

Valley's Destinal Challenges: A Sustainability Analysis Through Customer Satisfaction

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ABSTRACT

Sustainability management is emerging as a global paradigm for understanding the world besieged by grand challenges (GCs). It envisions the 'development' as shifting present unfavorable conditions towards the needs of next generations by providing systematic empirical evidence along policy implications about their formulation, development, and implementation. The present research study is an attempt to address how management philosophy-praxis can be applied to address pertinent such grand challenge contextually. Sustainability represents the societal development and evolution in the direction of a wealthy and more comfortable world where the natural environment and cultural accomplishments are reserved for future generations (Dyllick, Hockerts, 2002). Sustainability management priorities, the responsible use of natural resources, the socio-environmental impact of activities, and, the management of growth and development. It incorporates the understanding of pressure on the various resources like land, infrastructure, and biodiversity, the protection of heritage and the preservation of indigenous socio-cultural integrity. In addition to benefiting future generations, sustainability delivers value and financial gains in the present. The emerging paradigm of sustainable development is facing a challenge to keep the balance between economic growth and the imperatives of environment paying equal attention towards social inclusion to boost economy, environmental protection and poverty reduction. The paradigm of sustainable development is gaining its popularity at a very accelerating pace, and the need for its spatial and sectoral specification, has therefore made its application in development-growth of sustainable tourism imperative and critical. The idea of 'sustainable tourism' has undoubtedly popped up as the most notable influences in the sphere of tourism development, growth and analysis (Bramwell & Lane, 2011). The tourism industry is usually perceived as an instrument for the development of economy for the indigenous society and rendering the essential elements that can maximize the standard (quality) of life like tax revenues, opportunities regarding employment and investments, services like accommodation, restaurants and outdoor recreation and attractions towards betterment natural and cultural environments. The global tourism industry may prove as a strong engine of economy that can lead to increased welfare at lower social and environmental costs, in contrast other sectors of the economy. The objective is achievable when all the stakeholders in the industry manage all their destination resources efficiently and effectively. Otherwise, it will ruin the resource base of the destination with negative consequences not to the particular region but to the whole world. In every nation the responsibility for sustainable tourism development is shared by various types of actors, foreign and domestic commercial agents, local and tourists communities, public authorities' at all governmental levels – all are actors in the industry governance structure and have impacts on the sustainability performance of the one among the biggest sectors of the world. Sustainable tourism development needs the firm public policy, and strong democratic leadership of all stakeholders to make sure the wide participation and consensus building. To achieve sustainable tourism growth, it involves regular impact monitoring, introducing the preventive and/or corrective actions/measures whenever/wherever necessary. It must be a memorable experience to the visitors and also sustain a satisfaction of high level and aware them regarding sustainability issues and promoting sustainable tourism practices.

Key words: Development, Kashmir, Sustainability, Sustainable Tourism Development,

1. INTRODUCTION

The need and rationale of the study is to know the perception of foreign tourists in the valley that will help to achieve the sustainability development of the industry. A growing attention has been paid to the relationship

between destination attributes and the overall tourist satisfaction. The extensive literature review revealed that there are few studies investigating the relationship between destination competitiveness and sustainable tourism development through tourists' perceptions (Chen et al., 2011; Lin and Lin, 2011). The work in this area has not been done till date from the perspective about perception of foreign tourists in the state of Jammu & Kashmir. As the state of Jammu & Kashmir being the top most tourist destination in the world hence, with the help of this study various aspects about the tourism industry like environment, infrastructural services, lodging and boarding etc. will be evaluated and the valuable inputs regarding the revival or reconstruction of these factors can be obtained so that valley is transformed into the world class tourist destination and at the same time to take utmost care of the sustainability development that can improve satisfaction to the realized extent, in the coming public policy interventions regarding the tourism industry of the valley.

