



Garden Tourism – Perspectives towards sustainability

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Abstract

This paper examines the prospects of Garden Tourism in India. Garden Tourism has been a tourism motivator. There are different types of Garden Tourism segments namely private, historical and urban Garden Tourism. Garden Tourism is one of the fastest growing sections of cultural attraction around the world. Gardens as tourist destinations are becoming more prominent as targeted markets by tourism groups. Even though it is a prospective segment of tourism in India, there are several challenges as well. Garden Tourism growth suffers from volunteer input, co-ordination between tourist operators and farm owners, community support and local involvement upgrade public parks and gardens Maximise sponsorships and minimising cost to locals, reinvestment in garden tourism. Government can augment the garden tourism sector with consistent policy framing including extending tourist stays in the garden tourism destinations, lengthening the tourist seasons, enhancing the garden city image with a wide range of garden related activities, forming local garden council, city trusts, and garden tourism council for mentoring garden activities at local level. These initiatives will draw attention of public awareness and bring them closer to sustainability.

Keywords: Garden Tourism, Perspectives, Sustainability issues

Introduction

India has been land of multiples cultures and civilizations. Indian Vedic literature has innumerable references to link human living with nature. Living in Nature was considered as equal to superior god because it was considered as a very important agent of psychological and natural healing. The trend of nurturing garden was continued during Mauryan period, Gupta period, Vardhana period etc to name a few. The gardens were attached to royal palaces. The Reign of Delhi sultanate and Moghuls saw an increase in gardens as Garden designs from Afghanistan, Kabul, Sindh, Peshawar, Gazni, Lahore etc were experimented in India. The rise of Shalimar Bagh, Sonpari Bagh, Sona Bagh, Aladin Bagh, Poonam Bagh, Samhsheer, Songadh bagh, Basheera Chaman, Alisha Chaman, Chandani Chaman etc. The gardens were considered highly a superlative luxury and Delhi kings spent generously in designing them. Garden designers were imported from Afghanistan, Turkey, Persia who laid down impressive designs. Garden were surrounded by beautiful lakes, soggy ponds, water fountains, creepers, aromatic flowers, perfumed plant beds, herbal plants and shady trees. Women of the royal family as well as nobility spent hours in this garden. Several thousands of creative writing on garden exquisiteness can be found in literature of the period. These gardens were not only known for their beauty and extravaganza, they were the breeding house of innumerable birds and insects. The flora and the fauna around the garden was so stimulating that musicians, court bards and royal instrumentalists were motivated to compose poetry notes.

But after the coming of British East India Company, commercial ventures took over the gardens. Growing for external market assumed importance and gardens were let to self destruction. Gradually cultivation of cotton, Sugar, coffee, tea, indigo, tobacco, jute, spices etc became commercially practicable and gardens were cornered. Even though gardens were relegated to neglect and disregard, their importance in daily life was not ignored. Independent India planned to recreate gardens around heritage centres and restoring old gardens gained momentum. Several historical heritage destinations are redesigned to locate garden ambience.

Garden Tourism concept and scope

Garden Tourism is normally a non work activity at weekends especially for older retired people. Garden Tourism includes travelling outside immediate locality including farm stays and long distance tours. Garden Tourism is a leisure activity. Garden Tourism may be an activity an organized group activity or may be a solo isolated tour activity. Garden Tourism provides pleasure of aroma, sight and natural sequences for visitors. The people who have aspiration to natural colours design parks which are nature’s greatest gift. Some visitors love to visit gardens for therapeutic and psychoanalysis treatment purpose. Garden Tourism includes gardens which are quite extensive, isolated from urban modern hardships, usually linked to farm and small holdings.

Factors motivating garden tourism - Factors that may motivate garden tourism because people living in urban settings have very less time spent in nature.

1. Less access to nature ,
2. Less or no space for backyard garden,
3. Less knowledge about agriculture and garden,
4. Increasing urban pollution ,
5. Failing health issues ,
6. Medical suggestion to aromatic therapy ,

Challenges: The challenges to garden tourism can be dealt effectively by researching about the root of the issues which include



Garden Tourism suffers from volunteer input	There is a need to create awareness about public volunteering
Garden Tourism suffers from Co-ordination between tourist operators and farm owners	There is a need to Co-ordination between tourist operators and farm owners is needed
Garden Tourism suffers from community support and local involvement	There is a need to foster community support and local involvement towards highlighting local garden produces

Garden Tourism suffers from funds and revenues to upgrade public parks and gardens	There is a need to enhance budgetary allocations and crowd funding to upgrade public parks and gardens
Garden Tourism suffers from lack of sponsorships	There is a need to Maximise sponsorships through online and advertisements.
Garden Tourism suffers from reinvestment in garden tourism	There is a need to reinvestment in garden tourism considering this as a prospective segment of general tourism
Garden Tourism suffers from tourist stays and duration	There is a need to extend tourist stays in the region considering garden seasons
Garden Tourism suffers from very short tourists seasons	There is a need to lengthen the tourists seasons
Garden Tourism suffers from promoting garden related activities.	There is a need to enhance the garden city image with a wide range of garden related activities.
Garden Tourism suffers from separate garden management supervising authority	There is a need to form local garden council , garden city trusts, city tourism council at local level

Economic and commercial potential

Garden tourism has economic and commercial potential which is yet to be exploited. Garden tourism can be made to generate more revenues than expected. There is a need to increase awareness about garden tourism at sub urban and urban localities. In integrated approach is needed to create opportunities in marketing garden produces.

The role of government

The government can play an important role in supporting the sector to increase existing market share break into new markets and attract garden visitors during all seasons. The government can form a taskforce including citizens to better co-ordinate garden tourism marketing activity that is already taking place and identify further action that would grow the market across all seasons.

Role of Media - Western countries have experimented the garden tourism concepts through Popular TV programs , green E- Magazines , Newspapers , Online apps , garden stores , Green Go Advertisement etc. welcoming tourist with locally grown flower bouquets has also become very supportive trend.

Need for local partnerships- garden tourism can become supportive if local enterprise partnerships can be a key vehicle for driving local economic growth and could play an important role in spreading the benefits of garden tourism. Garden tourism raises the profile of the local economy. The economic estimates accrued from garden tourism needs to be integrated with general tourism policy. The garden tourism sector has to be very intricately linked to National tourism policy. This will support to get higher number of visitors.

Research funding- funding research in analysing the International and domestic tourist' trends and the seasonality of visits to India This will facilitate to bond local producers to provide a unique destination experience to tourists with locally grown flowers and herbal essences.

Public awareness creation - Awareness has to be provided through Garden tourism products that even-handedly support local , environmental and economy through Private public partnerships.

Developing marketing strategies -There is a need to develop marketing strategies to promote enterprise reflecting Indian cultural ambience business plan for sustainable food enterprise that responds to market needs

business partnerships. There is a need to develop managing organizational finances to meet the garden tourism enterprises

Professional development- There is a need to build up professional development strategy and strategy to improve leadership and management strategies for garden products .

Conclusion

Thus , garden tourism can be more motivating if co-ordination between tourist operators and farm owners can become feasible through larger community support and involvement. Government needs to formulate guidelines to promote and upgrade public parks and gardens around all tour destinations with local government support. Government policies to capitalize on international sponsorships will support prioritizing garden tourism. Government can augment the garden tourism sector with consistent policy framing including extending tourist stays in the garden tourism destinations, lengthening the tourist seasons, enhancing the garden city image with a wide range of garden related activities.

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