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The Perspectives of Government and the Tourism Industry on the Concept of Sustainable Tourism in Fiji

by

Anshu Mala

A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts

Department of Tourism and Hospitality
The University of the South Pacific

November 2006

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Declaration of Originality

I declare that this thesis is my own work and that, to the best of my knowledge, it contains no material previously published, or substantially overlapping with material submitted for the award of any other degree at any institution, except where due acknowledgment is made in the text.

Signature

........................................
Anshu Mala
(8 November 2006)
Acknowledgement

To begin with, all praise and thanks to the Lord of all beings.

Writing this thesis has been a voyage of intellectual discovery for me. During this journey, I have met many interesting people who have contributed ideas, reactions and comments, as well as considerable professional support. I would like to thank the many people — the Fiji tourism industry operators and the government officials whose participation in this study has contributed to the completion of this thesis.

More particularly, I owe much to Dr Stephen Doorne, my supervisor who challenged me to clarify, rethink some sections of this thesis, for his careful reading of the manuscript, constructive criticisms and on time feedback on the thesis. I am indebted to the EU Scholarship Committee for giving me such a wonderful opportunity to continue with postgraduate studies, which has been my dream since childhood.

My sincere acknowledgement to the respondents for their precious time allocated to provide me with data for this study. I am profoundly grateful to Ms Barbara Hau'ofa who has helped me to produce a quality output of my work by providing her professional assistance in editing my thesis.

My special thanks to my very dear friends Fozia Nisha, Jashwini Narayan, Salana Kalu, Sarika Singh, Sashi Singh and Alka Ashwini for their support and encouragement during this time. Thank you friends for your generosity with the time and resources plus sharing your personal visions that sustained me throughout the research process.

Finally, I am very grateful to my parents/family for believing in me. Thanks mum for all that you have done for me during this time and as always. My special thanks to Mrs Indu Chandra, my high school Hindi teacher and now a good friend, for her encouragement and support throughout. There are many people to thank for their support, guidance, and encouragement during my studies. Space, time, and memory prevent me from mentioning all of the individuals; however, my extended gratitude to all, whose visions and willingness to help sustained me throughout research process.
Dedication

This thesis is dedicated to my loving family.

To my parents - Mr and Mrs Dhirendra Tota Ram, brothers - Avishesh and Vinay, sister - Monita and Aji. You all have contributed a great support towards completion of this work, without which it could never have been possible. I am blessed with such a caring and loving family.

Finally, to my late grandfather, Mr Tota Ram, who always had a dream to see me with this achievement.
Abstract

Sustainability in tourism, which has emerged as a derivative of sustainable development, demands particular scrutiny in developing countries given the exponential growth of global tourism to the ‘pleasure periphery’ in recent decades. Despite this imperative, the articulation of sustainability in developing countries remains vague. The focus of this study is to identify the issues surrounding the divergent interpretations and discourses of sustainability in tourism in the developing country context of Fiji. This research focuses on the way in which sustainable tourism is understood and practised within the government and tourism industry sectors of Fiji using the framework of Swarbrooke’s (1999) integrated ‘dimensions’ of sustainability in tourism. The findings of this study indicate that there is a distinct dislocation of perspective between the tourism industry and the government with respect to the implementation of sustainable tourism and that achieving consensual ownership of the concept would greatly enhance the development of sustainable tourism in the future of tourism development in Fiji.
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<tr>
<td>CCC</td>
<td>Coral Cay Conservation</td>
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<td>CSD</td>
<td>Commission on Sustainable Development</td>
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<td>CVM</td>
<td>Contingent Valuation Method</td>
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<td>DOCH</td>
<td>Department of Culture &amp; Heritage</td>
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<td>Department of Environment</td>
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<td>EIA</td>
<td>Environmental Impact Assessment</td>
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<td>EMA</td>
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<td>EMB</td>
<td>Environmental Management Bill</td>
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<td>FAB</td>
<td>Fijian Affairs Board</td>
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<td>Fiji Islands Backpackers Association</td>
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<td>FLMMA</td>
<td>Fiji Locally Managed Marine Areas</td>
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<td>Fiji Trade and Investment Board</td>
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<td>FVB</td>
<td>Fiji Visitors Bureau</td>
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<td>GDP</td>
<td>Gross Domestic Product</td>
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<td>GNP</td>
<td>Gross National Product</td>
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<td>IAS</td>
<td>Institute of Applied Science</td>
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<td>ICM</td>
<td>Integrated Coastal Management</td>
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<td>NTC</td>
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<td>PATA</td>
<td>Pacific Asia Travel Association</td>
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<td>PCDF</td>
<td>Partners in Community Development Fiji</td>
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<td>PIFS</td>
<td>Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat</td>
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<td>SDP</td>
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<td>SEA</td>
<td>Strategic Environmental Assessment</td>
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<td>SPC</td>
<td>Secretariat of the Pacific Community</td>
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<td>SOFTA</td>
<td>Society of Fiji Travel Association</td>
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<td>SMEs</td>
<td>Small and Medium Enterprises</td>
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<td>TDP</td>
<td>Tourism Development Plan 1998–2005</td>
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<td>TPAF</td>
<td>Training and Productivity Authority of Fiji</td>
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<td>TRO</td>
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<td>TROA</td>
<td>Tourism Resource Owners Association</td>
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<td>TROC</td>
<td>Tourism Resource Owners Conference</td>
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<td>UNEP</td>
<td>United Nations Environment Programme</td>
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<td>UNESCO</td>
<td>United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organisation</td>
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<tr>
<td>WCED</td>
<td>World Commission on Environment Development</td>
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<td>WIPO</td>
<td>World Intellectual Property Organisation</td>
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<td>WTO</td>
<td>World Tourism Organisation</td>
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<tr>
<td>WTTC</td>
<td>World Travel and Tourism Council</td>
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<td>WWF</td>
<td>World Wild Fund for Nature</td>
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A Poem

The Finance Minister said
“It will boost the Economy
The dollars will flow in.”

The Minister of Interior said
“It will provide full
and varied employment
for all the indigenous.”

The Minister of Culture said
“it will enrich our life…
contact with other cultures
must surely
Improve the texture of living.”

The man from Hilton said
“We will make you a second Paradise;
for you it is the dawn
of a glorious new beginning!”

When the tourists flew in
our island people
metamorphosed into
a grotesque carnival
- a two-week sideshow

When the tourists flew in
Our men put aside
Their fishing nets
To become waiters
Our women became whores

When the tourists flew in
what culture we had went out the window
we traded our customs
for sunglasses and pop
we turned sacred ceremonies
into ten-cent peep shows

When the tourists flew in
local food became scarce
prices went up
but our wages stayed low
When the tourists flew in
we could no longer
go down to our beaches
the hotel manager said
“Natives defile the sea-shore”

when the tourists flew in
the hunger and the squalor
were preserved
as a passing pageant
for clicking cameras
- a chic eye sore

When the tourists flew in
we were asked
to be “side-walk ambassadors”
to stay smiling and polite
to always guide
the “lost” visitor…
Hell, if we could only tell them
where we really want them to go!

(Cecil Rajendra, quoted in Haley and Haley, 1997: 595)
1.0 Background to the Research

World tourism in recent decades has made a considerable contribution to the development of world economies. On one hand, the positive relation with the tourism industry prevails with benefits of concurrent visitor receipts and employment opportunities to skilled and unskilled workers while on the other side, the industry has been condemned for the resources used to accommodate the visitor needs to date. The concern is not only limited to the use of resources to meet visitor demands, however; the world economies have also been suffering from the negative impacts of tourism on the destination regions with respect to economic, socio-cultural and environmental aspects.

One of the ways to address the negativities of the tourism industry, alternative tourism, has been adopted under the broad banner of sustainable tourism. The emergence of the sustainable tourism concept can be applied to all types and scales of tourism, and from generating to destination regions, it has become pivotal worldwide either as part of tourism policies, plans or legislation. However, the dilemma of sustainable tourism still lies at its conceptual level, where according to academics it lacks clarity in its meaning. The confusion at the theoretical level of sustainable tourism has further intensified to the practical level. According to Mowforth and Munt (2003) sustainable tourism is a concept charged with power that is defined, interpreted and imagined differently among individuals, organisations and social groups; therefore, it is a ‘socially-constructed’ concept and often reflects the interests of those involved.

In his case study paper at Third Global Conference for the International Institute for Peace through Tourism, Richard Evanson, the Owner and Managing Director of Turtle Island, Fiji, highlighted that “the definition of sustainable tourism is still maturing”. He further expressed that “…if the [sustainable tourism development] programs I have spent the past 30 years or so implementing at my resort are only significant to me, yet hold no importance with our key stakeholders (namely, the local community,
international guests, staff, the industry and government bodies within Fiji), then at the end of the day, my efforts are wasted” (Evanson, nd).

According to Gee and Fayos-Sola (1997: 136) “the very success of sustainability as a concept belies, perhaps, some confusion as to exactly what sustainability is and what it involves. That is to say, if everyone is jumping on the sustainable bandwagon, might that not indicate that we are all seeing it as what we want to see, and not necessarily what is actually there”. According to McCool (2006: 316) “definitions help communicate ideas and concepts by clearly specifying the underlying meaning of the term”.

However, noting from the earlier discussions that it is a mere fact that the term sustainable tourism does not have a universal definition, that it is still evolving, perhaps it is appropriate to research how the term sustainable tourism is perceived instead of how it is defined by the tourism stakeholders. However, the main research questions that this study will answer revolve around whether there is a need for a working definition of sustainable tourism in Fiji and if so, why the need exists.

The study aims to describe and compare the perceptions of government and the tourism industry on sustainable tourism development in Fiji at both theoretical and practical levels. No research has been conducted in Fiji to find how the identified stakeholder groups of the tourism sector in Fiji actually perceive the term sustainable tourism development. The term has been used in many documents such as the Fiji Tourism Development Plan 1998–2005 (TDP), the Corporate Plan of the Ministry of Tourism 2003–2005 and Fiji’s Strategic Development Plan 2003–2005 (SDP). However, these documents fall short of providing a meaningful working definition for sustainable tourism development. This is to say that sustainable tourism is not only part of the discourse of the tourism industry but is at the same time incoherent.

It is important to note that the study does not aim to measure quantifiable take-up rates of sustainable tourism practices, nor does it aim to compare different sectors of the
tourism industry. Instead, what is offered is a case study of Fiji, which is used to examine the practical issues, which to some extent can also help to identify sustainable tourism interpretation by the stakeholder groups on the assumption that theory helps shape practice. Hence, the concern of this study is on these theories, which have helped shape practice. These findings will give an indication as to how sustainable tourism is interpreted in Fiji, with the identification of some common and conflicting areas of the interpretation, with a further discussion on some factors contributing to their interpretations. A conclusion will be drawn from the discussion to answer the identified research questions of this thesis; hence contributing to the overall sustainable tourism literature. Finally, recommendations and further research areas will be highlighted based on the conclusion made to the study. The following section will elaborate on the justification of conducting this research.

### 1.1 Justification for the Research

The meaning of sustainable tourism development can be generalised through the sustainable tourism indicators that have been developed by international organisations such as World Tourism Organisation and other national governments. These indicators identify what should be sustained and offer chains of command to achieve it. In addition, these indicators have a quantitative feature allowing sustainable tourism dimensions to be measured and monitored over a period of time.

However, the contexts in which these indicators have been designed are not specific to Fiji. Fiji is considered a developing country, in contrast to the developed countries where these indicators have largely been framed (Mowforth and Munt, 2003). These developed nations differ from developing nations in a range of areas such as economic situations, socio-cultural aspects, political issues and environmental concerns. Such place-based factors had an enormous impact on the development of these sustainable tourism development indicators.
Cvetko (2002) supports the idea that a sustainable tourism project in India will no doubt vary from one in Vanuatu because of social and cultural parameters, although some common denominators will still exist. It is important that we apply solutions that fit the social and cultural parameters of the relevant community or society. An appropriate process in one community may not lead to the same results when implemented in another. If this is clearly the case, are we not then talking about two different sustainable tourism developments that would require in some way identification of different points in any definition?

This discussion not only applies for sustainable tourism indicators but to the overall interpretation of the concept as well. It is not realistic to expect that everybody will agree to one definition or will think the same way; however, there are possibilities for their views to intersect at some point. Hence, this study aims to identify these intersections, in other words, the commonalities in their interpretations that can help to facilitate the development of a working definition of sustainable tourism to suit the Fiji context.

Twining-Ward and Tuilemalefua (2004) argued that there has been a consistent failure to pay more than lip service to participant stakeholder involvement and place-based approaches when addressing tourism issues. It is important to note that the results obtained from stakeholder participation advocate rationality and are core rather than peripheral to the management of the tourism industry as a whole.

In addition, calls of more research on the topic have been made by tourism academics as they feel there are areas that need to be unfolded to another level and depth. Butler, for example, insists that a conclusion cannot be made that sufficient work has been done in this area and neither can it be said the central questions have been answered. He states that:

a key problem, in my mind, is the current inability to define to the satisfaction of all, or even most, of the stakeholders in tourism, exactly what is meant by
‘sustainable tourism’; . . . in other words, to operationalise the concept and evaluate it in operation – find ways to ensure the necessary policies and actions are acceptable to all stakeholders in tourism . . . this remains a major problem and, because ambiguity exists, almost any form of tourism can, and often is, termed sustainable. (1999: 19–20).

Therefore, this study aims to fill the gaps in sustainable tourism research as identified by Twining-Ward and Tuailemafua (2004) and Butler (1999) by involving the two important stakeholder groups of the tourism industry and investigating how the place-based factors contribute to their interpretation of sustainable tourism in Fiji.

1.2 Research Questions

This study is guided by the following questions:

- How is ‘sustainable tourism’ understood in Fiji especially at the level where sustainable tourism policies are formulated (government) and the level where it is implemented (tourism industry)?

- Does the conceptualisation of sustainable tourism create a need for a working definition of sustainable tourism in Fiji and if so, why?

1.3 Objectives

The objectives of this thesis are divided into two sections. The first section outlines the broad while the second section the specific objectives of this study.

1.3.1 Broad Objective

To describe and compare the perceptions on sustainable tourism development held by the two major stakeholder groups, the government and the tourism industry in Fiji
1.3.2 Specific Objectives

- To discuss the conceptual framework and the underlying debates of sustainable tourism development
- To discuss the theoretical interpretation of sustainable tourism development by the two identified stakeholder groups
- To discuss the practical interpretation of sustainable tourism development by identifying some of the sustainable tourism principles practised by the identified stakeholder groups
- To identify the common areas used in the interpretation of sustainable tourism by the two stakeholder groups
- To identify the conflicting areas used in the interpretation of sustainable tourism by the two stakeholder groups
- To identify some of the factors that contribute to the interpretation of sustainable tourism by the two stakeholder groups

1.4 Methodology

This research overlays the interpretive paradigm, which according to Jennings (2000) is a socially-constructed reality. It is subjective in nature, meaning what sustainable tourism means to one person or group might not be the same as what it means to the other. The predominant approach to this study is therefore qualitative, where results are presented and analysed using texts; however, quantitative data has been used to discuss tourism trends and some of the findings to indicate ‘how many said what’ about the phenomenon under this study. Both primary and secondary data are used to collect information to meet the objectives of this study. The primary data collection was done via in-depth interviews with the two study groups: government agencies and the tourism industry operators. Secondary data sources included documents, library resources and publications (See Chapter 4 for an in-depth discussion of methodology).

1.5 Delimitations of scope and key assumptions, with their justifications

The problem identified in this thesis can be researched at an international level, as tourism literature makes it evident that sustainable tourism development lacks a
universal conceptualisation and is open to various interpretations by different stakeholder groups. The nature of problem has an option for a comparative study between two or more countries and among different stakeholder groups (government, tourism industry, local communities, training and educational centres, tourists and media). There is also scope for comparative study of stakeholder sub-groups, for example, comparing views of government at national level to local level, or comparing opinions of top end accommodation operators to middle range and budget operators.

It should also be taken into consideration that tourism is not a ‘stand-alone’ industry; rather it comprises various sectors such as accommodation, transport, tour operators, travel agents and attractions. Not only does it limit its boundaries to sectors but also has links with other industries such as agriculture, manufacturing and fishing. Furthermore, some sectors and industries link up directly with the tourism industry whereas others link indirectly benefiting from the industry through trickle down effects. The time and resources allocated for this research will not allow it to accommodate the complex nature and structure of tourism; hence, the scope of this study has been delimited to the Fiji context.

