

A STUDY ON SUSTAINABLE TOURISM DEVELOPMENT IN BHUTAN: QUANTIFYING THE AWARENESS OF MILLENNIAL PEOPLE OF BHUTAN TOWARDS SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Md. Tariqul Islam¹

Lovely Professional University, Airlines Tourism and Hospitality Management, India

E-mail: tariqulislamtonmoy812@gmail.com

ORCID: 0000-0002-7367-2989

Aswajit Boro

Lovely Professional University, Airlines Tourism and Hospitality Management, India

E-mail: aswajitboro@gmail.com

ORCID: 0000-0001-6091-1066

Namgay Phuntsho

Lovely Professional University, Airlines Tourism and Hospitality Management, India

E-mail: namgayphuntsho41@gmail.com

ORCID: 0000-0002-9499-2199

Abstract

Article Info:

Received: 17-04-2019

Accepted: 24-04-2019

Keywords:

Sustainable Tourism

Gross National Happiness

Government Initiatives

Millennial People

Bhutan

Sustainable development in the tourism industry is the key concern in this present world. Many countries are trying to focus on that. Tourism policy of Bhutan is focusing on sustainable development to conserve the natural and cultural heritage and improving the prosperity of the residents which is the general idea of Gross National Happiness (GNH). The government of Bhutan has already taken many steps to develop the tourism industry as it is the major source of the country's economy. But it is not possible to develop the tourism industry without the participation of local people. Millennial people are an important part of the local people and those millennial will dominate the tourism industry as they are the future of tomorrow. That's why millennial people should be aware of sustainable development for a better future. On this research, we have tried to quantify the awareness of millennial people towards sustainable tourism development.

1. INTRODUCTION

According to SDU Sustainable development in the tourism refers that using the tourism assets in such kind of way which meets with our present need without compromising the ability to meet with the needs of future generation. In the present world practicing of

¹ Corresponding Author

sustainable development is noticed in many sectors. Many country has started practicing it only because of minimizing the usage of natural assets. Bhutan is a country of South Asia which is sharing its border with India and Tibet. The tourism industry in Bhutan started in 1974, when the Government of Bhutan, with an end goal to raise income and to advance Bhutanese one of a kind culture and customs to the outside world, opened its disengaged nation to outsiders. In 1974, 287 travellers visited Bhutan. The quantity of visitors visiting Bhutan expanded to 2,850 of every 1992 and rose drastically to 7,158 of every 1999. By the late 1980s the tourism industry contributed over US\$2 million in yearly income. In spite of being available to outsiders, the Bhutanese government is intensely mindful of the ecological effect travellers can have on Bhutan's one of a kind and for all intents and purposes untainted scene and culture. Appropriately, they have limited the dimension of tourist movement to maintain higher-quality the tourism industry. Until 1991, the Bhutan Tourism Corporation (BTC), a semi self-governing and self-financing body, executed the administration's tourism industry approach. Bhutan can be considered as a role model in sustainable development for the others countries. But it is not possible for a government to develop a country sustainably by ignoring the participation of millennial people of Bhutan because millennial people are the future of the country as after a certain period they will rule the country that is why the millennial people have to be aware enough regarding sustainable development. Thus, this research is all about to measure the awareness of millennial people regarding sustainable development of Bhutan's tourism.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

According to Jiaying Lu & Sanjay Nepal (2009) sustainability is a perplexing idea as the tourism industry requires heaps of resources, in this manner the local communities and tourists are to be responsible for environment fused sustainable development. Sustainable development in recent years has met the present essential needs of voyagers and local people groups while protecting and upgrading open doors for what's to come. As the travel industry is a resource serious industry, reasonable improvement accentuates development without disintegrating the resources (Harmeet Matharu Mousime Xalxo, 2017). Bhutan is a developing station for tourism by drawing in tourists and rehearsing sustainability. Bhutan tourism furthermore, anchors guaranteeing long term manageability of the business and chipping in to the country's economy. Eco-tourism and nature based tourism being the natural asset of the country, it is very much pivotal to promote sustainable tourism and practice sustainable development. Bhutan with controlled tourism has built up structure for the future

