A STUDY ON CONSCIOUSNESS OF YOUNG TRAVELERS TOWARDS REGENERATIVE TOURISM: WITH REFERENCE TO PUDUCHERRY

E. Joshu Ajoon

MBA (TTM) Programme, Department of Tourism Studies, School of Management,
Pondicherry University, Puducherry. Email: ejohuajoon@gmail.com

Y. Venkata Rao

Department of Tourism Studies, School of Management, Pondicherry University, Puducherry

ABSTRACT

Tourism, a human activity emerged as serendipity and later became zemplanity due to overexploitation of esources in tourist destinations and uncontrolled development at the cost of sustainability. The present operating model of tourism is undoubtedly responsible for the abrupt and pervasive success and at the same time contributing extreme vulnerability to natural conditions and distress for fellow human beings. The need now is to have a holistic approach to tourism which can integrate all types of tour operations which emphasize sustainability. This paper envisions and studies the relevance of Regenerative Tourism which highlights the need for a conscious approach while undertaking travel to a tourist destination. Since youth and their ever-changing lifestyle are the most promising segment of tourism, active and fast networking community, this study is targeted on young travelers to find out their awareness about regenerative tourism and consciousness in terms of being responsible towards environment, culture and destination. Primary data will be collected from young travelers who visit tourist destination of Puducherry by using a structured questionnaire.

Keywords: Regenerative tourism, Conscious travel, Responsible tourism, Sustainability

1.INTRODUCTION

Tourism is an activity that emerged for leisure and happiness, serendipity, became one of the fastest-growing industries and contributes immensely to the economic sectors luring all countries across the globe incredibly. Over the years global tourism has expanded in such a manner that no country in the world is shunning away from making efforts to utilize it for socio-economic advancements and eventually resulted in zemblanity. Since tourism became a part of human lifestyle also the potential and positive impacts that can be created by tourism has led many organisations to stand in the forefront to regulate global tourism activity so as to decrease the negative impacts. Despite having a significant increase in the tourism lexicons in the sake of decreasing the cons for the last several decades didn't actually decrease the consequences created on social, cultural and environmental spheres, the industry was criticized severely, significantly the negative reactions on overcrowding and congestion posted by the residents and visitors became a serious debate.

Although a number of tourism concepts got emerged like green tourism, sustainable tourism, responsible tourism, alternative tourism etc. the model remained the same. The present model of tourism considers tourism as an industry, as a machine without giving consideration to the community and works in a hierarchy model rather than working in collaboration (Pollock, The Conscious Travel Manifesto, 2016). The present model considers travellers as tourists, places as a product, experiences and activities as a package, guests as consumers, hosts as suppliers, partners as wholesaler or retailer, fulfilment as efficiency and value as the price for the service (Pollock, Conscious Travel, 2013). This has resulted in developing huge competitive situation among the participants for tourism entertaining the rigorous price drop to sustain in the business, to this more technological advancements added a mind-set to the travelling economy to find the cheap deal (Pollock, Conscious Travel, 2013). All these activities of tourism, over time, generate a negative effect on price, yield and satisfaction. Thus this industrial model of tourism which increased the competitive mindset of professionals and 'Find-Cheap-Deal' mind-set of tourists has brought the whole tourism activities unsustainable and inconsistent, even the well-known tourism firms like Thomas Cook, Cox & Kings was reported as in critical breakdown condition (Shukla, 2019).

The current practice of global tourism results in fostering mass tourism which is a threat to sustainability, eventually making tourism underperforming, vulnerable and leads to breakdown. This model has to be reconsidered and altered as it is not fit to address tourism activity of around 8 billion population. Tourism has a potential to become a vital force for regeneration in communities enabling everyone to flourish and thrive only if there is an interaction, interconnection, interdependence, collaborative network, community engagement, purpose, passion and commitment which can only be achieved when tourism is considered as a system (Pollock, Creating Destination That Flourish, 2019) rather than an industry.

