

Planning and policies in the tourism industry



“ In today’s rapidly changing business environments it is an essential activity for every destination, to prevent disturbance in tourism.” Mill and Morrison, (1998). The author, say that a destination is highly influenced by the wide-range effects of tourism, it is therefore vital to plan for any development.

According to J. C. Henderson, (2005), many researchers have approached the issue on tourism planning and policies through different perspectives; “ the temporal and spatial evolution of destinations the impacts of development, government growth policies, planning imperatives, marketing issues and topics studied.” On top of that, the same author makes reference to the various opinions of different authors who make mentioned about the essential factors that would encourage tourism development at a particular destination “ Critical influences relate to accessibility” (Prideaux, 2000), “ attraction and amenity standards” (Gunn, 2004), “ awareness and positive images” (Johns and Mattson, 2005) “ associated with promotion and marketing” (Buhalis, 2000), “ a supportive government” (Weaver and Lawton, 2002) and “ a peaceful and stable environment” (Poirier, 1997).

Planning approach

“ tourism planning is defined as a comprehensive, coordinated and continuing process...that promote the common good of society” According to (Stifel, 1990), society benefits and welfare should be the main focus of all stakeholders involved in decisions making pertaining to any tourism development. Moreover, “ tourism planning has been defined as a process based on research and evaluation, which seeks to optimize the potential contribution of the human welfare and environmental quality”, (Tosun and Jenkins, 1998). In the above statement, Tosun and Jenkins, agree with Stifle

stating that human welfare is indeed to be considered while planning for tourism development and on top of it argued that tourism should not only look into tourists numbers and economic gain, but such development should be environmentally sound.

Importance of Tourism linkage

However, “ planning requires the integration of the tourism industry into other sectors...” Timothy, (1999). Timothy argues that tourism cannot operate on its own, (as it is environmentally dependant) and rely on other sectors of the economy, such as; agriculture, industry and transportation, to exist. There is the need to create linkage. According to Nikolaos Karangiannis 2003, “ lack of an overall integrated policy has limited the contribution of tourism growth to the country’s socio-economic development.”[15]

Therefore the author mentions that the need to formulae policies for economic restructuring and diversification was eminent. The government in Jamaica decides therefore, to create linkage between tourism, commodity production sectors, and complementary and related services in order to rejuvenate the industry, increase economic gain and competitiveness.

Tourism Planning and policies

“ Authorities have a vital role and public investment and implementation of pro-tourism policies can help in ensuring that such circumstances do prevail.” (Joan C. Henderson, 2006) “ Government policy is about influencing the way people utilize their resources and the way they relate to each other (within and across state and national boundaries) and their environment.

(Clare A. Gunn and Turgut Var, 2002) state that special competencies are required to understand the functioning of tourism and to formulate policies. They added policies, planning and development is at any scale, from national to local and their purpose and reasons differs from one destination to another. (Taylor 1994), " government holds the responsibility for research and guideline development, especially in three areas: travel markets, existing and potential; tourism physical plant; linkages between market needs and physical and physical plant development".

Further arguments, by Clare (A. Gunn and Turgut Var, 2002), stated that although government intervention is important to control impact of fragmented development on the environment and society, it has also been observed that capitalistic countries which adopt a laissez-Faire tourism policy by private sector, has very little government intervention. " The belief that ' political serenity, not scenic or cultural attractions, constitutes the first and central requirement of tourism" (Richter and Waugh, 1986, p. 320)

(Ritcher 1994), agrees with Clare A. Gunn and Turgut Var, stating that the purpose for tourism policies differs from one destination to the other as, for example, " in some countries tourism has purposely been directed toward increased immigration in hope that visitors will become residents... stimulating of investment to increase national wealth" according to the same authors it is agreed that excessive tourism growth may demand revision of policies; conservation policies pertaining to environment, policies for land use are some examples sustainable policies. " Governments of nations, provinces, states and communities have the choice of doing nothing or doing

something constructive about public tourism policies.” (Lamb and Davison 1996)

Furthermore, “ developing countries are often anxious to plan but unable to govern...this cannot be done by a macro-or national-level approach”(Cevat Tosun, Dallen J. Timothy 2001). With reference to Turkey, as tourist destination, Cevat Tosun, Dallen J. Timothy, confirm Stifel’s definition of planning, stating that an over-centralization of tourism planning and poor administrative practices and policies formulation have failed to promote common good of the society, because government reticence and negligence to considering regional and local conditions.