According to Perry (2002) delimitations of scope ‘build a fence’ around the research findings. Therefore, the scope of this thesis limits itself to Fiji as a case study. Within Fiji, the study will focus on two main stakeholder groups, the government and the industry, and only on major tourism destinations (Coral Coast, Nadi, Mamanucas, Yasawas and Savusavu). A further breakdown on sample selection will be discussed in the Methodology Chapter (see Chapter 4). The key assumption made in this research is that any tourism association in the identified tourism regions represents all the operators in that particular destination. For example, the president of Nadi Fiji Hotel Association is representative of all those operators who are part of this body. The focus of the study is the tourism industry and all the sectors that are directly linked to tourism. The respondents are limited to the executives (general managers most preferred).
1.6 Usefulness of the Study
This study goes beyond definitions and seeks to discover the actions undertaken by the stakeholders in Fiji to achieve a sustainable tourism industry. This will contribute to two areas. Firstly, it will indicate their understanding of sustainable tourism development and secondly, it will show how they are able to translate their theoretical understanding of the term into practice with the available resources, time and the geographical location. This will give an idea of the current manageable sustainable tourism practices in Fiji. In addition, it will assist regulators and national bodies in making decisions on awareness programmes needed on sustainable tourism development in Fiji. Furthermore, it will help policymakers to identify the improvements needed in their current tourism strategies and policies to achieve a sustainable tourism industry. Because there are outstanding needs to assess progress towards sustainability, this study will help to ensure that problems are framed in useful ways, and by examining different interpretations will bring out important issues that can further help in selecting sustainable tourism indicators for Fiji.

1.7 Organisation of the Thesis
This chapter lays the foundations for the thesis. It presents a background to the research problem, raises some important research questions and highlights the objectives of the study. Justification of the research is discussed, followed by the outline of the chapters.

Chapter 2 will present the theoretical framework of sustainable tourism by discussing the relevant theories and debates. It will articulate the historical background of the term sustainable tourism, the rationale for sustainable tourism to remain a debateable concept and the conceptualisation of sustainable tourism using the various dimensions of sustainability: environmental, economic, socio-cultural and political. In addition, this chapter highlights some sustainable tourism critiques and some findings of similar studies.

Chapter 3 will discuss the local context in detail by providing the background to the study area, which is Fiji. This chapter will discuss how the global problem of the
ambiguity in the meaning of the term sustainable tourism (international level) manifests in the tourism industry in Fiji (local level). It will give a brief overview of Fiji and its tourism industry. Furthermore, it will discuss tourism development in Fiji, its impacts and the need for sustainable tourism development in Fiji.

Chapter 4 will articulate the research methodology and methods adopted in this study with consideration to the study context and the nature of the problem identified for this research. This chapter highlights the philosophical assumption of this study, the use of both qualitative and quantitative approaches, primary and secondary data collection techniques, brief overview of the research context, and population and sampling details used for this study. A sample selection breakdown is given by providing a definition of the selected stakeholder groups—the government and the tourism industry, further discussing the sample selection and data collection from each group. This chapter will also highlight some ethical measures taken while conducting this research, articulate some of the limitations of the study, discuss data reliability and validity issues and highlight the data analysis technique that will be used in this study.

Chapter 5 will present the findings of this study, which includes the theoretical and practical interpretation of the term sustainable tourism by the government and the tourism industry in Fiji. The four sustainability dimensions (see Chapter 2) will be used to discuss the practical interpretation of the concept.

Chapter 6 will summarise the key findings of this study and relate them to the theories discussed in Chapter 2. A model has been developed from the findings of this study, which will be used as a framework to facilitate the discussion in this chapter. A comparison to the results from both stakeholder groups will be made under the theoretical and practical interpretations of sustainable tourism with reference to relevant theories where necessary. This chapter will also analyse and interpret some of the common and conflicting aspects in the interpretation of the term (at both theoretical and practical levels) by the government and the tourism industry. Furthermore, it will
highlight some of the factors that contribute to the interpretation of the term by the respective groups.

Chapter 7 will ensure that the research question has been answered by meeting all the objectives identified in this study. This will be done through summarising all the preceding chapters in this thesis. To begin with, it will revisit the motivation for the research and objectives set, review literature of sustainable tourism and the main issues which emerged, review the research approach and its relevance to the study, review the key findings, discuss the relationship of these findings to the theory and make the concluding comments from the analysis and interpretations of the results. In addition, it will identify the strengths and weaknesses of this study, suggest further research issues and make recommendations based on findings from this study.
CHAPTER 2

Literature Review: The Theoretical Framework of Sustainable Tourism

“Take nothing but photographs,
Kill nothing but time,
Leave nothing but footprints”

2.0 Introduction
Chapter 1 provided an overview of this thesis and introduced some key theoretical perspectives on sustainable tourism and sustainable development. This chapter expands on the theoretical framework of sustainable tourism development and presents an in-depth discussion on the theoretical debates underpinning the phenomenon under study. This chapter is divided into five sections. The first section will discuss the historical background of sustainable tourism; the second, the rationale for sustainable tourism to remain a debateable concept. The third section articulates the four sustainability dimensions, which is the most commonly used and trusted framework for conceptualising sustainable tourism in the tourism literature. The fourth section highlights some of the critiques presented on the concept of sustainable tourism, at both theoretical as well as a practical level; and the last section articulates results of some similar studies conducted in other parts of the world.

2.1 Historical Background of Sustainable Tourism
Sustainable tourism became a buzzword for the 1990s, gaining popularity in tourism literature and assuming pride of place in the goal and mission statements of government policies and plans (Sharpley, 2000). Although, its prominent usage has been worldwide in various documents and seminars, sustainable tourism lacks a universal conceptualisation. It is a highly debatable concept, open to various interpretations not least by the stakeholders in the tourism industry. This is where the dilemma lies, where sustainable tourism falls short of an agreed definition (Garrod and Fyall, 1998). Critics argue that the people who hold a stake in the industry must understand sustainable tourism as a concept. The risk otherwise is that sustainable tourism will never be a
reality in terms of its practices; it will remain mere rhetoric forever (Hardy and Beeton, 2001).

To understand the theoretical arguments that underlie sustainable tourism development requires examination of the seeds of its fundamental issues sowed during its evolution. Sustainable tourism evolved from its antecedent, sustainable development, which resulted from integrating environmental concerns to economic theory as an alternative development (Hardy et al., 2002; Hardy and Beeton, 2001; Sharpley, 2000; Swarbrooke, 1999; Butler, 1998; Hunter, 1997; 1995; Bramwell and Lane, 1993). The root of sustainable development has been traced back to the 18th century (Hall, 1998). Sustainable practices were apparent in the many conservation and planning attitudes of western society. Sustainability was evident in the application of traditional farming methods and the still living example is the architecture of buildings constructed during those eras (Swarbrooke, 1999).

In addition, Davis (2003) have highlighted in the literature that sustainability was initially practised in the forestry sector by practising the ideology ‘cut one, plant another’. They elaborated that in Europe, deforestation was becoming an issue of the era because their economy’s heavily reliance on wood products such as for building homes, manufacturing furniture and fixtures and most important of all, preventing flooding in Europe.

During the romantic era of the late 1700s, “the western ideal of nature was one in which there was an ordered and cultivated landscape in which wild nature was controlled and the boundaries of the wilderness made apparent” and their belief was that “science was inadequate to explain the entire phenomenon with which man was confronted” (Hall, 1998: 14–15). Romantics valued spirituality over materialism and with respect to this attitude, man was regarded as part of nature and not superior to it (Hall, 1998). The year 1832 marked the declaration of the first natural reserve in the United States for medicinal purposes. However, it is important to note that the declaration of the first national park and conservation reserve was due to tourism. An increase in publicity of
national parks and automobile provision to these parks led to a failure of park as construction of roads within parks was seen as a contradiction to its reason to be preserved in its natural state.

In 1798 Thomas Malthus prophesied in his *Essay on the Principle of Population* that population, if not controlled, will increase at an exponential rate (i.e. 2, 4, 8, 16, 32, 64, 128 etc.), whereas the food supply will grow at an arithmetic rate (i.e. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 etc.), resulting in shortage in food supply over the years. His prediction had a considerable influence on the world economy. With a growth in population over time, demand for food exceeded supply. In order to meet up excess demand, industrialisation took over countries in terms of their economy, society and environment during the 1850s (Swarbrooke, 1999). This was seen as a cutting edge in many of the developed countries through making a positive contribution to the countries in terms of economic growth measured using Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and Gross National Product (GNP). However, the negative impacts emerged largely as a consequence of the over-consumption of natural resources.

The publication of Marsh’s book, *Man and Nature; or Physical Geography as Modified by Human Action*, in 1864, highlighted the issue that mankind was destroying nature and a balance should be maintained on its consumption and renewal (see Hall, 1998). Other books published on similar themes were *Silent Spring* by Carson in 1962, *The Tragedy of the Commons in Science* in 1969 by Garrett Hardin and *Limits to Growth* by Meadows and Meadows in 1972 (see Butler, 1998). The establishment of organisations such as the World Conservation Union in the 1940s, the declaration of the International Geophysical year in the mid-1950s and formation of the World Wide Fund for Conservation in 1961 make it apparent that environmental issues were beginning to be addressed at a global scale. Though a conservation vision was gathering momentum over the years, economic growth was more highly valued.

Economic models (e.g. Rostow, 1960) were developed to show the transition developing countries would go through, predicting five stages (traditional societies,
preconditions to take-off, take-off, drive to maturity and finally age of high mass consumption) when aiming for growth. Although industrialisation increased the output or production of the country, world resources are threatened by reckless exploitation. Consequently, this has led to social problems such as poverty and inequality. One of the factors contributing to the failure of economic models as such was their emphasis on developing countries, which will never reach that stage; another was the model’s inability to account for the ecological impacts of growth (Sharpley, 2000). Hence, there was a need for alternative growth—sustainable growth. In 1966, Kenneth Boulding (see Hardy et al., 2002) proposed that environment and economics should be converged to achieve sustainable growth.

Environmental consciousness remained apparent in the literature on sustainable development through publications and formation of NGOs with particular interest in environmental concerns. Sustainability began to be the topic of conferences and meetings. The United Nations Conference on the Human Environment in 1972 was the first international meeting to discuss human impacts on the environment. This Stockholm Declaration highlighted problems with pollution, consumption of resources, environmental impacts, danger to species and enhancing human social well-being. In 1973, publication of Ernst Schumacher’s Small is Beautiful challenged the traditional large size of organisations. He claims that larger organisations are more threat to the environment; on the other hand, he argues, smaller operations, local labour and resources with communal ownership can enhance efficiency and minimise the activity’s environmental impacts.

The first report to discuss sustainable development publicly was the World Conservation Strategy published in 1980 by the International Union for the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources. In 1984, the International Conference on Environment and Economics reinforced that in order to achieve sustainable growth, economics has to marry its environment, that is, there is a need for their convergence. This was followed by the publication of Our Common Future, also known as the Brundtland Report, in 1987 by World Commission on Environment and Development.
This report reiterates the principles of the 1972 Stockholm Convention, interweaving the social, economic, cultural, and environmental issues, and addressing global problems by recommending concepts such as carrying capacity and sustainable yield to minimise the negative impacts (Cruz, 2003). The term sustainable development gained its popularity through this report and the term gained wider acceptance among various stakeholders at different levels.

The following are some of the definitions of sustainable development in the literature:

- The ability of humanity to ensure that it meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. Sustainable development is not a fixed state of harmony, but rather a process of change in which the exploitation of resources, the direction of investments, the orientation of technological development and institutional changes are made consistent with future as well as present needs (WCED, 1987)

- The lessons of ecology can, and should be applied to economic processes. It encompasses the ideas in the World Conservation Strategy, providing an environmental rationale through which the claims of development to improve the quality of (all) life can be challenged and tested (Redclift, 1987)

- Improving the quality of human life while living within the carrying capacity of supporting ecosystems (IUCN, UNEP, and WWF, 1991)

- A sustainable society is one that can persist over generations, one that is far-seeing enough, flexible enough, and wise enough not to undermine either its physical or its social systems of support (Meadows et al. 1992)

However, the major limitation outlined was that there was no mention on the implementation part of the concept. In 1992, as a result of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development or the Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro, sustainable development was addressed in a meticulous manner, embodied in two important documents: the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development, and Agenda 21: Program of Action for Sustainable Development (Jamieson, 1997). Though Agenda 21 addressed the comprehensive scope of sustainable development, there is no
mention of sustainability in the tourism sector despite the ubiquity of this sector in the mid-1980s (Weaver, 2004; Gee and Fayos-Sola, 1997), though ecotourism was mentioned under the forestry planning and management in Chapter 11 (Hardy et al., 2002).

The first world conference on sustainable tourism was held in Lanzarote, Spain in 1995. It adopted the Charter for Sustainable Tourism, which laid 18 principles as a basis for tourism management to achieve sustainable development as a global strategy (Perez-Salom, 2001; Cruz, 2003). In 1997, Agenda 21 for the Travel and Tourism Industry: Towards Environmentally Sustainable Development was published by World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC), World Tourism Organisation (WTO) and Earth Council. This document addresses the question of achieving sustainable development in the context of tourism, in line with the principles of the Brundtland Report and Agenda 21. At the regional level, as a result of Asia-Pacific Ministers Conference on Tourism and Environment on Sustainable Tourism in 1997, the Malé Declaration on Sustainable Tourism was published having a similar approach to the relationship between sustainable development and the tourism industry (Perez-Salom, 2001). In 1997, the UN General Assembly reviewed the implementation of Agenda 21 and recommended a Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD).

Following the mandates of the Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21 and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) Governing Council, the CSD agenda, in its seventh session (CSD-7), made the first representation of tourism in relation to sustainable development. Sustainable tourism saw its practical side through Best Practice Accreditation programmes such as Green Globe, which addressed the triple bottom line of sustainability (economic, environment and socio-cultural), though environment was again addressed as the core element of the programme. Many industry operators have shown great interest in the programme and by February 1999, there were some 500 members in 88 countries.
Declaration of the International Year of Ecotourism 2002 marked a special year for sustainable tourism. In addition, in September 2002 the UN World Summit on Sustainable Development (Rio+10), in Johannesburg, South Africa identified poverty as the cause of all social problems and environmental degradation, hence suggesting policies on achieving sustainable development, considering the changes since the Earth Summit in 1992. The major document published was the Plan of Implementation, outlining commitments and actions made to address world biodiversity issues, including timelines and targets to be attained by 2010. According to UNEP (2002) sustainable tourism has been specifically referred to in two chapters in the Plan of Implementation, which was one of the major publications from this summit:

- Chapter 41 discusses the promotion of sustainable tourism development as a means to increase the benefits from tourism resources for the population in host communities while maintaining the cultural and environmental integrity of the host communities and enhancing the protection of ecologically sensitive areas and natural heritages
- Chapter 64 calls for support of Africa’s efforts to attain sustainable tourism that contributes to social, economic and infrastructure development through a variety of measures.

Over time, sustainable tourism gained formal recognition with the subsequent launching of the Sustainable Tourism – Elimination of Poverty (ST-EP) initiative by WTO, where tourism is also seen as a tool for poverty elimination (Weaver, 2004). Moreover, the amount of research on sustainable tourism has continued to increase since the 1990s, becoming a more central idea of the knowledge based platform (see Jafari, 1989); hence it has gained official recognition or ‘institutionalisation’ in organisations both internal and external to the tourism sector (Weaver, 2006). External (non-tourism) organisations include the United Nations, the European Union, the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development and Asia Pacific Economic Co-operation. The establishment of internal (tourism-related) organisations such as the WTO, WTTC, and Pacific Asia Travel Association (PATA) has also helped to boost the popularity of the concept of “sustainable development” within the tourism industry.
According to the WTO (2004), “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.

Thus, sustainable tourism should:

1) Make optimal use of environmental resources that constitute a key element in tourism development, maintaining essential ecological processes and helping to conserve natural heritage and biodiversity.

2) Respect the socio-cultural authenticity of host communities, conserve their built and living cultural heritage and traditional values, and contribute to inter-cultural understanding and tolerance.

3) Ensure viable, long-term economic operations, providing socio-economic benefits to all stakeholders that are fairly distributed, including stable employment and income-earning opportunities and social services to host communities, and contributing to poverty alleviation.

Sustainable tourism development requires the informed participation of all relevant stakeholders, as well as strong political leadership to ensure wide participation and consensus building. Achieving sustainable tourism is a continuous process and it requires constant monitoring of impacts, introducing the necessary preventive and/or corrective measures whenever necessary.

Sustainable tourism should also maintain a high level of tourist satisfaction and ensure a meaningful experience to the tourists, raising their awareness about sustainability issues and promoting sustainable tourism practices amongst them." (WTO, 2004)

Sustainable tourism was adopted as an option for alternative tourism due to the negative consequences of increased growth. It became the buzzword of the 1990s under the adaptancy paradigm of Jafari’s (1989, 1990, 2001 cited in Sharpley, 2000:}
platforms of tourism research theory. The concept searched for more refinements under the knowledge-based platform until the call was made to include sustainability as the fifth paradigm in Jafari’s theory owing to the complexity, popularity and importance of the concept to date (Macbeth, 2005).

In summary, this section of the chapter has shown that sustainable tourism is a borrowed concept and its origins lie in the broader concept—sustainable development. Sustainable tourism as a child concept of sustainable development has inherited features of the parent concept; from broad questions on its conceptualisation to its politicisation and institutionalisation and finally to the subtle questions of its implementation remains unanswered. This section discussed the historical background of sustainable tourism, in other words where exactly its origins lie. The next section will discuss the rationale for the term sustainable tourism not reaching consensus in its meaning to date.

