

## **A STUDY ON FUNCTIONS OF TOUR OPERATORS AND DEVELOPMENT OF SUSTAINABLE TOURISM**

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### **ABSTRACT**

Tour operators are business organizations that facilitate tourists in terms of attractive tour packages, exclusive experience and various services and adopting sustainable management practices. Tour operators are having very good linkage among tourism destinations and tourists and they are playing influencing role for moving towards sustainable development of tourism. The results elucidate that tour operators are developing tour packages for tourists, making good travel arrangements, coordinating with tour leaders efficiently, managing tour budget well, making arrangement for site seeing and providing entertainment activities. Significant difference is there among functions of tour operators in tourism and profile of tourists. Development of sustainable tourism is positively, moderately and significantly related with functions of tour operators. Thus, tour operators should frequently modify tour packages and they must provide adequate tourist assistance. Besides, tour operators should give the best accommodation facilities and they must arrange travel insurance.

**Key Words:** Functions, Sustainable Tourism, Tour Operators, Tourists

### **1. INTRODUCTION**

The sustainable tourism is the main consideration for the successful development of tourism sector across the world and it is the tourism which is taking care of existing and future social, environmental and economical effects (Khalid et al 2008), dealing the requirements and demands of tourists, environment, local communities and tourism sector (Budeanu, 2015). The participation in development of sustainable tourism needs sincere involvement of all stakeholders namely tour operators, travel agencies, tour guides, transport operators, hotels, government and local communities (Rasid et al 2012).

Among all stakeholders of tourism sector, tour operators are business organization that are having huge responsibility in arranging various types of tours and development of sustainable tourism (Schwartz et al 2008). Tour operators are business organizations that facilitate tourists in terms of attractive tour packages, exclusive experience and various services and adopting sustainable management practices (Coles et al 2013). Tour operators are having very good linkage among tourism destinations and tourists and they are playing influencing role for moving towards sustainable development of tourism (Iffah et al 2015) and they are having better relation with local suppliers and communities that they are connected with tourism industry. Tour operators are performing various tourism related functions that are highly related with development of sustainable tourism. With this back ground, it is important to study functions of tour operators and development of sustainable tourism.

### **2. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE**

Marzuki (2011) found that tour operators arranged tours and they provided good accommodation, travel and local food to tourists and they adopted sustainable business practices and development of local people and conservation of local culture.

Khairat and Maher (2012) concluded that tour operators were involved in arrangement of tours, accommodation, transportation and they provided special facilities for disabled tourists and local culture and food to tourists.

Ahmad (2013) revealed that tour operators provided good accommodation, food, transportation, tour packages, assistance and other services required by tourists and they adopted environmental practices in tourism destinations.

Razali and Ismail (2014) indicated that tour operators arranged accommodation, transportation and other services and provided tour assistance and fun and entertainment activities to tourists.

Choy (2015) showed that tour operators were involved in arranging tour programmes for coastal tourism and they provided better food, hotel accommodation, tour assistance, travel, entertainment and sight seeing to tourists.

Bhuiyan et al (2016) found that tour operators arranged different tour packages for rural tourism for tourists and they provided good travel and accommodation facilities, local food, tourism assistance and entertainment activities to tourists.

Ng et al (2017) concluded that tour operators arranged tours, accommodation and traveling activities and they were giving proper guidance to tourists for using sustainable and local products and adopting sustainable management practices in tourist places.

Devaraja and Deepak (2018) revealed that tour operators were arranging tour packages, arranged travel and accommodation facilities, provided tour guidance and sight seeing and entertainment activities in tourism places and they were played a significant role in promoting and developing tourism.

Pantelescu et al (2019) indicated that tour operators were functioning with social and environmental responsibilities and they were conducting tour operations by using sustainable business and tourism destination practices in order to develop sustainable tourism and reduce negative impacts on tourism activities and environment.

Hamid and Isa (2020) showed that tour operators adopted sustainable business management practices, sustainable tourist destination practices and sustainable tourism activities for tourists in arranging tour packages to tourists.

Ullah et al (2021) found that tour operators had understood significance of social, economical and environmental aspects of tourism activities and they choose tourism destination based on demand of tourists and profit and they did not get any incentives for adoption of sustainable tourism development practices.

### **3. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

- i) To examine functions of tour operators in tourism.
- ii) To scrutinize difference among functions of tour operators in tourism and profile of tourists.
- iii) To evaluate relation among functions of tour operators and development of sustainable tourism.