Conscious Travel

The present industrial model of tourism which has many green lexicons is resulting in mass tourism and mass tourism is one major threat to sustainable tourism. Conscious travel is modelled on this belief that when the industry continues to follow the present model, tourism would become a very unsustainable activity. Conscious travel requires a demands a deeper mind-shift (Pollock, Conscious Travel: Signpost Towards a New Model for Tourism, 2012), being conscious to the activities carried out, it applied to both tourist, host and the practitioners of tourism, it requires the participants of tourism to be mature, wise and consider the surrounding for growth (Pollock, Conscious Travel, 2013), conscious travel has the potential to provide more quality experiences for the participants especially the tourist and host, also a net return for the local community (Pollock, Conscious Travel, 2020).

Regenerative Tourism

Regenerative tourism is a new tourism model to the tourism lexicon, which is very promising to achieve sustainability not just in terms of tourism but for the total global activities. Regeneration simply means making a favourable condition for life on earth to thrive equally (Pollock, FLOURISHING BEYOND SUSTAINABILITY, 2019). The same meaning of regeneration is considered to coincide it into tourism, a form of tourism where participants remains conscious like in conscious travel and contribute to the flourishing and thriving of all living beings on earth equally at the same time by taking at-most care of the environment (Pollock, Regenerative Tourism: The Natural Maturation of Sustainability, 2019).

2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Anna Pollock, with more than 40 years of experience as Tourism researcher, planner, strategist and change agent is the founder of Conscious Travel emphasizing of Regenerative Tourism (Pollock, Conscious Travel, 2013) which is a new business model of perceiving and practicing tourism that can become a movement.

> "Tourism is not an industry but a complex, self-organising system or network of relationships"
> Anna Pollock

Tourism is a system which is completely interconnected with three elements within the place; Host, Guest and Community. Host are the professionals of tourism, they would be inviting Guest 'the Tourist' who would experience the community, place play a vital role as all above interactions are happening within it and it shapes the identity of the

host, community and guest's experiences (Pollock, Conscious Travel: Signpost Towards a New Model for Tourism, 2012). Since, the whole tourism depends on how people understand, perceive and value the earth and its environment (Center for Responsible Travel CREST, 2018), the mind-set of people matters, if the mind-set can be altered to foster consciousness the nature of tourism would change significantly bringing back the serendipity.

Currently, tourism is considered as an industry which in-fact is a wrong model as it delivers more harm over time and it needs to be replaced (Pollock, Conscious Travel, 2013). Although we already have many tourism lexicons related to green practices, it wasn't efficient, there still lies a gap, what is required is a transformative shift in awareness. The idea of Conscious Travel (Conscious Travel, 2020) emerged from Conscious Consumers (Bemporad & Baranowski, 2007) and Conscious Capitalists (conscious capitalism, 2020). The idea suggests that to transform into conscious travel the change has to begin from the grassroots that is the community people (Pollock, Conscious Travel, 2013). also, the change must happen in the management of tourism, instead of having managers we must have leaders (Pollock, Conscious Travel: Signpost Towards a New Model for Tourism, 2012), in the sense the host must take responsibility for the tourism in their region they has to act as the agents of change and they must work as a community steward with constant communication within itself.

