2.1 INTRODUCTION

Before a detailed discussion of the research topic, it is necessary to review the research done so far in the area of research because a good research work builds on the existing research in the related fields. The present chapter begins with the review of the major research works leading to the emergence of the concept of sustainable development, it gives in brief the different ways in which the concept of sustainable development has been adopted by the tourism industry. The chapter traces the important research works regarding the role of travel intermediaries in realising the objective of sustainable development in tourism. The chapter concludes with the observation that the gap in existing academic research necessitates the present research topic.

2.2 EMERGENCE OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

The term Sustainable Development was probably coined in 1971 by Barbara Ward and René Dubos in their book Only One Earth. This work became basis for the 1972 United Nations Conference on Human Environment in Stockholm (UNCHE) - a major step forward in development of the concept of sustainable development. It was the first in a series of international conferences on the threatening ecological crisis. This conference was attended by 113 states and representatives from 19 international organizations (Paul, 2008). Also, the business world had played a “lukewarm” role at UNCHE but since then it joined the discourse (Redclift & Springett, 2015, p.9). The conference agreed on 26 principles and in each principle sustainability was reflected. Another major outcome was the establishment of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) – “international environmental watchdog” (Elliot, 2006, p.33). Though termed as catalyst for creating international awareness regarding environmental and developmental problems, yet the conference was limited in its effectiveness (Quental, Lourenço, & Da Silva, 2011 & UNEP, 2002). The UN documents also acknowledged that little was achieved to concretely integrate environmental concerns into development policies and plan. The conference propounded principles but there was no strategy to meet these principles. The conference was trying to develop a trade-off between the North’s aspirations of environmental sustainability with the South’s goal of achieving development rather than developing a more integrated perspective between the two (Paul, 2008).
After 1972 Stockholm conference, the next major event in history of the term sustainable development which re-emphasised ‘environmental sustainability’ was the report titled World Conservation Strategy (WCS) in 1980. This report was a joint effort of International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) commissioned by UNEP in 1977, UNEP and the World Wide Fund. The report is considered a ‘Launchpad’ by Mather & Chapman (as cited in Elliot, 2006, p.34) of term Sustainable Development as the strategy’s subtitle, “Living Resource Conservation for Sustainable Development,” indeed highlighted the concept of sustainability. The report mainly highlighted the importance of conservation of ecological processes, genetic diversity and appealed rational use of species and ecosystem for development process (Adams, 2001). Mainly concerned with conservation of environment, the document is more about environment and less about political, social, cultural or economic dimension of resource use or, indeed obstacles to development (Reid, 1995).

In an attempt to further extend and develop the holistic concept of Sustainable Development significantly beyond those of the WCS, the General Assembly of United Nations in 1982 established World Commission on Environment and Development (WCED). This was a group of 22 experts and governmental officials from developed and developing countries to identify long-term global environmental strategies and to formulate a ‘global agenda for change’. This WCED submitted their report entitled Our common future, to the UN in 1987 and since then it became the most cited document in the sustainable development literature (Quental, Lourenço, & Da Silva, 2011). There are two main reasons behind this popularity – first, the acceptance of the report by the United Nations (UN) General Assembly gave the term political salience and second (unlike WCS) this report weaves together social, economic, cultural and environmental issues and global solutions (Drexhage & Murphy 2010).

WCED defined Sustainable Development as –

“Sustainable development is a process of change in which the exploitation of resources, the direction of investments, the orientation of technological development; and institutional change are all in harmony and enhance both current and future potential to meet human needs and aspirations.” (WCED, 1987)
Keeping in view the above definition, the overall objectives of sustainable development, then, may be seen as:

- **Environmental sustainability**: The conservation and effective management of resources;
- **Economic sustainability**: Long-term prosperity as a foundation for continuing development;
- **Social sustainability**: With a focus on alleviating poverty, the promotion of human rights, equal opportunity, political freedom and self-determination.

Thus, the above discussion makes it clear that this definition has a holistic view and takes into consideration the three fundamental components of sustainable development, **the environment (planet)**, **the economy (progress)**, and **society (people)**, which was later known as the triple bottom line (Du Pisani, 2006). Though still most cited definition, this definition and concept of sustainable development did not have a universal acceptance. It was criticised on many grounds. Many statements of WCED were controversial, as throughout the report, prominence was given to the economic growth and an ideological inclination towards modernisation and capitalist market system was clear. Daly (1996) stated that the appeal for sustainable economic growth was at odds with sustainable development. It was also criticised as impossible to operationalize and implement due to its vagueness and hypothetical nature (Marashall & Toffeel, 2005 & Redclift, 2005).

One of the defining moments for Sustainable Development which has taken this concept to next level was the **UN Conference on the Environment and Development (UNCED)**. It was held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil in 1992. Also known as “Rio Conference,” or the “Earth Summit”, this was an unprecedented historical event with the largest gathering of 114 heads of State, including 10,000 representatives from 178 countries and 1400 nongovernmental organizations represented by additional thousands (Paul, 2008). This conference focused on developing approaches to ensure implementation of Sustainable Development rather than debating on its meaning. And as stated by Quintal et al (2011) impressive number of political milestones were achieved: i.) Environmental Agreements in the form of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD); ii.) Institutional Arrangements
and Financial Mechanisms in form of United Nations Commission on Sustainable Development (UNCSD) and Global Environment facility (GEF); iii) widely acknowledged ‘soft laws’ - Agenda 21 (a 40-chapter long blueprint of healthy practices to achieve sustainable development), Rio Declaration (the 27 principles for the future conduct of nations and peoples with respect to environment and development).

No doubt, the documents and declarations were the most important output of this conference but the distinctive legacy was participation of major stakeholders (people, business, government and nongovernmental organizations) down to the grassroots level and their efforts to find out ways to go beyond generalities and put the concept of Sustainable Development in practice (Mebratu, 1998). For instance, all governments agreed to prepare a national sustainable development strategy to implement Agenda 21. The Rio Conference had been a critical landmark in corporate engagement with environmentalism: the World Business Council for Sustainable Development (WBCSD, founded in 1990) played an important role (Redclift & Springett, 2015). Also, the international business community in order to voice their interest and support for environmental issues formed the Business Council on Sustainable Development (BCSD) (Mowforth & Munt, 2015).

Rio Summit received a mixed reaction from the critics. On the one hand, there was an optimism that new global commitment for implementation of sustainable development can be achieved (Elliot, 2006). On the other hand, it was criticised as a conference where the developed nations dominated the agenda with main focus on political and technical solutions than on poverty or global inequality (Adams, 2006). Quental, Lourenço, & Da Silva (2011) summarised that though governance issues such as transboundary cooperation and public participation were finally addressed by multilateral agreements but the conference failed to reach an agreement “regarding a universal Earth Charter that could guide the transition to sustainable development” (p. 21).

As a follow-up of Rio Earth Summit after a decade, the other landmark summit held in Johannesburg in 2002 was The World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) also known as Rio+10. By far considered the largest and the most inclusive summit organised by United Nations, this summit witnessed bigger
participation by business world along with heads of state. This time the BCSD, along with International Chamber of Commerce (ICC), with an aim to have maximum participation from the businesses around the world started an initiative called Business Action for Sustainable Development (BASD). Mainly popularised as ‘the implementation summit’, it aimed to develop a mechanism by which the decisions taken in Rio Summit could be implemented, as the progress in the last 10 years was very disappointing. This mechanism came in the form of, The Johannesburg Declaration on Sustainable Development and the Plan of Implementation, the official outcome of WSSD. It was primarily based on the existing commitments, those of Agenda 21 and of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), with few new additions focusing on socio-economic pillar of Sustainable Development especially for the betterment of the poorest section of world. MDGs are monitorable targets originated in the Millennium Declaration adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in 2000. They represent a more practical expression of the principle of equilibrium between the economic, social and environmental pillars of sustainable development (Paul, 2008). Also, the summit was successful by motivating a new type of partnership among multitudes of actors working at various levels as a new complex decentralized international governance system, which does not rely solely on governmental actions to achieve sustainable development.

