Investigating Responsible Behavioural Approaches and Challenges for Sustainable Tourism Development in Mysore

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Abstract

While tourists play a vital role in the sustainable development of a destination, the local community largely remains the beneficiary as well as the victim of the consequences of impacts caused by tourism activities. Hence, the growth of the destination must happen sustainably. Mysore, the heritage city of Karnataka was recently recognized as one of the cleanest cities in India. However, tourism activities adversely affect the sustainable practices of the city. The study investigates the responsible behavioural approach and challenges to develop Mysore as a sustainable tourist destination. To find this a survey was conducted on tourists and the local community. The study found that insufficient supportive services and lack of responsible behavioural practices among tourists are the challenges to the sustainable development of tourist attractions in various attractions of Mysore.

Keywords: *Responsible Behaviour, Sustainable Practices, Sustainable Tourism, Karnataka Tourism, Mysore Tourism.*

Introduction

The responsible tourism practices emerged in 20th century (Smith, 1990) had witnessed sharp growth during the 1980s (Dayananda, Leelavathi, 2016), leading to increased tourist traffic (Framba, 2020). This phenomenon resulted in overconsumption of resources which lead to resource scarcity (Sunlu, 2003), leading to the emergence of the concept of sustainable tourism practices. The growing concern with society, the economy, and the environment has led to the framing of social and environmental policies that help in the development of the senses of sustainable tourism, ecotourism, and responsible tourism, among travel stakeholders (Kiper 2013). Thus, the concept of sustainable tourism has gained the attention of tourists, service providers and especially the government and policymakers.

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Tourism as a service industry is mainly focuses on the interaction between the people and the attractions (Knowles, Westcott). As an industry that is highly sensitive towards social and physical conditions, tourism faces many challenges regarding the environment, society, and resources (Asadzadeh, Mousavi, 2017). Changes in tourism demand, economic instability, and environmental uncertainty lead to responsible practices in tourism (Khan et al., 2020). Thus, responsible tourism focuses on enhancing economic benefits, social equality and environmental integrity which is essential for maximizing the benefits to the local community (Soonthodu, Susheela, 2016)

Tourists and the local community are key drivers of responsible tourism practices (Stanford, 2006). Local authorities implement guidelines for responsible practices (Scott, 2016), tourists practice responsible tourism, and the local community is the beneficiary of the practices. The involvement of the local community is very much essential here as they are the direct and indirect beneficiaries of responsible tourism practices (Cameron, et al., 2001). Today various tourist attractions around the world are rigorously adopting responsible practices for a better future.

Tourism in Mysore

Mysore is the southernmost city of Karnataka and was the capital of the Kingdom of Mysore which ruled between 1399 AD and 1947 AD. Located at a distance of 120 km from the state capital Bangalore, Mysore is the predominant centre of tourism, art, and architecture. The total land area of the city is 286 sq. km. With an average altitude of 770 meters above sea level, Mysore welcomes its visitors with pleasant weather throughout the year.

River Cauvery is the lifeline of agricultural activities of the district. The district covers a total geographical area of 6850 sq. km of which around 10 per cent of the total area constitutes forest land and around 4850sq. km of land is cultivable. With a population of 12.35 lakh, Mysore is considered one of the most prosperous districts of the state.

Agriculture is the major source of income of the district. Industry and tourism are the promising sectors of the economy. Mysore is popular for its world-famous heritage sites, palaces, temples, parks, and sericulture. Jagmohan Palace, Art Gallery, Chamundi Hills, Mysore Zoo, KRS Dam, and the heritage sites of Srirangapattana are the major tourist attractions of Mysore. Mysore is also called the city of 'Palaces' which attracts thousands of tourists every year. The Mysore City Corporation and the District Tourism Board are promoting tourist inflow to the city and also emphasizing sustainable and responsible tourism practices in various attractions of the district. However, the growing number of tourists has led to many issues and challenges in sustainable and responsible tourism practices.

Despite COVID–19, Mysore was visited by many tourists. For instance, in September 2021, 30,425 tourists visited Mysore Palace whereas in October 2021, 26827 visitors visited the palace. Mysore's palace is visited by 6 million tourists every year, making it the second most visited monument in India. Jayachamarajendra Zoo (Popularly known as Mysore Zoo), Chamundi Hills and KRS Dam are the popular tourist hotspots of Mysore.

