ECOTOURISM IN ANDHRA PRADESH PROMOTION & PROSPECTS FOR SUSTAINABLE TOURISAM FROM A SERVICE PROVIDERS PERSPECTIVE

Dr. M. S. R. Seshagiri¹, Dr. Y. Rama Krishna², Dr. Kuppili Sudeshkumar³, Dr. K. V. Nagaraj⁴

¹Professor, GVP College for Degree and PG Courses, Dept. Of BS(Engineering), Rushikonda, Visakhapatnam
²GRIET, Nizampet, Hyderabad
³Sr. Assistant professor, Department of management studies, Gayatri Vidya Parishad college of Engineering (A)
⁴HOD- M.Com Program, GVP College for Degree and PG Courses

Email: drsudesh@gmail.com
DOI: 10.47750/pnr.2022.13.506.248

Tourism plays a significant role in today’s modern economic structure and is been a key driver in social progress. This sector has been identified as the only sector that involves a majority percentage of populace, directly or indirectly, for earning a decent livelihood. This reflects the fact that the tourism is fast turning into a volume game where an ever-burgeoning number of participants are pushing up revenues of industry players (hotels, tour operators, airlines, shipping lines, etc) and thus offers an interesting investment opportunity for long term investors. In this paper we through a light on the service provider perceptions on various parameters relating to their satisfaction on their revenue, Eco tourism and its sustainability. Primary data was collected from 379 Service providers, the data was analysed and the findings and suggestions were made.

Abstract

Tourism plays a significant role in today’s modern economic structure and is been a key driver in social progress. This sector has been identified as the only sector that involves a majority percentage of populace, directly or indirectly, for earning a decent livelihood. This reflects the fact that the tourism is fast turning into a volume game where an ever-burgeoning number of participants are pushing up revenues of industry players (hotels, tour operators, airlines, shipping lines, etc) and thus offers an interesting investment opportunity for long term investors. In this paper we through a light on the service provider perceptions on various parameters relating to their satisfaction on their revenue, Eco tourism and its sustainability. Primary data was collected from 379 Service providers, the data was analysed and the findings and suggestions were made.

Keywords: Eco Tourism, Sustainability, Perceptions and satisfaction.

INTRODUCTION

Ecotourism is one of the prominent emerging forms of tourism that has attracted many researchers and policy makers alike to analyse the righteous contributions made in the field of tourism development. Being recognized as one of the largest service industries in the world, Tourism, with the de-regulation of the airline industry, coupled with technological advancement, emergence of e-commerce and demographic changes continues to generate direct and indirect jobs which in turn increase the GDP across the world economy (Hui et. al, 2007).

Although, a tourist is an important constituent in the tourism industry, there are other elements such as tour operators, government officials, and local peoples who often join together for delivering services for tourists. Unlike conventional tourism, ecotourism involves a fair degree of interaction with these elements and these interactions help develop appropriate strategies for the development of tourism industry. Such strategies are assumed to be focused on environmental sustainability, benefits for local people, and also providing better services to tourists.

Attracting tourists, with a fair profile, is always a challenging factor in tourism industry. A mass inflow of wealthy tourists might not suffice to solve various problems associated with the tourism industry as envisaged during the last two decades. For overcoming challenges in the tourism industry, there is a desperate need for designing comprehensive strategies that encourage tourists to spend more time and money on a specific destination.

Stewart and Sekartjakrarini (1994) have distinguished two schools of thought concerning the activity of ecotourism: One is descriptive and investigates that which ecotourists actually do; the Second School is normative and investigates that which ecotourists should do. Given that different definitions will have different normative implications and practically, it is difficult to rigorously maintain a distinction between descriptive and normative approaches.
Khan et al. (1995), Lee and Kwon, (1995) and Lim (1997) have observed tourism’s positive contribution to the economic growth and their study discussed the development of tourism has usually been considered as positive element for economic growth.

Kim et al (2007) examines the role of tourism as the short run economic development of nation like Pakistan through error correction model and the causal relationship which is expected to be strong with positive relationship among tourism, receipts and economic expansion that means the economic expansion is necessary for tourism development at Pakistan.

Ashley et al. (2007) suggested that inter sectoral impacts are substantial and make up about 60 to 70 percent of earnings in the industry in developing economies, in addition to the direct effects of tourism.

Jamal & Stronza (2009) have viewed that Urgency, the third attribute, refers to the ability of stakeholders to act in collaboration. Power alone is insufficient, legitimacy is necessary to enable authority and urgency is required for execution.

Further, Jamal & Stronza (2009) pointed out that the method of attribute analysis is generally used to identify current stakeholder collaboration; it not only demonstrates the relationship between the attributes of the stakeholders, it also clearly shows how each stakeholder attribute compares with others. This is what can lead the process of stakeholder collaboration within tourism and protected areas. Researchers like Berezina et al., (2012) also mentioned the impact of information security breach on hotel customers in the US.

Chan and Lam (2013) studied the gap between managers and guests. This study also discussed the importance of safety and security training for staff, the acceptance of high-tech safety and security systems and the need for female guest floors, and also provided a number of insights to help hotel managers to understand more clearly the needs of their customers, thereby allowing them to employ measures that are likely to keep customers’ satisfied.

