

## Responsible Tourism: Paving the way for sustainable Travel

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### ABSTRACT

Tourism is expanding globally and the demand for responsible tourism has never been more urgent. This paper reviews the concept of responsible tourism and its ability to encourage the transformation of travel into a sustainable practice by bringing into the proper balance the social, environmental, and economic aspects of travel. The core principles of responsible tourism, such as environmental sustainability, socio-cultural responsibility, economic equity, and ethical tourism are explored. The article covers the main emerging trends like eco-tourism, slow travel, and regenerative tourism that are changing the tourism industry and encouraging people to take more sustainable and impactful travel trips. It also explains how the key principles of responsible tourism align with the United Nation's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), highlights the impact of policies and regulations on promoting sustainable travel and sustainable industry change, and produces a set of six recommendations aimed at stakeholders stretching from government agencies to the tourism industry. The paper concludes by emphasizing the importance of collaboration between the involved sectors to continue having tourism benefit the economy while minimizing its environmental impact and promoting social equity. The pathway for a more sustainable, ethical, and inclusive future of tourism is responsible tourism.

**Keywords:** Responsible Tourism, Environmental Sustainability, Eco-Tourism, Sustainable Development Goals

### 1. INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1 Background of Responsible Tourism

The concept of responsible tourism is still something evolving, meaning that its goal is perhaps to minimize all the negative impacts that tourism may have, which would be to bring any positive consequence rather to the support of local communities, to the respect of local cultures and to minimize the environment impact. The concept itself emerged in the early 1990's, as a sarcastic counter-reaction to all the worry on the part of mass tourism to the environment and social inequality (Mihalic & T, 2016). Whereas traditional tourism is different from responsible tourism, responsible tourism focuses on sustainability, local empowerment, and ethical practice. It promotes a more considered style of travel that places on the shoulders of tourists, businesses, and governments the responsibility to make tourism sustainable and to the benefit of all in the long term.

The environmental and social consequences of the tourism industry, including resource depletion, cultural erosion, and environmental pollution, became more apparent, and responsible tourism became the buzzword with which to promote sustainable tourism (Amarilla *et al.*, 2012). As a result, the earlier known 'mass tourism' model was replaced with a more sustainable, inclusive, and ethical tourism. The principles of responsible tourism have been further cemented in development with the aid of frameworks such as the Global Sustainable Tourism Council (GSTC), that provide guidelines for operators and destinations wishing to take a path to sustainability (Council, 2013).

#### 1.2 Importance of Sustainability in the Tourism Industry

The increased acknowledgment of the sector's environmental, economic, and social impact makes sustainability in the tourism industry more and more important. By the United Nations World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO) tourism is one of the biggest economic sectors in the world accounting for approximately 10% of global GDP and providing millions of jobs (Perdomo & Y, 2016). But it has grown quickly enough to encounter a range of problems like over-tourism, environmental degradation, and the profiting of local cultures. Because of this, the use of sustainable tourism practices has become necessary as a way to mitigate if not offset these negative effects.

Tourism sustainability is beyond environmental preservation and encompasses social and economic preservation dimensions. Sustainable tourism is a practice that leads businesses to use methods to minimize environmental footprints, maintain natural and cultural assets, and guarantee that local communities benefit from tourism activities (Burdeanuet *al.*, 2016). Nowadays, the sustainable tourism concept is part of the national and international policies, and, it is considered as a touristic destination planning and management determinant factor (Wilson & E, 2015). This is where considerations of long-term sustainability may be made to ensure the tourism industry can continue to be what it is whilst minimizing detrimental impacts upon the planet and people.

#### 1.3 Objectives of the Review

This review is intended to look at responsible tourism and the part it plays in promoting sustainable tourism. The paper will begin by providing an overview of key principles, followed by a discussion of the roles of various stakeholders in sustainability, and conclude with a discussion of key challenges and strategies for global implementation. Finally, emerging trends, research gaps, and recommendations for policymakers, businesses, and consumers regarding the sustainability of tourism will also be discussed in the review.