2.2 The Rationale for Sustainable Tourism to Remain a Debatable Concept

Sustainability dimensions have been widely used to conceptualise and practise sustainable tourism. Prior to any further discussion on these dimensions it is important for the reader to know why sustainable tourism has not reached consensus in its meaning. Therefore, the following discussion will briefly elaborate on this before proceeding to the discussion on the dimensions of sustainable tourism.

Various authors in the sustainable tourism literature have given their perceptions on how sustainable tourism should be conceptualised, incorporating justifications for their definitions. As a result of it being variously interpreted, the validity of tourism development to be sustainable lacks clarity or consensus concerning its meaning or objectives (Sharpley, 2000). To date the definition of the term sustainable tourism is still evolving. Butler (1999) claims sustainable tourism as the ‘state of the art of knowledge’. However, the irony remains; the more negotiations and dialogue that takes place to reach a set definition, the more complex the situation gets with more authors providing their opinions. Harrison (1996) calls this a “muddy pool” of debate on
sustainable tourism. These academics in the attempt to prove the precision of their
definition have made the conceptualisation of the term sustainable tourism highly
debatable and open to various interpretations by different groups.

For example, for the supporters of the advocacy platform, it represents continued
tourism growth and intensification, while for supporters of the cautionary and adaptancy
platforms, it often represents alternative tourism and a halt to mass tourism
development (Weaver, 2006). This consensus surrounding the principle is liable to
dissolve once a diverse group of stakeholders begins the process of implementation and
the different strategies and outcomes associated with the attainment of the principle
become apparent.

Butler (1993) concurs with Weaver (2006) by re-emphasising that since the term
sustainable tourism means different things to different people there is a likely chance
that the definition of sustainable tourism will never be accepted universally. As long as
the situation remains as such, Müller (1994) fears the risk of sustainable tourism
becoming an “empty cliché”. For Garrod and Fyall, sustainable tourism has become
something of a “cottage industry” in the academic literature (1998: 199).

Hall added that the wide array of issues underlying sustainable development has made it
an ‘essentially contested concept’, that is, a concept the use and application of which is
inherently a matter of dispute (1998: 13). Macbeth agrees with Hall’s claim and adds
that sustainable development (and by extension sustainable tourism) is a ‘contested
political concept’ (2005: 967). To Jacobs (1999 cited in Macbeth, 2005) this takes place
at two levels of meaning that are obvious in contemporary discourse and debates. At the
first level there is ready agreement on the language but the details and praxis are
contested due to the vocabulary used to define the term. He confirms that it is the
second level where the contest occurs: ‘political argument over how the concept should
be interpreted in practice (ibid: 967).

On the other hand, some of the authors have argued that it is about time that there
should be a movement away from the normative debate and to concentrate on how these
sustainability principles can be implemented in the real world (Bramwell and Lane, 1993; Garrod and Fyall, 1998). However, the dilemma remains how a vague concept such as sustainable tourism can shape practice when those who will be implementing it do not know what it means.

However, there is no doubt that sustainable tourism has a practical side. According to Hardy et al. (2002) people’s perceptions on nature changed with the historical development of the term sustainable tourism, hence resulting in the changes in the economic development and nature of the tourism industry. Therefore, it confirms that sustainable tourism exists in reality; in other words, it can no longer be treated as rhetoric. However, it remains a mere fact that the diversity of theoretical interpretations compounds the diversity of practice.

Furthermore, Ioannides’ (2001) theory, which advocates the shift in stakeholder attitudes towards tourism development and sustainable development in accordance to a destination’s development stage, is another contributing factor for sustainable tourism to remain a contested concept. His use of a longitudinal model (Butler’s Resort Life Cycle) on Mediterranean island destinations highlights an important caveat, where the position of smaller tourism areas on the resort life cycle is not conventional to their main or parent destination. He claims this to be one of the reasons for a single set of top-down comprehensive national or regional policies alone to be impractical throughout the whole country since it takes no account of the characteristics of individual localities. Other authors tend to believe that the high fragmentation of the tourism industry in terms of type and the range of possible environmental impacts has presented a quandary to the common interpretation and widespread acceptance and adoption of the sustainability concept (Hobson and Essex, 2001; Ioannides, 2001).

To conclude this section, the term sustainable tourism is open to various interpretations to its meaning. Some academics have justified for such a feature of the concept owing to its heritance from its antecedent sustainable development, while others have vindicated the high fragmentation of the industry and the shift in attitudes of the
stakeholders in accordance to the destination life cycle as due cause. The former is one of the main contributing factors for the persistence of contest surrounding the term. The following section will give an overview on some of the ways sustainable tourism has been conceptualised in the overall sustainable tourism literature and proceed to discuss sustainable tourism dimensions (also known as the triple bottom line).

2.3 The Conceptualisation of Sustainable Tourism using Sustainability Dimensions

There are different ways that commentators have attempted to conceptualise sustainable tourism development in the literature (Bramwell and Lane, 1993; Butler, 1993; Müller, 1994; Beioley, 1995; Coccossis, 1996; McCool et al., 2001; WTO, 2004). Wheeler (1991) strongly argued that sustainable tourism has to do with the number of tourists while Müller (1994) used the magic pentagon of tourism development, marking economic health, optimum satisfaction of guest requirements, healthy culture, unspoilt nature/protection of resources and subjective well-being on the five angles to illustrate his conceptualisation of sustainable tourism. Clarke (1997) on the other hand, using her proposed framework composed of four positions (polar opposites, continuum, movement and convergence), argued that sustainable tourism is achievable irrespective of the scale (small to large) of any tourism operation.

Overall, there are five ways sustainable tourism has been conceptualised in the overall sustainable tourism literature. First and one of the simplest ways, is the re-engagement of sustainable development to the tourism context. In other words, it is basically applying Brundtland’s definition of sustainable development to the tourism context, where sustainable tourism is consistent with the general aims and requirements of sustainable development (see Butler, 1993; Hunter, 1995; Wall, 1997; Dewhurst and Thomas, 2003).

A second way is through articulating the underpinning principles of sustainability to tourism, and extending its boundaries to develop a coherent set of sustainable tourism indicators (see Mowforth and Munt, 1998; 2003; Swarbrooke, 1999). The advantage of this is that it unfolds the concept from its state as a mere rhetoric to show how
sustainable tourism looks ‘on the ground’ (Swarbrooke, 1999). A third way uses the strong and weak sustainability interpretations as an operational tool for the concept (see Turner et al., 1994; Hunter, 1997; Weaver, 2006). Fourthly, good efforts have been made by simply distinguishing what sustainable tourism is from what it is not (see Krippendorf, 1982). A fifth conceptualisation is the widely recognised ‘dimensions’ of sustainability (Swarbrooke, 1999; Barke and Towner, 2003).

Barke and Towner (2003) and Swarbrooke (1999) have identified that within the literature a broader consensus can be reached to constitute sustainable tourism by recognising the core dimensions of sustainability. Sustainable tourism is seen as a multidimensional concept: environmental, economic, socio-cultural, and political being its dimensions most frequently mentioned in the literature. It is also important to note that some authors have proposed more than these four dimensions. Ko (2003) for example, identified eight dimensions in sustainability assessment: political; economic; socio-cultural; and production structures (the quality of services and products for tourists); while the ecosystem assimilates general environmental impacts; ecosystem quality of water, land and air; biodiversity of flora and fauna; and environmental policy and management. Choi and Sirakaya (2005) have added a technological dimension to the above list, but at the same time they emphasise that most literature on sustainable tourism has focused on the traditional sustainability dimensions (economic, socio-cultural, and environmental).

For the purposes of this study, the discussion will be facilitated using the three traditional dimensions highlighted plus the political dimension, which has been a contemporary area of discussion with the increased debate about sustainable tourism development over the years. The following 3-dimensional model (Figure 2.0) presented by Barke and Towner (2003) will be used as a framework to articulate the discussions on the sustainable tourism dimensions.

Figure 2.0: A Simple Model of Sustainable Tourism
Figure 2.0 illustrates that at the shallow end management of tourism impacts is dealt with at destination level and supports Clarke’s (1997) fourth position (convergence) in her framework on approaches to sustainable tourism, emphasising that sustainable tourism can be achieved at all scales of operation if properly managed. Moving along the spectrum towards the deep end of sustainability, the authors have argued that the whole tourism system is responsible for managing its impacts, integrating the environmental, economic, socio-cultural and political contexts. Time refers to the continuity of tourism.

Barke and Towner (2003) have labelled the dimensions of sustainability as ‘contexts of sustainability’. For this study, the word dimension will be used. There can also be confusion in the order of presenting the dimensions as different authors have used a slightly different order. It should be noted that this does not affect the arguments presented in this study in any way and these are the most commonly used order in literature as shown in Figure 2.0 will be adopted in this study.

Furthermore, in the real world, things are not often presented as black and white; however, they are mostly explained using the grey areas. Hence, the argument is that the dimensions of sustainable tourism development are not independent of each other,
meaning that they interact with each other and according to Swarbrooke (1999) one of the contributing factors to this is the multidisciplinary and multi-sectoral nature of the tourism industry. For discussion purposes, each of these will be discussed separately though their integrative features could be traced in between lines during the discussion.

Some authors have claimed that the environmental dimension has been dominating in the debates of both sustainable development and by extension, the sustainable tourism development literature, while the socio-cultural dimension has been given much less attention (Butler, 1999; Farrell, 1999; Swarbrooke, 1999; Twining-Ward, 1999). Hardy et al. (2002), however, argue that there has been a shift in the way sustainable tourism dimensions have been prioritised over the years as efforts have been made to equalise the weights given to all dimensions. Each dimension of sustainable tourism will now be discussed in more depth.

### 2.3.1. Environmental Dimension

The report to the seventh meeting of the CSD highlighted that tourism is not a ‘white industry’ due to its negative ecological consequences (Leitschuh-Fecht, 1998). However, adding to this is the irony that the tourism industry over the years has shown extreme interest in painting itself with ‘green practices’.

Environmental sustainability often considers the protection of the natural and physical environment (Stabler, 1997); whereas some authors have argued that to achieve sustainable tourism the focus should be given to the broader area ecosystems (Swarbrooke, 1999; Hassan, 2000). The Environment is often considered as the main selling point of tourism destinations. The emergence of concepts such as ‘new traveller’ (Weaver and Opperman, 2000; Mowforth and Munt, 2003) and ‘green consumerism’ (Miller, 2003) has even increased the importance of quality environment.

According to De Villiers (1997) travel for tourists in the past was a novelty, almost an end in itself—i.e. the reason people travelled was to travel, whereby quality of service was relatively unimportant and vacations were an escape from the routine of home and
work with an attitude of a healthy disregard for the environment and the cultures of host countries they visited. However, today the attitudes of tourist demand are changing. Miller (2003) confirms this by asserting that the inseparability of production and consumption in both time and space offers consumers more power to have a major influence towards achieving greater sustainability by the tourism industry. This is evident in his research findings, which reveal that as concerned consumers, they are using environmental, social and economic quality as a foundation for decision making in their day-to-day products and are prepared to take action now. In light of this, he further argues that these consumers are now intent to transfer these buying practices to tourism products, which are beneficial to them not only, but to the wider world they live in.

With respect to the above argument, tourism has often been acknowledged as a rationale for environment protection and conservation. To meet visitor demands, the industry has been part of many environmental initiatives such as being member of accreditation programmes; for example, Green Globe 21 has energy and water saving schemes and part of reduce, reuse, recycle programmes (Swarbrooke, 1999; Welford et al., 1999; Hawkins, 2004).

In addition, Manning and Dougherty (1999) have proposed two emerging environmental management approaches for sustainable tourism. Firstly, they have highlighted the impact assessment approach, in which tools such as Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) are employed to “identify, in advance, factors that either may affect the ability to build desired development, or the factors that will be affected by the proposed activity” (p.7). The other approach is the ecosystem evaluation approach, which establishes the links between environmental attributes and the benefits that are obtained from them.

Another key to sustainability for the tourism industry is to consider the limits or carrying capacities of the environment (Butler, 1997; Mowforth and Munt, 2003). Batta (2000) has expanded on the discussion of carrying capacities in relation to sustainable
tourism development by suggesting that the use of the concept (carrying capacity) gives planners an understanding of environment and quality of experience of guests and hosts, allowing destination areas to absorb tourism before the negative effects begin to bother the hosts. He further argues that carrying capacities are not to be used in a mechanical way to assess tourism impacts; rather, environmental and socio-economic impact assessment should still be carried out as a corresponding action to identify particular impact issues and to ensure verification in carrying capacity analysis.

However, the conservation and preservation efforts of the tourism industry have been criticised for being driven by self-interest in its ideology on economic gains, a tendency to preserve anything and everything, which might not suit today’s living, such as old buildings, and to patch up an already damaged environment through large tourism infrastructure developments (Swarbrooke, 1999). Kousis (2001) calls it a ‘treadmill’ view of sustainability, where the private companies preserve the ecosystem for economic gains instead of considering the needs of future generations in the destination area.

One of the interesting issues highlighted by Briassoulis (1995) is the negative tourism environmental impacts, which he calls the ‘environmental internalities’. He explains that environmental internalities occur where the ‘actions of economic agents belonging to the same industry or sectoral grouping and participating in the production or consumption of the same good alter the quality and quantity of resources needed by other agents in the same group’; meaning tourist activity itself having a negative effect on the environmental resources used for tourism.

Buhalis and Fletcher (1995) have argued that this conflicting nature of the tourism-environment relationship is hard to analyse and the measure of its impacts is just an added complexity. They have specified two main relations as discussed earlier between tourism and environment as the symbiotic relationship and the antagonistic relationship. The former relation advocates that environment is an asset to the tourism industry,
resulting in environmental protection and conservation, while the latter relation deals with the tourism actions resulting in negative consequences for the environment.

Figure 2.1 Locus of Sustainable Environmental Quality with Regard to Visitor Numbers

![Figure 2.1 Locus of Sustainable Environmental Quality with Regard to Visitor Numbers](image)

Visitors: $V$

Environmental Quality: $X$

Source: Johnston and Tyrrell (2005)

Johnston and Tyrrell (2005) highlighted the relation between environmental quality and tourism growth. They have used the relationship shown in Figure 2.1 to illustrate that the increase in visitor numbers causes loss in environmental quality and as environmental quality continues to degrade due to persistent consumption, visitor numbers start to fall.

Hence, in order to focus on environmentally sustainable tourism, proper planning is a pre-requisite. It is emphasised that this issue cannot be easily solved solely within the environmental dimension. Johnston and Tyrrell (2005) have claimed that the tourism industry has to be economically viable in order to be environmentally sustainable. Without funding, environmental projects and initiatives remain impossible missions by any industry. Therefore, the next dimension will elaborate on the economic dimension of sustainable tourism.

**2.3.2. Economic Dimension**
Garrod and Fyall (1998: 199) have claimed that “tourism has been hailed as the potential economic saviour of many countries, but will the unfettered growth of tourism inevitably kill the goose that so many are hoping will lay them a golden egg?” They argue that tourism should not be viewed as any commercial activity without impacts; however, it should be regarded as an extractive industry that transforms environmental resources to be its main industry product on sale for consumers, like any other extractive industry such as mining. There has been a continuing growth in tourism numbers, which is contributing economically, while on the other hand, putting lots of pressure on environmental resources (McKercher, 1993; Garrod and Fyall, 1998).

Figure 2.2: The Trade-Off of Environment Quality for Economic Growth

Source: Wanhill, 1997: xiii

The economic growth and environmental quality component of sustainable tourism are not mutually exclusive events (Wanhill, 1997). Figure 2.2 illustrates that a desire to increase local income and employment, that is, moving from point A to point B, trades off employment/income against environment quality. Point C in the diagram can only be achieved if proper environmental planning is done by changes in technology, which can result in improvement in the quality of environment. A quality environment will help in the continuity of the tourism industry, which will create in more employment for the locals. This proves that sustainable tourism, instead of being given a sector-specific focus, should be remarried to the overall principles of sustainable development to some extent. On the hand, it has been argued that the tourism industry needs economic gains
to carry out environmental initiatives, which to some extent have become a costly affair for many small-medium tourism operations.

International tourism has been a global phenomenon for decades, and as a sector has been acknowledged for its major contribution to world economies in terms of foreign exchange, job opportunities, and improved living conditions, combating poverty, providing revenues to governments, and maintaining forward and backward linkages with local communities. This positive contribution of the industry has strengthened its presence on the international development agenda.

Expenditures of tourists in destinations create new incomes and outputs in the region, which in turn, produce further expenditures and incomes (Mathieson and Wall, 1982), which is known as income multiplier through tourism. The size of the multiplier varies geographically and by industry (Mak, 2004) and is influenced by the internal structure of the economy and the manner in which the injection of tourist expenditures is distributed across its various sectors (Mathieson and Wall, 1982).

Often the developed countries get favourable economic effects from tourism business. The less-developed nations do gain in terms of employment opportunities, income, and improved living quality; however, the economy as a whole undergoes a loss through export and import leakages. The situation where the ownership, control and tourism benefits are ruled by the rich industrialised nations from where tourists originate, is known as export leakages (Lea, 1988). Enclave tourism is an example of export leakage. It is a kind of “internal colonialism” (Mbaiwa, 2002), where tourists remain for their entire stay at the same cruise ship or resort, which provides everything they need and where they will make all their expenditures; little opportunity is left for local people to profit from tourism (Freitag 1994; UNEP, 2002).