Another distinct feature of this summit was that for the first time globalisation and its implications were identified as one of principal challenges for future (Elliot, 2006). Though WSSD did make a constructive change by focusing considerably more attention on development issues (i.e. Millennium Development Goals [MDGs]) and implementation with support of all stakeholders especially business organisations, but still it was considered a flop. The main reason behind this was the political conditions at that time, as political leadership (particularly the USA) was more concerned about other alarming global situations like terrorism, weapons of mass destruction, and Iraq. Although several targets were approved but no agreements, institutional arrangements or financial mechanisms followed WSSD (Quental, Lourenço, & Da Silva, 2011). Many international non-governmental organisations (INGOs) were generally disappointed by the lack of specific monitorable and binding commitments to emerge from the conference (Elliot, 2006).
Further to mark the 20\textsuperscript{th} anniversary of the Earth Summit in 2012, another breakthrough conference held again in Rio de Janeiro named \textbf{United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (UNCSD) or Rio +20}. With presence of 193 Member States of the United Nations in this conference, it was attended by more than 45000 participants and there was enormous virtual participation through all platforms of social media. The final outcome of this summit was the document \textit{The Future We Want} which outlined aspirations and measures for a more sustainable future (Munt & Mowforth, 2015). This summit had the background of new and emerging global challenges like – the 2008 global economic crisis, climate change and the increasing poverty gap which have made the task of achieving all prior goals and commitments not only more and more complex, but also more pressing. Two specific themes dominated the summit – first, ‘a green economy in the context of poverty eradication and sustainable development and second, an ‘institutional framework for sustainable development’. Within these themes, seven areas requiring ‘priority attention’ were identified: decent jobs, energy, sustainable cities, food security and sustainable agriculture, water, oceans, and disaster readiness (Allenby, 2012).

The wide range of actions highlighted by this document were – emergence of the concept of green economy and policies related to it , initiation of the process of developing new Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) to replace the MDGs , agreement among member states to work with UN Statistical Commission and to develop mechanism to assess the well-being of a country beyond GDP , establishment of an intergovernmental process for preparing options for sustainable development financing and an agreement was reached on strengthening the UNEP . Also corporate sustainability reporting measure was promoted and recognizing the importance of voluntary commitments on sustainable development, hundreds of voluntary commitments from governments, international organisations, companies and NGOs were pledged. Adoption of a framework for tackling sustainable consumption and production was emphasised (Munt & Mowforth, 2015; Sustainable Development Knowledge Platform, 2017). Thus, the key messages for improving the institutional framework for sustainable development focused strongly on the integral role of business and business interests (Redclift & Springett, 2015).
However, the outcome of the conference fell far short of the ambitious expectations. In fact, the reaction to the conference was overwhelmingly negative especially from developing countries’ delegates, civil society and Indigenous Peoples’ organizations (Allenby, 2012 & Pleumarom, 2012). Redclift & Springeet (2015) stated that “many feared ‘Green Economy’ as a brainchild of big businesses aimed to replace sustainable development with ‘ecological modernization’ or ‘greener business as usual’: many perceived the ‘green economy’ as a pseudonym for the new mantra of ‘green growth’ – a wolf in sheep’s clothing” (p.11). Khor (2011) criticised it on two grounds, first that the ‘one-size-fit-all’ approach of green economy will fail as the level and stages of development differentiate among countries and second ‘green economy’ is a skewed concept with focus on environmental management and hence it will lead to imbalances between the three pillars of sustainable development (environmental protection, economic development and social development).

In order to revive the MDGs which were to end in 2015 there was United Nation’s Sustainable Development Summit on 25th September, 2015 in New York which adopted the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in the presence of the world leaders. The outcome of this summit was a vision document - ‘Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development’ which includes a set of 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) to end poverty, fight inequality and injustice, and tackle climate change by 2030. These 17 SDGs build on the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). These goals aim human rights, gender equality and empowerment for all as well as try to integrate and balance the three dimensions of sustainable development: people, planet and prosperity.

All these milestone conference and summits related with sustainable development till date are represented in Figure 2.1.
Figure 2.1 Milestones in the journey of Sustainable Development. Author’s illustration.
The above discussion clearly exhibits some prominent themes in the development of the concept of Sustainable Development. The concept though present since ancient times became a ‘political concept’ and entered international policy lexicon in 1970’s. From 1972 (UNCHE) to 1992 (UNCED) the theoretical framework for sustainable development evolved through a series of international conferences, initiatives and academician’s insights. In addition, from Rio Summit (1992) to Sustainable Development Summit (2015) all the stakeholders had attempted to implement this concept in their actions. Among all the stakeholders, commercial businesses have the major responsibility towards sustainable development as they are the main instruments of economic activity and hence main medium through which environmental degradation occurs and through which corrective actions can be achieved. (Redclift, 2005; Shrivastava & Hart, 1994; Vernon, 2002;).

One of the important commercial businesses is tourism, which over the past six decades, has experienced continued expansion and diversification, to become one of the largest and fastest-growing economic sectors in the world (UNWTO, 2017 & WTTC, 2017). In the following section, the relationship between Tourism and Sustainable Development is analysed.

2.3 TOURISM AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

When applied to Tourism Industry the concept of Sustainable Development as ‘mother – concept’ brings with itself the definitional problem. As rightly stated by Garrod & Fyall (1998) “defining sustainable development in the context of tourism has become something of a cottage industry in the academic literature of late which lacks consensus on its meaning and operationalisation” (p.199). Also, Buckley (2012a, p.534) states that “a single quantitative measure of sustainability in tourism remains elusive, because of difficulties in definition, accounting and analysis.” Also, as stated by Hardy, Beeton, & Pearson (2002) to understand historical context and conceptualisation of sustainable development in tourism, it is imperative to understand the process of tourism development. For this one of the most popular model regarding approaches towards tourism development is Jafar Jafari’s platform of thinking on tourism research (1990). Jafari (1990) through his four platforms of tourism thinking – i.) Advocacy, ii.) Cautionary, iii.) Adaptancy and iv.) Knowledge-based explained the shifts in thinking and attitudes towards tourism. While they apply
to tourism as a whole, these platforms provide a useful framework for understanding
the emergence and development of the concept of sustainability in tourism
particularly. Also, the appearance of each new platform, moreover, does not mean that
the preceding platforms disappeared or became less influential, rather all four
platforms coexist within the contemporary global tourism sector (Weaver, 2006).

With this in background, subsequent paragraphs deal with how the concept of
sustainable development has been adopted by tourism by discussing different terms,
concepts and their interpretations and how the academic, public and private sector’s
adoption of sustainable development has shaped the present-day views on
sustainable development and tourism.

### 2.3.1 Sustainable Tourism

In 1950s and 1960s, tourism was addressed as a clean industry that was
revolutionising the world as the growth of global tourism was intensive. The
economic benefits of tourism were visible especially in the developing and the least
developed countries. It emerged as a viable economic alternative for developing
countries as it generated foreign exchange. Along with this, non-economic benefits
like revival of culture and preservation of tradition with few environmental impacts
were evident (Jafari, 1990). Thus, tourism emerged as a relatively risk-free vehicle for
achieving economic development after World War II (Weaver & Jin, 2016). The
academic works at that time majorly described this aspect of tourism and thus termed
as *Advocacy Platform* by Jafari (1990). This sectoral viewpoint was termed by
Coccossis (1996) as the first interpretation of sustainability in tourism i.e. economic
sustainability of the tourism industry in which the main aim was to maintain tourism
in a format that is economically viable for an indefinite period. Such a view readily
endorses programmes of extensive construction and development to meet the narrow
economic needs of the industry (Coccossis, 1996).