advancement of tourism and must make certain that tourism development is steady with the imperial government's objectives of ecological and social conservation as well (Dorji, 2001). The royal government has embraced an approach of "high value-low volume" tourism, for the sustainability of tourism in Bhutan. The royal government's general goal of escalating forex profit while limiting unfavourable social and ecological effects of the tourism industry is apparently achieved. Preserving nature and culture is a part of the Bhutanese esteem framework and is a critical segment of the traditional and conventional lifestyle in Bhutan, and the tourism industry approach cast back these worries. Long term sustainability in Bhutan is only possible if all the participants of the tourism industry i.e. government, private operators, tourists and local people work together in cooperation (Bhap, 2017). Safeguarding the regular habitat is one of the base of the Gross National Happiness, a blessing from His Majesty King Jigme Singye Wangchuk to Bhutan and to the world on the loose. The standard of High-Value, Low-volume Tourism was a fragment of a visionary modernization and financial improvement plan. In this manner, the legislature has set a compulsory least day by day tax, with a target of amplifying foreign trade income while limiting the conceivably antagonistic social and ecological effects from mass tourism. The managing approach of the tourism industry development in Bhutan has without a doubt added to the industry brand on the world gathering. The travel industry has contributed the farmers to bank from tourists, ranch lodge, portage and the advancement of indigenous crafted works.(Chhewang Rinzin, Walter, Vermeulen & Pieter Glasbergen, 2007). Stated increase in number of tourist could endanger the expected low effect on both nature and culture, which are the selling purposes of Bhutanese tourism. Because of the controlled the tourism policy in Bhutan the effect on culture and environment is low as of now. In any case, the normal development may, in the event that it isn't overseen appropriately, destroy the natural beauty of tourism in Bhutan. The tourism policy is a fundamental component of the nation's explicit sustainable improvement approach. The advancement rationality based on the reason that Gross National Happiness (GNH) is more significant than Gross Domestic Product (GDP).

3. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- To discuss about the tourism industry of Bhutan.
- To discuss about the sustainable development in tourism industry of Bhutan.
- To analyse the government initiatives for sustainable development of Bhutan.
- To quantify the awareness of millennial people for achieving sustainability in tourism industry of Bhutan.

4. METHODOLOGY

All the data and information for this research has been collected from two sources; Primary and Secondary. Primary data were collected by performing a survey on 51 Bhutanese people who are directly and indirectly involve with the tourism industry of Bhutan. And the secondary data were collected from different types of journals, research paper, articles, books and Internet.

5. ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

5.1. Visitor's Arrival Growth

Tourism in Bhutan was started in 1974 in view to open the door for foreign countries and to promote its unique culture and tradition. Tourism is also one of source of country's revenue. Despite the country's policy of high value, low volume, the number of tourist visiting Bhutan keep on increasing year by year. The country's rich culture, traditions, historical sites, nature beauty and GNH motivates tourist to visit Bhutan. The number of tourist visiting Bhutan kept on increasing year by year after the start of the tourism in the country. Tourism council of Bhutan has recorded the visitor's arrival and its growth from the year 1995 to 2018 (Table 1).

Table 1. Number of tourist arrival and arrival growth

Year	No. Visitors Arrival	Visitors Arrival Growth in %	Year	No. Visitors Arrival	Visitors Arrival Growth in %
1995	4,800	***	2007	21,000	21.39%
1996	5,200	8.33%	2008	28,000	33.33%
1997	5,400	3.70%	2009	23,000	-17.88%
1998	6,200	14.81%	2010	41,000	43.90%
1999	7,200	16.12%	2011	66,000	60.98%
2000	7,600	5.26%	2012	1,05,000	59.09%
2001	6,400	-15.79%	2013	1,16,000	10.48%
2002	5,600	-12.5%	2014	1,33,000	16.54%
2003	6,300	12.5%	2015	1,55,000	16.54%
2004	9,200	46.03%	2016	2,10,000	35.48%
2005	13,600	32.35%	2017	2,54,704	21.29%
2006	17,300	27.21%	2018	2,74,097	7.61%

Source: Tourism Council of Bhutan

According to the TCB of Bhutan, country received total of 4,800 tourist visitor in 1995 and in 1996 there was growth in visitor arrival by 8.33% with number of 5200 visitors. There was growth in visitor's arrival till 2000 and then in the year 2001 there was huge change in visitor's growth. Country received 6400 that was 1200 less than previous year and visitor's

arrival growth reduced by -15.79%. Visitors again started increasing from 2003 and in the year 2004 there was huge growth in visitor's arrival with growth of 46.03%. The country received the highest number of visitors in the year 2018 and lowest in the year 1995. The highest growth in visitor's arrival was in the year 2011 with growth rate of 60.98% and with lowest in the year 1997 with just 3.70%. Though the number of visitors kept on increasing there was up and down in visitors growth rate.