Mbaiwa (2005) uses the dependency paradigm to explain the socio-economic impacts of enclave tourism in Okavango Delta, Botswana. His findings reveal that though enclave tourism has its advantages, in stimulating infrastructure for tourists and
generating employment for locals, its disadvantages outweigh the advantages. Furthermore, Shaw and Shaw (1999) have stated that such enclaves are operated by global capital and transnational organisations through a series of spatial networks. These elements of external control have been couched in terms of general core–periphery relationships. These individuals most likely gain control of the local tourism system and are the local elites who, “acting according to their class interests, see to it that they are the main beneficiaries of this new source of wealth” (Lee, 1978: 21 cited in Freitag, 1994: 551).

On the other hand, import leakages take place when goods and services that are not in supply by host countries are imported by hotels and other tourism organisations to meet the demand standards of tourists (Mowforth and Munt, 1998; 2003). For hotels to buy food items from off shore is a common practice of import leakage in the tourism industry and to emphasise again, this has been the result of the multinational operations dominating the tourism industry in most developing states.

In most all-inclusive package tours about 80% of travellers’ expenditures go to the airlines, hotels and other international companies as export leakage, while the average import-related leakage for most developing countries today is between 40% and 50% of gross tourism earnings for small economies and between 10% and 20% for most advanced and diversified economies (UNEP, 2002).

Archer (1997) has strongly argued that economists care about sustainability and have shown concern with the assessment of environmental, economic and socio-cultural consequences of tourism and have proposed new techniques to evaluate these impacts—an extension of input–output analysis and secondly through the cost–benefit analysis. Whichever approach is used to measure sustainability is not an issue of concern. What matters most for sustainable tourism is that tourist spending should be maximised and leakages to be minimised as much as possible so that the local economy is able to benefit. This discussion leads us to the next dimension, which takes care of the interest of these locals as well as the guests.
2.3.3 Socio-Cultural Dimension

The socio-cultural dimension has been given the least focus compared to environmental and economic dimensions despite its development and early definitional focus on subjective well-being and intergenerational equity (Butler, 1999; Hardy et al., 2002). One of the reasons for this could be that the social impacts are realised slowly in any tourism destination though these effects remain with the destination permanently (Robinson, 1999; Swarbrooke, 1999) and another could be the difficulties inherent in studying human behaviour and perceptions (Hardy et al., 2002). For Haley et al. (2005) the economic impact of tourism is more objectively measured and can play a supportive role as an effective tool for forecasting further tourism developments.

Long (1993), however, argues that socially sustainable tourism is important because negative sentiments of the local community can be passed on to the tourists, who may experience harassment, crimes and violence, resulting in fewer visitor arrivals. This process will lead the destinations to experience an apprehensive tourism industry. Under this dimension, tourism is developed in a manner that respects social identity and social capital (community culture and assets), strengthen social cohesiveness and pride that will allow locals to control their own lives, maintain or improve the integrity of the on-site communities and inhabitants, and consider the long term interest of the communities within or near tourism regions (Mathieson and Wall, 1982; Long, 1993; Swarbrooke, 1999; Mowforth and Munt, 2003; Choi and Sirakaya, 2005). Some authors have added visitor satisfaction to the list and have argued that a satisfied customer will bring tacit rewards to the host community due to return trips and helping with positive word of mouth marketing of the destination as mentioned under the economic dimension (Barke and Towner, 2003; WTO, 2004).

Swarbrooke (1999) has best summarised the socio-cultural dimension of sustainable tourism development using the four E’s: equity, equal opportunities, ethics and equal partners. To begin with, equity deals with fair treatment given to all stakeholders involved in the tourism industry, including people at grassroots level, to national government planners to international visitors. Cohen (2002: 273) argues that sustainable
tourism in theory is couched in terms of ‘locals-as-partners’; however, in reality the situation is more like ‘locals-as-users’ in the tourism industry.

Secondly, equal opportunities should be given to the industry employees as to the tourists to enjoy and benefit from the tourism industry. Sustainable tourism is about giving these people an equal chance to the enjoyment of being tourists and having someone else serves them, rather than always being taken for granted for serving others (Swarbrooke, 1999). Employees, on the other hand, should get equal work opportunity to be part of the tourism industry irrespective of age, gender, race and disability. Many empirical studies in tourism literature (Cukier, 2002; Hashimoto, 2002) in relation to gender roles in tourism, especially in developing countries, have indicated that women are mostly confined to unskilled, low paid and low status work in the tourism industry. Hashimoto (2002) claimed that family structures and values get affected where women join the workforce, a noting that tourism business by its nature gives preference to usage of the ‘feminine touch’ or relying on the friendliness of female workers.

Thirdly, ethics deals with fair trade among stakeholders. Godfrey’s (1998) findings from a survey conducted with local government tourism officers in the United Kingdom confirms his argument that in order to achieve sustainable tourism there is a need for better co-ordination and co-operation among the three major stakeholder groups: the private and public sectors and a fair-share partnership with the grassroots level. His study results further revealed that environmental and socio-cultural aspects should be acknowledged more to the short-term economic gains. Walsh et al. (2001) assert that it is the need to distribute resources and opportunities fairly throughout populations and across generations that sets the stage for a fair deal in tourism trade.

Finally, being equal partners deals with the tourists treating those who serve them as fair and not inferior. Lea (1993) has suggested that attention should be given to local ownership and control, and the use of local resources and amenities. Zeppel (1998) highlights examples from various regions in the world (Pacific region, South, Central and Eastern Africa, Australia, New Zealand, Canada, and United States) where the
locals or indigenous people are moving away from being the providers of cultural experiences for the guests and engaging in entrepreneurship of tourism operations or attaining managerial roles in these enterprises, contributing towards a fair distribution of economic gains from tourism businesses. It has been implied that this stakeholder involvement is a form of social equity in sustainable tourism; where those involved with the tourism industry have a fair share of both tourism costs and benefits and take part in decision-making (Walsh et al. 2001; Bramwell and Sherman, 1999; and Burns, 1999).

On one hand, sustainable tourism is privileged for taking good care of the interest of both the hosts and the guests, while on the other, it has been heavily criticised as a misleading concept because of its use as an instrument of power in the struggle over rare and valuable environmental and cultural resources (Cohen, 2002; Harrison, 1996). According to Cohen ‘sustainability’, like the concept of ‘development’ and ‘conservation’, serves as an ‘ideological tool, empowering and legitimising the agents of sustainable tourism development’ (2002: 268). He argued that the newly opened tourist areas in developing countries often enable external agents, whether state agencies or private entrepreneurs, to take control over valuable sites or attractive cultural practices in the name of sustainability, at the exclusion of the local population. The next section will elaborate more on this in discussing the political dimension of the term.

2.3.4 Political Dimension

Many authors in tourism literature have contended that sustainable tourism is a political concept (Pearce, 1993; Hall, 1994; McIntosh et al., 1995 cited in Choi and Sirakaya, 2005) which has resulted from the conflicting interest of “North” and “South” over the paradigm of sustainability concepts, involving power and inequality (Macbeth, 2005). The political dimension of sustainable tourism is concerned with the society’s political system, the extent to which control of tourism development lies within destination or generating regions and the degree to which that control permeates the social structure (Butler, 1993; Pearce, 1993; Hall, 1994; Butler; 1999; Barke and Towner, 2003).
Furthermore, overlapping the socio-cultural dimension of sustainable tourism to some extent, the political dimension incorporates the rights of the residents, including stakeholder collaboration, community participation and leadership, proper regulations, involvement of NGOs and local control over the tourism development process (Choi and Sirakaya, 2005). There have been many studies confirming that tourism development in many destination regions has caused the locals to be deprived of the use of resources, services and facilities in their own country and Cohen’s (2002) study on West Africa is an example of this. He asserted that in West Africa local children never had the opportunity to see the wild animals for which their country is famous, because these are now found only in those wild reserves to which they have no access, not for reasons of colour discrimination, but because of price discrimination.

Cohen (2002) highlighted that the rate of a night’s lodging in such places may be higher than their parents’ yearly income; and although they are the nationals of the very country in which these sites are located, the sites are known to them only via colourful brochures, postcards or from documentaries shown on foreign television channels. This price discrimination was a consequence of sustainability measures of implementing environmental carrying capacities, which allowed access to these wildlife reserve areas only to the elite tourists from the First World countries. Hence, this is a practical example that illustrates the transmission of power from the First World to the Third World context through sustainability principles.

In addition, it has been pointed out by Becker et al. that one of the objectives of the political context of sustainability is to re-negotiate the goals of future sustainable tourism and to establish a system of governance that is able to implement policies moving towards sustainability at all levels (1999 cited in Choi and Sirakaya, 2005). According to Godfrey (1998) tourism should be included in development plans at a local level, where impacts are acute due to face to face linkage, resulting in greater prospective towards real implementation of sustainability guidelines. This has been illustrated in a comparative study by Fallon (2001) on backward linkages of tourism
operators with the locals between two tourism regions, Rowok and Mangsit on the island of Lombok, Indonesia.

The study findings revealed that the sustainability of Rowok’s tourism industry was undermined due to conflict over the use of scarce resources between the tourism developers and the host community. According to the author, lack of democracy was the reason for this conflict (Fallon, 2002). In contrast, the other region, Mangsit, experienced a successful tourism industry based on proactive leadership and interpersonal skills, which helped build a positive affiliation with the adjacent local communities.

As claimed by Owen et al. (1993) sustainable tourism demands strong partnerships within the tourism industry, public sector being the key player, including the private sector and local communities. They added that appropriate practices such as design and control of development, transport planning and management, provision and management of access, soft technology (institutional structures and planning systems), resource management and maintenance, consultation and information services are added features of it. It has been argued that informed participation of all relevant stakeholders helps in tourism business planning, decision making and monitoring; thus ensuring a wider participation and consensus building (Haywood, 1993; WTO, 2004).

Mowforth and Munt (2003) confirming the later argument by Macbeth (2005), asserted that the Third World has been a static receiver of the consensus global trends, of which sustainability is part. They again conformed to the argument that the notion of sustainability is a channel through which power circulates, especially in the Third World context. They suggested that sustainability is ideological in the sense that it is interests of the First World (due to its emergence from the First World) being served or rather enforced upon the Third World. Furthermore, they claimed it to be a discourse, owing to the different perspectives on the concept presented by different stakeholder groups. Consequently, the sustainable tourism concept has become contested, through which power circulates. Finally, the hegemony again relates to the contested feature of
sustainability (as with discourse) but is extended to the continued renewal, re-defining and defending of the term, for example, proposing new ways to holiday through promoting the notion of new tourism and/or tourist.

It is important to consider the strategies on sustainable tourism development due to the negative impacts tourism has on the everyday lives and environment of the people. Andereck (2005) in his recent study claimed that the locals appreciate the way tourism enriches the community fabric, but this does not discount its negativities to any extent. According to Aronsson (1994), different communities and areas have different levels of tolerance in regard to tourism impacts; depending on how robust they are, as differences might be due to the number and types of visitors, but also to the economic differentiation, social and cultural structure and physical and ecological capacity of the area. However, the outstanding critiques on the concept of sustainable tourism have made the application of recommended strategies impractical to some extent. The next section will discuss some of the areas in which sustainable tourism has received criticism from the academic community.

2.4 Sustainable Tourism Critiques

Critiques make the reader aware of the complexities met if a further step is taken from the principles of sustainable tourism into practice. It is important for the reader to know that the thread of complexity/confusions has begun at the theoretical level and has channelled its way to the practical part. In other words, sustainable tourism literature has traces of critiques made by authors on the conceptualisation of the term itself. Cohen (2002) agrees that the time is ripe to submit the concept to a critical examination in order to set it into the context of wider theoretical and practical concerns, without necessarily denying or belittling its importance.

The major critique of the concept is the problematic relationship it has with the parent concept, sustainable development. Many authors have argued that sustainable tourism is too tourism-centric or sector-specific, which has resulted in its being inconsistent with the general aims, principles and requirements of the parent concept sustainable
development (Butler, 1993; Hunter, 1995; Wall, 1997). Some researchers (Butler, 1993 cited in Ioannides, 2001) have raised confusions by easily claiming that sustainable tourism deals with a continuous growth in tourist numbers in a destination area, at a sectoral level, over an extended period of time, giving Niagara Falls, Disneyworld, Las Vegas, London and Paris as examples: the mere fact that these destinations are able to maintain their appeal through product diversification does not mean that they are environmentally or socio–culturally sustainable.

An important caution was offered by Sinclair and Jayawardena (2003: 404-405) that the popularity and currency of the concepts of sustainable development and sustainable tourism might in fact be masking some unknowns that reside at the heart of sustainability. For example, how much do future generations need? What level of development creates a scenario of “compromise” for future generations? Also, if one accepts that sustainable tourism is a spectrum, then logically there would be degrees of sustainability leading to a greater or lesser ability of future generations to meet their own needs. In addition, McCool and Moisey (2001) have questioned who represents the future? How well are institutions prepared to consider the needs of future generations or even of those in the current generation who are not as well off?

Wall (1997) on the other hand questions what is to be sustained and who is to decide? These are intractable questions. Should one be trying to sustain individuals, communities, regions or nations; experiences for tourists, incomes for businesses or lifestyles for residents; individual enterprises, economic sectors or whole economies and production systems; economic activities, cultural expressions or environmental conditions? Marsh (1993) asks what evolutionary stage of environment, historic site or cultural activities are we trying to sustain? How do we decide which stage to sustain? Do we try to sustain the most scenic stage of an environment because it appeals to tourists? Do we maintain a fort in the condition it was in at the time of a famous battle, or a house in the style it exhibited when occupied by a famous person?
The validity of sustainability measures such as the carrying capacity concept has been questioned, that is, how to answer the question how many is too many? (McCool and Moisey, 2001). In addition Hunter (1997) argues that often sustainable tourism is achieved only conditionally either through the rhetoric of balancing its competing aspects, or by means of disguised labels such as ecotourism and alternative tourism under the banner of sustainable tourism. However, he strongly argues that in reality, trade-off decisions taken on a day-to-day basis will result in favour of a skewed distribution of priorities.

Furthermore, many authors have claimed that the scope of sustainable tourism has been from the protection of environment, to management of tourism businesses to interpretations that are simply a marketing ploy or a marketing publicity stunt designed to attract new clientele (Berry and Ladkin, 1997; Jamieson, 1997; Wall, 1997; Cohen, 2002). Cohen warns that it has become a “desirable characteristic of enterprises in the eyes of potential customers” and is adopted to advertise tourism products without taking any real steps to apply it (2002: 268). Wheeller added that “by clothing itself in a green mantle, the industry is being provided with a shield with which it can both deflect valid criticism and improve its own image while, in reality, continuing its familiar short-term commercial march” (1991: 96). Berno (2004) and Godfrey (1998) concluded that sustainability, if it can indeed be achieved, must go beyond the “greening” of tourism and encompass a range of innovative principles and practices by extending its boundaries to partnership with public and private sectors including community involvement, integration in addition to its environmental dimension.

Liu (2003) criticised the overall sustainable tourism debate for being patchy, disjointed and often flawed with false assumptions and arguments. Five of the weaknesses he highlighted were: the lack of attention paid to tourist demands at destination level; the failure to recognise that the resources are a complex and dynamic concept, evolving with changes in needs, preferences and technological capabilities of the society; the lack of adequate consideration of intra-generational equity, where the stakeholder groups receive impartiality in the costs and benefits; the ineffectiveness of carrying capacities
and indicators of sustainable development to determine the level and pace of development; and finally the unreliability of the means and instruments such as promotion of eco-, alternative, soft or responsible tourism as the way forward for a sustainable and growing tourism industry worldwide.

2.5 Some Similar Study Findings

It is considered important that the reader gets an overview on some of the findings of similar case studies done on the sustainable tourism interpretations in the literature. In addition, it also helps to better understand with examples from other areas where actual studies conducted have proved that if sustainable tourism is not well understood in terms of its meaning, then practice remains rhetoric. Though there are not many studies that exist in the literature, their findings are adequate to compare the findings of this study (see Chapter 6).

The theoretical interpretations of sustainable tourism in the case studies have revealed lack of awareness of the term sustainable tourism in the study contexts. For example, the study by Hobson and Essex (2001) on the accommodation sector in Plymouth, UK using a questionnaire survey revealed that no operator interpreted the term sustainable development in an environmental context; although a small percentage gave a closer response by recognising the preservation of the cosmetic outer shell of the resource base for the continuity of the tourism industry. Over a quarter of the respondents had no understanding of the term at all while a good percentage had never heard of the concept. The term, however, got some recognition and was interpreted by most businesses as the short-term preservation of the tourist industry in terms of economics and visitor volumes, rather than being related to environmental matters.

On the other hand, Stabler and Goodall’s (1997) study on the hospitality sector on Guernsey showed that 18% of the respondents were aware of the sustainable tourism concept—this implies that there is one concept of sustainability—and were able to explain it. Although the hoteliers possessed a general knowledge of environmental problems, they had minimum or no understanding of tourism’s interaction with the
environment. A study on Manuel Antonio and Texel also revealed the importance of the environmental dimension, which was rated as most important, followed by the socio-cultural and economic dimensions (Cottrell et al., 2004).