Further in 1970’s the negative impact of unregulated development of tourism
became prominent and *Cautionary Platform* emerged which criticised the laissez-faire
mass tourism. The problems created by tourism boom often termed as mass tourism
was voiced first in the works of German-speaking academic world who have criticised
tourism activities since 1960s contemporaneous with environmental movement and
the limits to growth debate (Weaver & Jin, 2016). Many leading works are Michael
Dowers’s report, ‘Fourth Wave – The Challenge of Leisure’ in 1965; Young’s book ‘Tourism: Blessing or Blight?’ in 1973; Jost Krippendorf landmark work Die Landschaftsfresser (The Landscape Eaters) in 1975 and De Kadt work ‘Tourism: Passport to Development’ in 1979 (as cited by Hall, Gossling & Scott, 2015). Thus, it becomes very clear that the conventional form of mass tourism brings negative impacts to destination and promotes that form of tourism development which is short-term, dominated by free-market principles and in which income maximisation is supreme. It has been described by Fennell (2007, p. 4) as “a monstrosity which has few redeeming qualities for the destination region, their people and their natural resource base”. The idea of sustainable development was indirectly presented at that time also through important models of tourism especially Carrying Capacity, first time used in context of tourism by J.A. Wagar in 1964 (Zelenka & Kacetl, 2014), and Life Cycle Model of R. Butler in 1980 (Cater, Garrod & Low, 2015). These models which signify the culmination of Cautionary Platform reemphasised the debate of limits to tourism growth. Also as tourism contains within itself the seeds of its own destruction a high level public-sector intervention was recommended (Weaver, 2006).

In late 1970s and early 1980’s another stream of academic work emerged which also criticised tourism for its negative impact similar to Cautionary Platform but at the same time supported the array of positive impacts suggested by Advocacy Platform. Emergence of ‘solutions’ for tourism development marked the beginning of Adaptancy Platform. This solution-based approach towards tourism development advocated an alternate form of tourism that can replace mass tourism and the negative impacts related with it. J.E Rosenow and G.L Pulsipher in their work Tourism: The Good, the Bad and the Ugly in 1979 highlighted the success and failure of tourism development in U.S.A and called for ‘new tourism’ as a panacea to preserve towns, work within carrying capacity, educate tourist and enhance environmental and heritage values (Hardy, Beeton, & Pearson, 2002). Jost Krippendorf’s second work which further elaborated the discussion was Die Ferienmenschen (1984). This was translated into English as The Holiday Makers: Understanding the Impact of Leisure and Travel in 1987 (as cited by Lane, 2009). In his work, he advocated a new form of tourism - Sanfter Tourismus (Soft Tourism), which expect change in lifestyle and behaviour from all parties. Robert Jungk in his German work Wie viele Touristen Pro Hektar Strand in 1980 also talked about parameters of ‘soft tourism’ and ‘hard
tourism’ (Lane, 2009 & Thimm, 2017). All this pointed out towards emergence of a new form of tourism that stressed on the alternatives to mass tourism that can produce more positive outcome for host communities and the environment. **Alternative tourism** thus refers to the variety of modern, special interest tourism niches that have appeared over the last couple of decades and that have tended to remain outside the mass markets, although not necessarily being more sustainable (Weaver, 2006). These special interest tourism niches emerged in form of many new terms and few of them are discussed below.

‘**Ecotourism**’ appeared in the mid-1980s as a manifestation of alternative tourism but in this natural environment was considered as main form of attraction for tourist (Weaver, 2006). The term ‘**Green Tourism**’ reflects the rise of interest in environmental issues in late 1980s and it was all about reducing the environmental costs and maximising the environmental benefits of tourism (Swarbrooke, 1999). Similarly, **Geotourism, Responsible Tourism, Pro-poor Tourism** and, of course, **Sustainable Tourism** many umbrella terms were used to describe these adaptations as alternatives to mass tourism (Weaver, 2006).

![Figure 2.2](image.png) Relationship between sustainable tourism, ecotourism and some of the main forms of tourism. Reprinted from *The Encyclopaedia of Sustainable Tourism* (p. xxii) by Cater, Garrod & Low, 2015.
Of all these alternatives forms of tourism, the one that has attained the most inclusive and widest currency was – Sustainable Tourism (Lane, 2009). The term born in 1993 with the publication of the first issue of the Journal of Sustainable Tourism (Bâc, 2014 and McCool, 2016). Swarbrooke (1999) clarified that all the other terms which are often deemed as acronyms for sustainable tourism are in some way related to it but none of them are synonymous with it. Figure 2.2 also explains the relationship between sustainable tourism and other terms.

The earliest understanding of sustainable tourism was a form of small-scale tourism opposite to mass tourism and capable of protecting the environment, while generating income and protecting cultures. Authors like Bramwell and Lane (1993); Cater and Goodall (1992) & Innskeep called sustainable tourism as a "kinder and gentler form of tourism development that stresses forms that are sensitive to environmental impact, give rise to harmonious relationships between hosts and tourists, and follow a long-term timeframe in consideration of economic consequences” (as cited in McCool, 1999, p.316). Thus, the second interpretation of sustainability in tourism was in terms of ecological sustainability, where the main priority is the protection and conservation of the natural environment (Coccossis, 1996). Alternative tourism was the popular label for sustainable tourism, mutual exclusion being implicit in the term (Clarke, 1997). Sustainable tourism and mass tourism were stereotyped as the ‘good’ and the ‘bad’. In short, small scale and environmentally sensitive tourism development was synonymous with sustainable tourism. Thus, in the beginning, for this polar opposite approach, scale of tourism was the main defining characteristics for sustainable tourism. At that time, the advocates of ecological interpretation demanded total replacement of conventional mass tourism and impose strict conditions on the nature and scale of permitted development (Clarke, 1997). They pressed for sustainable tourism based on small scale characteristics that lie in opposition to those of conventional mass tourism (Telfer & Sharpley, 2015). Since then, the term sustainable tourism has been engaged as a platform of reforms (Weaver & Jin, 2016) especially in academic circles as a pioneer and followed by public and private sectors. J. Swarbrooke (1999) model idea of sustainable tourism presented in graphical way in Figure 2.3 also summarises the above discussed emergence of Sustainable Tourism details:
Based on this interpretation Table 2.1 represents some of the most quoted definitions of sustainable tourism by pioneer authors:

Table 2.1

**Definitions of Sustainable Tourism**

**Bramwell & Lane (1993)** "Sustainable tourism is a positive approach intended to reduce the tensions and frictions created by the complex interactions between the tourism industry, visitors, the environment and the communities which are host to holiday makers...an approach which involves working for the longer viability and quality of both natural and human resources. (p. 2)"

**Butler (1993)** Sustainable tourism is “tourism which is developed and maintained in an area (community, environment) in such a manner and at such a scale that it remains viable over an infinite period and does not degrade or alter the environment (human and physical) in which it exists to such a degree that it prohibits the successful development and well-being of other activities and processes.” (p. 29).

**World Tourism Organization (WTO, 1998)** defines sustainable tourism as tourism development that "meets the needs of present tourists and host regions while protecting and enhancing opportunities for the future...leading to management of all resources in such a way that economic, social, and aesthetic needs can be fulfilled while maintaining cultural integrity, essential ecological processes, biological diversity, and life support systems" (p. 21).

**Swarbrooke (1999)** Sustainable tourism is “tourism which is economically viable but does not destroy the resources on which the future of tourism will depend, notably the physical environment and the social fabric of the host community” (p.13).
From above definitions, it can be concluded that “early conceptualizations of sustainable tourism focused on what might be termed the sustainable development of tourism (or sustainable tourism) – that is, a ‘tourism-centric’ approach (Hunter, 1995) that has, as its prime objective, the preservation of the natural, built and socio-cultural upon which tourism depends, rather than on tourism’s potential contribution to the sustainable development of a destination or region” (Sharpley, 2009, p.48-49).

2.3.2 Sustainable Tourism Development

In early 1990s, it was realised by stakeholders of tourism that tourism is a complex and dynamic phenomenon and the way tourism industry is growing in size and structure, the alternative forms of tourism are only a partial solution to broader problems of global tourism.

Two main reasons were put forward, one that the pace with which global tourism industry is growing mass tourism is ‘here to stay’ as it dominates many destinations globally and secondly due to the complex structure of global tourism industry any mode of tourism (including alternative form of tourism) in any destination gives rise to both positive and negative impacts. Rather, it was evident that the form of tourism based on environmentally and culturally fragile areas (especially case of ecotourism) may be more damaging than the forms of mass tourism which these forms of tourism sought to avoid (Wall, 1997 & Butler, 1999). For tourism development to be sustainable, it should be based upon ‘options or strategies considered preferable to mass tourism’ (Pigram, 1990). All this together resulted in the demand to change mass tourism to more sustainable forms.