The perception of the foreign tourist is the strategic lens for analyzing the present state of the tourism industry to determine and arrive at the current status of the products and services offered in concurrence to the consumer desires, needs, and expectations. Thus, monitoring foreign tourist's satisfaction at the diverse levels would provide a valuable data framework for its understanding, evaluation and analyses. These results will help in the development of a comprehensive strategic plan for the public policy interventions in the tourism industry.

The literature-praxis depicts an extensive deficit about the present research problem under study. The research problem is under-researched in general and particularly in the context of Jammu and Kashmir. A customer satisfaction analysis is needed and the key drivers of tourists' satisfaction have to be identified in order to frame and implement a smart and effective public policy. The present study will be foundation milestone work in the tourism industry for the onward public policy endeavors towards future economic-analysis, social-inclusiveness and environmental-sustainability.

The present research study have the strategic public policy relevance and ramifications. The study could become a barometer of the 'health' of the tourism industry by developing the national competitiveness index that help in devising the mass communication products for development of the cross-cultural and international brand equity promotional campaigns. . The present study is particularly relevant in this case to national, state and regional tourism development bodies responsible for destination marketing. Using the level of satisfaction experienced of foreign tourists to the destination as a measure and provide justification for their economic, social and environmental, planning and budgetary commitments.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Since the term sustainable development evolved, various research scholars and academicians made remarkable efforts to further enhance the definition and scope of the sustainable development. A number of initiatives were taken at the international level for the sustainable development from 1972 (UN Stockholm Conference) to recently developed SDGs (UN Sustainable Development Summit, sets 17 Sustainable Development Goals). Sustainable tourism is the emerging as epicenter of the tourism development and analysis in the world.

Development connotes a process that makes an effort to meliorate the living conditions of people (Bartelmus, 1986). Increased wealth is not called the development rather it means a change – a change in aspirations, behavior and in the way which one understands the world around one (Dudley 1993). Development is round (Hapgood, 1969), and it includes human and institutional change as well as economic growth. Development also includes broader spheres of the quality of life such as educational attainment, nutritional status and spiritual welfare, access to basic freedoms, life expectancy and infant mortality (Pearce, Barbier & Markandya, 1990). Hence, while defining development, keen thrust must be laid upon socio-cultural and political relations thereby freeing it from the confines of technical engineering exercises. In addition to, the loci-stand of sustainable development must be to carry developmental achievements to the next generation in order not to lurch in the worse situations (Department of Environment, 1989; Pearce et al., 1990; WCED, 1987).

Liu (2013) focus on the specific definition of 'sustainability' that involves the very important role in grooming a steady progress of economies and conditions of living for future generations; sustainable development is highly process-oriented and accompanying with changes that are properly managed and cause betterment in the conditions of those who are involved in the same. It involves proper utilization or sustainable use of natural, built resources, and the environment that is only possible when it is fully understandable and manage the industry demand in a better way and the growth of sustainable tourism's contribution towards community and economy as a whole.

Lu and Nepal (2009) studied 15 years of the tourism literature from 1993 to 2007 and according to them, sustainable tourism no more intend to minimise the disorder in clean and pure destinations only, but as an application in a range of built and natural settings. Now, sustainable tourism is considered not a particular form of tourism product but a mission/objective that is to be achieved. Sustainable tourism plays a very significant role in making tourism policies that has been adopted by public and private sector at all levels of governance not only at the local or national level but also on the international level, the organisations like –the World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC), United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and United Nations World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO) (Hall, 2011).

The conception of sustainable tourism development from the last thirty years grew momentum in practical as well as in academic field, in light of the endorsement given to this concept, STD involved an important responsiveness in various studies and in the field of tourism in particular, it is one of the fast-growing areas of research studies in the