Conversely, at the practical level, the study of Hobson and Essex (2001) showed that though many respondents were unable to interpret the term theoretically, there was evidence of its practice, while for Stabler and Goodall (1997) it was vice versa. Some of the common practices included energy and water consumption, waste recycling and buying from local suppliers. Hobson and Essex’s study also noted that these practices were common in large-scale operations due to availability of funds and the respondents claimed their perceived benefits to be non-economic, in other words, it contributes to environment protection and customer perceptions. On the other hand, Brown’s (1994) study on medium and large sized hotel groups in UK showed a conflicting response as for them, to be part of environmental conservation schemes was for economic reasons, that is, saving costs rather than showing a legitimate concern for the environment.

Berry and Ladkin’s (1997) used focus group interviews to study small businesses of East Sussex in the UK. His findings revealed that the very limited understanding of the concept by the respondents made it difficult to translate it into workable practice. The authors claimed that there has been a lot of importance of sustainable tourism in government policies; however, the implementation never eventuated, due to mistrust of government policy, poor administration and poor networking among tourism stakeholders.

For Hobson and Essex’s case, lack of interest in environmental sustainability, time constraints, cost and lack of expertise were some of the identified barriers to sustainable tourism practices, while for Stabler and Goodall the high degree of contentment among the businesses, satisfactory performance of the current environment and low precedence to environmental matters were some of the issues identified by the respondents.
Therefore, these case studies have been used as a testament to illustrate the point that if sustainable tourism is not well understood at a theoretical level by those who actually hold a stake in the industry, there is a high chance that the translation of the concept from theory into practice in tourism remains at best a long-term and imperfectly realised commitment.

2.6 Chapter Summary

In summary, sustainable tourism refers to tourism that attempts to minimise environmental impacts, enhances economic efficiency, deals with socio-cultural conflicts and promotes equity politically so that it can contribute towards prolonging the life expectancy of tourism destinations. The discourse of sustainable tourism mostly incorporates one or a combination of dimensions, though some authors give more weight to one of the dimensions than the others; while others try to balance all four, the environment, economic, socio-cultural and political dimensions and attempt to offer it a practical side. Sustainable tourism as a concept is also interpreted as tourism that deals with the present and also the future of the industry. All dimensions of sustainable tourism development are interconnected and serve as a basis for the long-term viability of the industry. The next section looks at how this global issue of the ambiguity of the term sustainable tourism fits into the study context.
CHAPTER 3
The Fiji Context: Zooming into the Study Area

3.0 Introduction
This chapter will provide an in-depth discussion of the study area. It will help the reader to understand better how the problem of ambiguity in the meaning of sustainable tourism is affecting the local context and the need to carry out this study. This chapter has been divided into three sections. The first section will give a brief overview of Fiji and provide the tourism industry profile. The second section will discuss the history of tourism development in Fiji. The last section will make assertions about some of the impacts of tourism development in Fiji and justify the need for sustainable forms of tourism development in Fiji.

3.1 A Brief Overview of Fiji and the Tourism Industry Profile
Fiji lies in the heart of the Pacific Ocean and its archipelago comprises over 300 islands of which about one-third are inhabited. It covers about 1.3 million square kilometers of the South Pacific Ocean. Fiji's total land area is 18,333 square kilometres. The population of Fiji is approximately 846,085 people, most of whom live on the two main islands of Viti Levu (10,429 square kilometres) and Vanua Levu (5,556 square kilometers). The population of Fiji comprises a combination of native Fijians (55%), Indians (37%) and a balance of other races (Bureau of Statistics, 2005).

Fiji, endowed with forest, mineral, and fish resources, is one of the most developed of the Pacific island economies, though still with a large subsistence sector. Fiji enjoys a tropical maritime climate, without undue extremes of humidity and temperature. In 1970, Fiji gained independence after being a British colony for 96 years. It became a democratic nation within the Commonwealth, though soon after the 1987 military coups, Fiji was declared a republic. It re-entered the Commonwealth in 1997. The year 2000 brought more political instability to Fiji causing great harm to its economy.

The economy of Fiji is narrowly based, and her performance is profoundly dependent on the success of the tourism and sugar industries. In his opening speech at the Fiji
Tourism Forum 2005 at the Sheraton, the Vice President Ratu Joni Madraiwiwi said that “the gradual collapse of the sugar industry and the insecurity of garments have put pressure on tourism to make up for the shortfalls in the country’s foreign exchange earnings”. As shown in Figure 3.0, while garment and sugar contribute only 18% and 19% of Fiji’s foreign earnings respectively, the tourism industry generates 48%. Tourism, according to Madraiwiwi (2005), has become “the engine of Fiji’s economic growth”.

**Figure 3.0: Sector Contribution to Fiji’s Economy**

Source: Tuamoto, 2005

Figure 3.1 confirms that for more than a decade the tourism sector has been contributing the most in terms of its earnings. This is followed by the sugar industry, which used to be backbone of Fiji’s economy followed by the garment, gold, timber and the fishing sectors.
The tourism sector composed of accommodation, transportation, shopping, travel agents and tour operators as the core segments is mainly driven by the private sector. Fiji’s major markets for tourism are Australia, New Zealand and the USA, followed by Canada, Japan, Korea, the UK, Continental Europe and other Pacific Islands. Figure 3.2 shows a breakdown of the percentage contribution from each country.

Source: Ministry of Tourism, 2005a
In geographic terms, tourism is not equally dispersed across Fiji. Table 3.0 shows the high concentration of tourists in the western part of Viti Levu, mostly in the Mamanucas/Yasawas, Coral Coast and Nadi Area, accounting to more than 80% of the total visitor arrivals in Fiji.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ZONE/AREA OF STAY</th>
<th>Value (SF (M))</th>
<th>Ratio</th>
<th>Visitors (number)</th>
<th>Ratio</th>
<th>Value per capita ($F)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>North and Eastern Viti Levu</td>
<td>5.18</td>
<td>1.0%</td>
<td>4,586</td>
<td>1.2%</td>
<td>1,130.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lautoka/Cruising</td>
<td>13.37</td>
<td>2.6%</td>
<td>8,671</td>
<td>2.2%</td>
<td>1,542.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nadi Area</td>
<td>121.45</td>
<td>23.2%</td>
<td>105,690</td>
<td>26.6%</td>
<td>1,149.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mamanuca/Yasawa Islands</td>
<td>170.17</td>
<td>32.6%</td>
<td>112,989</td>
<td>28.4%</td>
<td>1,506.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coral Coast</td>
<td>147.33</td>
<td>28.2%</td>
<td>107,695</td>
<td>27.1%</td>
<td>1,368.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deuba</td>
<td>9.61</td>
<td>1.8%</td>
<td>6,326</td>
<td>1.6%</td>
<td>1,519.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suva</td>
<td>32.02</td>
<td>6.1%</td>
<td>30,334</td>
<td>7.6%</td>
<td>1,055.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vanua Levu</td>
<td>5.10</td>
<td>1.0%</td>
<td>2,110</td>
<td>.5%</td>
<td>2,416.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outer Islands</td>
<td>11.63</td>
<td>2.2%</td>
<td>7,503</td>
<td>1.9%</td>
<td>1,559.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unknown/Did not stay in paid accommodation</td>
<td>6.51</td>
<td>1.2%</td>
<td>11,954</td>
<td>3.0%</td>
<td>545.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>522.40</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>397,859</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>1,313.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Ministry of Tourism, 2002

Fiji has two international airports. One, based in Nadi, is more developed and accommodates the bulk of the air traffic, while the other close to Suva, is still being developed to be able to accommodate larger aircraft. The national air carrier, Air Pacific, provides direct flights to Fiji from the key capital cities in Australia and New Zealand as well as from Tokyo, Honolulu and Los Angeles. In addition, the launch of low cost carriers in 2003—Virgin Blue’s sister carrier, Pacific Blue, which makes direct flights to Australian cities and Freedom Air to New Zealand cities, has also played a good role for Fiji to benefit economically.

The Ministry of Tourism (MOT) and the Fiji Visitors Bureau are the two main institutional bodies that look after the tourism sector in Fiji. Being mindful of the fact
that tourism was a mainstay to Fiji’s economy, the Ministry of Tourism and Civil Aviation was formed in 1985 (Department of Tourism, nd). The roles of the Ministry of Tourism includes devising policy initiatives for tourism development; facilitating the development of tourism infrastructure; coordinating the activities of stakeholder agencies; planning and monitoring the implementation of tourism development programmes; developing and promoting sustainable development tourism policies and practices; developing awareness and encouraging local participation in the tourism industry; and monitoring and improving policies and procedures governing the facilitation of travel (Ministry of Tourism, 2004). On the other hand, the FVB is the marketing arm, 85% funded by the Fiji Government to market Fiji as a tourism destination overseas, provide information to visitors in Fiji and help in the product development through event marketing and tourism awards (TDP 1998–2005).

Narayan’s (2000) paper on Fiji tourism documented the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT analysis) of the industry. He identified Fiji’s natural resources and beauty, expanded contribution to world tourism, wider tourist source markets, excellent stock of tourist accommodation (from luxury to budget) and a good network of domestic services as the strengths of Fiji’s tourism industry, whereas the imperfections in the labour market, improper waste disposal methods, crime, operation of unlicensed hotels and restriction on visa requirements to emerging tourism destinations like Russia as the weaknesses. Calls for more research in tourism, search for new markets and products, greater promotion and marketing, ecotourism potential for indigenous people and tapping into the niche markets such as sports and education were the identified opportunities, while political instability, foreign exchange leakage, uncertainties over land leases, underdeveloped infrastructure, high investment risk and inadequate development finance were identified as major threat.

3.2 Tourism Development in Fiji
According to the MOT, the history of tourism development in Fiji does not lie in the natural demand or supply for tourism products and services, but has its origin in the Trans-Pacific shipping-trade in the early twentieth century. Fiji was used as a principal
trans-shipment port by Australia and the USA, but due to the unreliable nature of ships in keeping to their advertised times, lodgings and other related facilities were offered to accommodate the waiting passengers. The completion of the Grand Pacific Hotel in 1914 and other lodges (Via House, Marinnen’s Boarding House, Pier Hotel, McDonald’s and the Club) laid the foundation of the tourism industry in Fiji. On February 29th, 1924, with the exertion from the White Settlement League, the Fiji Publicity Board was appointed by the Government to run a tourist bureau.

The actual promotion of Fiji tourism in the overseas market began in 1931 by the Board with a grant of 535,000 pounds. In the same year, the Government abolished passports for ship passengers. Fiji began to see growth in tourist numbers and the relaxation in the regulations to enter Fiji could be treated as a bonus for gaining publicity. With the improvement of tourism infrastructure successful lobbying by the Board to the Government, an American commercial airline touched Fiji’s grounds.

In 1951, the Publicity Board became a founding member of the Pacific Interim Travel Association, now called PATA. In 1952, the Fiji Publicity Board changed its name to the Fiji Visitors Bureau (FVB). Over time, tourism numbers kept growing and continued bringing foreign money into the economy. Fiji saw a lot of potential in its tourism sector, provided a lot of support to this sector. An ordinance was passed in 1962, exempting luxury goods, such as cameras, telescopes and tape-recorders on customs duty. Furthermore, in 1964 a Hotels Aid Ordinance was passed to encourage new hotel development in Fiji. Accessibility of greater funding allowed FVB to embark on serious marketing initiatives overseas, resulting in Fiji rapidly increasing visitor arrival numbers.

Today tourism has become one of the major industries in Fiji and is growing rapidly in terms of earnings and visitor arrivals, as shown in Figures 3.0 and 3.3. According to the Ministry of Tourism, the tourist numbers have grown tremendously since 1961, as illustrated in Figure 3.3. In 1980, the total visitor arrivals numbered 189,996, by 1990 the figures reached a total of 278,996; an increase by 89,000 (47%) tourists in a decade.
Despite the political instability in 1987, 1999 showed a recovery to 409,955, a leap of 130,959 tourists in 9 years (Ministry of Tourism, 2002) and a five-fold increase since the 1960s. Another political upheaval in 2000 shook Fiji’s tourism industry. According to Taylor (personal communication, 2004), “it was a nightmare!!!... Overnight the phones stopped ringing and the resort was empty for almost one year”. There was a drastic drop in the tourism arrivals by almost 50%. Tourism operators and investors lost confidence in Fiji’s tourism sector, but with the help of the MOT and FVB, the sector has been able to revive.

In 2001, tourist arrivals totalled 348,014, an 18.3% increase from 249,070 in 2000 (SDP 2003–2005) and continued with the upward trend as illustrated in Figure 3.3. Fiji was considered as a ‘safe haven’ after the terrorism attacks in USA and Bali, bomb threats in Australia, health alarms such as SARS and Bird Flu in Asian Countries and natural disasters in Indonesia and India. According to Keller (2005), these crises in most of the mature tourism destinations allowed Fiji to benefit and experience a new level of tourism growth (Keller, 2005).

**Figure 3.3: Visitor Arrivals 1961-2003**

Source: Gavoka (2004)

Whilst there has been very little investment in hotel development in Fiji in the last five years, there are now numerous hotel and resort projects proposed for development.
Denarau Island and the Coral Coast are the primary focus for new development, with five major hotel projects having commenced construction, representing a total investment of F$445 million upon completion. In addition, in excess of F$500,000 worth of known hotel and resort projects are proposed for development over the next few years from the year 2005 (Keller, 2005). Table 3.1 provides a detailed list of these proposed new resort and hotel projects to be developed in Fiji.

Table 3.1: Proposed Hotel Development Projects

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>No of Rooms</th>
<th>Development Status</th>
<th>Estimated Opening</th>
<th>Estimated Cost</th>
<th>Operator</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Natadola Marina Resort</td>
<td>Navo Island</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>Proposed</td>
<td>2008</td>
<td>F$100 million</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Natadola Marine Resort</td>
<td>Natadola beach</td>
<td>285</td>
<td>Commenced</td>
<td>mid-2007</td>
<td>F$100 million</td>
<td>InterContinantal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hilton Fiji Beach Resort &amp; Spa</td>
<td>Denarau Island</td>
<td>489</td>
<td>Commenced</td>
<td>Stage 1 - 2005</td>
<td>F$160 million</td>
<td>Hilton Worldwide</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sofitel Resort</td>
<td>Denarau Island</td>
<td>236</td>
<td>Commenced</td>
<td>2005</td>
<td>F$75 million</td>
<td>Accor Asia Pacific</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Treadwest Resort Timeshare</td>
<td>Denarau Island</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>Expansion</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>F$20 million</td>
<td>Treadwest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Golf Terrace Apartments</td>
<td>Denarau Island</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>Commenced</td>
<td>2005</td>
<td>F$20 million</td>
<td>Independent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fiji Marriott Resort</td>
<td>Momi Bay</td>
<td>250</td>
<td>Commenced</td>
<td>2005</td>
<td>F$100 million</td>
<td>Marriott International</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fiji Ritz Carlton</td>
<td>Momi Bay</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>Proposed</td>
<td>2005</td>
<td>F$75 million</td>
<td>Marriott International</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taimate Bay</td>
<td>Pacific Harbour</td>
<td>125</td>
<td>Proposed</td>
<td>2005</td>
<td>F$120 million</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sori Bay</td>
<td>Sori Bay</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>Proposed</td>
<td>2005</td>
<td>F$83 million</td>
<td>Sori Bay - Self</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Likuliku Resort</td>
<td>Mamanuca Islands</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>Proposed</td>
<td>2005</td>
<td>F$44 million</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bounty Island Resort</td>
<td>Mamanuca Islands</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Proposed</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>F$44 million</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bayview Resort</td>
<td>Wallisala Beach, Nadi</td>
<td>240</td>
<td>Proposed</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>F$70 million</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Denarau Beach Resort</td>
<td>Denarau Island</td>
<td>125 villas</td>
<td>Proposed</td>
<td>2008</td>
<td>F$45 million</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mana Island Resort</td>
<td>Mana Island</td>
<td>95 villas</td>
<td>Expansion</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>F$7.5 million</td>
<td>Mana Island - Self</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sonnnasia Resort</td>
<td>Mana Island</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>Expansion</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>F$10 million</td>
<td>Sonnnasia - Self</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shangri-La</td>
<td>Natadola</td>
<td>500</td>
<td>Proposed</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>F$15 million</td>
<td>Shangri-La</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Korovu Bay</td>
<td>Korovu</td>
<td>265</td>
<td>Ruminaced</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>Dust</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nacula Island</td>
<td>Yasawa Islands</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>Proposed</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>Dust</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Volani Lagoon Resort Project</td>
<td>Volani</td>
<td>650</td>
<td>Proposed</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: HVS International

Keller (2005) adds that to the above new hotel developments, several existing resorts have committed funds to the renovation of their guest rooms and common facilities, including the Fijian Shangri-la (F$35 million), the Sheraton Fiji (F$22 million), the Sheraton Royal (F$19 million to be re-branded a Westin), extension of the Naviti Resort (F$13 million) and the recent redevelopment of the former Pacific Harbour International (F$15 million), now Rae’s South Pacific.
3.3 Impacts of Tourism Development in Fiji

Tourism contributes approximately 24% to Fiji’s GDP and provides employment directly and indirectly to an estimated 45,000 people (Whitton, 2004). He adds that a tourist spending of F$1,000 on accommodation generates a total output of F$3544 to the economy of Fiji as a whole, while the tourist expenditure of F$1 million creates 96 fulltime jobs at direct, indirect and induced levels, while at the equivalent amount the movie industry is able to create 30 jobs, agriculture and fisheries 52 jobs, manufacturing 80 jobs and mining only 1 job. Tourism in Fiji has created a multiplier effect as result of engaging to other industries like the construction industry, dairy and agriculture industry, entertaining industry, retail businesses and the payments made to workers and landlords for their labours and land leases respectively.