Now operationalising current knowledge became the focus i.e. how sustainable tourism for development might be achieved and what the implications of sustainable tourism could be rather than the ‘is it or isn’t it sustainable tourism’ debate of previous years (Clarke, 1997 & Swarbrooke, 1999). Also, sustainable tourism should logically reflect the tenets of sustainable development which was missing in the above meaning of sustainable tourism (Sharpley, 2002). Academics and stakeholders advocated that instead of talking that small-scale tourism is inherently superior to large-scale tourism and vice-versa, the need of hour is that the decisions related with tourism development for different destinations should be based on a
sound scientific analysis of its characteristics. The tourism development strategy should be holistic, equitable and future-oriented (Sharpley, 2002).

Recognition of the fact that a holistic and systematic approach that utilizes rigorous scientific methods to compile the knowledge needed to properly assess and manage the tourism sector leads to emergence of Knowledge-based Platform (Jafari, 1990). This platform leads to the latest interpretation of sustainability in tourism in form of tourism as part of a strategy for sustainable development throughout the physical and human environment (Coccossis, 1996). Several authors (Butler, 1993; Hunter, 1997 and Wall, 1997) prefer to use the term ‘sustainable development in the context of tourism’ rather than sustainable tourism in order to prevent the parochial assumption implied in the term sustainable tourism. This interpretation represents the latest understanding of sustainable tourism as a goal that all tourism, regardless of scale, must strive to achieve (Inskeep, 1991 & Clarke, 1997) and where all the stakeholders work as strategic partner in the pursuit of system-wide sustainability (Hardy, Beeton, & Pearson, 2002). To achieve this aim, UNEP and UNWTO in year 2005 published a policy document titled Making Tourism More Sustainable: A Guide for Policy Makers. This guide outlines the effective approaches for developing strategies and policies for more sustainable tourism and the tools that would make the policies work on the ground. The message conveyed in it is that to achieve sustainable tourism development there is no ‘one-fits-all’ and cooperation among all the stakeholders is crucial. Here the definition given by WTO is noteworthy:

Sustainable tourism development guidelines and management practices are applicable to all forms of tourism in all types of destinations, including mass tourism and the various niche tourism segments. Sustainability principles refer to the environmental, economic and socio-cultural aspects of tourism development, and a suitable balance must be established between these three dimensions to guarantee its long-term sustainability. (UNWTO, 2005)

From the above definition, one can conclude that sustainable tourism can be understood as the strategy for sustainable development through tourism which is
possible only by the active participation of all the stakeholders of tourism industry. In other words, the adoption of STP by all the stakeholders can lead to the achievement of sustainable tourism development.

Besides the academic world, an important role has been played by different international conferences and summits regarding the current interpretation of the concept of sustainable tourism as a strategy for sustainable development through tourism. All the important milestone declaration, conventions and summits are discussed in the following paragraphs.

The first important conference to hint upon the role of tourism in sustainable development was **Manila Declaration on World Tourism in 1980**. This Conference was convened in Manila by the WTO with the participation of 107 delegations of states and 91 delegations of observers. The Declaration highlighted the social responsibility of tourism and stated that tourism in present day societies should be considered “more than purely economic activities of nations and people” and it should “not be prejudicial to the social and economic interest of the population in tourist areas, to the environment or, above all, to natural resources which are the fundamental attraction of tourism, and historical and cultural sites” (Point 18, Manila Declaration, 1980). Another important initiative taken by the WTO to promote sustainable tourism was **Tourism Bill of Rights and Tourist Code** adopted during Sixth Assembly in Sofia, 1985. This document highlighted the rights and duties of tourist and host population and suggested policies for implementation by States and tourism industries. (WTO, 1985)

The next important milestone toward expansion of the concept of sustainable tourism and the important role of stakeholders in the implementation of sustainability in tourism was the **World Conference on Sustainable Tourism** held in Lanzarote, Canary Islands, Spain in 1995, which produced the **Charter for Sustainable Tourism**. This charter was guided by the principles set forth in the Rio Declaration on the Environment and Development and the recommendations arising from Agenda 21 for Sustainable Development. This charter recognised “the need to develop a tourism that meets economic expectations and environmental requirements, and respects not
only the social and physical structure of destinations, but also the local population” (WTO, 1995). In this conference, the term and concept of ‘sustainable tourism’ entered in the international tourism lexicon for the first time.

One of the first concrete steps arising from the increasing cooperation between the tourism industry and inter-governmental agencies was ‘Agenda 21 for the Travel and Tourism Industry: Towards Environmentally Sustainable Development’. It was an action plan for sustainable tourism development launched by the World Tourism Organisation (WTO), in cooperation with World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC) and the Earth Council (EC), in 1995 (WTTC, WTO & EC, 1995 & WTO, 2001). Agenda 21 for the Travel and Tourism industry identifies twelve (12) guiding principles for tourism development.

Global Code of Ethics for Tourism, work as a fundamental framework for sustainable tourism and set forth a comprehensive set of principles to guide stakeholders in tourism development: central and local governments, local communities, the tourism industry and its professionals, as well as visitors, both international and domestic (WTO, 1999). The code was adopted in 1999 by the WTO and acknowledged by the General Assembly two years later. The code features a mechanism for voluntary implementation of STP by tourism industry players.

PATA in association with the Asia Pacific Economic Corporation (APEC) countries introduced Code for Sustainable Tourism in 2001. The code is aimed at making tourism industry organisations committed to “a responsible vision of tourism growth while respecting the natural environments, social needs and cultural sensitivities” (Garrod, 2015, p. 84). PATA believed that by adhering to the code for sustainable tourism, the tourism organisations will deal more effectively with environmental regulations, standards and accreditation schemes.

The United Nations observed 2002 as International Year of Ecotourism and one of the tangible outcomes of this year was Quebec Declaration on Ecotourism. The importance of this declaration lies in the fact that it acknowledges that ecotourism embraces the principles of sustainable tourism. This declaration set out series of recommendations for governmental and non-governmental organisations to realise
the goal of sustainable development through ecotourism. This declaration paved way for Cape Town Declaration on Responsible Tourism in the same year. This declaration is the first formal policy document to specify the characteristics of responsible tourism. The responsible tourism can be best understood as a way of ‘doing’ tourism planning, policy and development. In such applied context, responsible tourism prioritizes equitable benefits of tourism among stakeholders, sustainable resource management and local community control and planning (Grimwood, 2015). In other words, the concept of ecotourism and responsible tourism reflect the role of STP in achieving the goal of sustainable development through tourism. On similar lines in 2008, tourism board of state of Kerala along with International Centre for Responsible Tourism (ICTR) proactively organised the Kerala Conference attended by 503 delegates from 29 countries. The outcome of the conference was the Kerala Declaration on Responsible Tourism in Destinations which articulated practical actions to achieve responsible tourism in destinations.

An important step in the direction of application of STP was International Task Force on Sustainable Tourism Development (ITF-STD). The ITF-STD, chaired by France, provided support to nearly 40 projects between 2006-2009 to achieve the target of sustainable development through tourism. This task was the product of the Marrakesh Process and WSSD, 2002 (Cater, 2015). The successor to ITF-STD was Global Partnership for Sustainable Tourism launched in 2011 to inject sustainability principles into the mainstream of tourism policies, development and operations. This partnership aimed to give tangible shape to STP.

Another very important organisation that brought together businesses, governments, non-governmental organisation, academia, individuals and communities engaged in, and striving to achieve best practices in sustainable tourism was Global Sustainable Tourism Council in year 2010. This organisation was dedicated to increasing the reach, awareness and recognition of STP through endorsement of the principles of the Global Sustainable Tourism Criteria. This council was the result of the merger of Partnership for Global Sustainable Tourism Criteria (2008) and Sustainable Tourism Stewardship Council (2009). The GSTC “complies, reviews,
adapts, develops tools and resources to foster sustainable tourism practices” (Bricker, 2015, p.235). In 2012, GSTC announced a new version of Criteria for Tour Operators and Hotels which would guide them in executing STP in their business process. In 2014 Ministry of Tourism, India launched Sustainable Tourism Criteria and Indicators (STCI) for tour operators of India which were based on these Criteria of GSTC (MOT Press Release, 2015).