Finally according to Clare A. Gunn, Turgut Var, 2002, governments have not only the capacity but also the responsibility of creating, implementing and reviewing policies that plan tourism. [6] According to the same authors, tourism planners need to look into three main aspects, namely, economic, socio-cultural and environmental, when planning for tourism projects for particular destinations. Comprehensive planning process and judicious formulation of policies will surmount barriers to tourism planning in each tourist destination area and lead to sustainable development. Conclusion, “ empirical evidence through the world clearly shows that the “ model” destinations for successful tourism are those that have embraced the tourism-planning concept (Mill and Morisson 1997).

Barriers to tourism development

Sustainable Tourism

“ if tourism is to be truly beneficial to all concerned... and sustainable in the long-term, it must be ensured that resources are not over-consumed, that natural and human environments are protected, that tourism is integrated with other activities, that it provides real benefits to the local communities... that local people are involved and included in tourism planning and implementation, and that cultures and people are respected”. (Eber, 1992).

The World Tourism Organization defines sustainable tourism as “ tourism which leads to management of all resources in such a way that economic, social and aesthetic needs can be filled while maintaining cultural integrity, essentials ecological processes, biological diversity and life support systems.”

Developing indicators for sustainable tourism

“ The most significant attempt so far to develop indicators of sustainable tourism has been undertaken by the World Tourism Organization (WTO) through its Environment Task Force” (Dymond, 1997; Manning & Dougherty, 1995; Manning et al., 1996). [9] Manning et al. consider that the main purpose of the WTO, in identifying eleven international acceptable sustainable tourism core indicators is to assist planners and decision makers in their tasks. Figure 1 presents core indicators of sustainable tourism (WTO)

However, L. Twining-Ward & R. Butler, 2002, contested that the above framework has its limitations. It is observed that though, the above indicators represent a wise attempt towards sustainable tourism

development, no provision has been made for guiding stakeholders in the implementation of same; that is, converting indicator results into management action. Furthermore Laws et al., state that each destination is unique and thus has to consider the destination local characteristics and its own dynamics that may influence sustainable tourism indicators. Policy makers should understand that there is no generic model for several destinations, but indeed policies have to be tailor made according to destination particulars.

Moreover, it is of vital importance to review policy and strategy as a destination evolve with time; “ current policy may not be adequate for dealing with future problems in the same destination.” (Laws et al., 1998: 9) [10]

According L. Twining-Ward & R. Butler, 2002, “ Samoa’s Sustainable Tourism Status Report 2000”, is a good example an effective planning tool which assisted Saoma Visitors Bureau in developing appropriate action plans and tourism awareness programmes consequently. Figure 2, is an adapted model of Saoma’s effective planning and monitoring system for sustainable tourism development, which will be used to assessing planning process in Grand Baie.

Theoretical framework for sustainable planning

Figure 2 planning process, Source: adapted from L. Twining-Ward & R. Butler, 2002

Stage 1.

Project Design/ Study preparation

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Stage 7. Review and improve monitoring system

Stage 6. Implement action plan and communicate results to Stakeholders

Stage 2. Scope issues & formulate Goals & objectives

Stage 5 plan Action formulation

Stage 3. Survey / Develop and screen indicators

Stage 4. . Analysis and Synthesis

Applying L. Twining-Ward & R. Butler, 2002, model on research planning in Grand Baie:

Stage 1: Design and study preparation; at this stage there is the need to take decisions for planning, that is to be involved in planning process, (residents, NGOs, Government, District council, local business owners, tourism authority, beach authority; private and public sectors). Define roles and responsibilities of each and every one, getting all stakeholders involved in the project in order to write the study project terms of reference and organize the project.

Stage 2: Determine goals and objectives; goals and objective of the development programme are decided, but these are subject to changes and modification. For example, developing alternative forms of tourism in Grand Baie, promoting community-based tourism and cultural tourism (social exchange theory) developing environmental protection programmes for the area, educating tourist and residents towards responsible tourism, improving

security having a planning framework adapted to Gran Baie needs, hence designing policies that will regulate tourism activities of the region.