Literature review

Sustainable tourism aims to balance the environment, enhance socio-cultural integrity, and promote economic benefits by meeting the needs of the local community (Liu, 2013) both in marginal and developed countries (Mitchell, Hall, 2005). In other words, sustainability in the

tourism industry emphasizes enhancing socioeconomic benefits to host communities, women, and the marginalized sections of society (Cukier, 2002) so that the host region can access the benefits for a longer duration of time (Butler, 1993). Responsible tourism, a key component of sustainability, aims at maximizing the positive impact by reducing the negative consequences of tourism activities (Stanford, 2006) which can be achieved through a three-step model, i.e., setting the objectives, marketing to the most appropriate segment and visitor management system (Ford, Acott, 2015). Studies show that there is a positive relationship between attitudes towards tourism and the perceived economic benefits (Látková, Vogt, 2012). Creating and capturing value through sustainability (Ford, Acott, 2015) and emphasizing culture-based tourism products (Torn Laapio, 2019) may lead to sustainable tourism development that has a positive effect on the quality of life of residents (Lee, 2013).

Sustainable development also focuses on the green growth concept to minimize the negative impacts (George, 2019) which includes the implementation of new technologies to motivate consumers towards responsible practices (Streimikiene et al., 2020) while visiting a destination. Along with the tourists, tourism stakeholders such as travel agencies, transport companies, accommodation services, tour guides, local businesses, and the authorities have an evident role in enhancing responsible tourism behaviour (Streimikiene et al., 2020).

Tourism, being one of the largest service providers, should provide opportunities for the socio-economic development of the local communities (Hanafiah et al., 2013). Studies found that tourism also generates additional benefits for local communities by supporting small businesses, local vendors and the government (Yehia, 2019; Khan et al., 2020). At the same time, the behaviour of a tourist is likely to affect the socio-cultural, economic, and environmental perspectives of the local community (Pizam, Milman, 2014). The needs and requirements at the destination, activities that the tourist is involved in and the behaviour of the host community are the major deciding factors of sustainability (Zgollia, Zaiemb, 2018; Kiper, 2013). A positive attitude and the behaviour of tourists at the destination will have a positive impact which may guarantee the sustainable development of a destination.

Research framework

The study aims at finding the sustainable services available at the various attractions of the study area and how they are associated with sustainable practices. Mysore, being one of the tourist hotspots of India, is facing many challenges with sustainable practices. At the same time, tourists face many challenges in adopting responsible behaviour while they visit the study area.

Based on Figure 1, the study intends to examine the relationship between tourist and their responsible behaviour and how it impacts sustainable development. The role of stakeholders is crucial in implementing sustainable practices (Jonkutė-Vilkė, Staniškis, 2019) and to integrate
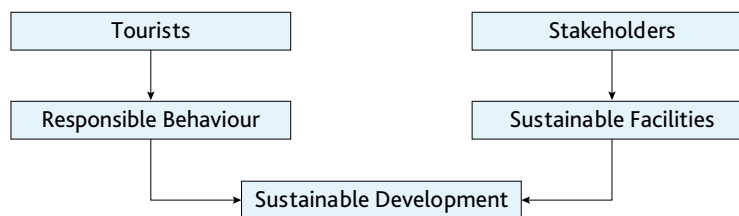
Figure 1. Stakeholder-centric Sustainable Development Model

with the service providers. This study tries to establish the relationship between the sustainable practices available at the destination and the behaviour of tourists. The study acknowledges that sustainable services available in a tourist attraction lead to sustainable behavioural practices.

The sustainable practice at the destination stands on the platform of three crucial aspects i.e., economic, environmental and social aspects of development (Allen et al., 1988; Yoon et al., 2001). The socio-cultural, economic and environmental behaviour of tourists play an evident role in sustainable development.

Methodology

A self-administered questionnaire was shared with the visitors to collect the data. Simple random sampling was used while deciding the respondents. The bio-information consisted of 5 components (age, gender, education, location and income) and the responsible behaviour of tourists was measured by 28 items based on a five-point Likert scale. To get an effective response, the questionnaire was further divided into 2 components. Sustainable practices at the destination (with three dimensions - Social, Economic and Environmental) and Challenges faced by the tourists while adopting sustainable behaviour at the destination were structured in the questionnaire.

Data collected from 400 respondents was analysed using SPSS software. %age analysis was conducted to analyse the demographic factors and KMO analysis, Principal Component Analysis and Rotated Component Matrix were conducted to identify the relationship among the different variables.

