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**A STUDY ON THE IMPACT OF ENVIRONMENTAL
AWARENESS ON THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIO-
CULTURAL DIMENSIONS OF SUSTAINABLE
TOURISM**

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Keywords

*Sustainable tourism,
Sustainability,
Responsible tourism*

Abstract

Purpose: Economic, socio-cultural and environmental awareness aspects play a crucial role in the sustainability of the tourism sector worldwide. The research aimed to analyze the impact of environmental awareness on economical & socio-cultural attributes of sustainable tourism.

Methodology: The research work is a social science research that has applied both the methods of data collection i.e., primary & secondary sources. Responses were collected using the convenient non – probability sampling technique. For testing of hypotheses, a Parametric test of Regression was applied.

Findings: The researcher concluded that all three dimensions are interrelated and have a significant impact on each other. Economic, Socio-cultural and environmental awareness are the most important three pillars for sustainable and responsible tourism development goals.



1. INTRODUCTION

The essence of sustainable tourism aims to balance economic growth with environmental protection and social responsibility, ensuring that tourism activities contribute positively to local communities while minimizing the adverse effects on the environment and cultural heritage. Sustainable tourism strives to create long-term benefits for all stakeholders involved, including local residents, businesses, visitors and future generations.

In the year 1988, the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) defined: “Sustainable tourism development meets the needs of present tourists and host regions while protecting and enhancing opportunity for the future. It is envisaged as leading to management of all resources in such a way that economic, social, and aesthetic needs can be fulfilled while maintaining cultural integrity, essential ecological processes, biological diversity, and life support system.” [WTO 1998:19]

After further studies and research in the year 1992, at Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, during the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) ‘Earth Summit’, three-layered principles of conservation and environmental awareness, socio – economic sustainability were discussed and recognized. Therefore, these principles of sustainable tourism were adopted by the tourism industry all over the world. The Ministry of Tourism, Government of India also adopted the same principles for environment conservation and awareness among travellers.



Figure 1: Sustainable Development Goals: United Nation’s Agenda by 2030 (Source: <https://www.unwto.org/tourism4sdgs>)

It highlights the importance of integrating tourism practices with the broader framework of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) to ensure a holistic and sustainable approach to tourism development. This approach emphasizes the interconnectedness of various aspects of sustainability, including economic prosperity, environmental conservation, social inclusion, and cultural preservation all of which are essential for achieving the SDGs.

2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Khan, Khan & Khan (2022) stated the consequence of economic, socio-cultural & environmental aspects of sustainability on the satisfaction of the local residents along with the SDGs of the tourism industry. *Maichum, Parichatnon & Peng (2016)* studied, identified and analyzed the construct of environmental awareness in maintaining sustainability towards purchasing recyclable, green and eco-friendly products among buyers and tourists. *Cottrell, Vaske & Roemer (2013)* analyzed and provided constructs and statements for the various factors and dimensions of sustainability in the tourism sector. *Florek (2012)* in her study applied and highlighted the principles of sustainable development that will reduce and prohibit the adverse impacts of tourism and thus promote responsible, sustainable and eco-friendly tourism. The paper also considers the three dimensions of sustainable tourism i.e., economic, environmental, and socio-cultural dimensions which can be achieved by effective planning and management of tourism. *Kulshreshtha (2012)* studied that the promotion of rural tourism destination projects has substantially changed the lives of the local community and their way of earning. Also, there has been efficient and effective use of prevailing natural resources for the purpose of sustainable tourism. *Yazdi (2012)* highlighted in her study the use of various factors of sustainable tourism. The study also indicated that sustainable tourism can be applied as an instrument to evaluate and implement overall growth and tourism development.

3. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- (i) To analyze the impact of environmental awareness on economical and socio-cultural attributes of sustainable tourism.

4. HYPOTHESES OF THE STUDY

- (i) H₀ – There is no significant impact of environmental awareness on the economic dimension of sustainable tourism.



H₁ – There is a significant impact of environmental awareness on the economic dimension of sustainable tourism.