Szymanska (2013) found that tourists visiting national parks demonstrate lack of understanding of sustainable tourism, but attempt to behave, as environmentally aware as they can. Further, she states that a set of general rules for the tourism economy, e.g., organizations, tourism companies and local authorities, could facilitate the implementation of sustainable development and explains the framework of biosphere reserves that seems to meet the regulatory necessities of sustainable development.

Peter et al. (2014) suggested about the preparedness for an attack, and also assessed the attitudes and approaches to risk management in relation to terrorism attack in New Zealand during Rugby World cup event.

Mohan (2014) explains that the government needs to come out with different set of rules for the midmarket, economy and budget categories, otherwise it will not be sustainable for these segments. He further says that, the entire cost structure for these segments is different, the tariff structure is different, the investment structure is different and also the ability to return on investment is altogether of a different nature. He further stated that, there has to be some differentiation in government policy to attract more investment.

In a speech dated 27 August 2015, Datuk Seri Najib Razak, the Prime Minister of Malaysia had quoted that, “Our renowned Malaysian hospitality and culture of service, our rich national heritage, our cultural diversity and of course, now more than ever, the value for money that foreign tourists will experience in Malaysia compared with many other destinations because of the exchange rates. All of these are huge selling points that need to be amplified and communicated across all channels to drive up tourism numbers.”

Anwar (2016) have brought out different benefits of tourism in today's context, those are (i) Rest and Recuperation - Taking rest from everyday life and get relieved from the stress of societies, tourism as diversion or compensation to holiday destinations is what may be called holiday or vacation travel, which is focused on resorts and beach holidays, both domestic and international, (ii) Escape-Tourism provides an opportunity to escape from everyday reality and to enter into an imaginary world of freedom, (iii) Communication- tourism, provides an opportunity to spend quality time with family and friends.

According to the United Nations World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO) Tourism Barometer, between January and August, 2017, destinations worldwide welcomed 901 million international tourist arrivals. According to the Secretary General of UNWTO, Taleb Refai, Tourism is a major economic engine and employment generator, contributing to the improvements of livelihoods of millions of millions of people around the world.
Henthorne & George (2017) revealed that prior exposure to destinations of eco-cultural importance leads to more desirable Ecotourism for sustainable development (ESD) or ecologically sustainable tourism development for the remaining part of a holiday trip. Environmentally and socio-culturally sensitive tourists are less likely to leave negative footprints upon destinations. Since destination carrying capacity is a function not only of tourist numbers but also of the intensity of tourist actions, a destination can afford to receive a higher number of low impact tourists.

Study Frame:

The State of Andhra Pradesh lies between the Latitudes of 12°41' & 22°N and Longitudes of 77° & 84°40'E. The geographical area of the state is 1,62,440.1 kms with 974 kms of Coastal Line. The Total Notified Forest Area of the State is 36914.69 kms which is 22.73 percent of the geographical area which includes Reserved, Protected- and Un-classified forests. The state has three Physiographic Zones viz., (i) The Hilly Region including Nallamalai and Erramalai Hills (ii) The Eastern Ghats having an altitude of 500 to 1400 meters and (iii) The Plateau having an altitude of 100 meters to 1000 meters and the Deltas of Rivers between the Eastern Ghats and the Sea Coast. The 3-Principal Rivers of the State are the Godavari, the Krishna and the Pennar and the Climate is generally dry with Temperature ranging from 30°C to 50°C and the annual rainfall is of about 500-1300 mm, received mainly from South-West and North-East Monsoons. The State of Andhra Pradesh, a tourist paradise, is rich in culture and heritage, with a wide array of ancient sculptured temples, scenic hill ranges, unexplored forests and endless beaches. The state is home for diverse flora and fauna inhabiting varied eco-systems ranging from semi-evergreen forests, moist-deciduous, dry-deciduous, coastal mangroves and fresh water to brackish water eco-systems.

The wild life, caves and museums continue to fascinate visitors over the years and there are three National Parks and thirteen Wild Life Sanctuaries in the State. The forests of Andhra Pradesh are blessed with a rich Bio-diversity and mostly deciduous in nature and its canopy density widely changes in different months.

Healthy Economic Growth and Rising Income Levels

Favorable growth in the Indian economy, rise in middle class population (National Council of Applied Economic Research (NCAER) Study: number of middle class households expected to increase from 31.4 million in 2010 to 113.8 million by 2025-2026) and increasing levels of disposable income with increased affinity for leisure travel, are some of the driving forces. Apart from this a growing recognition of tourism's contribution to employment and economic growth is the cause of growth of tourism industry in India. The availability of better infrastructure, focused marketing and promotion efforts, liberalisation of air transport, the growth of online travel portals, growing intra-regional cooperation and more effective Private Public Partnerships (PPPs) are also seen as key drivers for tourism development in the next decade.

Changing Consumer Lifestyles

With more than 65 per cent of the Indian population falling in the age group of 15-64 years, Indian travellers are more open to holidays and are keen to explore newer destinations. More than half of the planned budget of Ministry of Tourism is channelised for funding the development of destinations, circuits, mega projects as well as rural tourism infrastructure projects. (www.huffingtonpost.in)

Diverse Product Offerings

Indian tourism, with a wide range of diverse offerings such as rural, medical, pilgrimage, adventure and various other forms is driving the growth at a rapid pace. For instance, to facilitate the development in health and nutrition trade, Indian government has initiated a fresh category of visa - the medical visa or M visa and thus, making medical tourism in India to take leaps and bounds. Short term medical visa under existing E-Tourist scheme, is included.