## 2. CONCEPTUALIZING RESPONSIBLE TOURISM

### 2.1 Defining Responsible Tourism

Tourism takes responsibility for its own environmental and social impacts and for contributing to the economic and socio-cultural development of tourism destinations in an equitable way. It is a holistic approach that both travelers and businesses in tourism take responsibility for their actions. The International Centre for Responsible Tourism (ICRT) defines responsible tourism as 'tourism that benefits local people, conserves the environment, improves the well-being of visitors and hosts alike' (Manente *et al.*, 2014). If one interprets this definition strictly, it demands the weighing of different stakeholder interests and then promoting sustainability.

However, different scholars have different definitions of responsible tourism. For example, to Mowforth and Munt (2015), it is an ethical approach that calls for tourists to think more about their behavior, making sure that their tourist behavior helps for positive change made. According to Murphy (2012), responsible tourism is about reducing harm and augmenting good causes for the community and environment of hosting, primarily by backing local economies and preserving cultural heritage. Since responsible tourism is a multi-dimensional concept, the diversity of the definitions reflects the diversity of the elements of sustainability, ethics, and community well-being.

### 2.2 Core Principles of Responsible Tourism

Some core principles underpin the concept of responsible tourism which guides its implementation. Ethical, environmental, and social dimensions make up these principles that, when taken together, define sustainable tourism practices.

- **Environmental Responsibility:** The environmental component concentrates on minimizing tourist negative effect on resources of the nature and ecosystems. One is by encouraging energy efficiency, curbing waste, and defending biodiversity conservation (Sirima&A, 2013). The idea is to adopt practices that will safeguard the environment for future generations, such as opting for low-carbon travel and adopting sustainable resource management practices within accommodations and attractions.
- **Social Responsibility:** Instead, responsible tourism is the protection and preservation of cultural heritage; and respect for local traditions and customs. In addition, social responsibility means the promotion of the host communities' well-being through equal job creation, and local population empowerment as well as ensuring that tourism contributes to social and economic development (Ferguson *et al.*, 2015). Tourism benefits should be distributed fairly among all stakeholders making it one key theme.
- **Ethical Responsibility:** Ethical responsibility in tourism is a practice wherein the tourism methods are performed regarding broader morals of the welfare of workers, animal protection, and prevention of all sorts of exploitation, etc. Budeanu (2005) contends that ethical tourism means tackling children involved in labor, fair wages to employees, and protecting human rights. It also applies to the ethical treatment of animals and encourages responsible wildlife tourism processes that do not hurt animal populations at all.

### 2.3 Responsible Tourism vs. Sustainable Tourism

Though the terms responsible tourism and sustainable tourism are frequently interchanged, they are not the same. The two concepts promote the reduction of negative impacts on the environment, society, and economy, but in different ways.

**Responsible Tourism** is in the behavior and actions of tourists and businesses. It is about choosing to minimize environmental and community harm, and maximizing tourism benefits, based upon an informed decision. Stanford & D (2006) state that responsible tourism is a call for 'accountability' and 'positive action' by all stakeholders in a tour to be taken. This includes tourists making individual decisions related to ethics as supporting local economies and respecting local cultures.

**Sustainable Tourism** is more structural, and broader and integrates long-term planning and development of policies. It aims to develop a tourism model that can sustain in the long run without depleting resources, and without killing the ecosystem. The United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) has defined sustainable tourism as 'tourism that takes full account of its current and future economic, social and environmental impacts, addressing the needs of visitors, the industry, the environment, and host communities'. It is concerned with a balance between economic, social, and environmental impacts on a planetary level (Hall *et al.*, 2015).

The key distinction lies in the focus: Individual actions and choices will fall under responsible tourism and systemic, large-scale changes in the tourism industry, as sustainable tourism. As a part of the practice of sustainable tourism, responsible tourism can be taken into account. In practice, responsible tourism can be viewed as a way of getting to sustainable tourism goals, for it promotes the activity of tourists and businesses into sustainable actions.

## 3. PILLARS OF RESPONSIBLE TOURISM

### 3.1 Environmental Sustainability

Responsible tourism commits to establishing sustainable tourism by minimizing the environmental potential of ecotourism to protect natural resources. A fundamental goal is to decrease the adverse environmental effect of tourism, which consists of often overutilization of energy, water, and other resources, as well as ecosystem contamination. Mowforth & Munt (2015) argues for the use of responsible tourism practices in the utilization of renewable energy, reduction of carbon emissions, and the conservation of biodiversity.