Results and Findings

Table 1. *Demographic distribution of respondents*

SL №	Demographic Variable	Category of Respondents	Frequency	%age
1	Gender	Male	185	46.3
		Female	215	53.8
2	Age	Less than 25 years	149	37.3
		26 to 35	167	41.8
		36 to 45	55	13.8
		46 and above	29	7.2
3	Occupation	Own a business	21	5.3
		Government service	18	4.5
		Private sector	183	45.8
		Agriculturist	3	0.8
		Student	151	37.8
		Others	24	6.0
4	Location	Karnataka	275	68.8
		Non-Karnataka	119	29.8
		Foreigners	6	1.5

SL №	Demographic Variable	Category of Respondents	Frequency	%age
5	Income	Less than 2 lakhs	185	46.3
		2 - 5 lakh	129	32.3
		5 - 10 lakh	56	14.0
		10 - 20 lakh	15	3.8
		20 lakh and above	15	3.8

Table 1 shows the demographic distribution of the respondents. 46.3 % of respondents are male, and 53.8 % belong to the female category. 167 (41.8 %) of respondents belong to the age group of 26 to 35 years, 37.3 % are less than 25 years, 13.8 % are 36 to 45 years, and the remaining 7.2 % are respondents above 46 years of age.

The data also reveals that 45.8 % of respondents belong to the private sector category and 37.8 % are students. 68.8 % of respondents are residents of Karnataka, 29.8 % are from outside Karnataka and the remaining 1.5 % of respondents are foreign tourists who visited Mysore.

The income distribution finds that 46.3 % of respondents have less than Rs.2 lakh income, 32.3 % have an income distribution of 2-5 lakh and 14 % are in the category of Rs.5-10 lakh

Simple mean analysis

The Simple Mean Analysis shows the average value of the responses chosen by the respondents. Charts 1 to 4 show the average value of responses on the availability of sustainable environmental resources, sociocultural resources, economic resources and the challenges faced by the tourists while visiting the study area. A glimpse of the overall response is shown in the charts below.

The Simple Mean Analysis shows the average value of the response chosen by the respondents. Chart 1 shows the average value of responses on the availability of sustainable environmental resources at the destination. Availability of Electric vehicles at the destination (Mean
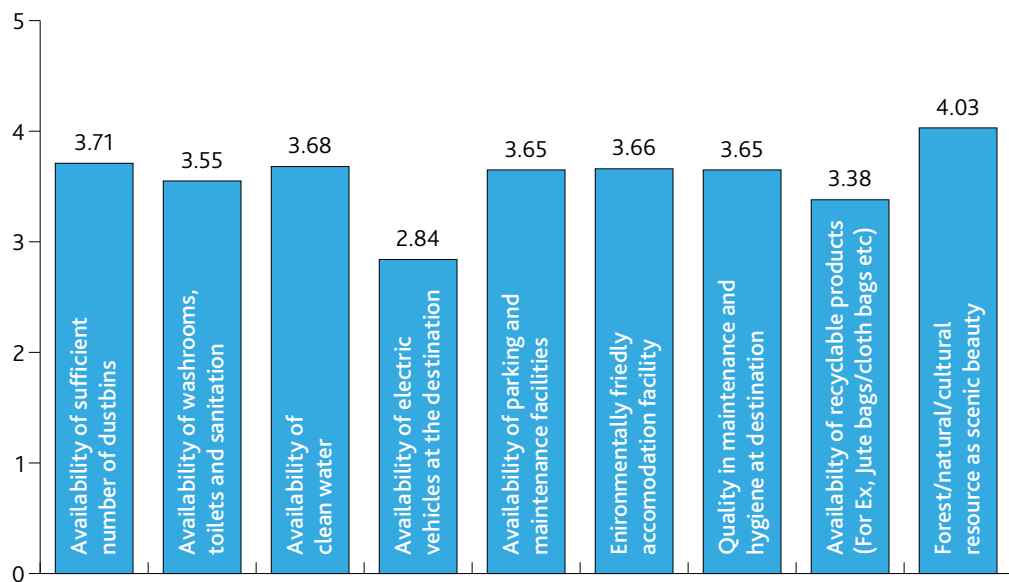