These assumptions put forth the 7 Principle's (7 P's) of tourism – Plenty, People, Place, Purpose, Pull, Pace, Protection (Pollock, Conscious Travel, 2013). The 'plenty' here is the alternative for 'profit' in the industrial model, it stands for 'enough' or 'sufficient' without having anything in 'excess' (Pollock, Conscious Travel: Signpost Towards a New Model for Tourism, 2012), this indicates a sense of limit for the activities. Another impact of having 'plenty' is that it increases the tendency to think in terms of quality rather than quantity and enhances the wellbeing (Pollock, Creating Destination That Flourish, 2019). Interdependence and interconnection of people make tourism happen, the interaction and relationship between human beings are happening in tourism and not transaction, hence 'people' have to be considered as 'partners' regardless of the role instead of 'object' which is practised in the industrial model (Pollock, The Conscious Travel Manifesto, 2016). Of all the roles played by human beings in tourism 'host' play a vital role as they are the bonding factor between all other roles. 'Place' is another important principle, considering a destination as 'place' instead of 'product' creates a mind shift in the attitude of people towards the destination (Pollock, Conscious Travel, 2013). Every place is unique, each place has some kind of differences in geography or culture or tradition or in anything that counts to be part of that particular place, identifying and projecting the uniqueness of each 'place' would increase the value and respect for the destination and encourages to sustainable development. 'Purpose'- having a purpose brings higher value and better tourism practices (Pollock, Conscious Travel: Signpost Towards a New Model for Tourism, 2012), the purpose here must be more of responsible purposes as well as opted with consciousness. 'Pull' is another important principle, it is not about pulling random guests it's about pulling the right guest to the place. This gives importance to another principle that is 'protection' the right guest must be responsible for the protection along with other people who play a role in that particular place, 'protection' here reflects protecting the geography, ecosystems and culture of the place (Pollock, Conscious Travel, 2013). The last principle 'pace' is one of the common tragedy faced by the present generation (Pollock, Conscious Travel: Signpost Towards a New Model for Tourism, 2012), the busy lifestyle encourages people to take a short break from daily routine prompting a visit to a place like a flash which would neither create a benefit nor lies a purpose rather than creating negative impacts. The concept of conscious travel slows down the guest at destination providing an opportunity to learn and experience plentifully from the destination.

All the above-mentioned concepts are emulsified to create a concrete structure for Regenerative Tourism. Regenerative Tourism, thus, is a system model approach with a collaborative network in tourism activities creating net benefits to all participants (Owen, 2007). A different mind-shift from industrial approach to a system approach considering the community and works in collaborative networking. In regenerative tourism, humans are not apart from but a part of nature and together by being conscious towards the tourism activity results in thriving and flourishing (Pollock, Conscious Travel, 2013). Individuals must have a mindset of not being superior to any other life forms, this would drastically decrease the tendency to exploit nature. Having a superiority feeling with other life forms make us survive but having a mindset of being equal and responsible helps to thrive (Join Pangea, 2019). Since tourism is a human-intensive activity (Center for Responsible Travel CREST, 2019), it is ambient to apply the concept of regenerative tourism, if it can be done properly tourism can be a vital force to flourish regeneration of the society in all aspects - financially, mentally, physically and emotionally.

Objectives

- To explore the consciousness of young travellers in terms of their responsibility towards environment, culture and destination at large.
- To find out the awareness of regenerative tourism among the young travellers
- To understand the relevance of regenerative tourism in the contemporary conditions of tourism sector

3. METHODOLOGY

Desk research on regenerative tourism was done from published articles and papers written by the founder of Conscious Travel, Ms Anna Pollock, and also from other academic articles on regenerative tourism and impact tourism. Primary data were collected using a questionnaire, youth who have toured Pondicherry constitute the population and 155 samples were taken from this population for the study. The questionnaire had Closed, Open Response-option and scale (5 point Likert Scale) questions in 3 sections collecting demographic data, tripographic data and data to study the consciousness in youth.

4. DATA ANALYSIS

Data analysis were done using quantitate tools with support of the MS Excel software. After manually entering all responses into the software, it was categorised into 4 and the responses were compiled into demographic data, tripographic data, Consciousness of Youth and Regenerative Tourism. Demographic details were analysed by calculating the total number from the responses received and the percentage was found. The same was done for tripographic data, the percentage was calculated from the total number of responses received. The mode of transportation was analysed separately although it was in the tripographic section, for this again percentage was calculated.

The likert scale data was categorised into two, Consciousness of the youth and Regenerative tourism. Data was analysed using excel software, the Likert scale was converted into values (Strongly Agree-5, Agree-4, Neutral-3, Disagree-2 and Strongly Disagree-1). This was then used to calculate mean rank and standard deviation which made interpretation of the data easy.

Demography

The Table 1 is to analyze the demographic features of the respondents. Among the 155 respondents, 58.1% are males and 41.9% are females with the majority (91.6%) in the age group of 16-25. 62% of respondents are students and 28% & 10% employed and unemployed respectively, among them, the majority (58.1%) are graduates, 31% postgraduates and 2.6% research scholars.