For instance, this can include asking tourism operators to choose eco-friendly operation policies, like using energy-efficient technologies, reducing waste through recycling and composting, and helping to develop sustainable transport options (Liu & Z, 2003). Eco-tourism, which is the promotion of low impact travel to natural areas, is a major support for the protection of endangered species and ecosystems, usually as a partner of local conservation attempts (Weaver & D, 2007).

### **3.2 Socio-Cultural Responsibility**

Responsible tourism socio-cultural responsibility is about preserving cultural and traditional elements of the local community and ensuring community participation and ultimately its people benefit from this tourism activity. In this case, this pillar stipulates respect for cultural diversity by discouraging cultural exploitation; and local community involvement in the decision-making processes regarding tourism development (Bramwell *et al.*, 2008). Having cultural sensitivity in mind, responsible tourism reduces the risks of cultural erosion because of unregulated tourism growth.

Tourism operators and tourists both are encouraged to learn from and interact with local communities that honor traditions and cultural heritage. According to Bramwell and Lane (2008, cultural exchanges are promoted by one such model of community-based tourism (CBT) as it ensures that community community benefits from tourism revenue. Promoting fair access to tourism opportunities for people from marginalized groups in society is also part of the social responsibility of tourism that guarantees egalitarian distribution of tourism benefits (Mowforth & Munt, 2015).

### **3.3 Economic Responsibility**

Economic responsibility refers to providing a balanced benefit from tourism to rural communities. The second pillar concentrates on encouraging fair wages, backing up local businesses, and having tourism revenue invested back into the community to maintain economic sustainability long term. Responsible tourism tries to curb the economic leakage of tourism profits which largely goes to serve international companies and outside stakeholders rather than local communities (Byrd & E.T., 2007).

Regarding tourism economic responsibility, such responsibility also promotes fair labor and pay practices for tourism workers who deserve to be paid for their work and deserve to work in fair working conditions. According to Duffy (2010), tourism businesses should give training and development chances to local representatives to enable them and cultivate them professionally and personally. Moreover, responsible tourism aims to diversify local economies by supporting small-scale and locally oriented businesses that can succeed together with bigger tourism operators so that the economic advantages are distributed among the village (Jamal *et al.*, 2013).

### **3.4 Ethical Tourism**

Ethical tourism takes a moral approach to tourism by asking that tourism activities are not harmful to animals, and children and unfair trade. Animals get treated in one segment of ethical tourism, most importantly in the wildlife tourism segment as the animal cruelty and exploitation of animals can take place here. Tourism which the practice of ethical treatment of animals by supporting animal conservation and discouraging practices like animal performances or unethical animal encounters (Mowforth and Munt, 2015).

Prevention of child labor in a tourism capacity is another important part of ethical tourism. Not only are child labor and exploitation an issue for many tourism destinations but particularly so in developing countries. Ethical tourism means tourism businesses follow international labor standards, and protect those vulnerable such as children (Johnston *et al.*, 2005). Moreover, responsible tourism is a means the practice of fair trade practices to ensure that goods and services provided to tourists are produced under fair labor conditions, and also, local craftspeople are paid fairly for their work (Frey *et al.*, 2012).

## **4. THE ROLE OF STAKEHOLDERS IN RESPONSIBLE TOURISM**

### **4.1 Role of Tourists**

Tourism is an essential tool for promoting Responsible Tourism practices by influencing the environmental, social, and economic outcomes of tourism activities to which tourists contribute. The behaviors that responsible tourists should adopt should lessen their ecological footprint, support the local community, and respect the cultural norms. Milne and S (1998) state that tourists need to be mindful of the environmental effects of their actions, energy use, waste production, and carbon emissions as these all constitute.