field of tourism. Hunter (1997) propounded that the sustainable tourism development paradigm is based on the principles that will protect and conserve the environmental resource base for tourism, meeting the needs of the local host community by improving their living conditions and quality of life; surrounded by the natural, built, and cultural components; and while continuing to attract tourists, satisfying the tourist demands and that of the tourism industry. The emphases of these principles is the primacy of meeting the needs of both tourists and local residents and at the same time pursuing conservation of the environment. Generally, concept of sustainable tourism development has attained widely accepted recognition as a desirable tourism development choice. The concept of sustainable tourism development recommends that the desires of hosts and guests (tourists) are the primary developmental considerations. Tosun (1998) sustainable tourism development must be accepted as development in all types of tourism products and makes it a noteworthy contribution and do not contradict the principles of development in an indefinite time without compromising the needs and desires of the future generation to come. Butler's (1993) sustainable tourism development offers a substantial contribution to glue the concept of sustainable tourism development with its parental terms. Butler stated in the context of sustainable development that tourism which is maintained and developed in a particular community and environment in such a way or at a scale which stays feasible over a very long period (unlimited) and does not destroy the environment or bars the well-being and successful development of other processes and activities. That is not the same as sustainable tourism, which may be thought of as tourism which is in a form which can maintain its viability in an area for an indefinite period of time. It is worth emphasizing that Butler has distinguished sustainable tourism development from sustainable tourism. In order to achieve sustainability, it is obvious that the economic benefits must be maximized to the local community and at the same time to minimise the social and environmental costs. Though, it is enormously difficult to achieve and not an easy task (Tosun, 2001).

Thus, sustainable tourism implementation and development is a process which results in an essential dialogue and policy-making process about better awareness in the business community of the requirements and contributions of the local population, a shift in attitudes across generations and sectors and the type of tourism development that a nation wishes to pursue (Bowman, 2011).

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research method incorporated is an exploratory one that was carried under quantitative approach to provide an explicit understanding about the perceptions of the foreign tourists within the parameter of sustainability management in the state of Jammu and Kashmir. The collection of data for the study was primary in nature and scope. The primary data was collected through an administered adapted questionnaire – QUALITEST (a statistically tested tool for measuring the satisfaction based on the perceived values during the visit to a destination). It is specifically designed by the National Tourism Best Value Management Group in England to provide the data necessary for thirteen of the Quality Perception Condition Indicators (QPCI) and the same tool is being used for the collection of data related to tourism activities in European countries across European Union and Scandinavian countries. Measuring tourists' satisfaction is conceptually different from measuring satisfaction at the transaction specific level (Aliman, khasimah et al., 2016). Johnson, Anderson et al., (1995) have distinguished between two different general conceptualisations of satisfaction: transaction-specific satisfaction and cumulative satisfaction. The former is concerned with 'satisfaction as an individual, transaction-specific measure or evaluation of a particular product or service experience' (Johnson, Anderson et al. 1995). Cumulative satisfaction, on the other hand, is 'a cumulative, abstract construct that describes customer's total consumption experience with a product or service' (Johnson, Anderson et al., 1995). As a customer's overall evaluation of the consumption experience, cumulative satisfaction is the most relevant conceptualisation when the focus is on the tourist's evaluation of their overall experience at a destination. The present research study will be measuring–cumulative experiences.

Indicators used for the present study

The set of satisfaction indicators used in the present research survey consist of:			
1)	Quality of communication on the destination received pre arrival	11)	Cleanliness of the local/Natural environment
2)	Transportation facilities	12)	Hygiene Cleanliness of bathing areas
3)	Quality and variety of Hotels/Accommodation	13)	Quality of air in the destinati
4)	Range and quality of things to do		
5)	Range and quality of places to eat and drink		
6)	Accessibility to tourist services		
7)	Quality of information on things to do in the destination		
8)	Safety and Security		
9)	Value of money in general		
10)	Friendliness of local population/Attitude of local people		

4. DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

The data collected during the data collection process was analyzed and interpreted to explore the perception of foreign tourists in Jammu and Kashmir State towards tourism industry based on the responses of respondents against the well-structured questions mentioned in the questionnaire. The statistical inference and logical analysis are used to study the indicators for understanding the perception of tourists towards sustainable tourism. The data was analyzed about demographic profile depicting information about gender, age, profession, stay period and nationality that further helps in analyzing the data set to extract a valuable and significant contribution of the present research study.