(ii) **H₀** – There is no significant impact of environmental awareness on the socio-cultural dimension of sustainable tourism.

H₁ – There is a significant impact of environmental awareness on the socio-cultural dimension of sustainable tourism.

5. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study is descriptive and analytical social science research. Both primary and secondary data have been utilized and applied in this study. The researcher prepared an online questionnaire. The researcher gathered primary sources of information from 162 respondents using convenient non-probability sampling technique. The secondary data has been collected from published journal articles, conference proceedings, reports, websites, e-data, etc. For testing of hypotheses, a Parametric test of Regression was applied.

6. IMPACT OF SUSTAINABLE TOURISM

Sustainable tourism brings a myriad of benefits to local communities. Firstly, it introduces new sources of income by attracting visitors who patronize local businesses and services. Moreover, it generates employment opportunities for residents, thereby bolstering the local economy. By promoting local products and crafts, sustainable tourism opens up new markets and avenues for economic growth. Its positive economic impact extends further, as sustainable tourism contributes significantly to the overall economic prosperity of a region.

Additionally, sustainable tourism plays a pivotal role in fostering cultural appreciation and preservation. It encourages the celebration and continuation of local traditions and customs, enhancing cultural values within the community. Furthermore, sustainable tourism supports the maintenance and restoration of tourist sites, ensuring their longevity and cultural significance for future generations.

One of the distinguishing features of sustainable tourism is its harmonious coexistence with the environment. By adopting eco-friendly practices and minimizing resource consumption, sustainable tourism endeavours to protect and preserve natural landscapes and ecosystems. As a conscientious

tourist committed to reducing consumption and respecting environmental conservation efforts, one can actively contribute to the sustainability of tourism destinations.

The positive effects of sustainable tourism extend beyond the economic and environmental realms. It enhances the attractiveness of areas by preserving their natural beauty and cultural heritage, ultimately improving the overall quality of life for residents. Thus, sustainable tourism serves as a catalyst for holistic development, fostering prosperity, cultural richness, and environmental stewardship within local communities.

Several phases to follow in the sustainable tourism technique as responsible travellers:

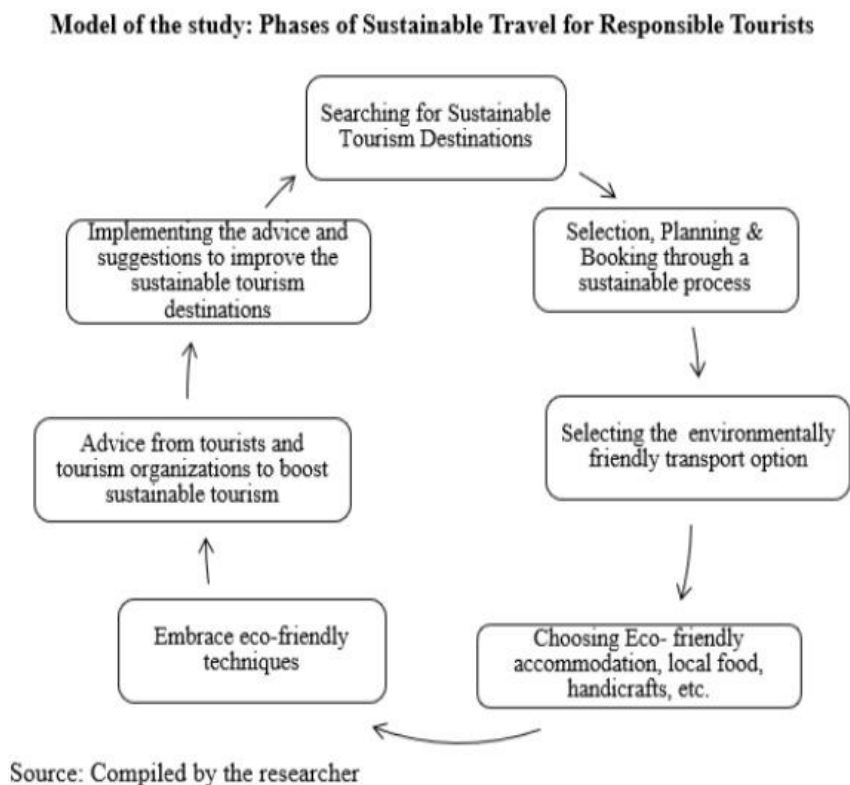


Figure 2: Model of the study: Phases of Sustainable Travel for Responsible Tourists