Table 1: Demographic Distribution of respondents

Demographic Variables	Category of Respondents	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender	Female	65	41.90
	Male	90	58.10
Age	16-25	142	91.60
	26-35	13	8.40
	36-45	0	0
Marital Status	Married	8	5.2
	Unmarried	147	94.83

	School Level	1	0.6
	Higher Secondary	10	6.5
Educational Qualifications	Diploma	2	1.3
	Undergraduate	90	58.1
	Post-graduate	48	31
	Doctorate	4	2.6
	Student	96	62
Occupation	Employed	43	28
	Unemployed	16	10

Tripography

It is reflecting from the Table 2 that about 112 respondents (72.3%) haves arranged tour to Pondicherry by themselves while 53.5% arranged with help of friends and relatives, only 9.03% of youth have arranged Pondicherry tour through Travel agency and Tour Operators. 58% of youth spend less than INR 10,000 to tour Pondicherry and only 5.2% have spent more than INR 40,000. 82.6% got to know about Pondicherry Tourism through friends and relatives and 31.6% through word of mouth. Favourable atmosphere (60.6%), affordability (60%) and accessibility (56.1%) are the main reasons for youth to prefer Pondicherry. 95% have booked accommodation by themselves to tour Pondicherry and 34.8% have spent less than INR 1,000 for the accommodation while 60% have spent between INR 1,000 to INR 3,000. 73% of the respondents prefer to tour Pondicherry with friends and 51% with family, only 4.5% have taken a solo trip to Pondicherry.

Table 2: Tripographic Distribution of respondents

Tripographic Variables	Category of Respondents	Frequency	Percentage (%)
	Self	112	72.3
Tour Arranged By	Friends & Relatives	83	53.5
	TA & TO Firms	14	9.03
	Thrice in a year	42	27.1
	Twice in a year	31	20
	Once in a year	33	21.3
Travel Frequency	Once in 2 year	4	2.6
	Once in 3 years	1	0.6
	Very Rare	35	22.6
	Often	9	5.8
	less than 10000	91	58.7
Tour Budget	10000-20000	56	36.13
	more than 40000	8	5.2
	Friends & Relatives	128	82.58
Pondicherry Tourism Marketing	Word of Mouth	49	31.6
	Direct Approach	24	15.48

	Offline Marketing	75	48.39
	Online Marketing	36	23.23
Prefer Pondicherry	Affordable	93	60
	Accessible	87	56.12
	Favorable	94	60.64
	Quality & Safety	34	21.94
	Recommendation	31	20
	Pondicherry Tourism	35	22.58
Accommodation Booked By	Self	148	95.48
	Friends & Relative	51	32.9
	TA & TO	26	16.77
Accommodation Budget	less than 1000	54	34.8
	1000-2000	70	45.16
	2000-3000	23	14.84
	More than 3000	8	5.16
Experience with Pondicherry	First Time	56	36.1
	Repeat Visitor	99	63.87
Length of Stay	1 Night	28	18.1
	2 Night	58	37.4
	More than 2 Nights	69	44.52
Type of Room	Single Room	55	35.5
	Double Room	67	43.2
	Suite/Cottage	24	15.5
	Dormitory type	5	3.2
Accompanied by	Family	79	51
	Friends	113	72.9
	Partner	15	9.7
	Colleague	15	9.7
	Solo	7	4.5

Consciousness among the young travelers

Data was collected through 5 point Likert scale and for data analysis, mean rank and standard deviation were calculated. From the analysis, it was found that valuing and protecting culture and diversity of destination region is most valued by the respondents with 50% strongly agreeing and 26% agreeing to the statement while 16% remained neutral only 3% strongly disagreed and 5% disagreed to the statement. This was followed by choosing Eco accommodation, 35% strongly agreeing and 39% agreeing to the statement and standardizing Eco hotels remained the 3rd criterion with 32% strongly agreeing and 43% agreeing to the statement. Waste management became the second last criterion with only 17% strongly agreeing and 33% agreeing this shows the waste management is poor in destinations in Pondicherry. The lease preferred attribute is the feeling of travel guilt for the negative impacts imparted by tourism 17% and 26% of respondents strongly agreeing and agreeing respectively and 12% and 8% respondents disagreeing and strongly disagreeing to the statement.