Chart 1. Availability of sustainable environmental resources
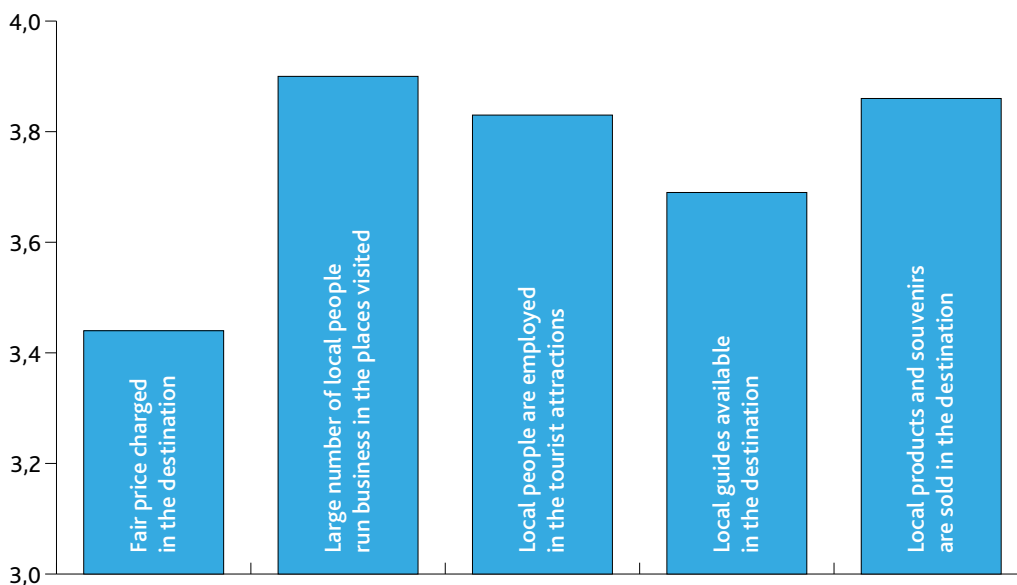
Chart 2. Availability of sustainable economic resources

= 2.84) shows the low significance of responses wherein both natural and cultural resources at the destination hold the highest significance (Mean = 4.03).

Chart 2 shows the average value of responses on the availability of sustainable economic resources at the destination. Low price charged in the destination (Mean = 3.43) shows the low significance of responses wherein a large number of local people running the business has the highest significance (Mean = 3.90).

The Simple Mean Analysis (Chart 3) represents the availability of sustainable cultural and safety resources at the destination. Tourist safety and security has the highest significant
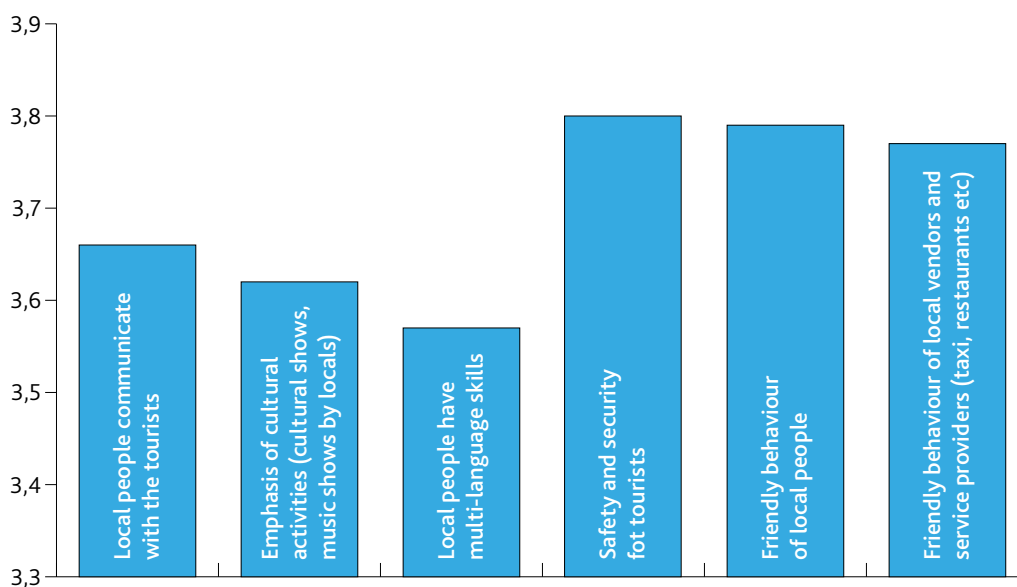