On the other hand, the economic downsides of Fiji’s tourism industry are that the locals are predominantly involved in the unskilled, low paid jobs and that foreign investors dominate the industry (Sofer, 1990). The involvement of foreign investors links the country to other developed countries resulting in the polarised character of a core–periphery relationship (Britton, 1980). Within this form of this polarised development by the core–periphery relation, the capitalist economic system, which is characteristic of the core, dominates the non-capitalist economic system (as generally represented by Fiji) and may change through processes of adaptation to the needs of the capitalist system (Sofer, 1990). In addition, there has been a considerable amount of leakage owing to the high level of imports in Fiji. It was highlighted by Whitton (2004) that approximately 56% is leaked out of the economy through imports, retaining a net of 44% (which is much higher than any other industry’s total gross earnings).

Furthermore, Fiji’s rich and preserved culture and traditions, natural environment and highly diverse biological resources have equipped the tourism sector with such a capacity to offer positive development potential to outer islands and rural settings. Tourism is an added venue to expose Fijians to the outside world and contribute towards an improved living standard through new ways of consumption and production patterns (Harrison et al., 1998).
While Fiji’s socio-economic development status has improved significantly over the last three decades, considerable disparities still exist in the economic development process and distribution benefits between rural and urban areas, as well as between provinces, particularly in the outer islands. To some extent the tourism industry in Fiji is helping in preservation of the environment through engaging in eco-tourism projects; however, over the years lots of environmental destruction has been incurred in the process of tourism development around Fiji. Various researchers present evidence of the negative economic, socio-cultural and environmental impacts of tourism in Fiji (Britton, 1980; Britton, 1983; Britton and Clarke, 1987; Plange, 1996).

The positive tourism impacts have come in the form of a blessing to the shores of the Fiji Islands; however, as discussed the negative consequences resulting from visitor growth cannot be ignored. There has been a forecast by FVB that the tourism industry will experience growth in future. The Three-Year Strategic Plan 2005–2007 has projected figures of 610,000 visitors and earnings in billions by 2007 (Madraiwiwi, 2005). Figure 3.4 shows a positive trend in both the arrival and earning figures from 2001 to 2007. This growth in the visitor numbers could have a later effect of diminishing returns to the economy due to continued impacts on the environment, which has been relatively untouched, hence one of the most attractive features of the country.
Bibi (2002) presents the argument that one of the biggest challenges facing tourism, the world’s largest industry, as it grows is not how to keep increasing the growth, but how to manage it in the face of projected increases in tourist numbers. Furthermore, in his speech on the opening of the Fiji Tourism Forum 2003 in Suva, Hon. Pita Nacuva (Fiji’s former Minister for Tourism), highlighted “our tourism industry in Fiji has grown so large that it is the largest employer, consumes huge volumes of resources, disposes large volumes of wastes, dominates our land and marine environments, and imposes huge demands on our infrastructure. Tourism affects our culture and offers alternative lifestyles. It affects all aspects of our lives… we have seen the development from only 6 facilities in 1910 to 700 hotel rooms in 1965. In 2002, we have 6356 rooms and about 250 licensed properties. In ten years time, this number is expected to increase further…”

The Minister’s concern indirectly questions the long-term viability of Fiji’s tourism industry. One of the tools suggested by academics is the implementation of the notion of ‘sustainability’ to the context of tourism. Questions such as ‘what is being sustained; by whom and for whom; and do all interest groups have the same intentions and
aspirations in terms of sustainability’ (Mowforth & Munt, 1998) need to be answered in order for a destination to reap the benefits of tourism in the long run.

Considering the uncertain future of the tourism industry, there have been calls for sustainable forms of tourism development in Fiji. In 1973 the Belt Collins Report was first to identify sustainability issues related to tourism development in Fiji by taking into consideration the economic, socio-cultural and environmental dimensions. This has been followed up in the current tourism development plans. Today, the talk of the tourism industry in tourism forums, conferences and workshops is about the sustainability issues. Recently, the theme of the Fiji Tourism Forum 2005 was ‘Managing Tourism’s Growth’.

Though there has been greater emphasis on sustainable tourism over the years, no working definition of the term has been articulated by the industry. Andrew Fairley, Director of Turtle Island, Fiji, strongly argued at the 13th PATA Adventure Travel and Ecotourism Conference & Mart in Sri Lanka, 2001, that “As responsible operators, we are constantly being reminded about the importance of sustainability in our everyday practices. Yet it can be difficult to ascertain if our individual efforts are hitting the mark”. Hence, the use of term sustainable tourism without providing an agreed working definition from the industry stakeholders casts doubt on its practical existence. In addition, any tourism can be termed sustainable tourism, due to the fact (see Chapter 2) that sustainable tourism lacks a universal agreed definition and can mean different things to different people. Therefore, this study aims to describe and compare the perceptions of government and the tourism industry on sustainable tourism development in Fiji at both theoretical and practical levels.

3.4 Chapter Summary

With consideration to the context of the study area, its tourism industry structure and the nature of the problem identified in this study, informed decisions were made on the methodology, methods and the research design for this study. The next chapter will
provide an in-depth discussion on the listed areas, which have been used in this research to address the broad and specific objectives of this thesis.
CHAPTER 4
Research Methodology, Techniques and Stakeholders

4.0 Introduction
Jafari’s (1989; 1990; see also Sharpley, 2002; Hardy et al., 2002) cautionary platform of tourism research advocated that the continuing increase in international tourism since the late 1960s has resulted in negative consequences to the physical, economic and socio-cultural environments. Hence, tourism as a field was challenged, and during the early 1970s, when the industry experts began to realise these impacts, became a legitimate area for systematic enquiry (Dann et al., 1988). The preliminary tourism research focused on the economic side of it as the industry was seen as a tool for economic development; contemporary research, however, has shifted to raise issues on tourism’s socio-cultural and environmental impacts, tourist behaviour and experience, as exemplified by the Brundtland Report and human resource needs in the industry (Jennings, 2001).

Any research helps to build a sound base of relevant knowledge. Cavana et al. (2001: 4) define research “as the process of thoroughly studying and analysing the situational factors surrounding a problem in order to seek out solutions to it”. The research objectives determine the methodology applicable to the research.

Methodologies are researchers’ general position on research purposes, thinking and theory formulation, which result from their philosophy, ontological and epistemological assumptions, disciplinary orientation, and paradigm. Methodologies influence research design and choices of research methods (Walsh, 2005: 89).

This chapter will discuss the methodology and methods applied to this study.

4.1 Philosophical Assumptions
Jennings (2001) identifies six paradigms (positivism, interpretive, critical theory, feminist perspectives, postmodernism and chaos theory), which govern the
methodologies and methods undertaken in research. She explains that the description of a paradigm is based on the following questions: how is the world perceived (ontological basis)?, what is the relationship between researcher and the subjects or objects of research (epistemological basis)? and how will the researcher gather data/information (methodological basis)?

Babbie (2002) argues that paradigms are often difficult to recognise as such, because they are implicit, assumed and taken for granted. He further highlights that the emergence of a new paradigm replaces the old one; the strength of social science theoretical paradigms, however, remains that even though they may gain or lose popularity, they are seldom discarded.

The overlying paradigm of this study is the interpretive paradigm, meaning that the underlying philosophical assumptions of this research on the nature of reality (ontology) and the nature of knowledge (epistemology) are that reality is ‘socially constructed’ (subjective) and reality will always be only partially known. Therefore, the interest of this study lies in understanding the lived experiences of the tourism industry and government at policy level.

This research identifies what is meaningful to each individual being investigated in terms of his or her understanding of sustainable tourism. It is interpretive since it relies on the texts and discourses of participants and involves small numbers of participants in the research process by nature of gathering in-depth information (‘thick-descriptions’) (Jennings, 2001). Hence the two key players, the tourism industry and government, are the respondents under this study to unfold this socially constructed meaning of the concept of sustainable tourism, as understood by them in the Fiji context.

This research is inductive in nature and is based on textual representations of the phenomenon under study. Inductive reasoning moves from the particular to the general, that is, from a set of specific observations to the discovery of a pattern that represents some degree of order among all the given events (Babbie, 2004). The inductiveness of
this study is based firstly upon a pre-understanding gained largely through previous empirical research and secondly, upon a reliance on data collection through in-depth interviews and analysis techniques that achieve depth and maintain an open focus (Connell and Lowe, 1997).

The research design is unstructured in order to respond to the field setting. It emerged in the course of fieldwork and is study-specific since it is grounded in the setting being studied. For example, in the initial stages of conducting in-depth interviews with the industry operators, it was found that there are tourism associations around Fiji—each region has its own tourism associations—therefore it was decided that it would be more feasible to get views from these association presidents, who represent most of the tourism operators in the region.

4.2 Qualitative vs. Quantitative Approach

In this research, the distinction between quantitative and qualitative is associated with data. In a quantitative study, data are collected in numbers or are very soon converted into them, and are subsequently analysed and reported in the same form. On the other hand, in qualitative studies, languages (technical language of the researcher or the everyday language of the respondents) are used to describe behaviour, social relationships, social processes, social situations, and in particular, meanings people give to their activities, the activities of others, and to objects and social contexts (Blaikie, 2000).

Quantitative methods of data collecting have very limited contact with people and do not anticipate any personal disclosure and/or emotional involvement. For this reason, they are thought to ensure greater objectivity. On the other hand, qualitative methods usually entail immersion into social actors’ world and allow the researcher to become an ‘insider’ and discover the social actors’ culture and world-views (ibid.).

The quantitative data in this study will give a ‘skeleton framework’ of the tourism phenomenon under study while the qualitative data will add meat to the bones by
explaining what lies beyond the numbers. It gives a rigorous investigation of the phenomenon. For example, if the findings show the quantitative fact that 60% of industry operators interpreted sustainable tourism development as conserving the environment, then using qualitative data, explanation will be provided on what specifically they had meant when they said ‘conserving the environment’. Did they mean conserving the natural environment, physical environment and/or manmade environment? Conserving it for whom? Is it for the hosts, the tourists, future tourists, and/or future locals of the destination? What sorts of measures will they use to conserve it? How strongly do they feel about the conservation? Walle (1997) argues that purely statistical tools are being supplemented with more qualitative methods and data the to better cope with a multiplicity of research problems and issues faced by tourism scholars.

Blaikie (2000) suggests that methods can serve a number of masters, but they need to change their colours to do so, and the data they produce will need to be interpreted within the particular ontological and epistemological assumptions that they have adopted. In addition, Walle (1997: 535) supports the view that “the choice of emics/art (qualitative) or etics/science (quantitative) must be determined by the situation in which research takes place, not by some misguided search for rigor simply for its own sake”. Furthermore, he adds that the researcher should be aware of the “tradeoffs” involved in adopting specific research methods.

This research therefore takes up more of a qualitative approach to investigate the problem identified in Chapter 1. Due to its qualitative approach, this study does not lend itself to the kind of generalisation that can emerge from quantitative research (results generalisation beyond the population that is studied); however, it is confined to generalisation made about the study site, that is, about Fiji. In addition, replication will be not relevant to this research topic because of variation in the researcher’s study context. It is important to note that social situations are never sufficiently similar across time and space. Understanding the phenomenon under this study is generated through descriptions and not just yes/no answers. To summarise, qualitative research like this
enables the researcher to highlight detailed and in-depth snapshots of the participants under study, presenting a slice of life of the participants under study (Jennings, 2001).

4.3. Data Collection Techniques: Primary vs. Secondary

The term method refers to “ways in which evidence is obtained and manipulated, or, more conventionally, to techniques of data collection and analysis” (Blaikie, 2000: 232). There are three main types of data in social science: primary data (generated by a researcher who is responsible for the design of the study, and the collection, analysis and reporting of the data – also referred as ‘new’ data’); secondary data (raw data that have already been collected by someone else, either for some general information purpose, such as government census or other official statistics, or for a specific research project); and tertiary data (data analysed either by the researcher who generated them or by an analyst of secondary data – results of the analysis) (Blaikie, 2000: 183–184).

The two types of data used in this thesis are primary and secondary. In-depth interviews were conducted as the primary data collection method while documents were used as secondary data sources. The subsequent section facilitates discussion on each of the above mentioned data collection techniques.

4.3.1 Primary Data Collection: In-depth Semi-Structured Interviews

The pre-requisite for primary data collection is to be in contact with the data source. An in-depth semi structured interview questionnaire was used to collect data from the industry and government ministries and departments. Two different sets of interview questionnaires were used for the respective respondents (refer Appendix A and B).

The interview questionnaire was constructed around a core of standard predetermined questions and there was always an expansion on questions based on the researcher’s view of what seemed appropriate while conducting the actual interviews to explore a given response in greater depth. The standard questions addressed the central question of this thesis. In addition, some of the pre-defined questions in the questionnaire were restructured or presented differently and these do not reflect the detail of the literature
review. The interview questions were open-ended, in which the respondents were asked for facts of a matter as well as opinions on issues. Some respondents were asked to propose their insights into certain occurrences and these propositions were used as the basis for further inquiry. Open-ended questions were preferred for this study so that actual perceptions on sustainable tourism development could be obtained in the Fiji context and not led by the principles of sustainable tourism development discussed in the literature that has been mostly designed by people of First World countries apt for the First World context. Therefore, open-ended questions allow the respondents to take into consideration Fiji tourism context on sustainability issues, as well as allowing the interview to follow up their own actual perceptions of the issues.

In-depth interviews were conducted with the general managers of tourism operations and senior executives of government ministries and departments. Interview questions were sent to the interviewee before the actual interview was conducted. This helped in three ways. Firstly, it allowed respondents to seek clarity on questions they found ambiguous. Secondly, they had time to prepare themselves to provide accurate and up-to-date information during the actual interview. Thirdly, it helped the interviewee to become familiar with the questions, thus allowing the interview session to proceed in a smooth and natural fashion.

One of the main reasons of selecting in-depth interviews as the main data collection technique was to collect ‘rich data’ on the phenomenon under study. The advantages of using semi-structured interviews in research are presented in the Table 4.0, providing further justification for its application in any research.

It is also to be noted that there were some respondents engaged during this research who did not have any previous understanding of the term sustainable tourism. However, the researcher observed that these operations (environmental projects, contribution to the local community etc) were contributing considerably towards the sustainable tourism development in Fiji. Hence, under such circumstances, the researcher explained to the respondents what the term sustainable tourism meant, based on the WTO (2004)
definition of the term due to its standard usage worldwide (refer Chapter 2) and the respondents were to identify and explain on the practices of the concept undertaken at their operation.

Table 4.0: Advantages of Semi-Structured Interviews

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Advantages of Semi-Structured Interviews</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>▪ Multiple realities can be determined since the semi-structured interview does not constrain the participant to following the interviewer’s a priori reasoning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>▪ The subjective epistemological viewpoint enables rapport to be established</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>▪ The method’s usefulness in gathering data on complex issues and sensitive issues, as the interviewer can take time to establish rapport and move towards the examination of such issues, whereas in a structured interview, the objective nature of the epistemological positioning of the researcher works against such issues being examined in any great depth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>▪ Detailed information regarding attitudes, opinions and values maybe elicited as opposed to using scales that tend to reduce the interviewee’s experiences to numeric positions along a continuum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>▪ The questions are not objectively predetermined and presented, so the interviewer is able to ask for further clarification and detail and pursue these issues without negatively affecting the quality of the data collected</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>▪ Interview probes can be altered to follow the path the interviewee is focused on pursuing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>▪ Queries can be clarified, which is generally not the case when an interviewer is operating from an objective epistemological perspective, as such explanations are considered to add researcher bias to the data collection process</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>▪ Verbal and non-verbal cues can be recorded and included in the analysis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>▪ Follow-up questions can be framed to further extend responses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>▪ The semi-structured schedule provides a more relaxed interview setting</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Jennings, 2001: 166

The duration of each interview was between 45 minutes and an hour. As mentioned earlier in this chapter, different interview questionnaires targeted different study groups. Further details on sample selection, interview questionnaire construction and distribution are covered under each group discussed later in this chapter.

4.3.2. Secondary Data Collection: Documents

One of the weaknesses of primary data is that respondents’ awareness of being studied can bring changes to their opinions, behaviours and values; consequently, the researcher may end up with data that do not reflect the real picture of the phenomenon under study. In light of this issue, secondary data have been incorporated in this study. Data were
collected from secondary sources such as tourism statistical records, government documents, books, journal articles, newspapers, magazines, reports from conferences, seminars and workshops and publications from such international organisations as the WTO, the United Nations and the WTTC.