Stage 3: Survey and core indicators for the region of Grand Baie; undertake surveys and have an inventory of the existing situation. Grand Baie is known for its; safe lagoon, beautiful beaches, people (hospitality), its tropical climate, shopping facilities, restaurants, beach resorts and peripheries rich in culture and traditions. All of these elements should be given great consideration when planning for tourism. Each destination has its unique characteristics and dynamic context. Survey can also be used to study residents' reaction pertaining to tourism, in their locality. Moreover can assist planners establish baseline for sustainable development in Brand Baie.

Stage 4: Analysis and Synthesis; once baseline information are collected they need to be analysed in order to have the basis for the plan. Feedback received from locals and different stakeholders will help to design policies that will ensure smooth implementation of planning.

Stage 5: Action plan formulation: formulation and design of plan will be based on preparation and evaluation of alternative policies. Generally planning is conducted at all levels, from individual to comprehensive planning. (Inskeep, 2000), argue that tourism planning applies same concepts and approach of general planning; however, it is adapted to the particular characteristic tourism system. In this context action plan for Grand Baie, is at local level and should be tailor made. Consequently planners will have to possess strong element of predictability and appropriate skills in attempting to envision the future.

Stage 6&7: Implementation and Monitoring: the plan will be implemented in Grand Baie using different techniques. Policies are here as guidelines to implement plans but above all effective communication among stakeholders is vital. The risk of failure is lower when recommendations are addressed to all stakeholders. Environmental policies for sustainable development, e. g. EIA, has been established by the Government, but the extent to which it has been fully observed are debatable when looking at actual situation in Grand Baie. Hence, it is important to monitor progress in implementing the plan and evaluate the success of the plan in meeting its goals and objectives on a regular basis. Plans generally need to be adjusted over time due to changing goals, changing market conditions, and unexpected impacts.

“ Although the monitoring project is still ongoing and its long-term implications for the sustainability of tourism in Samoa are far from clear, several important lessons can be noted from the Samoa example: the importance of formulating clear objectives before trying to identify indicators, the value of establishing a multi-disciplinary advisory panel, and the necessity of designing an effective and flexible implementation framework for converting indicator results into management action.” (L. Twining-Ward & R. Butler, 2002) [11] According to L. Twining-Ward & R. Butler, stakeholders need to consider space and time-specific issues related to tourism development. Local involvement should be from early stages of development that is, planning and decisions making, to implementation. In fact STD needs to be broadening from critical issues currently facing destination.

Tourist Area Life Cycle / Application in Grand Baie

Mauritius has experienced significant levels of growth in tourism over the last 30 years. As a result, tourism is now the largest economic activity of the island and many coastal resorts have been developed. Although the island has undergone significant changes between the early arrivals of tourists and today, there is a remarkable negligence of research towards these changes. The stages of Butler's Area Life cycle model will thus be reviewed and tested on Grand Baie, to present the life cycle stage of the destination.

According to Butler 1980, destinations go through a cycle of evolution similar to the life cycle of a product. The shape of the TALC may vary from one destination to another, however it will depend upon factors such as; rate of development, access, government policy, and market trend. The TALC model is a framework to understand how a destination and its market evolve, through stages of launch, development, maturity and decline.

Figure 3: Butler's Destination Lifecycle Model Adapted from (keyser, 2002)

" According to Butler (1980) destinations pass through a predictable sequence of six stages. These stages are: exploration, involvement, development, consolidation, stagnation and decline or rejuvenation. In each life cycle stage there are changes in the morphology, the types of tourists' visitation, and residents' attitudes towards tourism."

Exploration stage

During the early " discovery stage" of the cycle a small number of unobtrusive visitors arrive seeking " unspoiled" destinations. These early " explorer" tourists generally speak the language and identify with the local

culture. The social impact in this stage is generally small and resident attitudes are fairly positive towards tourism.