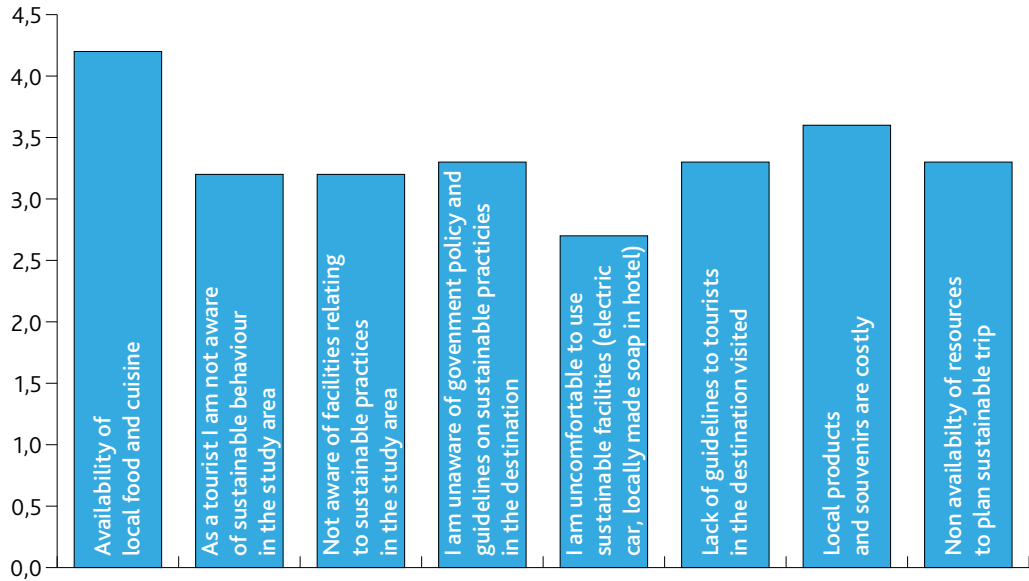**Chart 3**. Availability of sustainable cultural and safety resources

Chart 4. Challenges in practicing responsible behavior at the destination

value (Mean = 3.80) and the multi-language skills of local people hold the low significant value (Mean = 3.53).

Chart 4 interprets the challenges in practising responsible behaviour at the destination. Tourists uncomfortably using sustainable facilities such as Electric cars, locally made soap in hotels etc (Mean = 2.75) show the low significance of responses wherein availability of local food and cuisine has the highest significance (Mean = 4.20).

KMO Analysis

The factor analysis was run on collected responses for all the 28-item questions in the questionnaire. KMO and Bartlett's test shows significant adequacy with a KMO value of .878 (>.5) and significance at a 5% level (p = .000<.05) (Field, 2013). The test shows the significant relationship between the variables. The significance value '0' withstands the highest reliability on the results.

Table 2. *KMO and Bartlett's Test Analysis*

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		.878
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	6251.054
	Df	378
	Sig.	.000
a. Based on correlations		

Table 3. *Total variance analysis 2*

	Component	Initial Eigenvaluesa			Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings		
		Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
Raw	1	10.335	33.921	33.921	5.816	19.088	19.088
	2	3.575	11.734	45.655	4.692	15.399	34.487
	3	1.874	6.149	51.805	2.826	9.275	43.762
	4	1.599	5.249	57.054	3.092	10.149	53.911
	5	1.433	4.702	61.756	2.179	7.152	61.063
	6	1.123	3.686	65.442	1.334	4.379	65.442
	7	1.037	3.405	68.847			
	8	.966	3.171	72.018			

Table 2 interprets the eigenvalues and the rotation sums of squared loadings on the components if it shows factor loading 0.40 or greater (Field, 2013). The output produced six components based on the grouping of variables set in the questionnaire. Availability of resources (social, cultural and economic) and the challenges faced by the tourists during their visit to the destination are the major components of grouping.

Demographic analysis was conducted to determine the demographic distribution of the respondents. The study found the dominance of female travellers over the male. The majority of the respondents, who visit Mysore are aged between 26 and 35 years and belong to the private sector. Mysore is dominant in attracting domestic tourists. Though income is a prominent factor in the tourism industry, the study found that the majority of respondents belong to the income category below two lakh per annum.

Environmental, Economic and Socio-cultural factors are the basic pillars of sustainable practices. To understand the tourists' perspectives on these factors, several variables were identified and grouped under each category. Each factor holds significant value and influences responsible behaviour at the destination. The simple Mean Analysis on the availability of sustainable environmental resources found that natural and environmental resources (Mean = 4.03) hold the highest significance under group 1 (Availability of Sustainable Environmental Resources) and the availability of modern sustainable amenities such as Electric vehicles (Mean = 2.84) is the least preference among the tourists.