There were two reasons for using secondary data in this research. Firstly, it gave a comprehensive coverage to the tourism phenomenon being studied here. Secondly, it helped in data triangulation to facilitate for the internal data validity.

Yin (1989) argues that because of their overall value, documents play an explicit role in any secondary data collection. He has identified three reasons for using documents in research. First, documents are helpful in verifying the correct spellings and titles or names of organisations that might have been mentioned in the interview. Secondly, he points out that documents can provide other specific details to corroborate information from other sources; if any documentary evidence is contradictory rather than corroborative; the investigator has specific reason to inquire further into the topic. Thirdly, he highlights the inferences that can be made from documents; however, these inferences should be treated only as clues worthy of further investigation rather than as definitive findings, because the inferences could later turn out to be false leads.

4.4. Research Context: Fiji Islands

Fiji is considered to have the most developed tourism industry in the South Pacific. Fiji not only has excelled in its tourist arrivals but also has a good quantity and quality of tourism goods, services and infrastructure. Considering the fact that Fiji has the highest visitor numbers, it experiences a greater amount of favourable and unfavourable impacts in order to meet the demand of the guests by using more resources to maintain a quality standard not only for today and tomorrow but for the future of the tourism industry and the economy as a whole. Hence, sustainability principles have to be applied to the tourism context, and the marriage of sustainability to tourism results in the emerging, highly contested and most widely used concept of sustainable tourism. However, it is to be noted that there is no universal agreement on the meaning of the
term sustainable tourism (see Chapter 2). Consequently, this leads to the confusion that if the meaning of the term is not interpreted on common grounds, as a consequence the practical side of it is a big question mark for the stakeholders. Does sustainable tourism have a practical face in Fiji? Tourism industry reports and papers in Fiji have presented discussions on how sustainability principles have been woven into the tourism context. This builds the curiosity that if sustainable tourism in Fiji exists in reality then what conceptual framework has been able to shape this practice? Therefore, this study will answer the central research question of whether there is a need for a working definition of sustainable tourism in Fiji based on the results of the government and tourism industry perspectives on the concept of sustainable tourism (refer to Chapter 3 for a detailed background to the research context).

4.5 Population
The population under this study is composed of all the tourism industry operators and government ministries and departments in Fiji. It includes all those having a direct as well as an indirect relation with the tourism industry in Fiji. The target population for this study is all the tourism industry sectors and government ministries and departments directly involved with the tourism industry in Fiji.

4.6 Sampling Method and Size
According to Walsh (2005) a small slice of the population, that is, a sample, which saves time, energy and money. Sampling is an important feature of research and care is taken to make sure that a sample is an accurate reflection of the whole from which it is taken, hence the manner in which the sample is drawn determines to what extent findings can be generalised (Bouma, 2000).

The sampling method used under this study is non-random, with every person in the study population not having an equal chance of selection. A purposive, also referred to as judgemental, sampling method was used. The reason for choosing this sampling method is that, since the central research question determined more of a qualitative nature for this study, it was logical to target the respondents who would best be able to
provide in-depth meaningful data to fulfil the study objective. This helped saved time, money and energy in conducting fieldwork. “With qualitative research, it is the ‘quality’ not the ‘quantity’, of the data that determines the sample size” (Sarantakos, 1998, see Jennings, 2001: 149).

4.7 Sample Selection Breakdown
The two stakeholder groups in this study are the government and the tourist industry. The reason for choosing these two stakeholder groups for this study was that these two groups have the major influence in shaping the whole tourism destination, irrespective of where it is located on the world map. According to Butler (1999) and Bramwell and Lane (1993), for sustainability to be achieved, the participation of all stakeholders is a precondition. Butler (1999) highlighted that the industry at all scales should have a direct interest to commit themselves to the principles of sustainability, and then it will require a lesser effort to get other stakeholders to get their involvement in such schemes. On the other hand, he asserts that the role of the public sector is crucial in terms of conducting awareness programmes and enforcing sustainable policies and actions while again, the rest will just have to follow.

In other words, the governmental level is where sustainable tourism policies are designed and it is the industry where it is implemented. This selection will also help in identifying the gaps that lie between theory and practice of sustainable tourism development of Fiji. In addition, these two particular stakeholders, namely the government and the tourism industry itself, are fully aware of the impacts and changes caused by tourism in Fiji, thus their perceptions, issues and practices on sustainable tourism development will represent actual results on sustainability issues in Fiji.

The tourism industry, which is made up of various sectors—accommodation, transport, shopping, attractions and restaurant—contributes a major role in attracting visitors and providing them with a quality visitor experience. The industry can be considered as the ‘heart’ to the whole ‘body’ of the tourism sector. This is where the movement of people begins and ends; therefore, tourism impacts revolve around the industry itself. Hence, in
order to achieve sustainable tourism in any destination, the industry is the place to begin with. The industry is where sustainable tourism practices are implemented. If the industry will operate in a sustainable manner, its impact will be passed on to its ‘attachés’—the local communities and the tourists.

The government, on the other hand, is treated as the ‘brain’ due to its powers in the ability to think and make decisions on relevant policy enforcements. Therefore, these two stakeholder groups need to understand what sustainable tourism is all about before they can practise it. The main objective of this research is to find out their perceptions of sustainable tourism and in what way their conceptualisations shape practice.

The following section discusses the selection of study units from the target population. Under each stakeholder group the following will be discussed:

1. Definition – providing a definition that is more specific and precise to this research context
2. Sample Selection – presentation of the categories used for sample selection
3. Data Collection – providing particulars of the research design used

4.7.1 Government
4.7.1.1 Definition
Sharpley (2002) argues that in everyday language the term ‘government’ can be used to convey several different meanings, including a vague sense of authority, power and order, control by a political party, a particular administration, a collective of official institutions (such as ‘government departments’ and ‘local government’ or even organisation). He further explains that ‘government’ conveys a sense of the settled (but not permanent) and agreed formalisation of power and authority, which provides a framework within which political discourse can be managed, disagreements can be debated, collective choices made and policy directions set out.

Government in this study will include the different types of public sector (see Figure 4.0) as outlined by Swarbrooke (1999: 88). All different types of public sector were
identified and contacted for the interview schedule. In addition to those listed in Figure 4.0, a town council view was also included in the sample. The reason for this is that town councils play a great role at the local level to administer a town and take a closer step in monitoring the performance of the towns in Fiji. Therefore, they also have a role that contributes to sustainable tourism development in Fiji. In this study, the Savusavu Town Council’s view was taken and an interview was conducted with the mayor.

4.7.1.2 Sample Selection

The sample selection of government was based on the model presented by Swarbrooke (1999: 88) on different types of public sector. In addition to the Ministry of Tourism, in-depth interviews were done with other line ministries with which the Ministry of Tourism is closely affiliated. It was considered important to include these ministries due to the fact that the Ministry of Tourism is regarded as a ‘toothless tiger’ lacking a mandate to implement the relevant policies (Kuilamu, Personal Communication, 2004). Therefore, the Ministry of Tourism with the other Ministries of Environment, Culture & Heritage, National Planning, and Fijian Affairs implements the respective policies related to sustainable tourism development in Fiji. Hence, their perception of sustainable tourism development will be a meaningful contribution to this study.

In addition, views of two NGOs were included in this study as it was also found during interviews with the government ministry officials that the NGOs make a significant contribution towards achieving a sustainable tourism industry in Fiji (Sovaki, Personal Communication, 2004; Kuilamu and Tagivetaua, Personal Communication, 2004). Five NGOs, whose names were mentioned during interviews with the Ministry of Tourism, were contacted with an interview schedule. Only two NGOs, namely Partners in Community Development Fiji (PCDF) and the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF), responded to the interview request, hence their perceptions were included as part of this study.
4.7.1.3 Data Collection

In-depth interviews based on the semi-structured questionnaire were conducted with the identified organisations and ministries in Figure 4.0. Common questions included some background information on the organisations, how they interpreted the term sustainable tourism development, what roles these respective respondents play to achieve a sustainable tourism industry in Fiji, their current and future plans and/or policies on sustainable tourism industry, their major projects on sustainable tourism, opportunities and constraints encountered, and the strategies that can be applied to achieve a sustainable tourism industry for the future.

4.7.2 The Tourist Industry

4.7.2.1 Definition

For the purpose of this research, the tourism industry comprises the accommodation sector, transportation, and dive and excursions from main tourism regions.

4.7.2.2 Sample Selection

*Accommodation*
Accommodation has been chosen from three different categories: top end, mid-range and budget, as outlined in the Lonely Planet guidebook. This guidebook was used for accommodation selection as it was found to be more up-to-date than the Ministry of Tourism industry listing and had more organised categorisation of the accommodation located in different parts of Fiji.

The sample selection was done from main tourism regions in Fiji. These regions include Pacific Harbour, the Coral Coast, Nadi, the Mamanucas, the Yasawas and Savusavu. Each of these regions has its own tourism association and the majority of the tourism operations in a region were found to be members of their respective tourism association. Because these tourism associations are officially representative of operators from the whole region, it was considered necessary to include them in the sample. Views from professional industry bodies like the Fiji Islands Backpackers Association (FIBA) and the Society of Fiji Travel Association were also taken into consideration.

**Transportation**

The transportation sector was also divided into three main categories: land, water and air. An email requesting an interview schedule was sent to all the transport companies listed under the Ministry of Tourism’s industry listing. Due to time constraints, the first organisation to give an interview schedule was chosen to be in the sample.

**Dive and Excursions**

Email requests for an in-depth interview were sent to all the dive and excursion operators included in the Ministry of Tourism’s industry listing. There was a good response from this sector and opportunity was given to the researcher to do a purposive selection of different types of excursion to get a cross-section of tourism operations in the sample, representing a ‘typical’ tourism industry structure.

**4.7.2.3 Data Collection**
In-depth interviews were conducted with all the tourism operators except for those in the Yasawas. Time constraints and unfavourable weather conditions made the Yasawas trip impossible. Hence, a telephone interview was conducted with the President of Nacula Tikina Tourism Association (NTTA) using the same semi-structured interview questionnaire as was used with the rest of the industry operators.

The questionnaire was divided into 3 main sections. The first section was to get general details of the operation. The sub-sections were background, land details, employee information, and future plans. The succeeding section questioned the interpretation and application of sustainable tourism development to the operations and the final section consisted of questions on specific sustainable tourism dimensions: business involvement with the local community, guest issues, environmental issues, political issues, employee selection and training.

4.8 Ethical Considerations
Anyone involved in social scientific research needs to be aware of the general agreements shared by researchers about what is proper in the conduct of scientific inquiry (Babbie, 2004). This study considered ethical issues while dealing with the respondents during fieldwork.

Permission was taken from respondents to get them involved in this research to conduct in-depth interviews by using fictitious names of the respondents. Interviewees were also made aware that their responses would be recorded; in effect, their approval was sought for this action. Those respondents highlighting some of the sensitive issues during interview will remain anonymous.

4.9 Limitations of the Study
Some industry operators did not cooperate with this study. They did not bother to respond to email requests seeking an interview. Another limitation was that there were situations when interviewees’ availability and schedule did not match to the researcher’s. Since the researcher herself did all the interviews, simultaneous
appointment times could not be met and arranging an alternative time for conducting an interview was an issue due to the distant locations of the tourism operators around Fiji.

Getting all interview schedules to fit while making a trip to one particular region was difficult. Most of the fieldwork was done during the vacation period in Fiji, between November 2003 to February 2004, and many general managers of tourism operations, especially foreign owned ones, were out of the country. There were situations encountered when the researcher made long-distance trips (e.g. from Suva to Nadi) to conduct interviews only to find that the manager had left a message with reception for alternative interview times or had forgotten about this appointment. The re-scheduling of interview times caused many delays with fieldwork.

However, it is to be noted that these research limitations did not affect the quality of data collected, because the use of the purposive sampling method helped in satisfying the specific study needs. Secondly, as major tourism regions were selected for this study, there was always more than one operation falling in a particular identified category. Therefore, an alternative operator co-operated and permitted for an interview session, though it took some time for the interviewee to confirm to the researcher for an interview schedule. Finally, alternative times given by the respondents, especially representatives of tourism associations, were negotiated for a time that suited both the researcher and the respondents.

4.10 Subject Bias
The type of work the respondents are involved in can have an effect on the answers they provide on their understanding of sustainable tourism development. There is a chance that they will prioritise that particular dimension of sustainable tourism. For example, the Ministry of Environment personnel will prioritise environmental aspects and provide a definition of sustainable tourism development that is built around the environmental dimension, relating it to the context of tourism.

4.11 Data Reliability and Validity
Ethridge (1995) claims that information is reliable when it is valid and applicable, and this validity and applicability of information depend on its collection processes and procedures. He further argues that data alone cannot guarantee the reliability of the knowledge; however, facts, analytical tools, and theories applied in a reasoned and deliberate manner have the capacity to provide reliable knowledge. To summarise, the research methodology and methods used in the research determine the reliability of the data.

Ruyter and Scholl (1998) have highlighted that qualitative research is often criticised for its lack of reliability and validity. However, they still suggest that qualitative research can be justified. If used with care, it can be valid, because meaningful data is collected based on real life context of the respondents; and it is reliable if the research data collection and analysis is followed closely to get a reproduction of results.

This study has reliable data due to triangulation of data sources. The data collected from one source was cross-validated with other sources. Secondly, follow up interviews were done on unclear areas of information acquired through initial interview sessions. This process allowed for accuracy in collected data. In addition, the design of the questionnaires assured very relevant questions to meet the study objectives. Finally, not to miss out any points raised by the respondents during interviews, a digital recorder was used and later transcribed word by word. This allowed for the researcher to fully concentrate on the interview. Word by word transcription was done, so that there were no changes to the original meaning of what the respondent was trying to elaborate on. Reliable and valid data add to the quality of any research findings, thus producing meaningful information.

4.12 Data Analysis Technique

Data collected through different techniques is not an end in itself, but a challenge to the researcher to generate some logical discussion out of it (Patton, 1990). In order to make some sense out of the raw data collected the following steps were taken:
1. Data collected from in-depth interviews were transcribed using Microsoft Word. From the transcription, a data table was designed, listing the respondents across the table and their answers corresponding to interview questions in a downward manner.

2. Themes emerging from the raw data were identified.

3. A conceptual model was designed as a data analysis tool, using the themes that were raised by the authors in sustainable tourism development literature (refer to Chapter 2) and findings from this study.

4. This conceptual model was used to map the data collected during in-depth interviews, to present stories from the field. This helped in the organisation of findings and the discussion chapter.

5. When analysing the data, a discussion of the findings based on the identified themes was achieved by revisiting the theoretical arguments presented in Chapter 2. In addition, quotations from the transcription were included to build “rich stories” containing the main insights of the subject area. Finally conclusions were drawn.

A model is a simplification of the real world. It helps to give a better explanation of how a system works by explaining certain features, relationships or processes (McKercher, 1999). Tourism literature has proven successful use of models to explain the phenomenon under study. Some of the well-known models include Gunn’s model on tourism planning, Leiper’s ‘tourism system’ model, Butler’s destination life cycle model, Pearce and Maslow’s proposed models on tourist motivation (see ibid.).

It is important to note that the conceptual model used in this study (see Chapter 6) is just a framework of the subject to develop discussions around it. This model clusters around major themes identified from the literature review on sustainable tourism. Sustainable tourism itself is such a broad area of study that there cannot be a restricting boundary to its conceptualisation. However, it should be noted that this is not a hard and fast model and is purposely suitable to this study context.
4.13 Chapter Summary

The approach taken for this study has been identified as the most appropriate for the questions the thesis is aiming to answer with consideration to the study context and its tourism industry. This study has been conducted under the interpretive paradigm, where reality is to be ‘socially-constructed’. The study is dominated by the qualitative approach to highlight in-depth snapshots of the respondents under this study. The two key stakeholder groups, the government and the tourism industry of Fiji, are selected for this study. The reasons for selecting these two identified groups is because sustainable tourism policies are laid by the government and the tourism industry is where it is implemented; therefore these two groups are considered to be the key players for the sustainable tourism development in the destination region.

Both primary and secondary collection techniques will be used in this study. The primary data collection will be done via in-depth semi-structured interviews to collect rich and meaningful data for the phenomenon under study, with both stakeholder groups while the secondary data are collected through documents relevant to the stakeholders and the study topic. The purposive sampling method has been adopted to elicit the opinions of the targeted population. This method verifies that the respondent does in fact meet the criteria for being in the sample and reaches to a targeted sample quickly, where sampling for proportionality is not the primary concern. This study has been conducted with consideration to ethical issues and data reliability and validity aspects.