Like most products, destinations have a lifecycle. In his 1980 article, Butler proposed a widely-accepted model of the lifecycle of a tourist destination. The basic idea of Butler's 1980 Tourism Area Life Cycle (TALC) model is that a destination begins as a relatively unknown and visitors initially come in small numbers restricted by lack of access, facilities, and local knowledge. This is the case for Grand Baie which was first known as a fishing village and which economy mainly derived from agriculture (sugar cane). Soon adventurers will get to know about the remoteness and exotic beaches, beryl water and the bay that is deeply sheltered. Visitors and host encounter is high but yet the desire for the destination to remain unchained by tourism prevails. At this stage Grand Baie had limited accessibility to the area and lacked of facilities to cater for more tourists.

According to Butler 1980, " at the involvement stage, local community has to decide whether they wish to encourage tourism and if so, the type and scale of tourism they prefer." Through word of mouth tourists' interest to visit the coastal region increases. The residents of Grand Baie will soon realize the possible potential for economic benefits. The willingness to encourage tourism is shared among locals who will cater for the basic needs of visitors. Much effort is being done to advertise the region and attract more tourists. Such a coastal region as Grand baie will inevitably generates mass tourism, due to its fabulous beaches and local attractiveness. Moreover Grand Baie was cheap destination for visitors due to the foreign exchange currency rate. But unfortunately, the " thrill of tourism" will make population and

stakeholders to neglect some important aspects such as sustainable principles; limits on carrying capacity and elements of predictability. At this stage pressure is placed on public sector for infrastructure and regulatory bodies.

Development stage

In the early 80, s Grand Baie will know an increase in tourism growth which will force the destination to the next “ stage of Development” mentioned by Butler in 1980. Grand Baie is well known worldwide and demand for the destination has increased considerably. The fishing village has vanished and is now known to be the “ Tourist Village”.

Residents in Grand Baie find themselves limited in terms of knowhow and resources to meet the needs of the visitors. Control shifts from locals to big investors from outside the region and public authority to provide expertise, products and services. Massive investment and development took place and soon Grand Baie became a tourist hub. Tourism impacts are increasing with the emerging tourism activities in the area. Natural areas are cleared away giving place to Hotels namely; the Canonnier, the Royal Palm, the Mauricia and the Verenda. All sorts of beach and sea activities are put forward to give visitors a unique experience. At this stage the changing nature of tourism is altered and the very nature of the resort and quality declined through problems of overused and deterioration of natural and manmade resources. Improper planning for Grand Baie is making development to be detrimental.

Contact between tourists and local is high impacting on the lives of those involved in tourism. Locals tend to adjust their way of living to accommodate

the changing economic structure. For example, women start working in hotels at odd hours, practice which was long ago seen as taboo. Some of the major influences are the effects of westernization, the eating pattern and gender in the form of employer. The public authority becomes involved through infrastructure provision, road access facilities, improving communication network, educational and leisure facilities.

At this critical stage it is highly recommended to undertake analysis on the actual situation, to review action plan and monitoring system to ensure sustainability of tourism in Grand Baie. Actually much effort is placed on implementing policies at a national level, relating to environmental protection in order to comply with international policies, but on the other hand very little is being done in terms of security, destination management at peak seasons, social stability and distribution of wealth.

“ If the day, tourism is undeniable, the nocturnal activity of Grand Baie is full. The nightclubs and bars take over the beaches and natural sites visited in the morning. These popular places with night owls are constantly crowded and joyful atmosphere is palpable at any time until the end of the night, and more specifically, the “ Banana Cafe, a must in addition to being the biggest club in the Grand Baie Village.”

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Positive Impacts at Development Stage

(Grand Baie)

The destination grows in popularity

Expansion of service and facilities

Development of new service and infrastructure

Economic growth

Employment

Better quality of living

Negative Impacts at Development Stage

(Grand Baie)

Decline in local community

Natural and built suffers from wear and tear

Conflict between local population and tourism

Region loose authenticity

Loss of Culture, Beliefs, and Values

Increase in cost of living

Degradation of the Environment

Exceeding carrying capacity

Prostitution

Increase in crime rate

Consolidation Stage

At Consolidation stage, also known as critical range of elements capacity, tourist number will continue to rise in Grand Baie and the destination becomes dependent on tourism. More promotional and advertising efforts are undertaken in many different ways to maintain existing market and attract new ones. Lots of money is being injected in research and development. There is more pressure on the environment, where tourist number may exceed destination population. The manner resources have been managed in the early stage of the Tourism Area Life Cycle will determine the degree of impact and future of the destination. The tourist-relationship is converted into one of business as the novelty of new visitor arrivals declines. The more culturally sensitive “explorers” move on to new “unspoiled” areas and are replaced by the mass market. The local authorities and all stakeholders should, through sustainable tourism planning, consider and anticipate actions in order to mitigate tourism impacts.