4.1. Demographic Profile

TABLE 1 Demographic Frequency Distribution

	CATEGORY	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
GENDER	Male	600	60.00%
	Female	400	40.00%
	TOTAL	1000	100.00%
AGE	18 to 28 years	40	4.00%
	28 to 38 years	160	16.00%
	38 to 48 years	460	46.00%
	48 to 58 years	120	12.00%
	Above 58 years	220	22.00%
	TOTAL	1000	100.00%
PROFESSION	Student	100	10.00%
	Employee	530	53.00%
	Businessman	120	12.00%
	Others	250	25.00%
	TOTAL	1000	100.00%
STAY PERIOD	1 to 3 days	672	67.20%
	3 to 7 days	193	19.30%
	7 to 15 days	96	9.60%
	15 days to 30 days	39	3.90%
	Above 1 month	0	0.00%
	TOTAL	1000	100.00%
NATIONALITY	Australia	20	2.00%
	Denmark	50	5.00%
	Finland	40	4.00%
	France	47	4.70%
	Germany	30	3.00%
	Greece	40	4.00%
	Indonesia	10	1.00%
	Korea	40	4.00%
	Lithuania	60	6.00%
	Malaysia	63	6.30%
	Nepal	40	4.00%
	Singapore	72	7.20%
	South Africa	79	7.90%
	Spain	30	3.00%
	Sweden	45	4.50%
	Turkey	20	2.00%
	UK	84	8.40%
	USA	40	4.00%
	Canada	10	1.00%
	China	35	3.50%
	Iran	18	1.80%
	Kuwait	21	2.10%
	Lebanon	21	2.10%
	Mauritania	22	2.20%
	New Zealand	20	2.00%
	Slovenia	17	1.70%
	Switzerland	11	1.10%

	Thailand	15	1.50%
	TOTAL	1000	100.00%

The demography frequency distribution TABLE 1 reveals majorly the respondents who made a visit to the state were males (60%). The ratio of the visitors was 3:2 (male: female). The table revealed that most of the tourists were adults, in the age group of 38-48 (46%). Most of the tourist inflow generated from employed sector (53%) followed by Businessmen (12%) thereby implying a chance for MICE tourism development. However, the stay duration was found to be short of 1 to 3 Days (67.20%). Short tenure means fewer available options to explore.

TABLE 2 Descriptive Statistics

INDICATOR	VERY POOR (1)	POOR (2)	PERCENTAGE OF NOT SATISFIED (1+2) / 1000	SATISFACTORY (3)		GOOD (4)	EXCELLENT (5)	PERCENTAGE OF SATISFIED (4+5) / 1000	TOTAL	MEAN	STANDARD DEVIATION
	FREQUENCY	FREQUENCY		FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE	FREQUENCY	FREQUENCY				
COM	0	0	0.00%	160	16.00%	450	390	84.00%	1000	4.23	0.705
TRNS	0	40	4.00%	160	16.00%	530	270	80.00%	1000	4.03	0.768
ACCM	0	40	4.00%	100	10.00%	310	550	86.00%	1000	4.37	0.821
TNGS	0	0	0.00%	180	18.00%	610	210	82.00%	1000	4.03	0.624
ETDK	0	40	4.00%	280	28.00%	510	170	68.00%	1000	3.81	0.758
ACCS	0	40	4.00%	320	32.00%	370	270	64.00%	1000	3.87	0.857
INFO	0	40	4.00%	300	30.00%	450	210	66.00%	1000	3.83	0.801
SESF	0	40	4.00%	160	16.00%	470	330	80.00%	1000	4.09	0.802
MONV	0	40	4.00%	140	14.00%	540	280	82.00%	1000	4.06	0.76
FRDP	0	0	0.00%	80	8.00%	330	590	92.00%	1000	4.51	0.641
CLNE	0	160	16.00%	160	16.00%	510	170	68.00%	1000	3.69	0.935
CLNB	0	100	10.00%	200	20.00%	330	370	70.00%	1000	3.97	0.985
QLTYA	0	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	250	750	100.00%	1000	4.75	0.433