Easy Finance Availability

Increased adoption of credit culture and availability of holidays on Equated Monthly Instalments (EMI) is another growth driver for expansion of tourism industry in India. Identifying the tremendous growth potential many reputed Indian Corporates like Mahindra & Mahindra, Tata have ventured upon creating tourist destinations and incessantly marketing the tourists to visit their locations on EMI basis.
Rich Natural/Cultural Resources and Geographical Diversity

With 28 world heritage sites, 25 bio-geographic zones along with a 7000 km long coastline India abounds in natural resources and offers a rich cultural heritage through multiple religions, traditions, fairs and festivals.

Government Initiatives and Policy Support

Rise in FDI in the tourism sector is providing fillip to its growth. Policy initiatives such as 100 per cent FDI, proposals for extension of visa on arrival scheme to a larger number of countries and a five year tax holiday for 2, 3 and 4 star category hotels located around notified areas by UNESCO World Heritage among others are expected to drive future growth. A renewed focus, under Make in India initiative, on skill development in the travel and tourism sector is enabling more tourist inflow and thus resulting in revenue improvement. The central government has established about 21 hotel management and catering technology institutes and 10 food craft institutes to impart specialised training in hoteliering and catering. The government’s initiative to rechristen Tourist Visa on Arrival (TVoA) as Electronic Travel Authorisation (ETA) on 15th April, 2015 has given a boost up to the tourism industry. Presently, with 150 countries accessing ETA a significant positive impact is expected with further policy changes on foreign tourist arrivals in India. (www.ibef.org)

Some of the major initiatives taken by the Government of India to give a boost to the tourism sector of India are as follows:

- The Central Government has taken a number of steps for smooth transitioning to cashless mode of payment to ensure that no hardship is faced by the tourists and the tourism industry remains unaffected from government's demonetization move.

- Maharashtra Tourism Development Corporation (MTDC) has come up with a unique tourism experience of visiting the open cast coal mine of Gondegaon and underground coal mine of Saoner, which are near Nagpur and part of Western Coalfields Limited.

- A quadrilateral Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was signed among the Indian Ministry of Tourism, National Projects Construction Corporation (NPCC), National Buildings Construction Corporation (NBCC) and Government of Jammu and Kashmir for the implementation of tourism projects in Jammu and Kashmir.

- The Ministry of Tourism has approved projects worth Rs 450 crore (US$ 67.10 million) under the Swadesh Darshan scheme, for the improvement and creation of tourism infrastructure in Madhya Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Tamil Nadu, Uttar Pradesh and Sikkim.

- The Union Cabinet has approved an MoU between India and South Africa, aimed at expanding bilateral cooperation in the tourism sector through exchange of information and data, establishing exchange programmers and increasing investments in the tourism and hospitality sector.

- The Union Cabinet has approved the signing of Memorandum of Understanding among the Ministry of Tourism of India and the Ministry of Trade, Industry and Tourism of Colombia in order to enhance cooperation in the field of tourism between the two countries.

- The Central Government has given its approval for signing of a MoU between India and Cambodia for cooperation in the field of tourism with a view to promote bilateral tourism between the two countries.

- The Heritage City Development and Augmentation Yojana (HRIDAY) action plans for eight missions cities including Varanasi, Mathura, Ajmer, Dwarka, Badami, Vellankini, Warangal and Amaravati have been approved by HRIDAY National Empowered Committee for a total cost of Rs 431 crore (US$ 64.27 million)

Host Nation for Major International Events

India is fast emerging as the preferred nation for hosting of major international events such as the Commonwealth Games held in 2010. Meetings, Incentives, Conventions and Exhibitions (MICE) tourism is on a rise on account of increased business travel in India. The Government of India is committed to host many of the international events in sports to film with an aim to increase the inflow of tourists to India.
Growth Drivers of Ecotourism in India

Ecotourism is one of the fastest growing segments of tourism in India, and is situated in the natural settings of the traditional homelands of indigenous peoples. Unique cultures and traditions of native people at ecotourism locations have been a great learning and attracting feature to many a visiting tourist. Nevertheless, uncertain, unexpected, and undesired cultural impacts may result when tourists and native people directly interact with each other. Further, ecotourism that does not respect traditional values and customs or over exploits, may cause undesired cultural impacts and consequently endanger the indigenous culture. Accordingly, it is crucial to understand ecotourism-induced cultural impacts and the mechanisms that work to create cultural impacts from ecotourism. But little research provides explanations for the mechanisms forming ecotourism-induced cultural impacts.

Impact of Ecotourism on Indian Economy

Ecotourism refers to ecologically sustainable tourism to areas having ecological and biological diversity or is of environmental interest to ecologically conscious individuals. Generally speaking, the definition of Ecotourism varies. This makes Ecotourism an important sector of the tourist industry, and the United Nations estimates that the sector will contribute 28% of the world's tourism revenues in 2020. Precise definitions vary, but the United Nations' Food and Agriculture Organization defines the term broadly as "tourism and recreation that is both nature-based and sustainable." Some deem tourism to ecologically sensitive or interesting areas as Ecotourism, while some define it as a responsible tourism which aims at to minimize the damage caused to the environment through tourism. In India, Ecotourism is popular in national parks and sanctuaries, amongst others. It also emphasizes on taking care of the natural environment and often involves local people in the provision of tourist facilities, but has both positive and negative impacts.

