

Abstract

In today's world, being sustainable is not just a trend but also essential for future generations. Once recognized, the consequences of global warming cannot be overseen and it is vital that society realizes and understands the problems that will occur. As we all know nature and all its resources were, are and always will be necessary for life itself. Should the world not understand the urgent need for change, then the problems of rising temperatures, swelling sea levels, the decrease in fresh water supplies, the devastation of land and the loss of marine biodiversity could not be solved in a motivated, calculated and accurate way. As the world's population continues to grow, the necessity of land and all of its resources and raw materials are becoming an ever-growing and inevitable concern. Perhaps the biggest consequence is the outcome of small islands and how the loss of land will affect those living on them. This paper studies the various impacts that pose significant risks to small islands, illustrated by the example of the Maldives. The country's economy is heavily dependent on its tourism activities and fisheries. However, there are many hidden consequences of tourism on the island, especially when it comes to ecotourism, as it relies on the fragile, unspoiled and undisturbed natural landscape. Hence, there is a disagreement, whether tourism is beneficial or harmful to the Maldives. The lack of robustness to resist human induced and natural environmental damages, which are caused by tourism development and climate change impacts, are one of the key challenges the archipelago is facing. Moreover, not only do these environmental damages cause destruction of the ecosystem, but also the construction of numerous tourism resorts on the islands and coastal structures are manipulating the main asset of the archipelago, which is the reef system (Karthikheyan, 2012, p.345). Therefore it is obvious that tourism is a double-edged sword, which needs to be well thought through and well planned. This study evaluates if the Maldives will have the possibilities to manage the increasing tourism in future while facing the threats of global warming. For this reason, an expert interview was conducted and literature extensively reviewed in order to gather factual information about the situation the Maldives is facing. Results revealed that there are various possibilities to support sustainable tourism and make the destination more resistant to global warming, by

differentiating between hard and soft measures. The findings add to the understanding of a very complex phenomenon, which may guide further research.