Table 3: Consciousness among the respondents

Sl. No.	Attributes	Mean	Std. Dev.	Rank
1	Culture and diversity of destination region must be valued	4.15	1.06	I
2	Choosing Eco accommodation	3.97	1.05	II
3	Preferring standardised Eco hotels	3.95	1.01	III
4	Intention to buy sustainable products	3.91	0.99	IV
5	Change consumption habit to benefit environment	3.74	1.09	V
6	Noticing impacts of tourism on destination visited	3.74	1.00	VI
7	Quality of destination's environment has deteriorated because of overcrowding and irresponsibility of tourist	3.70	1.10	VII
8	Paying more for environment friendly products	3.68	1.05	VIII
9	Aware of positive effects of sustainable tourism in local people	3.68	1.09	IX
10	Tourism activities in destination affect local people's quality of living	3.68	1.13	X
11	Participation in volunteer activities	3.66	0.98	XI
12	Aware of unsustainable tourism's effect	3.58	1.05	XII
13	Research on origin of product before buying	3.53	1.10	XIII
14	Proper waste management system in destination visited	3.38	1.14	XIV
15	Travel guilt felt for negative impacts imparted by tourism	3.32	1.14	XV

Analysis on Regenerative Tourism's attributes

Out of 155 respondents, 50% have used local transport and only walking and cycling was opted by only 8% and 6% respectively. The majority, that is 52% have used own vehicle and 46% used cab/rented vehicle.

Table 4: Mode of transportation used in Regenerative Tourism

Transportation	Frequency	Percentage
Local Transport	45	50%
Walking	7	8%
Cycle	5	6%
Own Vehicle	47	52%
Cab/Rented Vehicle	41	46%

For a better analysis of the Likert scale data, mean rank and standard deviation were found and the most agreed attribute of regenerative tourism in Pondicherry is developing tourism by taking care of natural, social and cultural environment followed by respecting monument and learning about culture and tradition. The least is travelling with a purpose to which only 20% of respondents strongly agreed and 39% agreed while 8% of respondents disagreed and strongly disagreed, 25% remained neutral.

Table 5: Variable of regenerative tourism

Sl. No.	Variables	Mean	Std. Dev.	Rank
1	Develop tourism taking care of natural, social, and cultural environment	4.19	1.02	I
2	Respecting monuments	4.08	1.08	II

3	Learn about culture and tradition	4.06	1.04	III
4	Buying Products crafted by Local People	3.86	1.05	IV
5	Prefer to learn language of the destination	3.82	1.15	V
6	Preferring Home stays	3.81	1.05	VI
7	Get engaged in host culture and tradition	3.68	1.10	VII
8	Buying souvenirs from local merchants	3.62	1.02	VIII
9	Traveling with a purpose	3.55	1.14	IX

5. DISCUSSION ON FINDINGS

Upon analysing the primary data collected using Likert scale for understanding the consciousness among the youth by finding the mean rank the least rank is 3.32 which is above the average and the maximum is 4.15, making the consciousness among the youth to be satisfactory, the youth are conscious towards the environment, they tend to value and protect the culture and diversity of the destination they are visiting. The steady awareness by different means has made young travellers opt eco mode for their tours, in the study the respondents have preferred eco-accommodation and standardisation of eco-hotels as an important criterion for tourism. It is also clear that the trend has shifted from plastics and other such unsustainable products to sustainable products, much new eco-friendly product's shops have emerged in the street, this indicates the rise in market need for eco-friendly items, the survey also reflects the same opinion, 3.91 is the mean rank calculated on intention to buy sustainable products and they are ready to pay more for eco-friendly products. More than half of the respondents accept to change their consumption habits indicating the adaptive nature of youth to change to protect the environment, adapting to change is one important attribute to make positive change and the mean rank is 3.74 a very significant observation giving a belief that if any development is made which would result in sustainable development will be accepted by the young travellers.