5.2. Government Initiatives Regarding Sustainable Development

Followings are the government initiatives regarding sustainable development in tourism.

Pillar of Gross National Happiness

When Gross National Happiness was started in 1972, Sustainable Socio –Economic development was made one of the Pillars. There are basically four pillars of Gross National Happiness-1: Good Governance, 2: Sustainable Socio –Economic Development, 3: Cultural Preservation and 4: Environmental preservation. GNH is main tool of diving economy development in the country. Bhutan is the only country in the world which measures its annual income with GNH that is in terms of happiness and wellbeing of the people. To sustain the natural resources, local culture and tradition, and to preserve the historical sites, government of Bhutan had started sustainable tourism in the country.

High Value, Low Volume.

When the tourism started in Bhutan in 1974 the concept of 'High Value, Low Volume' was started. High value, low volume is the key concept, where by country is able to generate high income with eco-friendly tourist at low volume. This initiatives enables the government to reduce tourist through imposing high value which leads to minimum negative impact on natural environment and socio-economic of the country. Tourist are made to pay USD 200 per day which reduce the number of tourist visiting and on the other hand generating high income.

Preserving of Handicrafts

The tourism council of Bhutan encourages local to show case their handmade crafts through numerous festivals like Royal High land festival which was started in 16th October

2016 in the district of Gasa which takes place for 1 days in which local people show caste their hand made products from the wool and fur of Yaks and sheep. The festival also includes various culture programme performed by local peoples. This festivals encourage local people to preserve their handicrafts and generate income through trading with tourists. Like was there are many festivals started by tourism council of Bhutan to preserve the distinct handcraft of the country.

Band of Plastic in the Country.

So as plastic is one of the main source of waste in the country, Bhutan has band plastic bag nationwide from the 1st April 2019. In this regards neither tourist nor local people are not allowed to use plastic. If they are found using plastic bags the government will find them with 500 Ngultrum and double the amount for second. If local vendors and shopkeepers are found using plastic bags again and again it will result in cancellation of business licence. Tourist are not allowed to throw litters while they are visiting a destination.

Conservation of Flora and Fauna

The constitution of Bhutan mandates that the country should be covered with forest of minimum 60%. The country is covered with 71% of forest which helped the country to be the only Carbon- Negative country in the world. The initiative taken by the Government of Bhutan is also helping the world in reducing carbon emission. And also Bhutan has many protected areas including 5 National Parks and 5 Sanctuaries which protect endangered animals like Snow Leopard, Bengal Tiger, Black Naked Crane, Red Pandas and many of animal species. Though government allows visiting this protected areas, hunting, fishing, pouching and cutting down of trees are not allowed for both tourist and locals.

5.3.Quantifying the Awareness of Millennial People of Bhutan

5.3.1. Being a millennial local resident of Bhutan

Q1: Do you support those policies that have been taken by Bhutan government for sustainable tourism development?

A field survey has been performed among 51 millennial people of the Bhutan. According to the survey, it has been found that 21 people (41.2 %) strongly agreed and 26 people (51%) agreed that they support the policies and approach that have been initiated by

Bhutan Government for sustainable development. But 4 people (7.8%) were neutral (sometimes they do and sometimes they don't). (Table 2).