Positive Impact of Ecotourism

- Ecotourism acts as a deterrent to poaching as a steady flow of tourists hampers the secretive activities of poachers, and provides no scope for collusion between forest officials and poachers,
- This kind of tourism creates an interest and awareness among the people about India’s native flora and fauna. It acts as a forum to educate and encourage conservation efforts,
- Boosts economic development in areas surrounding reserves through sustainable development,
- Increases the revenue derived from tourism,
- Facilitates preservation of native culture,
- Creates various avenues of employment opportunities for the locals and
- Encourages participation of local community in protecting and conserving the area where they reside

Negative Impact of Ecotourism

The substantial economic benefits that are being derived from Ecotourism has resulted in excessive commercialization that has resulted in flagrant violation of rules, guidelines etc that have been put in place for protecting the environment and the rights of the people

- Ecotourism propels only basic conservation of flora and fauna that is sufficient to attract tourists. In reality, it does more harm than good. The tourists arrive in and ride around the parks in vehicles which pollute the environment and scare the animals. The incessant flow of tourist disturbs the animals. Also, the garbage, such as plastic bottles etc. left by the visitors is a prime concern to environmental degradation
- To cater to the increasing demand for Ecotourism, land around parks and sanctuaries is being cleared through deforestation, displacement of people etc. to accommodate hotels, resorts etc.
• Mismanagement of Ecotourism sites causes more harm than any little good that Ecotourism bring about.

• Ecotourism takes away regular livelihoods from the locals, and in return provides them with low-paying subordinate positions in the resorts etc that are established. No viable, long-lasting employment opportunities with scope for growth are provided to the locals.

SWOT Analysis of Indian Tourism

The Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT) of the Indian Tourism are analysed, keeping in view the challenges thrown up by competing nations. And as also understood from the feedback received from different sources, discussed above, are elaborated below.

Strength

• India has a huge cluster of destinations of varied types, more than what many countries have to offer together at a collective level.

• A rich story which offers a unique combination of past and present, which includes architecture, culture, modern amenities and facilities as well.

• Some products like “Rural Tourism” are unique in nature, which no other country has thought of or imagined of.

• A wonderful promotional campaign which has attracted attention of millions of globe trotters across the world.

Weakness

• Lack of co-ordination amongst the states as well as centre in promoting destinations/ products. The Centre, as well as, the state promotes destinations independently. Such multiplicity creates confusion in the minds of the foreign tourists visiting / willing to visit India as where should to start from?

• Compared to South East Asian Countries, Indian visa procedure is very lengthy.

• Lack of appropriate infrastructure in certain airports shy away the foreign airlines.

• Inappropriate connectivity amongst certain prime destinations within the country is another concern. For instance, the Air fares between certain domestic destinations within the country are equivalent or somewhat more than connecting flights abroad.

• Maintenance of quality accommodation in major destinations across the country is a serious concern. Expensive room tariffs, normally eats up considerable proportion of a foreign tourist’s budget.

• Climate of certain locations, within India being tropical in nature, considerable hindrance is viewed in marketing those places as a “365 day destination” unlike major South East Asian countries, which have geared up their infrastructure to deal with this type of climate.

Opportunity

• India as a destination provides “value for money” compared to the other South East Asian as well as South Asian nations.

• India offers diverse kinds and types of destinations, as a complete package, compared to the South East/ Far Eastern countries that promote one or two themes/ products.

• India has a wide base of English speaking population a major advantage, compared to the South East Asian nations.
• Booming economy, growing foreign investment in the major sectors has prompted immense flow of foreigners in recent times. Word of mouth has promoted Indian Tourism on the whole.

• The International events like the Commonwealth Games in New Delhi in the year 2010 presents India with a platform to attract more and more foreign visitors.

Threat

• During 2008 Olympics, China had developed its infrastructure keeping in mind with plans to use this event as a major event in attracting tourists. The Beijing – Lhasa railway line is an important indicator in this direction.

• Proactive and systematic marketing efforts of the comparatively smaller South East Asian nations and their focus on developing tourism centered infrastructure. Off late, Sri Lanka is actively promoting it’s tourism resources ith focus mainly on its natural resources (sprawling beaches, evergreen forests, tea gardens)

• Dubai is aggressively marketing itself as a major tourism destination. The world’s most ambitious project, the Dubai waterfront is shaping up to be a major tourist attraction of the world, which on completion is likely to draw scores of tourists to witness this engineering marvel.

Relationship between Ecotourism and Sustainable Tourism

Ecotourism, in rural orientation changes from tourists to the host community. It is an agent of change and provides well done, a positive outlook for economic and social development and the environment. The relationship between the principles of ecotourism and sustainable development are shown in Fig. 1 below. Ecotourism is an activity based on the natural environment and its virtues and educational implications for tourists and locals are managed properly and sustainable. Sustainable management refers to the community and the environment. The consequences are products, jobs, education etc. Strategic objectives of sustainable development, ecological safety and social inclusion mean incorporating to a certain extent, ecotourism in national and transnational development strategies.