Travelers also have to choose to purchase ethical travel options that support local economic development. This encompasses support of local businesses, purchase of locally made goods, and respect for local people's rights and dignity (Sharpley & R, 2009). Also, tourists should keep away from engaging in behaviors that affirm local cultures, wildlife, or natural resources. Lund-Durlacher & D (2015) explains that responsible tourism pushes to bring travelers to

sustainable accommodations like eco-tourism, low-impact accommodation, and wildlife-friendly attractions. With responsible travel choices comes the opportunity to be powerful agents of change and contributing to sustainability, encourage the tourism industry to behave more responsibly.

#### **4.2 Role of Tourism Businesses and Operators**

Although tourism businesses (travel agencies, accommodation providers, tour operators, etc) have a huge responsibility in promoting practices of responsible tourism, they face difficulties in doing so. However, these same businesses are in a position of particular power to affect the sustainability of tourism, because they impact so directly what the tourists will experience and the local community they visit. Tourism operators should practice sustainability across all of their operational aspects: reducing waste, conserving water and energy, employing local people, preserving cultural heritage and heritage sites, and giving back to the community, Bramwell and Lane (2011) say.

According to Weeden & C (2013), the best practices for tourism firms are the adoption of green accreditation programs, marketing for eco-friendly travel options, and training of local staff on sustainable practices. For example, accommodation providers can use renewable energy sources to power their shop, use minimal food waste, and emphasize eco-friendly actions such as reusing towels for the guests. Agencies of travel and tour operators could provide the option for packages that emphasize sustainable destinations, eco-tourism activity, and responsible cultural exchange. Also, they can persuade tourism policies favoring sustainability and corporate social responsibility.

Tourism businesses also help educate tourists in responsible practices; so that tourists themselves understand their part in minimizing negative impacts and maximizing positive contributions to local communities (Telfer *et al.*, 2015).

#### **4.3 Government and Policy Frameworks**

Policies, regulations, and strategic planning are government core tools for shaping the sustainability of the tourism industry. As per Horobin (1996), the duty of fostering elective tourism is on the legislatures as they make guidelines to advance effective travelers, for instance, natural surroundings assurance, social insurance, and reasonable work practices. Instead, businesses should be incentivized to make sustainable practices part of their business, including giving tax breaks or subsidies for companies that use eco-friendly technologies or impact the community positively.

Also, involvement by the government in providing sustainable tourism infrastructure, i.e., systems that can handle waste, renewable energy sources, and conservation areas is part and parcel of the developmental impact. In addition, governments can set regulations about how tourists should behave — for instance, how many people can be around delicate ecosystems, or what laws exist against harming animals in tourism (Moscardo&G., 2017).

Tourism, too, should contribute to the long-term economic development of host communities and the fair distribution of benefits and sustainable employment opportunities. If sustainability is integrated into national tourism strategies, governments help achieve a more responsible, more resilient tourism industry.

#### **4.4 Local Communities and NGOs**

As direct beneficiaries or victims of tourism activities, local communities and non-government organizations (NGOs) are among the most important local stakeholders in the development of responsible tourism. To Mowforth and Munt (2015), community involvement in the decision-making process is central because local people should have a say on how tourism ought to be developed and managed in their areas. One such method to empower local communities through control and benefit from tourism while precipitating their people, culture, and environment is through Community-based tourism (CBT) initiatives (Maan & M, 2014).

And NGOs, too, have a role to play in demanding sustainable tourism practices. Often they act as watchdogs checking both the impacts of tourism on the local communities and environment and what can be improved. NGOs can work alongside governments, businesses, and communities to build sustainable tourism policies, raise awareness of environmental and social issues, and support community-led tourism projects (Holden *et al.*, 2005).

Local communities and NGOs, working together, can encourage responsible tourism practices which benefit tourists and communities alike, and which protect the social, cultural, and environmental integrity of the destination for future generations.

### **5. CHALLENGES IN IMPLEMENTING RESPONSIBLE TOURISM**

#### **5.1 Economic Pressures and Competing Interests**

Profitability and sustainability are some of the major challenges in implementing responsible tourism. The tourism industry is exceptionally competitive and many businesses are under pressure to extract as much profit as is conceivable, by and large from the expense of sustainable practices. Dodds (2012) argues that businesses in the tourism sector can focus on short-term profits, rather than long-term environmental or social sustainability. In cases when the tourism product is focused on mass tourism, this is especially the case as mass tourism can be detrimental to the local community as well as the environment.