To commemorate the 20th Anniversary of World Charter for Sustainable Tourism 1995, in 2015 World Charter for Sustainable Tourism + 20 conference was held in Basque Country. In this conference, after reviewing the execution of STP by the tourism stakeholders, it was concluded that the achievement of the goal of sustainable development through tourism is still a distant dream. The need of the hour is to translate the intentions of sustainability in tourism development into legally binding commitments as reflected from the fact that only 34 per cent countries have sustainable tourism policy even which is implemented half-heartedly (UNWTO, 2015a). The latest development which underlines the role of tourism in the implementation of Agenda 2030 and the realisation of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) is UN (General Assembly) declaration of the year 2017 as International Year of Sustainable Tourism for Development (UNWTO, 2015b). Tourism is included as targets under three of the 17 SDGs – SDG 8: Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all; SDG 12: Sustainable Consumption and Production and SDG 14: Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development (UNWTO, 2015c).

Table 2.2 depicts in brief the various conferences, declarations and summits held from time to time which have contributed in raising awareness about STP and motivated the various stakeholders in tourism industry to execute them.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Conventions and Declarations</th>
<th>Organisation(s)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1980</td>
<td>Manila Declaration on World Tourism.</td>
<td>World Tourism Organisation (WTO)</td>
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<tr>
<td>1985</td>
<td>Tourism Bill of Rights and Tourist Code</td>
<td>World Tourism Organisation (WTO)</td>
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<td>1989</td>
<td>The Hague Declaration on Tourism.</td>
<td>Inter Parliamentary Union (IPU) &amp; WTO</td>
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<tr>
<td>1995</td>
<td>Agenda 21 for the Travel and Tourism Industry: Towards Environmentally Sustainable Development</td>
<td>WTO, WTTC &amp; Earth Council</td>
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<tr>
<td>1997</td>
<td>The Berlin Declaration on Biological Diversity and Sustainable Tourism.</td>
<td>18 Nations and 11 Institutions</td>
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<tr>
<td>1999</td>
<td>Global Code of Ethics for Tourism.</td>
<td>UNWTO</td>
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<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>The Code of Conduct for the Protection of Children from Sexual Exploitation in Travel and Tourism</td>
<td>UNWTO &amp; End Child Prostitution in Asian Tourism (ECPAT)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>Code for Sustainable Tourism.</td>
<td>Pacific Asia Travel Association (PATA) &amp; Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>UN International Year of Ecotourism &amp; Quebec Declaration on Ecotourism</td>
<td>UNEP &amp; UNWTO</td>
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<td>2002</td>
<td>Cape Town Declaration on Responsible Tourism in Destinations, South Africa.</td>
<td>Responsible Tourism Partnership (RTP)</td>
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<td>2003</td>
<td>Djerba Declaration on Tourism and Climate Change, Tunisia.</td>
<td>UNWTO</td>
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<tr>
<td>Year</td>
<td>Declaration</td>
<td>Organisation(s)</td>
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<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>Tourism for all: Declaration on Tourism, Cultural Diversity and Sustainable Development, Barcelona.</td>
<td>Universal Forum of Cultures &amp; Responsible Tourism Institute (RTI)</td>
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<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>Declaration - Harnessing Tourism for the Millennium Development Goals.</td>
<td>UNWTO</td>
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<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>International Marrakech Task Force on Sustainable Tourism Development.</td>
<td>UNEP &amp; United Nations Department for Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA)</td>
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<td>2007</td>
<td>Davos Declaration. Climate Change and Tourism: Responding to Global Challenges.</td>
<td>UNWTO, UNEP, World Meteorological Organisation (WMO) &amp; World Economic Forum (WEF)</td>
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<td>2008</td>
<td>The Kerala Declaration on Responsible Tourism.</td>
<td>Kerala Tourism &amp; International Centre for Responsible Tourism (ICTR)</td>
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<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>Lusaka Declaration on Sustainable Tourism Development, Climate Change and Peace, Zambia.</td>
<td>International Institute for Peace through Tourism (IIPT)</td>
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<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>Réunion Island Declaration on Sustainable Tourism in Islands.</td>
<td>UNWTO</td>
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<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>Phnom Penh Declaration on Community Development through Tourism, Cambodia.</td>
<td>PATA, UNESCO &amp; UNWTO</td>
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<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>Adoption of Resolution for promotion of sustainable tourism, including ecotourism, for poverty eradication and environment protection.</td>
<td>UN General Assembly</td>
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<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>World Charter for Sustainable Tourism + 20, Basque Country.</td>
<td>UNWTO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2017</td>
<td>International Year of Sustainable Tourism for Development.</td>
<td>UN General Assembly</td>
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Waligo, Clarke & Hawkins (2013) recommended that operationalizing of sustainable practices in tourism development can be implemented only when all the stakeholders are involved in sustainable tourism development process. Stakeholders referred to those groups or individuals who are associated with tourism development initiatives and therefore can affect or are affected by the decisions and activities concerning those initiatives. The literature on sustainable tourism suggest six stakeholders in the field of sustainable tourism – tourists, industry [i.e. travel intermediaries], local community, government, special interest groups and educational institutions (Butler, 1999; Swarbrooke, 1999). These stakeholder groups influence tourism development in many ways including tourism supply and demand, regulation, the management of tourism impacts, human resources and research.

Among these stakeholders, the most important and “powerful” is the travel intermediaries (Cheong and Miller, 2000, p.381). They link the demand and supply side of the tourism industry and strongly influence the nature of both demand and supply of tourism. Bricker and Black (2016) rightly remarked that “tour operators are an important component of the tourism system” and “can maximize aspects of sustainability including: social and economic benefits; benefits to cultural heritage; benefits to the environment; and enable partnerships” (p. 81). Similarly, Jadhav, Mahapatra and Sharma (2013) by discussing case of Bhutan emphasized that objective of sustainable tourism development in a country cannot be achieved by government alone rather “Tour operators are one of the most important implementing arms of the government policies regarding sustainable tourism development” by developing and following STP for all types of tours (p.164). Therefore, the onus of adoption of STP lies on them. How travel intermediaries have reacted to their new responsibility has been reviewed in the following section.

2.4 TRAVEL INTERMEDIARIES AND SUSTAINABLE TOURISM DEVELOPMENT

Many studies have been conducted across the world to assess the role of travel intermediaries in achieving the goal of sustainable tourism development. Some important studies are as follow:

1. Studies on importance of travel intermediaries in sustainable tourism development
2. Studies on manifestations of STP
3. Area specific studies of STP of travel intermediaries
4. India specific studies of STP

Studies on Importance of Travel Intermediaries in Sustainable Tourism Development

Since the 1980s the tourism industry has begun to take green issues and idea of sustainable tourism seriously. Within tourism industry, the development of tourism is primarily in hands of travel intermediaries i.e. tour operator and travel agents (Carey, Gountas & Gilbert, 1997; Mowforth and Munt 1998; Smith, 1988; Swarbrooke, 1999). Travel intermediaries act as a middleman in chain of distribution and can be seen as a necessary and essential link between the tourist and the service provider (Bhatia, 2012 and Kamra & Chand, 2004).

Budeanu (2005) described that travel intermediaries play an influential role in encouraging or ignoring sustainable tourism practices to both backward and forward stakeholders in the tourism supply chain. This influential role is result of their position in chain of distribution and functions performed by them like providing asymmetric information between service providers and tourist, economies of scale enjoyed by them due to bulk buying and their high bargaining power over service providers. Moreover, tour operators’ especially large tour operators play significant role in affecting change in behaviour and attitude of both tourist and supplier towards integration of STP into mass tourism. The work presents some of the most important arguments which emphasise the role that tour operators have in promoting sustainable tourism.

The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), World Tourism Organisation (WTO) and Tour Operators Initiative (TOI) in their joint publication authored by Font and Cochrane (2005a) acknowledged that as intermediaries between tourists and tourism service providers, tour operators and travel agents can influence the choices of consumers, the practices of suppliers and the development patterns of destinations. Though the travel intermediaries i.e. tour operators and travel agents have started late but have taken a broader view of sustainable tourism than businesses in any other sector of tourism (Swarbrooke, 1999).