Figure-1: Relationship between Ecotourism and Sustainable Tourism

Source: Dowling R.K (1999), Tourism & Sustainability: Principles to Practice
RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study is an attempt to gather the opinions of local residents of Rampachodavarm, Coringa Wildlife Sanctuary, Maredumilli areas of East Godavari district, Horsley Hill, Kaundilya Wildlife Sanctuary of Chittoor district and Krishna Wildlife Sanctuary, Ethipothala Waterfalls of Guntur district of Andhra Pradesh by using a structured questionnaire. As a whole, 379 questionnaires were distributed amongst the different age group of people starting from 20 years to above 70 years, covering diverse economic conditions. Out of 379 distributed questionnaires, total 332 were collected bank and rest 47 were either not returned or incomplete and thus not considered for the study. Hence, a total of 332 responses were taken for analysis. Thus, 90.46% of respondents who are primarily the service providers to the tourists responded to this endeavor without hesitation. In this chapter the data thus collected through questionnaires from different economic and age group of service providers were thoroughly scrutinized, tabulated and analyzed and interpreted.

The data for the present study has been collected from both secondary and primary sources.

The collected data has been tabulated and organized segment-wise and category-wise. The Statistical Package for the Social Sciences version 20.0 (SPSS 20.0) was utilized for analyzing the data. The data so classified are analysed and interpreted suitably by using statistical tools like Percentage Analysis, Factor Analysis, Multiple Regression Analysis, Analysis of Variance (ANOVA), t-test, F-test, Pearson(r), Spearman rho, etc.

COMPREHENSIVE OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

After analyzing the research gaps, the study proposes the following objectives:

1. To test Eco-tourism’s environmental impact on the sustainable tourism development in East Godavari, Guntur and Chittoor districts of state of Andhra Pradesh.

2. To study the relationship that exists between the improved infrastructure and sustainable tourism development due to promotion of eco-tourism in Andhra Pradesh.

3. To study how the Government’s policy for sustainable eco-tourism will be helpful for attaining sustainable tourism development in Andhra Pradesh.

4. To study whether the improvement in the standard of living has an impact on the sustainable tourism development.

5. To examine whether Tourists’ evaluation of destination attributes is the most important indicator of overall tourist satisfaction bringing sustainability in tourism sector in Andhra Pradesh.

TESTING OF HYPOTHESES

Table 2: TABULAR OUTLINE OF HYPOTHESIS TEST RESULTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SL. NO.</th>
<th>OBJECTIVES</th>
<th>NULL HYPOTHESIS</th>
<th>RESULT</th>
<th>ACCEPT/REJECT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>To study the advertisement and promotional aspects of ecotourism and its effect on the sustainability of tourism in Andhra Pradesh with specific reference to East Godavari Guntur and Chittoor region.</td>
<td>Advertisement and promotion of eco-tourism do not significantly help in attaining the sustainability in tourism in Andhra Pradesh.</td>
<td>P&lt;.05 (0.000&gt;.05) The result is statistically Significant</td>
<td>Rejection of Null hypothesis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Major Findings of Service Providers/Local Residents:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>---</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Following are the major findings from the service providers who are playing major role to attract tourists to the eco tourism destination:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1. It is observed that total 379 numbers of questionnaires were actually distributed among the various age group of both male and female respondents.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. It is observed that, 332 respondents (Local residents/service providers) were taken into consideration to find their business engagement, that reveals largest of among 87 respondents have 3-5 years of business in the eco-tourist places of East Godavari and their percentage is highest amongst all with 26.20%.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3. It is observed that the respondents (Local residents/service providers) those who were covered in the research having more than 15 years of business operations were of 38 in numbers that count to 11.45%. A total of 13.25% of respondents were of 10-15 years’ experience in business followed by the 1-year experience businessmen who constitute 14.46% of the total.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### MAJOR FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

Major findings of Service Providers/Local Residents:

Following are the major findings from the service providers who are playing major role to attract tourists to the eco tourism destination:

1. It is observed that total 379 numbers of questionnaires were actually distributed among the various age group of both male and female respondents.

2. It is observed that, 332 respondents (Local residents/service providers) were taken into consideration to find their business engagement, that reveals largest of among 87 respondents have 3-5 years of business in the eco-tourist places of East Godavari and their percentage is highest amongst all with 26.20%.

3. It is observed that the respondents (Local residents/service providers) those who were covered in the research having more than 15 years of business operations were of 38 in numbers that count to 11.45%. A total of 13.25% of respondents were of 10-15 years’ experience in business followed by the 1-year experience businessmen who constitute 14.46% of the total.
4. The data collected from the respondents (Local residents/service providers) brought out an interesting fact that more than 40% respondents were of business experience for more than 3 years and less than 10 years. But in specific 17.77% of respondents were of business experience for 5 to 10 years.

5. The point out that the measures taken by the service providers to grow their business. It reveals that out of 332 responses, 94 responses indicates the growth in turnover they consider a parameter that indicates the growth of their business. The increase in employment overhead was considered to measure the business growth by 41 respondents that count 12.35%. About 20.48% number of respondents considered Increase in customer base is required to measure the growth of their business.

6. It is observed that only 35 respondents out of 332 which count 10.54% consider gross profit is the measure of business growth. About 16.27% i.e. 57 respondents consider an increase in productivity helps in business growth, which is the pictorial representation of the table-5.2 that describes the factors that help to measure the growth of business amongst the service providers.

7. It can be observed that most of the service providers at different tourist destinations of the three selected Districts of Andhra Pradesh employee’s 3-5 people that count to 104 numbers. But 59 number of respondents pointed that the people they employ work with them for more than 8 years this counts 17.77%. 97 respondents point out; they have people working with them for more than 2 years.