TABLE 2 descriptive statistics, reveals the responses of Parameters/facilities, a tourist enjoys in the State and his/her evaluation of the same. It may be noted that none of the tourist who visited the State responded to any facility as 'very poor' (TABLE 2) rather most of the responses was either 'Good' or 'Excellent'. Although 'Poor' was attributed to certain factors but it needs an introspection because of an evaluation at the global level. The below mentioned points highlights the importance and significance and also discuss the results of the parameters/indicators individually shown in TABLE 2 descriptive statistics.

- 1) **Quality of Communication on the destination received pre arrival (COM):** Prior to tourist arrival at the destination, the process of quality evaluation via pre-arrival communication crept in between the tourist and the chosen destination, implying significance of this communication on expectation of the tourists, hence, would play a critical role in building positive or negative tourist quality depending on whether the communication was appropriate or misleading. Most of the respondents were satisfied (84%), (TABLE 2) indicating that information about the state tourism potential is disseminated widely across globe and people from all sects, cultures and ethnic backgrounds are aware of the state. The mean satisfaction of the tourists was 4.23 and standard deviation 0.705 that depicts the good satisfaction level of foreign tourists about pre arrival communication.
- 2) **Standard of transport services in the destination (TRNS):** Transport service is the most essential service in every sphere of the life activities (whether economic or non-economic). The travel and tourism experience of tourists and the ideas about tourism products start and end with transportation. That is why it is impossible to consider tourism without transportation. However, the quality of the transport services has to meet the tourists' expectations. TABLE 2 depicts that 80% of the tourists were satisfied with the transport facilities of the destination. The mean and standard deviation of transport services in the State of Jammu and Kashmir was 4.03 and 0.768 respectively that reveals the tourist are satisfied with facility of transport.
- 3) **Quality of accommodation used (ACCM):** In travel, accommodation provides the base, from which tourists can engage in any activities at a destination, therefore, travelling will be incomplete in absence of accommodation. (Cooper, Fletcher, Fyall, Gilbert & Wanhill 2008, 343) Hotels are the primary form of

accommodation. Camping and caravan sites are an important component in domestic and international tourism where visitors bring their own accommodation to the destination as tents, caravans or trailers and the same are provided by the J&K Tourism Department to the inland and foreigners at a very affordable price that boosts the industry. Accommodation is a very vital factor of tourism development the development of the accommodation sector should be a key element of the tourism destination planning process in order to gain tourism development. Increasing environmental awareness among travelers is a positive contribution towards accommodation sustainability. In eco fragile destination accommodation will adversely impact and now the modern travelers are very cautious about the sustainability of the destination. TABLE 2 depicts that 86% of the travelers who visit the valley are satisfied with the accommodation of the tourist destinations with a mean value 4.37 and standard deviation 0.821.