The young travellers are also very observative in behaviour as they have noticed the unsustainable tourism practices, tourism's role in local people's lives and the negative effects of mass tourism in the environment. The majority have indicated the poor waste management systems in destinations and it is true, a research was done to test the application of responsible tourism by tourism students in Pondicherry during their field visit, it was found that only 2 destinations of Pondicherry have a proper waste management system. This throws up a strong message to improve the waste management practices in Pondicherry as well as the study shows how observative and conscious are the young travellers.

Similarly, when checking the awareness of young travellers on regenerative tourism, the responses received have the least mean rank as 3.55 which is above the average and the maximum as 4.19. The most rated attribute is developing tourism taking care of natural, social and cultural environment, this is one of the major aspects of regenerative tourism, feeling oneness with nature and being a part of it to protect the environment and society. As well as, the majority of youth agrees to the statement that it is vital to respect the monuments at the destination, as monuments have a notable role in tourism activities and it replicates the society's culture, tradition and history. Getting engaged in local communities culture, tradition makes the tourism activities more interesting and experiential, majority of the respondents of this survey are interested to get engaged and learn the culture, tradition and language of the destination they are visiting. Tourism can benefit the local community and regenerative tourism supports the local community immensely, from the survey majority of the respondents have stated that they would buy products produced by the local community of the destination and also they prefer to buy it from the local merchants, this behaviour of the young travellers supports the local community economically also this is one best way to build network and learn more about different culture and tradition. This would result in being responsible and respecting the surrounding.

Homestays are another way to get to know the local culture, cuisine and tradition of a destination, the majority of the youth prefer homestays for their accommodation. But the number of homestays in Pondicherry is very low when compared to the number of hotels and the tourist arrival, it can be suggested from the data that homestay has a huge potential to be successful in Pondicherry since the majority of the tourist are youth and among the 155 samples for the study, most of them prefer to stay in homestay accommodation. Travelling with a purpose is one the major criterion

for regenerative tourism and 91 respondents responded positively for this question, this suggests that the youth doesn't travel to just relax and rest but to be changed and get new experiences and learn new things.

These findings hence state that the young traveller's conscious in terms of their responsibility towards environment, culture and destination are satisfactory, their awareness on regenerative tourism is average. From the desk research, it was clear that regenerative tourism has the potential to make tourism sustainable and foster development without creating any negative impacts. Hence, the study appears to support the belief that regenerative tourism is relevant to the current tourism sector and the behaviour of youth, at a satisfactory level, are conscious towards the environment and supports regenerative tourism activities.

6. CONCLUSION

Life on earth is possible because of the equilibrium between all the elements on earth, but the human activities especially after industrialisation have created a drastic danger. The sources for creating unfavourable situation for life on earth have a steep increase. The climate change is one solid example for the aftereffects of unsustainable activities of mankind. The recent fire, Australia bush fire and Amazon forest fire, have led to an abrupt increase in the CO_2 level in atmosphere (Reuters, 2020). These scenarios now demands regenerative actions rather than thinking of green activities keeping the same mind-set.

The regenerative tourism's concept which basically is intended to regenerate is a much suitable form of tourism that has to be adapted, regenerative tourism fosters the relationship between human beings and with the environment by considering everything as equally important for flourishing and thriving. Along with this the other P's of regenerative tourism - Plenty, Purpose, Pull, Protection and Pace (Pollock, Conscious Travel, 2013), can constitute to make better tourism activities, and would result in sustainable development and regeneration (Pollock, FLOURISHING BEYOND SUSTAINABILITY, 2019), it would also contribute to attain resilience at a significant pace as the mankind would turn to conscious and responsible overtime.

Pondicherry, being a peculiar destination for youth during weekends mostly known form leisure is selected to study the awareness and consciousness towards the environment, also to determine the scope of regenerative tourism in Pondicherry. From the study it was found that the youth who came to Pondicherry as tourist, their consciousness towards being responsible to the environment is average. This has to be improved in order to achieve sustainability in real time. Also, the consciousness on regenerative tourism too is average. More awareness has to be provided regarding the importance of regenerative tourism.

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