved in decision making and management. This will lead to meaningful tourism planning and will assist local people in becoming informed decision-makers.

In another study conducted by Aspinall et al. (2012), in their work in British Columbia tried to assess the quality of life and social sustainability in British Columbia. The study examined how an assessment of the quality of life can contribute to social sustainability analysis and lead towards sustainable community development. This also emphasizes the role of diversification and support of social capital by drawing the inter-linkages between social sustainability and social capital in tourism destinations. They argue that quality of life has the potential to make contributions in making social capital in socially sustainable tourism. Similarly, Brouder (2013) in his study in Sweden also emphasises that policymakers need to embrace tourism development as tourism can act as a catalyst for the development of social capital, which is crucial for the overall development of sustainable tourism.

Stephanie Hess in her work has analysed the social aspect of sustainable tourism on Easter Island. She also analysed the perception of stakeholders on social sustainability and sustainable tourism. Still, local people lack behind in participating and managing tourism in their area.

Soriya Yin (2016) in her work in Malaysia has analysed how different stakeholders like government, industry and civil society organizations have conceptualized sustainable tourism. Using a snowball sampling technique, the study throws light on how our knowledge and understanding of how policymakers and practitioners perceive sustainable tourism in developing countries and what are the challenges they face in implementing them. They identify challenges like - poor maintenance, poor transportation connectivity, water pollution, and limited collaboration governance. Residents felt that their concerns are not incorporated in decision making by the policy-makers. At the same time, they also face walkability problems, parking problems, and waste disposal problems in their life.

In case of India's context, Mathew and Sreejesh (2017) in their work have tried to examine the impact of sustainable responsible tourism on the quality of life. In addition to these studies, there are other studies too which examine how social-cultural sustainability is still lacking in sustainable tourism studies. For example- a study conducted in Holland by Tamara Rátz (2000) in Hungary identified how studies on tourism's impact have been restricted to the environment and economic aspects and still socio-cultural impacts are under-researched as largely socio-cultural impacts are seen as indirect impact of tourism and are often difficult to measure.

Significance of the Study

This research contributes towards the research on social sustainability with respect to tourism. This research can have practical implications for policy makers and decision-makers of local government in particular and state and central government in general as social sustainability can have a positive impact on local communities by improving their quality of life. If policies are made without taking into account the dimension of social sustainability, benefits that are derived from such policies may be inequitably distributed, then, it may lead to social exclusion and inequality in society. At the same time, when social sustainability dimension is taken into account, it will promote higher levels of participation by the communities and also combat the social exclusion. Furthermore, the achievement of the other two elements of sustainability—economic and environmental sustainability—requires the engagement of all stakeholders as well as the backing of other groups.

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