Tourism operators, such as accommodation providers and tour operators, are often unable to implement sustainable practices as they perceive eco-friendly technologies, certifications, and ethical practices to be more expensive (Freyet *et al.*, 2010). In addition, local governments and businesses in areas where tourism is the major economic contributor may have the task of promoting responsible tourism, without harming economic growth or attracting visitors. Resistance to

adopting more sustainable policies usually stems from the conflict between economic growth and environmental protection (Hawkins&D, 2006).

### **5.2 Lack of Awareness and Education**

Another substantial obstacle to the implementation of responsible tourism is equally the failure to educate or create awareness among the stakeholders and tourists. According to Brookes (2014), many tourists don't know the environmental and social impacts of their travel options and continue to apply practices that lead to the abuse of local communities and ecosystems. This ignorance is not restricted to only individual tourists but also tourism businesses many of which do not appreciate in full the benefits of having sustainable tourism practices and how to go about it.

The importance of driving the adoption of responsible tourism is increasing awareness. Resources that could benefit tourists and tourism operators alike exist that can lead to a better understanding of sustainable tourism practices and why they are important. According to George (2010), tourism operators should be responsible for informing the tourist about how not to leave an environmental footprint, how support to local economies, and how to respect local cultural practices. Training programs targeted to tourism businesses can also include moots for the incorporation of sustainability into business operations in compliance with responsible tourism.

### **5.3 Measuring the Impact of Responsible Tourism**

There is another major challenge in measuring the impact of responsible tourism. The results of responsible tourism practices are often multi-factorial, affecting the environment, society, and the economy. A comprehensive understanding of sustainable tourism projects' success is said to involve both qualitative and quantitative analysis. McCombes (2015) also mentioned though that there is no general agreed-upon framework for assessing the influence of responsible tourism, which makes it difficult for businesses and governments to be able to accurately measure and report sustainability outcomes.

On the one hand, ecological impacts including a decrease in carbon emissions or water use are straightforward to quantify, while social and economic impacts are less tangible. For example, the benefits of responsible tourism to society, e.g. in terms of community empowerment and cultural preservation, can be hard to map out. The economic impact of responsible tourism practices on local economies can be very different on a large scale with local stakeholder's participation and when it is on a smaller scale (Blackstock *et al.*, 2008). Standardized metrics to judge the effectiveness of responsible tourism will help to improve accountability and prove over the long term whether or not the practices are effective.

### **5.4 Globalization and Mass Tourism**

Mass tourism and globalization have closely intertwined histories, which have significantly affected our modern understanding of the term tourism. A closer look is therefore warranted to gain a firmer grasp of the issues related to the concept of tourism and its implications on the world today. The narrative of tourism can trace its roots to the Age of Discoveries and sailing expeditions and began taking consistent form in the Age of Enlightenment, where modern concepts of tourism were first established (Vassileva& B., 2017). Moreover, tourism highlighted the growing trend of increasing contacts among societies through these expeditions, thus blurring the so-called foreign or domestic boundaries of any society. Since then, there has been an almost unending expansion of the concept of tourism, wherein it is now deemed an activity of the modern world.

Due to the growth of mass tourism and globalization, the principles of responsible tourism often come into conflict. Mass tourism, with many tourists visiting popular destinations, is said by Setachai and N (2008) to place convenience above sustainability and cost above sustainability. Often the outcome of this model of tourism is overcrowding, environmental degradation, and cultural commodification which work against the aims of responsible tourism.

Low-cost airlines and online travel platforms have allowed the global population to travel enabling a steep rise in tourist numbers, particularly in vulnerable or already over visited destinations. Tourist influx can also cause a boom in local infrastructure and resources leaving very little room to adopt sustainable practices. Moreover, the mass tourism industry places excess pressure to satisfy tourists' demands hence it tends to exploit natural and cultural resources, for instance (Dwyer & L., 2015). The solution to the tension experienced by resonant tourism vis a vis globalization is moving towards more sustainable and diversified tourism models such as eco and community-based tourism and models that focus on the conservation of the environment, cultural sensitivity, and engagement (Kamens & D., 2014).