8. It is seen that, the age is one of the important factors which influence the success of any business. The table-5.5 describes the age of the service providers in which the highest 27.71% are the service providers of age group 41 to 50.

9. It is visualized that, the respondents from 51-60 years of age constituted merely 13.55% and the respondents of age group 61-70 constituted 7.53% of total population of 367.

10. It is observed that out of 332 respondents who are service providers 45 were from 51-60 age groups, 36 are from under 20 age groups, 74 were from 36-50 age group and 57 were from 17-77 age group.

11. It was noted that the information that 13.55% of respondents were from the age group of 51-60 years, while 10.84% were from under age group of fewer than 20 years. At the same time, 27.71% of respondents were from the age group of 41-50 years while 7.53% were from 61-70 years of age.

12. This research covered the responses of the service providers of seven eco tourism destinations where the study was carried out in East Godavari, Guntur and Chittoor districts of Andhra Pradesh. A total of 165 (49.69%) respondents were from east Godavari district, 63 (18.97%) respondents from Chittoor district and 104 (31.32%) respondents from Guntur district were taken randomly. Out of 165 respondents 62 are from Rampachodavarm, whereas 46 and 57 respondents were from Coringa Wildlife Sanctuary and Maredumilli respectively. Similarly, in two eco-tourism places of Chittoor district i.e. Horsley Hill and Kaundilya Wildlife Sanctuary, 35 and 28 samples were taken. Further, in Guntur district 61 respondents from Krishna Wildlife Sanctuary and 43 sample from Ethipothala Waterfall eco-tourism destination.

13. It is observed that 35 respondents are less than High School, no diploma qualification, 47 respondents have completed their High School, diploma, or equivalent, 14 respondents have college credit qualifications that are not degrees, 17 respondents are found having Trade/technical/vocational training, 47 respondents have completed their Associate degree, 82 respondents have completed their Bachelor’s degree, 25 and 32 respondents were found they have Master’s degree, Professional degree respectively and 12 respondents were of Doctorate degree.

14. The information about employment status of the service providers. Highlights out of total 100% respondents 10.54% are employed for wages which make 35 numbers of respondents, 41.27% i.e. 137 respondents are Self-employed, 10.54% i.e. 35 respondents are part time Self-employed, 7.53% i.e. 25 respondents are from student category, 14 i.e. 4.22% respondents are unable to work.

15. It can be observed that out of 332 respondents 80 respondents constituted people belong to less than Rs. 10,000 P.M income group. Highest 29.82% respondents belong to Rs.10,000 P.M to 20,000 P.M income group. At the same time, the smallest size of respondents was found to be more than Rs.50,000/- P.M income group who were of 24 in numbers and it constituted 7.23% of the total respondents.
16. A cursory glance reveals the information about the years of business operations. The Table shows that 40 respondents have business operations for Less than 1 year, at the same time it is found that 15.36% i.e. 51 respondents have 1-3 years of experience. Highest 36.14% i.e. 120 respondents are involved in business activities for 3-5 years, 47 i.e. 14.16% of respondents are involved in business for 5-10 years, 32 respondents are found to be involved in business for 10-15 years, it is further observed that 12.65% i.e. 42 respondents are involved in business for more than 15 years.

17. Factor analysis was conducted to assess the dimensionality of the 20 items divided into six category levels. All exploratory factor analysis were initially performed using the principal axis factoring method and Varimax rotation with the Kaiser Normalization. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure of sampling adequacy was computed to quantify the degree of inter-correlations among the variables. If the KMO measure of sampling adequacy is larger than 0.6, it illustrates that the use of factor analysis is appropriate.

18. It is observed from the descriptive statistics i.e. presented in the analysis that all the 20 (twenty) sustainability attributes were positively evaluated by the service providers. In contrast, attributes, such as, promotional strategy for local business attracting foreign and local tourists, foreign aid to improve the infrastructure, infrastructure development and its impact on the business, government’s clear and elaborated policy, dedicated tourism development etc. i.e total eighteen out of twenty had the highest mean values (above an average 3.11) and were positively marked by the service providers.

19. The F-ratio in the ANOVA tests the overall regression model is a good fit for the data or not. The table shows that the independent variables statistically significantly predict the dependent variable, $F (6,325) = 2061.090$, $p < .0005$ (i.e., the regression model is a good fit of the data).

20. The scree plot graphs presented in the analysis informs about the Eigenvalues against each factor. It is observed from the graph that after factor 6 there is a sharp change in the curvature of the scree plot. This shows that after factor 6 the total variance accounts for smaller and smaller amounts.

21. A closer look at the standardized beta values in the above table reveals that the factor F3 i.e. 0.459 is contributing highest towards the sustainability of ecotourism followed by F1 and F2 with .233 and .155 level of importance and impact respectively. Whereas factor F5 and F4 found to have positive influence i.e. 0.131 and 0.102 respectively but at decreasing rate and factor F6 has the lowest importance i.e. 0.006 as far as sustainability of ecotourism in the state of Andhra Pradesh is concerned.

22. It is observed from the research that the unstandardized coefficients indicate how much the dependent variable varies with an independent variable when all other independent variables are held constant. Consider the effect of F1 i.e. advertisement and promotion in this example. The unstandardized coefficient, $B_1$, for F1 i.e. advertisement and promotion is equal to 0.231.