- 4) **Range and quality of things to do (TNGS):** One of the dimension of the study is the breadth and width of the activities offered at the destination, which should meet the tourist expectation regarding its variety and quality and ultimately the satisfaction. The mean of the indicator was found to be 4.03 and the standard deviation is 0.624. Of all, 82% of the tourists were satisfied with the 'Range and quality of things to do' at the destination, TABLE 2.
- 5) **Range and quality of places to eat and drink (ETDK):** Foodservice, which plays a supportive role, is key parts of tourism industry. There has to be a satisfactory choice of eating and drinking establishments in the destination, and they should be of sufficient quality. Food and tourism play a key role in the contemporary tourism industry. The linkages between food and tourism also provide a platform for local economic development, and food experiences help to brand and market destinations, as well as supporting the local culture that is so attractive to tourists. Presently the tourists are more cultured, well educated, concerned about the sustainability of the environment and are interested in taking part in a health/wellbeing life style and wants to experience the local culture during their visit to the destination. According to 'Global Report on Food Tourism' of the World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO), food tourism is commented as a fast growing segment of tourism industry. As a matter of fact, many countries, tourist destinations, tourism stakeholders, tourist offices, event companies, tour operators and travel agents have recognised the importance of food tourism in local, regional and national tourism development. The report also reveals results from a survey on food tourism marketing promotion, from which internet marketing tools, such as websites have been effectively utilized to pro-mote food tourism in a particular destination. (UNWTO 2012). TABLE 2 showed that 68.00% of the travelers were satisfied with the eating and drinking facility provided by the state (local or non-local dishes and cuisines) and the average satisfaction level towards food was 3.81 with a standard deviation of 0.758.
- 6) **Accessibility to tourist services (ACCS):** The tourism industry provides various facilities and services to the visitors and it also need to account for the accessibility needs of disabled people. Accessibility is used to describe facilities or amenities to assist people with disabilities and people with limited mobility, including elderly people and families with infants that require a pushchair or pram and other facilities to ease the guests (visitors) while visiting the destination because most of the tourists visit the destination with family that will give an opportunity to fulfill the goal of 'Tourism for all' and give the destination access to a potentially very big market, both in terms of domestic and international tourists. The mean value of the accessibility to tourist services was 3.87 and shows only 64.00% of the visitors are satisfied with the accessibility of facilities provided to the old people and infants, the standard deviation of this parameter was 0.857.
- 7) **Quality of information on things to do in the destination (INFO):** The major and important information or communication point between the tourist industry and the travelers are Tourist Information Centres (TICs) that forms a place (market) where the visitors primarily visit or the services that would be offered to the tourists at the destination can be advertised to attract more and more tourists toward the destination. TABLE 2 shows that only 66.00% of the tourists are satisfied with the information provided to them at the tourists centers during their visit, which must be improved by the state tourism department in order to increase the tourist inflow. The mean of the information (indicator) was to be found 3.83 that shows the satisfaction level of tourists was not high and standard deviation was 0.801.
- 8) **Feeling of security and safety from crime (SESF):** If a tourist feels unsafe or threatened at a holiday destination, he or she can develop a negative impression of the destination. Crime is a societal problem in any area, and difficult for the destination management to influence. This can be very damaging to the tourism industry and can result in the decline of tourism to the destination. A common finding is that safety and security of tourists is a prerequisite for a prosperous tourist destination. As with risk perceptions, when safety and security concerns are introduced into travel decisions, they are likely to become the overriding factors, altering the context of conventional decision-making models and causing travelers to amend travel plans. The mean of safety and security indicator was 4.09 that shows irrespective of political instability and war like situations in the valley the tourists still feel secure and were satisfied with the safety and security of the destination and 80.00% of the tourists are satisfied with a standard deviation of 0.802.
- 9) **Value of money in general (MONV):** Value for money is closely related to the concept of quality. When a tourist judges a product or service to be good value for the price charged, the tourist is making a quality judgement in relation to the price paid. Whether the tourist will buy the product again, be it a dinner at a

restaurant or the holiday in the destination itself, will largely depend on their perception of value for money. TABLE 2 shown that 82.00% of the tourists who visit the state were satisfied with the value of money they get. The mean value of value for money was 4.06 which shows travelers were very satisfied with the products and services which they get for what they spent on it during the visit to the destination, the standard deviation of the indicator was 0.76.