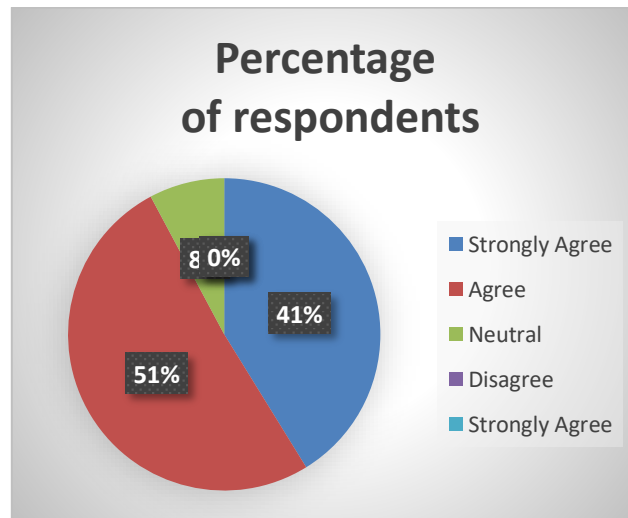


Table 2. Answers of Q1

Responses	Percentage of respondents	No. of respondents
Strongly Agree	41.2%	21
Agree	51%	26
Neutral	7.8%	4
Disagree	0%	0
Strongly Disagree	0%	0

Q2: Are you concern about minimizing waste and pollution? (Table 3)

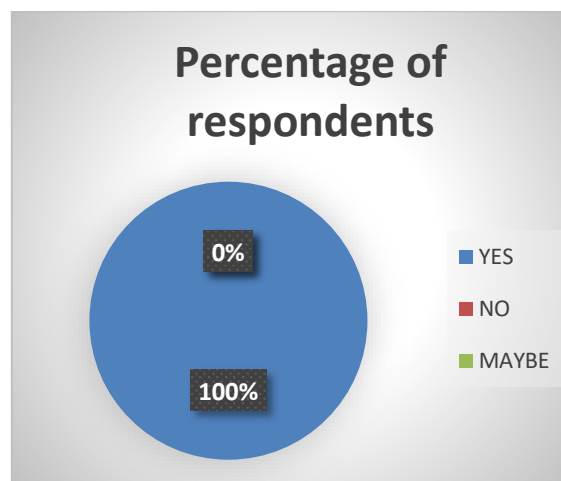


Table 3. Answers of Q2

Response	Percentage of respondents	No. of respondents
YES	100%	51
NO	0%	0
MAYBE	0%	0

Above table and graph represent that all the 51 millennial people (100%) of Bhutan are concerned about minimizing waste and pollution in their nation. It is the only nation on the planet that is carbon negative, which implies it creates more oxygen than it expends. It is only possible if locals are concerned about its environment and the above stats proves it so.

Q3: Are you concern about conserving natural resources? (Table 4)

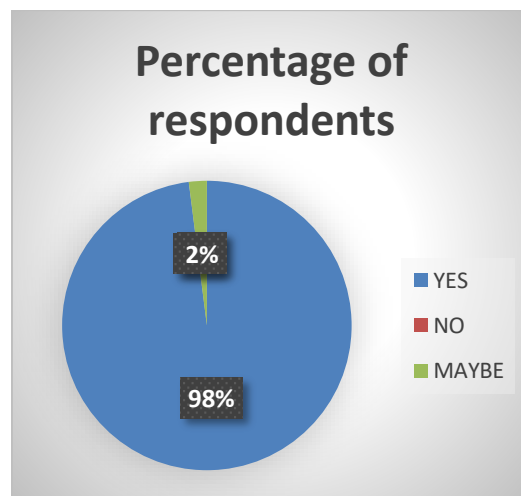


Table 4. Answers of Q3

Response	Percentage of respondents	No. of respondents
YES	98%	50
NO	0	0
MAYBE	2%	1

Above table and graph represents that 50 millennial people (98%) of Bhutan are concerned about conserving resources for future generations and 1 person (2%) has mere possibility that he/she might be concerned about it. The main asset of Bhutan is its natural resources and exploiting it too much would destroy its charm and beauty. And furthermore, would affect the tourism industry and locals of the country as well.

Q4: Which factors you will consider while booking a Hotel? (Table 5)

Table 5 and graph represents that 2 people (3.9%) consider Luxury, 36 people (70.6%) consider Eco friendly and 13 people (25.5%) consider Budget while booking a hotel during their trip. Luxury hotels would be booked by the tourist who like to maintain their status in the society under any circumstance, eco-friendly hotels are chosen by the ones who likes to spend most of their time amongst green environment and support sustainable development. Likewise budget hotels are chosen by the tourist who likes to spend less amount and explore more. It is up to the perception and attitudes of the tourist while booking a hotel.