23. It is observed from the fact that for each increase in advertisement and promotion, there is an increase in the level of sustainability by 0.231 points. But in case of the unstandardized coefficient, $B_1$, for F3 i.e. Improved Infrastructure and increase in flow of foreign currency and F6 i.e. Improvement in Standard of Living are equal to 0.454 and 0.006 respectively.

24. It is observed that, the positive unstandardized beta value means that for each increase in Improved Infrastructure and increase in flow of foreign currency and Improvement in standard of living, there is an increase in the level of sustainability by 0.454 and 0.006 points.

25. Testing of Hypotheses with the use of Multiple Regression Method brought out the following facts, are as follows:

26. There is no statistically significant relationship that exists between the advertisement and promotion of eco-tourism and attainment of sustainable tourism in Andhra Pradesh.

27. There is no statistically significant relationship that exists between the eco-tourism's environmental impacts in attaining the sustainable tourism in Andhra Pradesh.

28. There is no statistically significant relationship that exists between the improved infrastructure and sustainable tourism development due to promotion of eco-tourism in Andhra Pradesh.
28. There is no statistically significant relationship that exists between the local community satisfaction and sustainable eco-tourism in Andhra Pradesh.

29. There is no statistically significant relationship that exists between the government's policy for sustainable eco-tourism and sustainable tourism development in Andhra Pradesh.

30. There may be a statistically significant interrelationship exists between the standard of living and sustainable eco-tourism in Andhra Pradesh.

Major findings towards the Tourists:

Following are the major findings relating to the tourists visiting the eco tourism destinations.

1. It can be concluded from the figure-5.16 that 16.96% of respondents were from the age group of 51-60 years, while 17.41% were from the age group of 20-30 years. At the same time, 23.66% of respondents were from the age group of 41-50 years while 10.49% were from 61 and above years of age.

2. It is observed that, highest numbers of tourists were from business amounting to 26% of the respondents. At the same time the arrival of the students and the retired government servants were of little more than 8 percent. While 18.75% of the respondents were employed with governmental organisations.

3. It can be described from the table-5.20 that out of 448 respondents, 87 respondents constituted people who belong to less than Rs. 30,000 P.M income group. Highest 28.13% respondents were from Rs. 30,001 P.M to 40,000 P.M income group. At the same time the smallest size of respondents were found to be more than Rs.60,000/- P.M income group who were of 76 in numbers and it constituted 16.96% of the total respondents.

4. It can be seen from the table-5.21 and the figure-5.19 that out of 448 respondents 250 are male and rest 198 female visiting the eco-tourist places.

5. It can be inferred from the table-5.22 that 16.52% of respondents have received the information about the eco-tourist places of East Godavari from their friends and relatives. The foreign tourists have received the information from internet and television. A total of 44 respondents earlier have the information about these places that constitutes 9.82%.

6. It is observed that books and guides are the best sources to inform the tourists. It is observed that, 51 touristers have received information about eco-tourism destinations from different books and guides and they constitute 11.38% of the total.

7. It can be concluded from the table-5.23 that the largest number i.e. 121 have organized their touring plans to different eco tourism destinations individually. It is observed that 74 respondents availed tour packages of private service providers that counts 16.52%. It is observed that, 37 respondents were from colleges and their tour was specifically an educational one and they constituted 8.26% of total respondents.

8. It is seen that, the highest number of tourist respondents were from other states and they constitute 30.80%, followed by the foreign tourists. It is observed that the foreign tourist respondents are 117 in number and they constitute 26.12%.

9. Regarding the mode of transportation used by the tourist respondents, it is revealed that car is considered the most convenient for the tourists. It is observed that the most of the tourists were using taxi followed by own car and the public transport is the most preferred mode of transportation for the tourist and its contribution is 17.19% second to car i.e. 30.13%. Train, Tourist Bus and motorcycle were also used by the respondents and they constitute 11.61%, 17.19% and 12.05% respectively.

10. It is observed that, the 147 tourist respondents were spending between Rs. 5001/- to Rs. 10000/- that constitute 32.81%. At the same time 30.36% of the respondents are spending less than Rs.5000/- during their stay at eco-tourism destinations. It is observed that merely 5.80% of respondents are only spending more than Rs. 30000/- during their stay at these eco-tourist places of study.
11. It is observed that the 141 tourist respondents were spending between 2-6 hours in eco-tourist places; that constitutes 31.47%. At the same time 7.14% of the respondents are spending more than one day at eco-tourist places in Andhra Pradesh. It is observed that merely 15.18% of respondents are only spending between 6-12 hours with night halt during their stay at these eco-tourist places of study.

12. It is observed that 95 respondents have come to this place for rest and relaxation and they constitute 21.21% followed by 55 respondents, those are visiting this place for fun constitutes 12.28%. It was also observed that 9.82% respondents are from the business category and they are here for business purposes and they constitute 44 numbers out of 448.

13. The study indicates that tourist evaluation of destination attributes is the most important indicator of overall tourist satisfaction.

**RECOMMENDATIONS & SUGGESTIONS**

Based on the findings, the recommendations and suggestions are given below.

1. Inventory should be made of primary tourism attributes and assets, including culture and heritage, wild life viewing, provincial parks, and adventure tourism locations;

2. The government should form a task force for the evaluation of existing infrastructure and gap analysis, including existing access opportunities and fly-in only desirability;

3. The government should consider and initiate developing a separate organization towards development and maintenance of ecotourism in the form of “Ecotourism Enterprise Development Council”.