Stagnation Stage

Stagnation is the stage where carrying capacity of many relevant factors is reached. Social, economic and environmental problem arise. Social instability that may lead to riots for instance, local people feeling like strangers in their home community, they realize that they have lost their culture, values and norms and that crime rate has increase to such a point that one does not feel secured anymore. Cost of living being too high makes it practically impossible to have a decent life. Those who are rich become even richer while the poor people become poorer. Land becomes scarce and a rise in demand make for land makes a rise in price. Failing to develop further

development due to lack of space (land) for these new tourism developments and products, unemployment rate increases. Local people perception changes and local people no longer show interest in tourism sector and indeed think how to spoil new proposed projects.

Decline and/or Rejuvenation stage

Decline, the area of Grand Baie will not be able to compete with newer attractions, faces a declining market. Falling profits lead to foreign-owned businesses withdrawing and the community is left to “pick up the pieces”. Unless resources have been effectively managed in the early stage of the Tourism Area Life Cycle then only Rejuvenation is possible. It is important to deal effectively with demand and supply. Professional should work in close collaboration with local community and keep in mind that the development plan should be developed and implemented at same pace to the progress of the community. The supportive attitude of the locals is the bottom line for the success of tourism development.

If issues are not resolved this results in a severe drop in tourist number. That is why stakeholders need to increase marketing and promotional efforts.

New market strategies develop in line with the re-structure of the tourism industry. It is also important to educate the local community and create awareness of the tourism activity. Training and development empowers the local people to better serve the industry and benefit from the advantages generated by the tourism sector. Corporate Social Responsibility is a very good attempt to mitigate negative social economic impacts. Residents are more willing to become stakeholder of tourism development when such development is a positive force for environmental conservation and for

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social/cultural enhancement. Moreover, Environmental Impacts Assessment has to be conducted prior to each development plan for sustainable development.

Conclusion

“ Tourism is becoming, more than ever, sensitive to and dependent on a high-quality sustainable environment (Eccles 1995; Ing 1995; Nelson, Butler, and Wells 1993). The authors mean that development plan should seek to optimize the potential contribution of the human welfare and environmental quality. Planning should be in respect to the environment for the industry to sustain and keep market competitiveness. Basically approaches to sustainable destination development should look into; formulating development policy and strategies on uniqueness of natural and cultural attraction for the destination, considering physical, biological and psychological carrying capacity, developing alternative forms of tourism that will create linkage with other economic sectors, reviewing national, regional local framework policy and strategy as a destination evolve with time, planners to be concern with all stakeholders in the community, hence, developing a product that sits in harmony with local environment. According to ((L. Twining-Ward & R. Butler, 2002) Saoma has known a successful and revitalized torism industry due to its effective planning and monitoring system, framework for sustainable tourism development.

According to Butler 1980, destinations go through a cycle of evolution similar to the life cycle of a product, that is, all destinations is bound to reach some point of “ stagnation” and “ decline” where signs of negative impacts become apparent. Destination will rejuvenate only if sustainable

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management practices have been considered at early stage of development. Harrison, in his research, notes that Swaziland (in the context of life cycle), underwent rapid growth in the British colonial period but has since decline rapidly due to bad planning. Planners and decision-makers should possess predictable skills to anticipate problems before they happen and take preventive actions rather than curative ones. According to the World Commission on Environment and Development (1989), sustainable tourism is defined as “ development that meets the needs of present without compromising the ability of the future generations to meet their own needs.” However, (Salah S. Hassan 2000) added that “ using the best planning and development effort, a destination cannot grow or revitalize unless it can provide a high level of health care, safety and security for tourists.

Finally, development is ongoing and further research is required to monitor the evolution of any tourist destination and evaluate underlying policies. Some obstacles remain and new ones may be confronted so that the future is not without formidable challenges. For destinations to sustain their competitive advantage