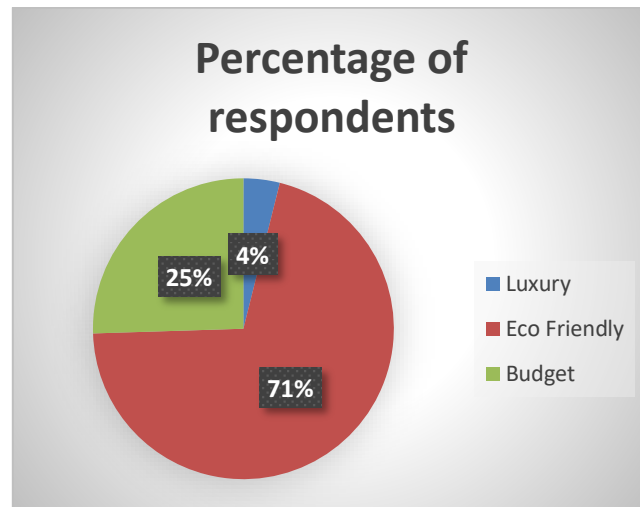


Table 5. Answers of Q4

Response	Percentage of respondents	No. of respondents
Luxury	3.9%	2
Eco Friendly	70.6%	36
Budget	25.5%	13

5.3.2. *Millennial as a tour operator in Bhutan*

Q1: As a tour operator will you provide your staff with information, tips and training on how to be more environmentally responsible? (Table 6)

Table 6 represents that 49 millennial people (96.1%) as a tour operator would provide staff with information, tips and training on how to be more environmentally responsible and 2 people (3.9%) are not sure but they might as well do the same and contribute in sustainable development.

Table 6. Answers of Q1

Response	Percentage of respondents	No. of respondents
YES	96.1%	49
NO	0	0
MAYBE	3.9%	2

Q2: As a tour operator will you make suggestions to your clients to purchase local products from the local community? (Table 7)

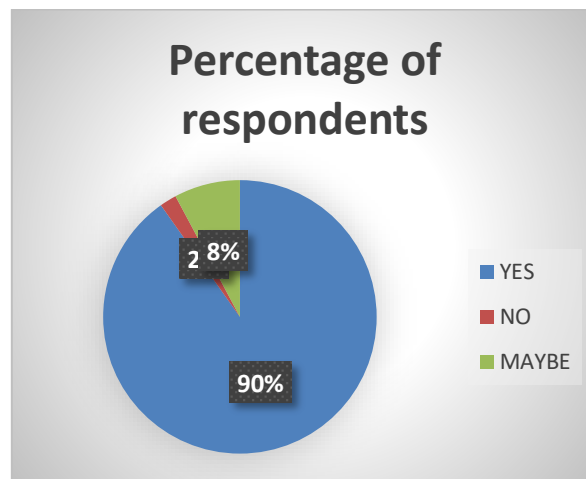


Table 7. Answers of Q2

Response	Percentage of respondents	No. of respondents
YES	90.2%	46
NO	2%	1
MAYBE	7.8%	4

Above table and graph represents that 46 millennial people (90.2%) as a tour operator would make suggestions to clients to purchase local products from the local community, 4 people (7.8%) might as well do so but 1 person (2%) most certainly does not want to do so.

Q3: As a tour operator will you source your supplies locally to support your local community? (Table 8)

Table 8. Answers of Q3

Response	Percentage of respondents	No. of respondents
YES	84.3%	43
NO	2%	1
MAYBE	13.7%	13

Above table and graph represents that 43 millennial people (84.3%) as a tour operator would source their supplies locally to support local community, 13 people (13.7%) may or may not do it and 1 person (2%) absolutely will not do so.