4. The government should also develop methodology to assess the level of community interest in ecotourism enterprise development;

5. The government need to focus on developing checklist of requirements for viable ecotourism industry;

6. There should be an agreement on community tourism standards (i.e. environmental, social, and cultural considerations or concerns).

7. The government has to focus on advertising and promotion in publications that cater to nature lovers.

8. The government should take steps to create trained guides with local knowledge of forest plants, animals, including birds and other flora and fauna.

9. The government should take sufficient steps by arranging photography exhibitions to promote nature photography as a component of a comprehensive ecotourism package.

10. The efforts are to be made to increase viewing opportunities near hotels and lodges. Such efforts might include: setting out feeders for hummingbirds and seed-eating birds, planting fruit-bearing shrubs, or installing nest boxes for waterfowl, small owls, swallows, and other cavity-nesting birds.

11. The government must take all the steps to provide amenities to the tourists in the areas of dense forests that are more easily accessible to ecotourists than fly-in lodges. What makes fly-in lodges and communities unique is the opportunity to access areas away from highways and industrial activity access roads. In these remote areas, the stars and the aurora are not dimmed by city lights, and visitors can hear birds singing without a backdrop of traffic noise.

12. The government should take advantage of tourists’ interest and should speed up in emphasizing promotion of remote tourist areas as this remoteness and the pristine nature of the surroundings attracts the tourists to a great extent.
13. The government should keep in track of the mining and other industrial activities taking place in those areas. Thus the government should discourage any industrial activities in tourist sensitive places of Andhra Pradesh.

14. The government and the civil societies should take all the steps to make the local people aware about keeping the tourist destinations neat and clean.

CONCLUSION

Sustainability makes an industry lucrative. Tourism is no exception. This research makes an honest attempt to identify and analyse the ways and means to attain the sustainability, with special reference to ecotourism. The research highlights the impact of promotional activities initiated by the government and non-government organizations towards sustainable development of ecotourism in East Godavari, Guntur and Chittoor districts of Andhra Pradesh, India. Development of infrastructure, as rapid growing economic activity, adequate employment generation through tourism appeals to a State. To meet the needs of rapidly growing tourism sector, the government needs to assist the local people to get educated and it has to impart basic skills and abilities for better living. Ecotourism supports and supplement environmental preservation, rural development and cultural survival by facilitating tourists in their educational self-fulfilment and thus tries to transform this activity sensible for society at large.

Tourism as a key for modern society, that has surfaced as an economic activity of huge global importance. From this research it is observed that this sector has been identified as the only sector that involves a majority percentage of populace directly or indirectly. This reflects the fact that the tourism sector has found a niche for itself as an efficient mechanism that facilitates overall economic development.

This research points out that the term ecotourism is by common view that the present governments whether local or national are highlighting on community-based ecotourism ventures, but it is difficult to replicate the same in every area. It is commonly observed that the approach of community-based ecotourism is based on a development perspective. The community-based ecotourism rests upon increasing the social, environmental and economic goals, and meeting the needs of the host population by improving the short- and long-term living standards. It is this belief that community-based approach to ecotourism validates the need to promote both the quality of life of people and the protection of nature. Sustainable tourism discussed in this research emphasizes on sustainable development as being the optimal use of social, natural, cultural and financial resources for national development on an impartial and self-sustaining basis. It is also believed that the sustainable development helps to provide a unique visitor experience and an improved quality of life with the help of partnerships among local government, private sector and local communities. This research comes with the view point that the tourism industry can have adverse environmental, economic and social effects on the host region and the people who live in those regions. This research has strongly advocated for the specific requirements of infrastructure development for tourism as it acts as a tool for regional development.

SCOPE OF FURTHER RESEARCH

The present research covered the promotion of ecotourism in Andhra Pradesh and ways and means it extends and helps to attain the level of sustainability. The promotion of ecotourism in Andhra Pradesh has witnessed growth in various areas of the economy that one can make a study on. There is scope for further research in the following areas.

1) Further research can be carried out to test the impact of lack of infrastructure on the sustainability of tourism.

2) Sustainability of tourism can be achieved with the help of other variables too like; environment, educational upliftment of the local people, attitude of the people etc. thus, further research can be carried out to test the impact of these variables.

3) A dedicated research can further be done on the effect of absence of separate contingent staff for tourists on attaining the level of sustainability of tourism.
4) This research was carried out taking East Godavari, Guntur and Chittoor districts of Andhra Pradesh. Thus, further research can be carried out to test other eco-tourist areas of Andhra Pradesh too.

5) This research is concentrated to Andhra Pradesh only. Thus, there is an ample opportunity to study other State too on the similar line.

6) In this research the service providers, who are the local residents, were taken as the respondents. Thus, further research can be carried out to test the perception of the local residents, who are not the direct service providers to the tourists.

7) This research has used both service providers and the tourists. Thus, it opens up an area in which the research can be carried out in which any one category of the two can be considered as respondents and the total research can be carried out taking on them into account singularly.

8) This research has brought that the improvement in the standard of living does not have any impact on the sustainable tourism development in Andhra Pradesh. Thus, the further research can be carried out why standard of living does not have any impact on the sustainable tourism.

REFERENCES