Group 2 (Availability of sustainable economic resources) in mean analysis has broader significance in the study as local community benefit is involved in it. The result shows a positive perspective of the involvement of the local community in running the tourism-related business (Mean = 3.90). However, the study also shows a relatively low response towards the price charged in the destination (Mean = 3.43).

Group 3 in the mean analysis represents the availability of sustainable cultural and safety resources in the destination. Tourists are highly satisfied with the safety and security measures (Mean = 3.80) available at the destination. The study also found that language skills as one of the weaker representations of sustainable cultural and natural resources.

Group 4 in the mean analysis is the representation of challenges faced by the tourists while practising responsible behaviour in the study area. Tourists are delighted with the food and cuisine available at the destination (Mean = 4.20) while not happy with the sustainable facilities offered at the destination (Mean = 2.75). This could be the hindering factor for promoting responsible behaviour in the destination.

KMO and Bartlett's test shows significant adequacy with a KMO value of .878 (>.5) and significance at a 5% level (p = .000<.05) showing the significant relationship between different variables that are considered for the study. The study also found that the availability of sustainable environmental resources at the destination has a greater degree of relevance in the study (Initial Eigenvaluesa value 10.335) and the availability of sustainable economic resources at the destination (Initial Eigenvaluesa value 3.575) becomes the other factor of consideration among the respondents.

Discussion

Responsible behaviour in tourism is determined by the quality of sustainable infrastructure available in a destination. Studies showed that there is a direct relationship between the quality of sustainable resources and the responsible behaviour of tourists. Though Mysore is a world-known tourist destination, the number of non-Karnataka and foreign tourists visiting different attractions is relatively very low. Mysore Palace, Chamundi Hills, KRS Dam and Mysore Zoo are the few sights that tourists prefer to visit. However, many other beautiful attractions need strategic promotional activities to attract more tourists. Low support from the customers at the destination is one of the barrios for growth in sustainable tourism (Budeanu, 2007). The local authorities and the service providers should induce the tourists to buy local products, choose environmentally friendly transportation and respect the local community. Promoting the appropriate practices and indulging tourists in various activities by making them the co-managers, co-designers and co-creators of tourist experiences enhances the belongingness towards a destination (Shen et al., 2020).

The service facilitators need to utilize social networks to influence smart tourists (Shen et al., 2020) to promote Mysore as one of the sustainable tourism hubs. Consumer awareness of sustainable practices is still an under-researched area that needs high attention (Penz et al., 2017). The study found that tourists are biased with the products offered to them hence appropriate labelling of tourism products needs to be carried out to increase the awareness and knowledge about sustainability among the travelers. Three core components of sustainable promotion i.e., awareness, agenda and action (Mihalic, 2019) need to be considered for successful implementation of sustainable practices at the destination.

Sustainability and responsibility need a solid understanding of the process of how a responsible destination implements a sustainability agenda (Mihalic, 2019). Mysore being one of the cleanest cities has to focus on the introduction of sustainable infrastructure to promote responsible behaviour. The lack of sufficient electric vehicles and the lack of availability of recyclable products are some of the environmental threats that the destination is facing today. At the same time, biased pricing at the destination and the non-availability of sufficient guide facilities are hindering responsible behavioural practices at the destination. Special training and workshops need to be organized emphasizing on improvement of communication skills and cultural manifestation among the local people who are associated with the tourism business. Tourism, environmental and transport policies need to integrate better to create sustainable development (Peeters et al., 2016). As tourist awareness about sustainable practices is the focal point, awareness camps can be organized. Mysore also needs a sustainable tourism circuit that could cater for the needs of special interest tourists. Eventually, special training for service providers, attractive incentives and subsidies, and moral and financial support for those service providers who implement sustainable practices at the destination.

Conclusion

The study highlights the role of every stakeholder in successful implementation of any kind of activity in a destination. Mysore, being one of the top tourist destinations, has maximum potential to attract millions of tourists every year. Though the number of tourists visiting Mysore is gradually increasing, attitude towards sustainable practices and responsible behaviour still demands the intervention of the authorities and the policy makers. As the respondents rightly highlighted, the destination requires innovative strategies to create awareness on responsible behaviour among the tourists. Local business agencies and the government authorities need to focus on offering sustainable products and services to promote responsible behaviour among the tourists. Developing quality infrastructure, employing local people in tourism activities, promotion of local products and proper guidance to every stakeholder involved in tourism business may drive Mysore tourism into greater heights.

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