Thus, the researcher designed a model for this paper that aims to promote and make tourists and various tourism organizations to embrace and follow the initiative of sustainable tourism for the benefit of future generations.

7. TESTING OF HYPOTHESES

7.1 1st Hypothesis of the study

Table 1: Parametric Test – Linear Regression 1st Hypothesis

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.598 ^a	.357	.353	.40092

a. Environmental awareness Dimension

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1 Regression	14.303	1	14.303	88.986	.000 ^b
Residual	25.717	160	.161		
Total	40.020	161			

a. Economic Dimension

b. Environmental awareness Dimension

In this case, $R = 0.598$, indicates a positive relationship between environmental awareness and economic indicator of sustainable tourism. The standard error shows a standard deviation between the data points and the fitted value. As the ANOVA table shows the significance value is 0.000 which is less than the P – Value 0.05, it can be predicted that the model is a significantly fit. This proves that there is a significant impact of environmental awareness on economic dimension of sustainable tourism. Therefore, the researcher fails to accept the null hypothesis and accepts the alternative hypothesis.

7.2 2nd Hypothesis of the study

Table 2: Parametric Test – Linear Regression 2nd Hypothesis

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.728 ^a	.530	.527	.33697

a. Environmental awareness Dimension

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1 Regression	20.446	1	20.446	180.067	.000 ^b
Residual	18.167	160	.114		
Total	38.613	161			

a. Socio-cultural Dimension

b. Environmental awareness Dimension

In this case, $R = 0.728$, indicates a strong positive relationship between environmental awareness and socio-cultural dimension of sustainable tourism. The standard error shows a standard deviation between the data points and the fitted value. As the ANOVA table shows the significance value is 0.000 which is less than the P – Value 0.05, it can be predicted that the model is a significantly fit. This proves that there is a significant impact of environmental awareness on the socio-cultural dimension of sustainable tourism. Therefore, the researcher fails to accept the null hypothesis and accepts the alternative hypothesis.

8. LIMITATIONS

- a. This study has been conducted in the Mumbai region only, so the findings and conclusions might not be universally accepted.

- b. If different other statistical tests and tools are applied, the results might have variations.
- c. Time and resources constraints.

9. CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

The researcher concluded that all three dimensions are interrelated and have a significant impact on each other. Economic, Socio-cultural and environmental awareness are the most important three pillars for sustainable and responsible tourism development goals. Selecting a sustainable tourism destination provides tourists with a sensible attitude towards all phases of their travel.

The suitable and beneficial available method to prevent, preserve and maintain tourism destinations from damage and destruction in terms of environmental and socio – cultural manner would be to apply the principles of sustainability. Sustainable Tourism development is a combined effort of the private sector, along with multiple numbers of contributors and organizations as well as the Government. The efforts and determination of all the representatives and supporters of tourism, together with the travellers and residents will determine whether there would be an overall positive or negative impact of tourism on the environment. The researcher concluded that all three dimensions are interrelated and have a significant impact on each other. Economic, Socio-cultural and environmental awareness are the most important three pillars for sustainable and responsible tourism development goals.

“While the strong performance of developed nations is encouraging, as developing countries grow in prominence as tourism destinations, they will take on a greater role in driving sustainability in this field, worldwide.” – *Sustainable Innovation Forum, Europe, January 2018.*

The researcher concluded that sustainable tourism will be more ideal and feasible economically, provide ecological continuity and be socially acceptable in the near future.

10. CONFLICT OF INTEREST: Nil

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