6. RESULTS AND FINDINGS

This study on sustainable development of Bhutan has led to the understanding of the importance of the natural resources as tourism asset in their nation. The involvement of royal government and locals in conserving the environment for sustainable development is praiseworthy. Even the millennial people of Bhutan are aware about the necessity of preserving their natural resources for future generations. As a millennial people of Bhutan, (Q.1 table) it can be said that 51% people are pleased with the initiatives that are been taken by the government for sustainable development, (Q.2 table) 100% people are concerned about minimizing the waste and pollution in their country as they care more about Gross National Happiness more than Gross Domestic Product, (Q.3 table) 98% people are bothered about conserving natural resources as too much exploitation would hamper the locals especially the future generations, (Q.4 table) 70.6% people literally believe in booking eco-friendly hotels as it has less negative impacts on the environment and contributing in the sustainable development.

As a millennial tour operator of Bhutan, (Q.1 table) it may be very well said that 90.2% people would provide their staff with information, tips and training to be more environmentally responsible, (Q.2 table) 90.2% people would make suggestions to their clients to purchase local products from the local community as it would help them in improving their economic condition and bestow to the local community's unique identity by sharing their culture and tradition globally, (Q.3 table) 84.3% people would source their supplies locally to support local community as it empowers biodiversity, supporting economy and cultivating community pride. It is likewise simpler to assemble great affinity and dependable organizations with vendors.

7. CONCLUSION

The tourism in Bhutan is established on the guideline of manageability, implying that tourism must be naturally and environmentally inviting, socially and socially adequate and economically feasible. Bhutan desires to be a nation where development is all encompassing, comprehensive and maintainable. The sustainable development idea and standards are

established in the GNH advancement theory as it is more significant than GDP. It was plainly reflected that 'the guideline of sustainability must invade all the reasoning on the future development of the nation by imposing "high value, low volume" policy. Bhutan's untarnished habitat, forests and conservation of its social convention are contemplative of its sustainable development. Bhutan is on the proper approach to save its ecological and social base. Establishment of GNH have clearly improved with the enhancement of financial activities and upkeep of local social and cultural tradition. Bhutan has confined the GNH as its commitment to sustainability. As indicated by the Constitution of Bhutan, Article 5.1, it is each resident's obligation to help secure nature. Bhutan's development principle is a sincere apprehension for sustainability and for future development globally.

REFERENCES

- Bhap, T. D. (2017, May 18).. *Bhutan a Champion of Sustainable Tourism*. Retrieved from <http://www.bhutanmindvacation.com/blog/2017/05/18/bhutan-a-champion-of-sustainable-tourism>
- Bhutan Awarded World's Sustainable Destination's Earth Award. (n.d.). Retrieved from Tourism Council of BHUTAN: <https://www.bhutan.travel/blogs/bhutan-awarded-worlds-sustainable-destinations-earth-award-1>
- Bhutan, R. G. (2002). *Bhutan: In Pursuit of Sustainable Development*. The United Nations Conference. Retrieved from <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/798bhutanreport.pdf>
- Chhewang, R., Walter J.V. Vermeulen & Pieter, G. (2007). Ecotourism as a mechanism for sustainable development: the case of Bhutan. *Journal of Integrative Environmental Sciences*, 4(2), 109-125.
- Dorji, T. (2001). Sustainability of Tourism in BHUTAN. *Journal of Bhutan Studies*, 84-104.
- Harmeet Matharu Mousime Xalxo (November 2017). A study on sustainable tourism and its practices with reference to "Bhutan". *International Conference People Connect: Networking For Sustainable Development*. IJCRT .
- Jamyang, D., Sherab, D., Tshetrim, D. & Kinley, C. (2013). Public Awareness of Environmental Policies in Bhutan. *Bhutan Journal of Research & Development*, Spring, 1-14.

Jiaying, L. & Sanjay, N. (2009). Sustainable tourism research: An analysis of papers published in the Journal of Sustainable Tourism. *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*, 17(1), 5-16.

Lepeley, M. T. (2017). Bhutan's Gross National Happiness: An Approach to Human Centred Sustainable Development. *South Asian Journal of Human Resources Management*, 4(2), 174-184.

Two Distinguished Lectures on Bhutan: The Land of the Thunder Dragon and Gross National Happiness. (2019, January 9). Retrieved from Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative: https://ophi.org.uk/ophi_stories/two-distinguished-public-lectures-on-bhutans-democracy-and-development/