## **6. STRATEGIES FOR PROTECTING RESPONSIBLE TOURISM**

### **6.1 Education and Awareness Campaigns**

Promoting responsible tourism is also an education and awareness. Tourists and service providers have to be conscious of the meaning of grain practices and their obligations within the desire to help the longkeeping of the destinations. Education initiatives, according to Forsyth (1997) are inevitable in bringing awareness of the environmental, cultural, and economic impacts of tourism. Educational campaigns aimed at awakening the awareness of 'sustainability' as a dynamic concept that while it explores the preservation of the environment, has also a behavioral/normative impact on

people and organizations within and outside the tourism sector; educating tourists and tourism businesses about how their action support/impaired sustainability.

Awareness campaigns for tourists could be to cut down on energy consumption, conserve water, honor local cultures, and reduce waste. Just as educate tourism businesses on the need to adopt sustainable practices like sourcing locally, reducing emissions, and providing sustainable services. Moreover, Dodds (2010) suggests that public-private partnerships and government---NGO collaboration can increase the scale of education efforts by supplying resources and vehicles for disseminating knowledge about responsible tourism practices.

The opportunities for extending the reach of these educational campaigns do not lie solely within digital printing but are also available in social media and on other digital platforms. Organizations can engage tourists and service providers by using engaging content, such as infographics, videos, and interactive tools (Budeanu&A, 2007). Awareness campaigns are critical to the change of consumer behavior in favor of more sustainable choices and turn toward long-term tourism patterns change.

## **6.2. Certification Programs and Standards**

Certification programs and sustainability standards are important tools to get tourism businesses to be responsible. Green Globe, EarthCheck, and others provide a formal framework to guide tourism businesses in moving toward the achievement of sustainable development goals. The criteria of these programs to which the businesses have to adhere are strict environmental, social, and economic, for example, resource conservation, waste reduction, and community involvement (Poser & E, 2009).

These certifications give tourists a way to choose more sustainably by pointing out sustainable businesses and destinations. According to Font (2003), certification programs can push the competitiveness in the tourism industry, as the businesses try to separate themselves as sustainable and responsible. In addition, certification programs offer businesses a way to be recognized for what they're doing, resulting in positive publicity and increased customer loyalty. Yet, the rollout of certification programs can be difficult, especially for small businesses with high costs and complex tracking of sustainability results. Yet, certification is an important tool in promoting responsible tourism by establishing clear rules and encouraging ongoing sustainability practices (Spenceley *et al.*, 2013).

## **6.3 Technology and Innovation in Sustainable Travel**

And how can technology and innovation provide powerful solutions to reduce tourism's environmental impact and increase the travel experience for the visitor? According to Ali (2013), advances in technology can improve sustainable practices by using a digital platform to check in paperless, a mobile app to encourage sustainable tourism choices, and smart systems for energy and waste management in hotels. Transport, from electric vehicles to new sustainable aviation technologies, where innovations help bring tourism further down in terms of carbon footprint.

In addition to that, the use of big data and artificial intelligence in tourism planning improves sustainability by optimizing tourist' inflows, lowering decongestion, and limiting the environmental impact of mass tourism. In addition, real-time data is being used to manage the number of visitors, including at popular attractions, so as not to overload them (Scott & M.M., 2013). In addition, sustainable tourism apps give tourists the knowledge of which eco-friendly accommodations, green activities, or local initiatives to choose from so they can help tourists make sustainable choices on their travels.

Additionally, technology enables tourism businesses to more accurately measure their sustainability performance, track their carbon emissions, and provide real-time reporting on their environmental impact. With technology at its forefront, the tourism industry can operate more efficiently and responsibly, a sustainable way of travel that benefits tourists, the environment, and businesses.

## **6.4 Community-Based Tourism (CBT)**

Community-Based Tourism (CBT) is a necessary approach to guaranteeing tourism benefits remain accessible to local communities and to maintaining their cultural heritage and environment. According to Dangi (2016), CBT aims to involve the local people in tourism planning, management, and operation in such a way that they have a say in the way in which tourism develops in their areas. By empowering local people, CBT ensures that tourism development responds to community values and priorities, a situation that will encourage local people to have a sense of ownership and responsibility for their environment and culture.