Taking it forward, Carey, Gountas and Gilbert (1997) had made a concrete effort to measure the tour operator’s influence on the long-term sustainability of destination. They suggested that tour operator is one of the major influences on the nature of tourism demand which in turn determine the nature of tourism supply. Much emphasis is put on the fact that travel intermediaries play a major role in achieving
sustainable goals at a destination by maintaining & sustaining 'right' level of demand. Cavlek (2002) also confirms intermediaries central position in the tourism gives them great potential to influence the decision & behaviour of both sides: tourists & service providers.

Van Wijk and Persoon’s (2007) research work again highlights that travel intermediaries are the main players in the tourism industry and can use their market power to improve sustainability in the tourism sector. In the study 42 internationally operating tour operators’ sustainability reporting process is analysed and it is concluded that in comparison to other industry sectors, tour operators perform weak. Tribe and Sherma (2008) by their work targeted small tourism enterprises and their level of understanding of sustainable tourism. In their work, they argue that instead of numerical dominant of small tourism enterprises (STES) in many destinations, little is known about their role in helping destinations progress towards sustainability objectives. This paper works with the assumption that by being small and locally owned these enterprises automatically contribute to sustainable tourism development and to test this assumption relevant indicator of sustainability has been developed covering the four broad sustainability dimensions. These indications can be used in assessing the STE’s progressiveness towards a destination's long- term sustainability goals.

Kensbock & Jennings (2011) bring out the relationship among the “entrepreneurial self, the actions of entrepreneurs, their use of ethics and their praxes of sustainable tourism through grounded theory approach” (p.489). Another dimension for effective implementation of STP is to understand the perspective of tourist as it will help intermediaries to implement those STP which are more relevant, feasible and thus economically viable to both intermediaries and society as exemplified by Witt (2014) in his research paper.

In another study done by Lozano, Arbulú & Rey-Maquieira (2016), “the greening role” of travel intermediaries was examined in context of hotel. The authors stated that travel intermediaries “can create incentives to greening hotels’ management through the sharing of an environmental price premium” (p.49) and this will be a win - win situation of both. Strambach and Surmeier (2017) stated that for setting global standards for sustainability the travel intermediaries of the Southern
hemisphere can play an important role by becoming knowledge-intensive intermediaries. Such intermediaries would be ‘standard makers’ rather than ‘standard takers’.

These studies bring out the central position and seminal role of travel intermediaries in sustainable tourism development.

**Studies on Manifestations of STP**

A leading work in area of sustainability and travel intermediaries was given by Tour Operator Initiative (TOI), UNEP and UNWTO in year 2005. This management guide was authored by Font and Cochrane in two volumes namely *Integrating sustainability into business an implementation guide for responsible tourism coordinators*, Volume-1 (2005a) and *Integrating Sustainability into Business - A Management Guide for Responsible Tour Operations*, Volume-2 (2005b). In very simple and easy ways they stated how tour operators can integrate STP in their business practices and hence could contribute towards sustainable development. STP were divided into five main areas of tour operating business. These were - internal management, product development and management, supply chain management, relations with customers and co-operation with destinations. The following studies examine STP in the above-mentioned areas under the headings i.) Eco-labelling and Certifications, ii.) Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR), iii.) Supply Chain Management (SCM) and iv.) Sustainable Reporting. In these four areas, Tepelus (2005) had attempted to summarise and critically evaluate the voluntary initiatives for integration of sustainable tourism in mass tourism undertaken by tour-operating sectors currently referred to as 'good practice’. The main aim of this piece of work is to know about actual implementation of these ‘good practices' and to explore their comprehensiveness and sufficiency as tools for making mass tourism a more sustainable business.

Lee (2001) had given conceptual definition of sustainable tourism destinations - an emerging term used in recognition schemes to promote Sustainable Development at destinations. She puts forward that sustainable tourism destinations can be achieved by focusing on improving environmental performance of tourist facilities, by integrating different approaches and tools such as environment management system, eco-labelling, etc. Buckley (2002) highlighted the emerging importance of Eco-labels
for tourism enterprises and discussed that an array of ecolabels is available. The paper concluded that a context and market relevant framework of environmental regulation will enhance effectivity of these eco-labels.

Similarly, the study of Sasidharan, Sirakaya & Kerstetter (2002) focused on benefits and usefulness of eco-labels for tourism enterprises in context of developing countries. By use of qualitative research method, the paper proposed the feasibility of adopting ecolabeling schemes for certification of tourism enterprises in developing countries along with challenges faced while adoption of these ecolabels and measures to overcome these challenges. In another study, Font and Harris (2004) had investigated the successes and challenges of five tourism certification programmes based on socioeconomic criteria and operating partially or wholly in developing countries. The paper concludes that instead of environmental tourism certification programme social standards adopted by tour operating business are ambiguous and assessment methodologies are inconsistent. There is an urgent need for better understanding and awareness of STP so that the remarkable variation on what is understood as sustainable depending on the type of tourism companies targeted can be rectified.

Similarly, research work Tepelus & Cordoba (2005) emphasized that voluntary instruments such as eco-labelling schemes and codes of conduct used by travel intermediaries had more environmental focus. Inclusion of socio-cultural factors in different recognition schemes and code of conduct is necessary as it would actually represent the transition of tourism industry recognition schemes from “eco” to “sustainability” (p.135). Buckley (2012b) in his research work stated that like other industries tourism industry also have many tourism eco-certification programmes as means of self - regulation and an alternative to government regulation. The author stated that these eco-certification programmes are less effective in achieving environmental sustainability in tourism industry as compared to other industries. The paper concluded that though it is difficult to have a very effective self- regulatory mechanism in form of eco-certification and sustainability reporting yet GSTC can be considered a small step in the same direction.

A very important manifestation of STP is Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) which is used as a tool to measure STP. According to Miller (2001) Corporate Social Responsibility act as an indicator that can be used to monitor movement of the tourism industry towards sustainable position. 35 senior representatives of U.K.
Tourism Industry were interviewed and research revealed that the industry structure acts as a constraint for displaying the responsibility of organization. Market advantages & fear of negative public relation act as factors that will increase the actions of tour operators towards corporate social responsibility. Dodds & Kuehnel (2010) had gone one step forward and added that “CSR is gaining momentum worldwide as companies begin to realize that their stakeholders are demanding accountability that goes beyond shareholders’ interests” (p.221). In their study of execution of CSR by Canadian mass tour operators it was found that there was little implementation of CSR practices.

In another study related with CSR and STP, Sheldon and Park (2011) in their research paper based on the study of members of Travel Industry Association of America (TIA). According to the study the main drivers of CSR activities are enhanced reputation, and community based issues where as main barriers are lack of resources and lack of understanding. A very important observation made by the study was that the inclination of CSR was more towards environmental issues as compared to social and cultural issues. Manente, Minghetti and Mingotto (2012) through their study highlighted important role of corporate social responsibility (CSR) in promoting the integration of sustainable practices in the tourism industry. They opined that CSR can be made more effective by adoption of Ranking Assessment Systems to measures CSR practices and sustainable tourism products.

Camilleri (2014) and Luu (2011) in their research papers state that corporate social responsibility (CSR) is a major parameter to achieve STP. Their paper links the corporate social responsibility (CSR) paradigms to the sustainability agenda. The importance of CSR in STP is also illustrated by the upcoming tourism enterprises of Malawi as discussed by Chilembwe (2015). Tourism sector is in its infancy in the country and from the beginning steps are being taken to make the tourism enterprises adopt the approach of CSR and thus integrate STP in their businesses.

Tapper (2001) had brought together the issue of socio-economic contribution of tourism to societies with special reference to developing nations and the contribution of tour operators specially U.K. tour operator's business in achieving it. Tapper puts forward that in order to fulfil this expectation of developing countries, the tour operator business has to focus on structural and business practice issues especially local economic linkages in the supply chain. Application of supply chain management in tour operation business was initiated by him for the first time. Tapper
& Carbone (2004) published a handbook for Tourism Operators’ Initiative (TOI) and Centre for Environmental Leadership for Business (CELB) which focused on three steps i.e. economic, environmental and social sustainability criteria that can guide the tour operators to make better choices while selecting and contracting their service suppliers. And ultimately this will lead to execution of STP by tour operators through supply chain management (SCM).