### **4. HYPOTHESES OF THE STUDY**

- i) There is no significant difference among functions of tour operators in tourism and profile of tourists.
- ii) There is no significant relation among functions of tour operators and development of sustainable tourism.

### **5. METHODOLOGY**

The present study is conducted in Chennai. Tourists are randomly chosen and data are collected from 225 tourists by using questionnaire. Percentages are used to understand profile of tourists. Mean and standard deviation are computed to know functions of tour operators in tourism. t-test and ANOVA test are applied to scrutinize difference among functions of tour operators in tourism and profile of tourists. Correlation analysis is employed to evaluate relation among functions of tour operators and development of sustainable tourism.

### **6. RESULTS**

#### **6.1 PROFILE OF TOURISTS**

The profile of tourists is shown in Table-1. The results show that 53.33 per cent of them are males, while, 46.67 per cent of them are females and 33.78 per cent of them are belonging to age category of 36 – 45 years, while, 18.67 per cent of them are belonging to age category of less than 25 years. The results indicate that 31.11 per cent of them are having under graduation, while, 19.56 per cent of them are having higher secondary and 36.45 per cent of them are getting monthly income of Rs.25,001 – Rs.35,000, while, 13.33 per cent of them are getting monthly income of above Rs.45,000 and 88.44 per cent of them are married, while, 11.56 per cent of them are unmarried.

**Table-1. Profile of Tourists**

<b>Profile</b>	<b>Number (n = 225)</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>Gender</b>		
Male	120	53.33
Female	105	46.67
<b>Age</b>		
Less than 25 Years	42	18.67
26 – 35 Years	57	25.33
36 – 45 Years	76	33.78
More than 45 Years	50	22.22
<b>Education</b>		
Higher Secondary	44	19.56
Diploma	48	21.33
Under Graduation	70	31.11
Post Graduation	63	28.00
<b>Monthly Income</b>		
Below Rs.25,000	40	17.78
Rs.25,001 – Rs.35,000	82	36.45
Rs.35,001 – Rs.45,000	73	32.44
Above Rs.45,000	30	13.33
<b>Marital Status</b>		
Married	199	88.44
Unmarried	26	11.56

## 6.2. FUNCTIONS OF TOUR OPERATORS IN TOURISM

The functions of tour operators in tourism are shown in Table-2.

**Table-2. Functions of Tour Operators in Tourism**

<b>Functions of Tour Operators</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Standard Deviation</b>
Tour operators are developing tour packages for tourists	3.91	0.95
Tour operators are frequently modifying tour packages	3.32	0.75
Tour operators are making good travel arrangements	3.87	1.02
Tour operators are providing adequate tourist assistance	3.36	1.01
Tour operators are coordinating with tour leaders efficiently	3.68	1.09
Tour operators are managing tour budget well	3.74	0.97
Tour operators are giving the best accommodation facilities	3.39	0.71
Tour operators are making arrangement for site seeing	3.85	0.97
Tour operators are providing entertainment activities	3.78	0.99
Tour operators are arranging travel insurance	3.29	1.15

The tourists are agreed with tour operators are developing tour packages for tourists, tour operators are making good travel arrangements, tour operators are coordinating with tour leaders efficiently, tour operators are managing tour budget well, tour operators are making arrangement for site seeing and tour operators are providing entertainment activities, while, they are neutral with tour operators are frequently modifying tour packages, tour operators are providing adequate tourist assistance, tour operators are giving the best accommodation facilities and tour operators are arranging travel insurance.

### 6.3. FUNCTIONS OF TOUR OPERATORS IN TOURISM AND PROFILE OF TOURISTS

The difference among functions of tour operators in tourism and profile of tourists is shown as below.

#### 6.3.1. Functions of Tour Operators and Gender

The difference among functions of tour operators and gender of tourists is shown in Table-3.

**Table-3. Functions of Tour Operators and Gender**

Gender	N	Mean	Standard Deviation	t-Value	Significance
Male	120	36.43	3.19	3.174**	.000
Female	105	33.90	3.69		

\*\* Significant in 1% level

Mean value of functions of tour operators for male and female tourists are 36.43 and 33.90 respectively and it reveals that functions of tour operators are better for male as compared to female tourists.

The t-value is 3.174 explicating that significant difference is there among functions of tour operators and gender of tourists.