Second, CBT can also promise more equitable economic benefits, because it promotes the redistribution of tourism revenue to the residents, rather than to large multinational corporations. Second, CBT also ensures the preservation of cultural traditions through authentic cultural exchange between the tourists and host communities, that is, by preventing commercialization or exploitation of the lives of the indigenous communities a, this, however (Giampiccoliet *al.*, 2017). In addition to serving as a vehicle for conserving natural resources and biodiversity, CBT also benefits natural resources and biodiversity, because communities are more invested in conserving the environment when they would directly benefit from it (Tourism & N.Z., 2010).

## 6.5 Collaboration Between Stakeholders

Responsible tourism and sustainable tourism will depend on each other and collaboration among stakeholders. According to Bramwell and Lane (2000), responsible tourism partnerships from governments, businesses, local communities, and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) are very important. Working together, these stakeholders can develop policies, programs, and initiatives that put sustainability first but consider the needs of stakeholders on both sides.

When well facilitated, collaboration can help make tourism policies inclusive and take into consideration the interests of local communities, with the private sector on board. According to Kasim (2009), these collaborations are essential for fulfilling long-term sustainability objectives because they permit for synergy of resources, pooling of knowledge, and coordination of efforts to overcome overcrowding, environmental destruction, and cultural degeneration. Governments can create such an enabling environment for responsible tourism by providing incentives, regulation, and support in sustainable practices and businesses can contribute by adopting green technologies and promoting responsible tourism packages.

It is also very critical in raising awareness of, and building capacity within, the tourism industry in this regard. Stakeholders working together can help scale up sustainable practices and make sure that tourism becomes a force of good for tourists, host communities, and the environment, for future generations (Waligo *et al.*, 2013).

## 7. FUTURE DIRECTIONS FOR RESPONSIBLE TOURISM

### 7.1 Emerging Trends in Sustainable Travel

Growth in concern for sustainability and environmental effects is leading the tourism industry to evolve. Several emerging trends toward more responsible travel are identified by Sharpley & R (2011). Some of these trends are eco-tourism, slow travel, and regenerative tourism, a more sustainable way of tourism practice.

- **Eco-tourism** is all about travel to natural areas that promote conservation and the improvement of the well-being of local people. This form of tourism is orientated towards education, environmental conservation, and minimizing tourism's negative impacts. According to Dolnicar (2009), as travelers look for ways to enjoy travel that combines being more meaningful and environmentally aware; This has seen eco-tourism grow in popularity.
- **Slow travel** gets travelers to spend more time longer in a destination and explore it more sustainably. Slow travel is about savoring the experience of a place — rather than racing through many destinations — and using local transport and staying in local accommodations. Reducing the carbon footprint of tourism is not only this trend, it also provides local communities with economic benefits (Dickinson *et al.*, 2010).
- **Regenerative tourism** is an emerging movement that is about more than sustainability — it's about restoring and improving the environment and local communities. For Wise & N (2016), regenerative tourism is meant to have a regenerating, long-lasting positive impact, for example, to help revive an ecosystem or to support a local culture by participating in conservation and community development acts. This form of tourism aims to undo the damage that has been inflicted by traditional tourism models and assist the environment and economies to recuperate from effects perhaps too great to be reversed.

Many emerging trends of tourism are characterizing the future of tourism; as an increasing number of travelers and companies become aware of the need to balance tourism's economic benefits with the health of the planet and local communities. If such trends continue, the tourism industry can expect growing demand for sustainable options and the move towards responsible travel options.

### 7.2 Integration with Global Sustainability Goals

It is increasingly important to align responsible tourism with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). A universal framework for global sustainability is represented by SDGs, whereas tourism can make a significant contribution to their achievement. Bramwell and Lane (2017) contend that tourism can directly contribute to Goals 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth), 12 (Responsible Consumption and Production), and 14 (Life Below Water) by encouraging sustainable practices by tourism businesses and operations.