- 10) **Friendliness of local population (FRDP):** The impact of local population to the destination is very relative because the locals are the primary service providers that can strengthen the cultural identity of a region and help pave the way for infrastructural developments. Tourism often affects the everyday lives of the local population living in the destination. However, a high seasonality can also lead to pressures on the destination in the form of overcrowding, and potential resource shortages, for example lack of drinking water, lack of basic facilities like urinals, carrying capacity, etc. The friendly nature of local population will boost the tourism activities and also attracts more and more visitors to the destination and Kashmir is world famous, known for its hospitality by the locals, 92.00% of the tourists were highly satisfied by the warm welcome of gusts (visitors) and the average satisfaction level of this indicator was 4.51 with a minimum standard deviation of 0.641.
- 11) **Cleanliness of the local environment (CLNE):** Sustainability of environment is the essential and important factor of tourism industry. Growing environmental awareness globally means that customers have begun to change their attitudes to consumerism and increasingly demand that industries provide products that are more 'environmentally friendly' and 'ethically correct' (Holden, 2000). Environmental quality of a destination is now vital influencing factor that affects the travel related decisions. Tourism policy makers are increasingly realizing that environmental commitment makes good economic sense (Hu, W., & Wall, G. 2005). Cleanliness of the natural, cultural and manmade assets of the destination impacts the quality of the tourist destination. The visual appearance of the destination is of course important both for the residents and for the tourists, who place high demands on a litter free and clean environment. Cleanliness include levels of excrement and vandalism that is quite visible near the pilgrimage sites (mostly) in the state of Jammu and Kashmir that adversely affect our natural environment. Only 68.00% tourists were satisfied with the quality of the local environment where the average satisfaction level is 3.69 with a standard deviation of 0.935 TABLE 2.
- 12) **Cleanliness of bathing areas (CLNB):** Bathing water quality is an essential aspect of holidays at the coast. Nonetheless, many urban and rural destinations have a long tradition of bathing opportunities for tourists by lakes and rivers, and many more are on the way. One of the most important aspects of the bathing area is scenery, which depends on natural parameters. The travelers love to visit the bathing places, water is a major source of recreation for tourists and the valley is known for the river tourism across the globe. Improper sewage management along the banks of river degrades the quality of water and poor water quality is usually caused by the release of untreated or insufficiently cleansed sewage. The bathing water become unhygienic due to the various factors like human excrete along the river sides and no proper waste disposal management that adversely impact on the sustainability of the destination. Only 70.00% of the tourists were satisfied with quality of bathing areas where the average satisfaction was 3.97 that is very low and the standard deviation was 0.935.
- 13) **Quality of air in the destination (QLTYA):** The impact on tourism of poor environment quality has long been emphasized by tourism researchers (Mihalic, 2000; Ross & Wall, 1999). Choi et al. (1999) argued that environmental factors are one of the important attributes when tourists choose to visit a destination. Page and Thorn (1997), as well as Dymond (1997), also stated that high environmental quality standards are necessary for sustainable tourism, and that the environment and its resources should be protected for future generations. Hudson and Ritchie (2001) further advocated that international travelers are increasingly motivated by the quality of destination landscapes, in terms of environmental health and other resources. Bad air quality can lead to respiratory illness and can have an influence on the tourists' perception of the destination. This indicator focuses on the quality of the air outdoors and 100.00% of the visitors were highly satisfied with the average value of 4.75 and with minimum standard deviation of 0.433.

5. CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

Developing sustainable tourism policies in Eco-fragile nature of Jammu and Kashmir State is imperative for development, growth and employment. The management of resources and development of appropriate policies can be drafted from the evidence-based decision-making process incorporated in the present research study. In the emerging scenario tourists as consumers are becoming more empowered, demanding, about experiential destinations. Thus, recognizing the factors that influence tourist satisfaction is viewed as a key challenge for sustainable development and growth of tourism industry. The present research study's understanding of tourist perception(s) towards sustainability is a humble attempt towards achieving global standards in the sector. Tourists are becoming more aware of sustainability and they cherish for eco-friendly services and products. In order to meet this request, policy makers must invest in improvements of efficiency in waste management, sensitizing guests to conserve energy and recycle the products, carbon emission reduction, and use of alternative sources of energy.

Sustainability is a new feature that determines success of the destination. Sustainable destination requires to maintain high level of tourist satisfaction and to make sure an eloquent tourist experience while safeguarding its features and resources. In the meantime, sustainable tourist destination ought to raise socio-economic awareness over sustainability issues so as to promote sustainable tourism practices.