In another study going one step forward Schwartz, Tapper and Font (2008) present a framework for tour operators for implementation of supply chain management process to improve sustainability. The research considers current tour operators approaches to sustainable tourism development, how the suggested SSCM (Sustainable supply chain management) framework may be implemented by specialist & mass market operators & what will be the challenges faced if these early steps are to lead to widespread, full implementation of SSCM initiatives. Further, Budeanu (2009) in her another work again emphasizes the adoption of Environmental Supply Chain Management (ESCM) by eight large tour operations. She explores that in order to make sustainable tourism as a common practice for large scale tour operators adoption of ESCM is must but due to absence of regulatory pressures and cost saving benefits the adoption of ESCM is triggered by public pressure and its implementation is limited by organizational factors. Moreover, formal commitment from top management in the travel intermediary business is necessary for successful implementation of the sustainable development strategies.

Another similar study which emphasised importance of SCM (supply chain management) for STP implementation by travel intermediaries was done by Spasić (2012). By analysing business functioning of Serbian travel intermediaries, the researcher concluded that these companies are still not able to think ahead of price competitiveness. There is a sheer lack of STP implementation through SCM as lot of difficulties are faced by them while integrating sustainability aspects in their SCM. For example, principal suppliers of Serbia lack in sustainability area. The study suggested that “well-placed management system and intensive long-term cooperation with service providers” (p.60) will yield beneficial results to travel intermediaries as well as principal suppliers.

Tepelus (2000) in her study stated that there is a gap between increasing awareness regarding environmental, social and economic impact of tourism and the kind of information regarding it disclosed by travel intermediaries which highlights
the need of sustainable reporting. Further, Dwyer (2005) in his research paper emphasised the importance of sustainable reporting as it serves the dual purpose of internal management tool and external reporting framework. Herremans, Pyasi and Lu (2011) in their study highlighted the importance of sustainability reporting in the tourism industry for effective execution of STP. The study undertook case studies of the emerging economies of both China and India and found that sustainability reporting in the tourism industries lags behind other industries. The study concludes that to encourage STP there is an immediate “need for a) tourism sector specific global reporting standards that integrate contextual nuances, b) effective monitoring, and c) partnership building and benchmarking through research” (p.247).

**Area Specific Studies of STP of Travel Intermediaries**

Forsyth (1995) could be credited first one to examine the business attitude of UK outgoing tourism industry to sustainable tourism. He put forward that at present the self-regulation adopted by UK outgoing tourism industry for sustainable tourism is not sufficient rather long-term regulation and better awareness and understanding of the commercial opportunities of sustainable tourism may help companies to be more proactive for accepting sustainability. Holden & Kealy (1996) in his paper has examined the attitudes and practices of UK outbound tour operators selling green or eco-based holidays. Sirakaya (1997) in his study stated a direct and proportional relationship between the level of education / awareness among tour operators and the attitudinal compliance with ecotourism guidelines.

Berry and Ladkin (1997) had talked about application of sustainable tourism at regional level (East Sussex) with small tourism business in focus. Three main aspects were researched i.e. understanding of the concept of sustainable tourism, its implementation & barriers in implementation. The research revealed that small tourism business has willingness to engage in sustainable activities but have little understanding of concept, vague principles of sustainable tourism cannot be tabulated into workable practices and mistrust of government policy, poor administration and lack of communication act as barrier to the implementation of STP in small businesses at the regional level.

Curtin and Busby (1999) had put forward that for sustainable destination development role of mass market tour operators is very crucial. A study of members of British Federation of Tour operators and Association of Independent Tour Operator was undertaken to identify their business awareness towards sustainable tourism
development and it was concluded that the present policy of price-cutting competition of mass market operators act as a threat to sustainable destination development. Fennell & Malloy (1999) in his research work measured the ethical differences in nature of selected tour operators of USA and Canada and emphasized that education, organisational size and code of ethics influence day-to-day business operation as well execution of sustainable practice of tour operators.

Further, Bramwell and Alletorp (2001) conducted a study in Danish tourism industry and surveyed senior managers of industry to identify their understanding of and attitude towards sustainable tourism. The study concluded that prime responsibility for promoting STP lies with travel intermediaries. But at the same time suggests that comparatively larger proportion of businesses expect an assistance from other stakeholders like government that may encourage the introduction of these practices. In the same vein, Björk (2001) in his study of small tourism companies of Finland in respect of progress of operationalisation of sustainable tourism development concluded that there was positive attitude towards sustainability issues among them but due to lack of external support and training the attitude could not be transformed into action.

Okeiyi, Okrah and Bryant (2005) work also shows the importance of tour operators role in achieving sustainable tourism development in developing nations. Their work examines the operators’ attitude towards STP in Ghana using Butler’s five constructs. The paper concludes that Ghanaian tourism operators (private and public) have positive attitude towards sustainable tourism development concept but cost and lack to expertise are barriers in its implementation. Further the paper emphasises an active role of government in order to bring a better awareness & application of this concept. A region-specific study to assess the extent of STP adopted by tour operators was conducted by Spenceley (2007). Twenty tour operators were interviewed and the findings suggested that positive interventions in the destinations were made by nearly half of the tour operators. The study proposed that in order to make South African tourism industry implement STP at large scale more concentrated efforts were required on part of tour operator as well as government. Also, a lot has to be done for education of tourist regarding STP so that a market for sustainable tourism products could be created.

Thuot, Vaugeois & Maher (2010) had conducted a study of rural operators throughout the Canadian province of British Columbia to assess their level awareness
of STP, execution of STP by them, drivers and barriers in execution of STP. They also suggested ways to enhance the adoption of STP among tour operators. Similarly continuing the trend, Frey and George (2010) studied current attitude and perception of tourism business owners in Cape town towards Responsible Tourism Management Practices. Survey data of 244 tourism business were used to statistically test what factors are causing the low levels of Responsible Tourism Management (RTM) practices in the Cape Town Tourism industry. Finding suggest that despite general positive attitude towards RTM business are not investing time and money into changing management practice. Recommendations are made as to how the costs of implementing RTM can be reduced and solutions should be implemented to facilitate change.

Cavagnaro & Fiona (2011) conducted a study on the same pattern among inbound tour operators of Kenya. La Lopa & Day (2011) identified “readiness to change” as a first step in implementation of STP by travel intermediaries (p.130). The study is based on 129 managers working in Welsh Tourism Industry. The study also provides practical applications for Destination Management Organisations to implement change based on the ‘readiness to change’ model.

On the same line, Khairat and Maher (2012) qualitatively examined attitude of 32 tour operators working in Egypt regarding their integration of STP into their business processes and identified main areas of implementation of STP, drivers and barriers experienced by them. To get a complete perspective, response from other destination’s stakeholders were also solicited. The study concluded that though integration of principles of sustainable tourism is beneficial for travel intermediaries yet there is a great gap between strategy and implementation of STP. The main priority for them while implementation of STP was “supply chain management”, main driver for integration of STP in business is "building positive public image", main benefits enjoyed by their business due to STP integration were "increased operational efficiency & business opportunities (design innovation)"; "competitive advantage"; "improved image of company in general" and main barriers for STP implementation faced by them were “weakness of stakeholders’ support”, "complexity due to numerous parties & partners" and "obligation of setting aside funds for environmental or social activities" (p.229).

Candrea & Brătucu (2012) in their quantitative work assessed the level of awareness concerning issue of sustainability of incoming tour operators of Brasov,
Romania. To do this, perception of managers working in tour operation business were measured related with general understanding of the concept of sustainable tourism along with the extent of practical application of STP in their business. Their interest in eco-certification and membership of environmental organisations were also checked. The research concluded that Brasov tour operators had a “moderate interest concerning sustainability issues and eco-certification” (p.34). Further study suggested that for better understanding and usage of sustainability tools- especially eco-certifications, promotion and networking among all stakeholders of tourism value chain is required.