#### 6.3.2. Functions of Tour Operators and Age

The difference among functions of tour operators and age of tourists is shown in Table-4.

**Table-4. Functions of Tour Operators and Age**

Age	N	Mean	Standard Deviation	F-Value	Significance
Less than 25 Years	42	36.21	3.76	5.328**	.000
26 – 35 Years	57	36.07	3.33		
36 – 45 Years	76	38.24	3.02		
More than 45 Years	50	34.20	3.45		

\*\* Significant in 1% level

Mean value of functions of tour operators is varying from 38.24 for tourists belonging to age category of 36 – 45 years to 34.20 or tourists belonging to age category of more than 50 years and it reveals that functions of tour operators are better for tourists belonging to age category of 36 – 45 years as compared to other age categories.

The F-value is 5.328 explicating that significant difference is there among functions of tour operators and age of tourists.

#### 6.3.3. Functions of Tour Operators and Education

The difference among functions of tour operators and education of tourists is shown in Table-5.

**Table-5. Functions of Tour Operators and Education**

Education	N	Mean	Standard Deviation	F-Value	Significance
Higher Secondary	44	38.49	3.16	5.239**	.000
Diploma	48	35.88	3.45		
Under Graduation	70	35.99	3.57		
Post Graduation	63	34.25	3.31		

\*\* Significant in 1% level

Mean value of functions of tour operators is varying from 38.49 for tourists having higher secondary to 34.25 tourists having post graduation and it reveals that functions of tour operators are better for tourists having higher secondary as compared to other educations.

The F-value is 5.239 explicating that significant difference is there among functions of tour operators and education of tourists.

#### 6.3.4. Functions of Tour Operators and Monthly Income

The difference among functions of tour operators and monthly income of tourists is shown in Table-6.

**Table-6. Functions of Tour Operators and Monthly Income**

Monthly Income	N	Mean	Standard Deviation	F-Value	Significance
Below Rs.25,000	40	35.73	3.37	5.690**	.000

Rs.25,001 – Rs.35,000	82	38.84	3.24		
Rs.35,001 – Rs.45,000	73	36.25	3.38		
Above Rs.45,000	30	32.67	3.46		

\*\* Significant in 1% level

Mean value of functions of tour operators is varying from 38.84 for tourists getting monthly income of Rs.25,001 – Rs.35,000 to 32.67 for tourists getting monthly income of above Rs.45,000 and it reveals that functions of tour operators are better for tourists getting monthly income of Rs.25,001 – Rs.35,000 as compared to other monthly incomes.

The F-value is 5.690 explicating that significant difference is there among functions of tour operators and monthly income of tourists.

### 6.3.5. Functions of Tour Operators and Marital Status

The difference among functions of tour operators and marital status of tourists is shown in Table-7.

**Table-7. Functions of Tour Operators and Marital Status**

Marital Status	N	Mean	Standard Deviation	t-Value	Significance
Married	199	35.99	3.58	3.342**	.000
Unmarried	26	37.65	2.67		

\*\* Significant in 1% level

Mean value of functions of tour operators for unmarried and married tourists are 37.65 and 35.99 in order and it reveals that functions of tour operators are better for unmarried as compared to married tourists.

The t-value is 3.342 explicating that significant difference is there among functions of tour operators and marital status of tourists.

### 6.4. RELATION AMONG FUNCTIONS OF TOUR OPERATORS AND DEVELOPMENT OF SUSTAINABLE TOURISM

The correlation analysis is employed to evaluate relation among functions of tour operators and development of sustainable tourism and the result is shown in Table-8.

**Table-8. Functions of Tour Operators and Development of Sustainable Tourism**

Particulars	Correlation Coefficient
Functions of Tour Operators and Development of Sustainable Tourism	0.53**

\*\* Significant in 1% level

The correlation coefficient among functions of tour operators and development of sustainable tourism is 0.53 and it shows that they are positively and moderately inter related.

### 7. CONCLUSION

The above results explicate that tour operators are developing tour packages for tourists, making good travel arrangements, coordinating with tour leaders efficiently, managing tour budget well, making arrangement for site seeing and providing entertainment activities. Significant difference is there among functions of tour operators in tourism and profile of tourists. Development of sustainable tourism is positively, moderately and significantly related with functions of tour operators. Thus, tour operators should frequently modify tour packages and they must provide adequate tourist assistance. Besides, tour operators should give the best accommodation facilities and they must arrange travel insurance.

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