Responsible tourism can contribute to SDG 1 (No Poverty) for example because it ensures tourism has an economic benefit for local communities and helps to promote inclusive growth. Goodwin (2016) further also notes that tourism that follows the SDGs can mobilize marginalised groups (women, youth, and Indigenous communities) through community-based tourism and fair trade practices. Responsible tourism and SDG 13 (Climate Action) are also linked because tourism businesses can introduce measures that reduce their carbon footprint, invest in renewable energy, promote carbon offset programs, or promote sustainable transport (Brendehauget *et al.*, 2017). If tourism practices are appropriately structured and aligned with the SDGs, the industry could be a part of the global efforts in the fight against climate change, protection of the environment, and redistribution of wealth.

To reach these goals, however, all stakeholders – including governments, businesses, and tourists – must coordinate their efforts. According to Hassan (2000), both strong partnerships and appropriate policy frameworks are fundamental in integrating tourism and the SDGs, and for having tourism contribute to global sustainability.

### 7.3 Potential Role of Policy and Regulation in Shaping Future Tourism

Policies and regulations are important determinants in building the future of responsible tourism. The Governments have the authority to put in place policies that stimulate sustainable tourism, protect the environment, and help uplift local communities. Edgell (2008) argues that good policies to promote responsible tourism have been policies like closing down businesses that do not sustain themselves and the environment, protecting environment laws, and promoting local ownership of the tourism venture.

Governments can also get involved by backing the creation of certification schemes, offering tax incentives for sustainable businesses, and investing in tourism infrastructure that decreases tourism carbon footprint. This paper argues that some destinations have imposed limits on the number of visitors in certain locations, to reduce the environmental effects of tourism and to offer a better sustainable experience for the visitor. As per Coles (2013), such policies can help prevent tourism which has plagued certain destinations destroying the environment and erosive culture. However, improvement is needed in some areas of policy frameworks. Bramwell and B (2011) for example point out that some of the governments are still prioritizing mass tourism economic growth over sustainable development. Long-term policies are needed that go beyond tourism to incorporate responsibly tourism as an integral part of national and regional development policies. In addition, other governments should strengthen local community capacity to enable them to effectively participate in tourism planning and decision-making with a sense of ownership of tourism development in their areas.

For policies and regulations to encourage responsible tourism, international cooperation at the global level is needed to harmonize them. The United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) and other organizations can be instrumental in educating national governments on the setting of sustainable tourism policies centered around the SDGs. Overall, policy and regulation are necessary to induce responsible tourism. Effective policies of government also have to be enacted to intercede and promote sustainable practices, put forth regulations on the tourism industry, and carry out countries' tourism strategies that are suited to interlink with global sustainability goals.

## 8. CONCLUSION

Tourism with responsibility is increasingly becoming an integral part of the tourism industry globally as the world has increasingly come to recognize the need for economic growth to be matched with the conservation of the environment and the provision for social equity. The principles of responsible tourism (environmental sustainability, socio-cultural responsibility, economic equity, ethical tourism) give a complete framework for tackling problems raised by conventional tourism models. This article discusses ways in which responsible tourism promotion can be done based on education, certification programs, technological innovations, and close collaboration among all stakeholders. Today emerging trends in the industry, including eco-tourism, slow tourism, or even regenerative tourism are changing how this practice of tourism and slowly moving the tourism industry away from unsustainable and onto more sustainable and regenerative models. They reflect trends consistent with current global sustainability goals such as the UN's SDGs and provide potential answers to some of the tourism industry's current environmental and socio-economic challenges. Tourism integration with SDGs means tourism will help enhance global sustainability efforts and provide long-term benefits to the local community and the environment.

The future of responsible tourism is in the hands of governments and policymakers. There are many policies and regulations needed to encourage positive change in the tourism industry that are based on sustainability and people-oriented policies. Despite major advances in this field, much more needs to be achieved to ensure tourism remains a force for good and contributes to local and global sustainability targets. In the end, the future of tourism is embracing and practicing responsible and sustainable tourism that puts people, the planet, and profit on equal footing. Responsible tourism is a vehicle for the industry to continue to grow, while at the same time reducing its negative impacts and contributing to the well-being of communities and the protection of natural and cultural resources for future generations. The vision of a more sustainable and ethical tourism industry is shared by travelers, businesses, and governments as they continue to work together.

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