The satisfaction of tourists in Jammu and Kashmir as tourist destination shows that the tourists are not satisfied with the bathing facilities and local environment of the destination and hence these parameters must be improved, for the same the state and central government must take necessary measures to develop strategies for cleaning of environment as it boosts the overall development besides the tourism development. Logical analysis of the study deduced that the perception of the visitors about 'cleanliness of the local environment' is dependent on 'cleanliness of bathing areas'. Therefore, travelers whose perception regarding the bathing facilities is poor directly impacts the perception about the cleanliness of local environment and hence if bathing area facilities will be improved by public policy interventions the perception about environment will also be improved and it will help to enrich the tourist loyalty and sustainability of tourism industry.

Tourist satisfaction and healthy environment are intricately woven as per our study results. Hence, the state policy to curb the menace of environmental pollution and sustain the quality of air is to be formulated at earliest in order to attract sustained healthy tourist inflow. The policy must ensure that the pristine of the eco-fragile tourist destinations of the state are conserved and preserved.

One out of every three visitors' sense discomfort and hence an unpleasant tourist experience to the tourist destination for lack of proper family tourism plans especially with regard to old age and kids. Thus, the state must come up with a policy to embrace such age groups into the ambit of genuine tourism experience.

Local tourism bodies along with the government needs to evolve tourism supply strategy so as to satisfy the tourist needs which has been focused as the prime managerial standard for success. Greater satisfaction levels are perceived as connected to greater tolerance of price, loyalty and future re-visitation and an enhanced reputation.

On understanding the perception of tourism products offered in the state of Jammu and Kashmir, the continuous efforts are to improve and develop them on sustainable grounds. Since new experience is sought by tourists from the tourism products offered there is need to upgrade the tourist destinations or even create new such destinations, but not at the cost of existing tourist destinations which can be offered as a compliment to the package offered so as to ensure its heritage characteristics are preserved and even enhanced, if possible.

Tourism board needs to be established on the lines of such boards as already in vogue in few developed nations. Tourism board ought to support and enhance industry coordination, joint messaging, building talent, driving forward industry-wide policy recommendations and enacting change through policies, as well as public-private policy initiatives, small and medium-sized enterprise growth, while considering reality and best practices from other countries, following the suite. Fundamentally, the tourism board will need to help set clear targets for the travel and tourism industry. However, neither in any state nor at the centre (India) is any such tourism boards.

Tourism plays a vital role in the economic development of a nation by contributing significantly towards GDP especially in the developing nations/states that can avail and reap huge benefits by developing their tourism on sustainable grounds and without going for mass exploitation of tourism related activities/products. The sector's capacity to generate employment and income owing to its backward and forward linkages makes it important for economic diversification and economic growth. There should be a proper mechanism or policies for tourism development and long term sustainable tourism development programs must be initiated in order to reap long term sustainable benefits.

Proactive approach towards the sustainable tourism development is not enough in the modern era, participation of all stakeholders of the industry is most important for the policy making and sustainable development, this is a very early stage of the process, and is crucial for the success of the future implementation of plans. The involvement and participation of all stakeholders, that are the members of the tourism industry as a whole, is crucial for the implementation of the plans and policies and guidelines to maintain the sustainability of the tourist destination, because it is them who will have to obey the rules. Further, resource allocation and resource management is necessary to achieve the sustainable goals. The success of the sustainable tourism policies implementation depends therefore on how committed the stakeholders are towards achieving the sustainable goals.

The increasing unplanned tourism activity has resulted into large quantities of solid waste generated at trekking and expedition locations. The high concentration of air pollutants in summer months (unplanned yatra at most eco fragile tourist place in the valley) is directly attributed to tourism. The degradation of water bodies is also attributed to unplanned tourism in Kashmir; the worst affected being the famous Dal Lake, River Lidder, Jhelum and others and for the same there is no such proper scientific method to control and dispose of the waste generated near and around tourist destinations. The state government and tourism development authorities must frame policies about planned tourism activities (like to check / limit on the number of tourists to visit eco fragile spots, ban on plastic items and open defecation must not be allowed) and scientifically cast away the generated waste to save the heaven on earth.

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