Tay & Chan (2013) by using push and pull motivation theory in their study proposed a conceptual framework describing different types of motivational factors behind implementation of responsible tourism practices by one of key stakeholders i.e. travel intermediaries of Kota Kinabalu, Sabah, Malaysia. The study also explored main challenges and barriers faced by travel intermediaries in implementation of responsible tourism practices like lack of “1) stakeholder participation; (2) responsible tourism awareness; (3) green transportation; and (4) population pressure.” (p.27). The study concluded that these challenges can be resolved by a proactive role by government like initiating “awareness campaigns or incentives for tour operators who practice responsible tourism such as eco-awards or green certification” (p.27). Similarly, Erdoğan and Tulga (2013) quantitatively investigated the opinions of 1620 travel agents of Turkey in terms of sustainable environmental practices. The study also explored the relationship between education level and business experience and its influence on their opinions regarding 27 items related with sustainable environmental practices. The study concluded that there exists a difference between opinion of travel agents regarding environmental STP wherein travel agents having higher education level and longer business experience have more sensitive opinion for environmental and sustainable issues. The study suggested that for better awareness and implementation of STP the government should “develop a local, national, regional and international integrated system of policy and practices” for all the stakeholders including intermediaries (p.118).

Gaspari (2015) in the study of Korca region, Albania focused on the measurement of the level of awareness of the concept sustainable tourism among the tourism enterprises. The researcher found low- level of awareness among the travel intermediaries and identified the following barriers in the execution of STP: “lack of
available money to invest, other business priorities, lack of incentive programs” (p.46). In the same manner, a study conducted by Vongsaroj (2015) using a mixed research method on 130 tour operators of Chiang Mai and Phuket provinces of Thailand highlighted that there is a considerable gap between the awareness level and performance level of tour operators in respect of sustainable tourism development ethical behaviour.

Sardianou, Kostakis and Mitoula et.al. (2016) in their empirical research work on study of sustainable tourism entrepreneurs’ behavioural intentions in Greece inferred that demographic characteristic of entrepreneurs like age, level of education and firm characteristic like income were deciding factors in the execution of STP. The drivers for STP suggested in the paper are “creation of knowledge networks and websites to focus on sustainable business and the promotion of environmental labels and certified management systems in tourism businesses” (p.857). In an attempt to study the drivers for STP among small scale travel enterprises Font, Garay and Jones (2016) conducted a survey of 900 tourism enterprises in 57 European protected areas. They concluded that competitiveness is the least driving force for the execution of STP by small travel enterprises. Legitimization driven enterprises do fairly well in implementing the STP. Lifestyle and value driven firms observe the maximum execution of STP in their business strategies.

**India Specifies Studies of STP**

In the Indian context, Kokkranikal, McLellan & Baum (2003) had examined the development of tourism in Lakshadweep Island within the context of sustainability. The study seeks to identify, specify development & management practices and also explains potential strategies for promoting sustainability - oriented tourism in Lakshadweep. Singh (2008) has examined the role tourism trade and liberalization plays in fostering or constraining sustainable development. The paper explores the opportunities and barrier to achieve sustainable development through trade in tourism service in Agra and Varanasi, a popular tourism destination in India.

Taxak (2008) puts forward ‘Sustainopreneurship’ as a new managerial approach to tourism and hospitality industry. Sustanopreneurs is an entrepreneur with sustainable attitude. They are expected to play a crucial role in identifying opportunities and finding their creative solutions. The paper intends to explain
theoretical dimensions of sustainopreneurship and the application of the criterion in tourism management. Chauhan (2009) has examined the perspective of Indian Tour operators towards the burning issue of climate change & tourism. The study explores the relationship between tourism and climate change and also proposes strategic options for Indian tour operators for pro-actively responding to the challenges of climate change for assuring ecologically sustainable planet for posterity.

Dhiman and Dubey (2011) in their empirical work investigated understanding of various sustainable tourism development dimensions among tourism stakeholders namely travel intermediaries, hotels and other leisure organisations. The study revealed that there is a set of sustainable tourism development parameters that is most common and identified five factors of stakeholders’ perceptions - sustainable tourism; institutional; social; economic and environmental dimensions. The study inferred that these factors can be used as ‘a barometer’ to develop sustainable tourism development in India through stakeholder involvement.

Another area where synergy of stakeholders, especially between travel intermediaries and destination service providers, can foster better STP implementation at destination is encouragement to indigenous entrepreneurial innovations by travel intermediaries. This has been highlighted by two seminal works of Kokkranikal and Morrison (2002 & 2011). By citing case study of house boats of Kerala (in 2002 study) and by discussing case study of an eco-heritage tourism resort of Coconut Palms (in 2011 study) the authors emphasised that by supporting and promoting community based enterprises at a destination dual benefits could be achieved. On one hand the maximum economic and social benefits of tourism development will reach directly to disadvantaged communities in destinations and on the other hand indigenous communities when develop, own and manage tourism activities in their own way it leads to sustainable development through tourism.

An empirical survey of Indian tour operators to explore the status of sustainable tourism development in Indian context was done by Mamhoori (2015). The study identified macro and micro factors that affected the adoption of sustainable tourism practices. Batta (2016) in his study proposes Community Benefit Tourism Initiative (CBTI) model for achievement of sustainable tourism development in Manali by the Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs). The research stated that working in isolation these SMEs had caused environmental damage for which the
local community has to pay cost. This paper highlights that Indian travel intermediaries have neglected integration of STP in their business operations and thus causing damages not only to destinations’ environmental and cultural attractions but also put their future at stake.

Hamid and Isa (2017) have done a review of literature for better understanding of the significant contributions of tour operators in implementing STP. They summarised from the review of literature that the STP are a combination of many mechanisms such as compassionate treatment of the natural environment (ecotourism), supply chain management (SCM) and corporate social responsibility (CSR). These three aspects should be included in the systematic guidelines and code of conducts for tour operators which are indispensable for the execution of STP.

2.5 RESEARCH GAP

A review of literature done in the previous section brings to the conclusion that travel intermediaries have a pivotal role to play in realising the aim of sustainable tourism development. Being in the central position in tourism distribution chain, travel intermediaries “have a great possibility and responsibility for triggering essential changes in the attitudes and actions of producers and consumers towards practices of more sustainable tourism” (Budeanu, 2007, p.41). Travel intermediaries have understood their responsibility to integrate STP in their business strategies to a certain extent. Their execution of STP, on three broad areas namely environmental, social and economic, is manifested in different forms: Corporate Social Responsibility, Supply Chain Management, working closely with local communities of destinations for their capacity building, Eco-friendly internal office operations, Educating Tourist, Eco-labels, Certifications, Code of Conduct and Sustainable Reporting. The review indicates that various area specific studies of travel intermediaries and sustainability have been done to 1.) to assess the level of awareness of STP among travel intermediaries, 2.) to measure the extent of execution of STP by travel intermediaries, 3.) to identify the motivators/drivers to enhance STP and 4.) to identify the challenges/ barriers faced by travel intermediaries in the execution of STP. Most of the studies indicate that the travel intermediaries are well informed of STP but the execution of STP is far from satisfactory. The other important fact is that these research studies are geographically restricted to foreign countries. In the Indian context, the research work done is either very narrow in its
area of study or of a very broad nature. This underlines an academic research gap. There has been no comprehensive study for one of the powerful stakeholders of tourism industry i.e. travel intermediaries operating in a prominent tourism destination. In order to fulfil this gap, the present research work aims to study the above mentioned four parameters of sustainability and travel intermediaries in the context of iconic tourist circuit of Indian tourism i.e. the Golden Triangle. A detailed discussion of area of study is done in the following chapter.

2.6 CONCLUSION

Sustainable tourism development occupies centre stage in the present century. The declaration of year 2017 as International year of Sustainable Tourism for development clearly underlines this fact. Since late 1990s to attain sustainable development through tourism the focus of research has shifted to stakeholders. As discussed above among all the stakeholders, the travel intermediaries have the most crucial role to play on account of their positioning in the travel distribution chain. The present study is a contribution in the same direction as it focuses on the role of travel intermediaries operating in the Golden Triangle to make Indian tourism move on the path of sustainable development. The following chapter discusses in detail the research methodology underlying the present research work which adopts a mixed-method research approach.
REFERENCES