For data analysis and interpretation, a model will be designed using the key study findings, which will be related to the theories discussed in Chapter 2. Hence, this chapter gave an outline on the philosophical assumptions, methodology, methods and research design of this study with consideration to the study context and the nature of the problem identified for this research. The next chapter will discuss the findings that are the output of the application of the discussions in this chapter.
CHAPTER 5

Research Findings: Government and Industry Perceptions on Sustainable Tourism

5.0 Introduction

This chapter will present the findings of the study in three main sections. The first section will give an overview of the perceptions on sustainable tourism dimensions by the two stakeholder groups, based on the findings using quantitative data, and further provide explanation on what factors contributed to their interpretations. The focus of this section is on the conceptualisation of sustainable tourism by both stakeholder groups. The second section, consisting of two sub-sections, will take a step further into the practical interpretation of the term. The first sub-section will present the findings on government, the second on the industry. The discussions in the second section will move beyond numbers to describe the identified stakeholders’ interpretation of sustainable tourism at both theoretical and practical level and to confirm the trustworthiness of the qualitative data, direct quotations of the respondents will be used as evidence. It is to be noted that the findings presented in this chapter have been laid on the framework of the dimensions of sustainable tourism as per the discussion in Chapter 2 to maintain a level of consistency throughout the thesis. This chapter will conclude the findings from both stakeholder groups selected for this study and proceed to the next chapter to interpret the results by revisiting the theoretical context of sustainable tourism.

5.1 The Theoretical Interpretation of Sustainable Tourism

This section deals with the ‘language’ used by the industry and government ministries and departments to express their interpretations of sustainable tourism development. Forty-five interviews were conducted altogether during the fieldwork. In total, there were 27 local respondents and 18 expatriates/foreigners. Local in this case refers to the indigenous and Indo-Fijian respondents while expatriates/foreigners refer to the Europeans. It is important to note that the stated figures on locals and foreign respondents are not related to the ownership of the tourism businesses. Out of all 45 respondents, 12 (26%) had no idea what sustainable tourism development might mean. They said they had never heard about this term in their entire tourism career. Out of
these 12 respondents, one of them did attempt to define it in some way based on a
presumption on what the term could mean if it relates to sustainability with the word
tourism sitting right next to it. These 12 respondents were all locals.

Four respondents in particular generally commented on sustainable tourism
development as a concept where they mentioned it as a “widely used concept” (Nadi
FHA), a term that has become very popular in the last couple of years” (Air
Pacific), “term difficult to define in an easy way” (Sheraton) and, “term, which is loosely used in
many areas (Captain Cook Cruises). It was also mentioned that sustainable tourism is
something that deals with “balance” (Air Pacific), “blending three pillars” (Ministry of
National Planning) and “trade offs” (SPTO) of its dimensions.

Two out of 43 respondents stated that they prefer to interpret sustainable tourism in the
same way as the World Tourism Organisation interprets it. Given that the definition of
sustainable tourism by WTO is not context specific and used by many countries
including many developing nations, the two main tourism bodies in Fiji, SPTO and the
Ministry of Tourism mentioned that this definition should not be a problem to use in
Fiji.

Respondents in this study have used the common dimensions, environment being the
most mentioned one, followed by socio-cultural, economic and political to
conceptualise sustainable tourism development. Table 5.0 shows that the environmental
dimension got the focus of the respondents’ attention to interpret sustainable tourism
development. Two respondents strongly emphasised that sustainable tourism
development was “just more than environment”. The socio-cultural dimension was
recorded second, followed by economic, while the political dimension got the least
priority concern.
Table 5.0: Sustainability Dimensions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sustainability Dimensions</th>
<th>Number of Respondents</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Environmental</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economic</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Socio-Cultural</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>63*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The results also showed that sustainable tourism was interpreted using time as one of the variables of sustainable tourism, in other words, the continuity of the tourism industry. Respondents used phrases like “tourism that has a lasting life…” (Captain Cook Cruises), “tourism that sustains consistently over a period of time…” (Crusoes Retreat), “ensure that tourism…survive in perpetuity” (FVB), “continue to meet expectations…long term” (FVB), “…input that can be here 50 years down the track…” (SOFTA), maintain a certain level for a certain period of time. Phrases like “keep tourists coming” (Coral Coast FHA), words like “consistently”, “maintaining”, “sustaining”, “surviving”, and “continued growth” reflected the continuity of the tourism industry as the interpretation of sustainable tourism.

In addition to timescale, there were responses that incorporated the needs of the present as well as the future of the tourism industry of Fiji. This intra- and inter-generational equity was another interpretation of sustainable tourism. The following quotes illustrate the views of the respondents on the present as well as the future of the industry while interpreting the term. As quoted “…using the resources to today’s daily needs and leave behind for future generations” (Department of Environment) …workable for future generations…” (FIBA) and “…tourism for today and tomorrow”.

* The Table does not total to 43 because many respondents mentioned more than one dimension in his/her definition for sustainable tourism
The nature and work involved by the government ministries and departments determined their interpretations of sustainable tourism development. Senior government officials gave definitions having a definite relation to the nature of their individual work. The Department of Environment defined it with a major focus on the protection of the environment for the present as well as the future of the tourism industry. The Department of Culture and Heritage highlighted the importance and interest of locals and their culture in the tourism sector, while the National Planning Ministry, at a national level, interpreted it in a way that tourism as a sector should contribute towards the broader, or parent, concept of sustainable development of Fiji and not just revolve around a particular sector. The quoted definitions demonstrate the point.

Definitions by Government Ministries and Departments

Department of Environment

“Sustainable – we refer to efficient use of environmental resources to daily needs and leaving some behind for future generations. Therefore, sustainability in tourism will mean that the natural environment is protected so that there are continued visitor arrivals, meaning the future generations can see the beauty of the environment we have today.”

Department of Culture and Heritage

“Tourism that involves local communities, involves their values, understands their side of things and also their side of the business, and compromises so that both the locals and the investors can come out as a win/win situation. It also considers where resources owned by local communities are not over exploited, used with their consent, and where money coming out of it is shared properly.”

Ministry of National Planning

“Sustainable Tourism Development is a holistic approach to tourism development in Fiji. It blends in political, economic, social and environmental pillars of tourism development—not leaving out any pillar…Tourism as a sector should contribute to the overall sustainable development of Fiji.”
At a theoretical level, the MOT revealed during the interview that they follow the same
definition of sustainable tourism as given by the WTO (2004). It is important to note at
this stage that the WTO (2004) definition of sustainable tourism places special emphasis
on establishing suitable balance between the three sustainability dimensions
(environmental, economic, and socio-cultural). In addition to that, WTO has included
the requirement of informed participation of all stakeholders, a strong political
leadership to ensure wide participation and consensus building, constant impact
monitoring and tourist satisfaction and awareness about sustainability issues. As
highlighted earlier, the rest of the government agencies interpreted sustainable tourism
with respect to the nature of their particular work.

These findings confirm that sustainable tourism within the government agencies did not
receive a common interpretation as discussed earlier. Government representatives had
their own agendas for sustainable tourism, which was strictly confined to their work
area. The positive aspects that can be drawn from this finding are that each government
ministry or department has shown interest in addressing that particular dimension, in
which they specialize in and there is greater chance of that theoretical interpretation
becoming a practice.

On the other hand, the tourism industry respondents interpreted sustainable tourism
based on the issues or challenges they are facing currently in Fiji. In other words,
sustainable tourism to them is the solutions to their current tourism industry problems in
addition to the mention of the common dimensions of sustainable tourism development
(see in quotations that follow). The environment was the most mentioned dimension.
Furthermore, their interpretations were very much sector-specific, in other words, there
were no references made to the parent concept, where tourism can be a contributor to
the broader sustainable development of Fiji. It is also important to note that many
tourism operators were not aware of the WTO definition of sustainable tourism. This
was confirmed when respondents were asked to give their opinion on adapting the
WTO definition of sustainable tourism. The following are the quotations from industry
operators on their interpretations on sustainable tourism, highlighting some of the tourism industry issues that are part of sustainable tourism development in Fiji:

According to the Managing Director of Sheraton Resorts, Sustainable tourism involves many different factors. It begins with infrastructure and infrastructure includes basic things like roads, airline seat capacity, and ability to be mobile once you are at a destination, having a number of appropriate attractions at the destination…Sustainable tourism with infrastructure also includes having a workforce—having an available labour pool that is conducive towards the hospitality and being able to instil a level of service oriented attitude and mind set. Education is important and being able to have a pool of local indigenous people that can grow up within the industry and eventually grow into senior positions…Also sustainable tourism includes having political stability, racial harmony, all of the things that make it conducive for people to be comfortable to travel half way around the world… — having quality products like that is unique to the destination. Like the handicrafts we have here is wonderful and many many people come here and take home handicrafts from Fiji that they keep for a long time.

Furthermore, the President of (Mamanuca FHA) said:

When we talk about sustainable tourism there is more than just the environment. One of the biggest issues in Fiji is the human resources…in general sustainable tourism boils down to environment, human resources, development and agriculture. Fiji has a problem in these areas, which must get immediate attention for sustainability of the tourism industry

To conclude this section, the environmental dimension was given the most importance by the respondents of this study. Sustainable tourism was interpreted in accordance to the respective government agencies’ nature of work. The national tourism body of Fiji, the Ministry of Tourism fell back on the WTO definition of sustainable tourism. This confirms that sustainable tourism received different interpretations at a theoretical level
within the government agencies while the same applies to the industry group. For the industry, in addition to the three core dimensions of sustainability (environment being the most mentioned) addressing the challenges that face the tourism industry in the Fiji context is what they consider ‘sustainable tourism’ to be.

5.2 The Practical Interpretation of Sustainable Tourism
The preceding section looked at sustainable tourism interpreted at a theoretical level. This section is divided into two sub-sections. The first sub-section will discuss the practical interpretation by the government while the proceeding section will discuss the industry practical interpretations of the term. Both these sections will be presented using the framework of the four sustainability dimensions discussed in Chapter 2.

5.2.1 Government Perspective
Table 5.1 will be used as a framework for the discussion in this section. The interview responses of government have been plotted using the four sustainability dimensions to illustrate the actual undertaking of the MOT in conjunction with other line ministries, departments and the NGOs in shaping sustainable tourism in reality.

Table 5.1 illustrates that, at a practical level, the focus of government lies in the economic dimension of sustainable tourism. As highlighted earlier, the MOT revealed during the interview that they did not have their own working definition of sustainable tourism. Instead, they use the definition given by WTO (2004). It should be noted at this point that the MOT has not in fact been able to comply with the definition of sustainable tourism. Their plans have revealed an imbalance in accounting for the sustainability dimensions; as illustrated in Figure 5.1 the economic dimension has been prioritised. WTO (2004), on the other hand, as discussed earlier, emphasizes the balance between the three sustainability dimensions rather than weighting any one more than the other.
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<th>Environment</th>
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<td>✿ Ecotourism awareness for hosts and guests (SDP)</td>
<td>✿ Increase resource owner’s participation in the tourism industry (SDP)</td>
<td>✿ Promote human resource development in tourism (SDP)</td>
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<td>✿ Promote ecotourism development (SDP) &amp; ecotourism policy &amp; strategy (MOT)</td>
<td>✿ Increase economic contribution and the retention of tourist dollar (SDP)</td>
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Key:
- Theoretical Interpretation
- Practical Interpretation
The interview with MOT also revealed that the two major documents that have been prepared for the sustainability of the tourism industry in Fiji are the Strategic Development Plan 2003–2005 (SDP) and the Fiji Tourism Development Plan 1998–2005 (TDP). As noted in Figure 5.1, both these documents have mostly targeted the economic dimension of sustainability. For example, the SDP has five policy objectives (see Appendix for details), of which the first two (the first one is to increase visitor arrivals and the second one is to increase the economic contribution and the retention of the tourist dollar) are heavily biased to the economic dimension with their key performance indicators (KPIs).

To name a few, direct flights to new markets, targeting 500,000 visitors by 2005, adding 2000 rooms via new 3 to 5 star hotels, creating 26,500 jobs, reviewing tourism investment regimes, increasing length of stay and hotel occupancy and implementation of the Tourism Satellite Accounting (TSA) were some of these KPIs. The TSA will help detect leakage by accounting for all tourism related imports and exports and government spending, giving much attention to the economic dimension of sustainable tourism development in Fiji (Kuilamu, personal communication, 2004). It will allow gauging the economic performance of the tourism sector specifically indicating the rate of multiplier effects and other economic monitoring facts and figures such as the contribution of tourism as a sector to GDP; and breakdown of industry spending – restaurants, shopping, contribution and how issues can be addressed (Dawai, personal communication, 2004).

In addition, though the TDP addresses all dimensions of sustainable tourism, the economic dimension again has been the prime focus with tourism investment being the key element of this plan.

Other focal points of the plan include the tourism planning in terms of foreign exchange earning, job creation and competition from tourism; creation of a lot more potential for business through investing in new accommodation and attractions for their existing markets (Australia, New Zealand, North America, Europe and Japan); tourism product
development mainly through infrastructure improvement; increasing airline access and capacity; Ministry adapting to a step change strategy, which involves improvement in investment climate and procedures, increasing FVB budget to increase visitor numbers; a push for 3 to 5 star quality resort and hotel development for Fiji; and the physical planning involving the improvement and consolidation of existing tourism development areas (TDAs) with Fijian themes are all mainly targeting the economic dimension at the end of the day.

In addition, it was not surprising to see in the TDP that the SMEs were proposed for economic reasons, which weighed more than the environmental concerns as emphasised in the TDP (p.62): “SMEs are internationally recognised as having an important role in economic development due to factors including low cost of entry and potential for the indigenous Fijian to be part of the industry”.

The TDP has also made a call for the adoption of the Sustainable Development Bill, now called the Environmental Management Bill (EMB), and for establishing a coastal zone management program. The MOT is working in conjunction with the Department of Environment (DOE) on this (Sovaki, personal communication, 2004). According to Sovaki, DOE protects the environment, allowing the establishment of more ecotourism businesses in Fiji. He added that their contribution towards sustainable tourism development in Fiji is not only by giving the MOT the information about existing and potential tourism attraction sites in Fiji but also by assisting them to manage and maintain the natural resources for the present as well as the future hosts and guests. The MOT has a policy and strategy designed for ecotourism and village based tourism in Fiji.

In 2003, out of 104 labels for accreditation and benchmarking for the tourism industry in Fiji, a Cabinet decision endorsed that the Green Globe 21 (GG21) to part of the Sustainable Tourism and Best Practice Standard Initiative. The MOT undertook a GG21 review, which turned out unfavourable for the tourism industry stakeholders with a particular emphasis that the programme did not suit Fiji context. As part of the
recommendation to the Cabinet, it was noted that Fiji should develop its own scheme using some principles of GG 21 instead of fully disregarding it. Consequently, the MOT came up with a ‘home-grown’ product called the Green Fiji (GF), which is a voluntary accreditation program aimed to identify and reward those within the tourism industry of Fiji who operate in an environmentally friendly and socio-culturally manner.

However, it was again noted in the TDP (p.41) that “hotels can contribute to environmental management of natural resources, and often improve their profitablity, by operating under a “green code”…while such actions [recycle, reduce and reuse] will benefit Fiji’s tourism image, they should also benefit the hotels, given the growing demand by tourists for such practices in destinations that promote their natural resources”.

Furthermore, the environmental dimension was given prime focus in the Strategic Environment Assessment Report (SEA Report). According to Levett and McNally, (2003: xiii) two main conclusions were drawn from the SEA Report. Firstly, it was concluded that there is a requirement for the tourism industry to adapt to a precautionary approach to maximise the benefits and at the same time to avoid becoming involved in actions that can cause serious environmental or social tension to its resource base. Secondly, it needs to implement the institutional and regulatory frameworks for environmental assessment and management, including capacity building and enforcement, in order for the tourism expansion to be sustainable in the long run.

The TDP has also given some attention to the environmental dimension as it mentions about the conservation and protection of the environment. Section 7.7 (p.34) of the TDP was devoted to the tourism development design guidelines, which noted areas of building controls, structure and a list of issues highlighting alternative sources of water and energy, proper sewerage and waste treatment, type and the scale of development. Small-scale tourism development, which is believed to have little impact, has been
recommended for islands because there is no regulation in place to distinguish between densities allowed in mainland and island resorts (TDP 1998–2005).

However, it was mentioned during the interview that one of the biggest constraints faced by the MOT for the sustainable tourism development in Fiji is that it does not have a mandate or any legal power (no Act under MOT) to enforce its policies or plans (Kuilamu and Tagivetaua, personal communication, 2004). According to Tagivetaua (personal communication, 2004) they have to seek the assistance of other line Ministries in having their policies or plans enforced and that again takes a lot of time to be implemented as there is a procedure that needs to be followed and all formalities fulfilled.

Furthermore, the socio-cultural dimension has also been addressed by the MOT largely through both local and industry educational and awareness programmes and working closely with the NGOs. In 2005, the government allocated $20,000.00 for awareness purposes. For the first quarter of 2005, the ministry concentrated on the production of awareness materials. According to the MOT (2005), this included the production of 2500 information booklets, 20,000 brochures and 30,000 pocket cards. Furthermore, there were short television and radio interviews on marine protected areas and their importance to sustainable livelihood. The Ministry also visited schools, provided media interviews and worked in partnership with other organisations such as the ministries of Information and Education to increase public awareness.

The MOT conducts industry awareness programmes especially for the small tourism operators. According to Kuilamu (personal communication, 2004), the programme covers issues on sewerage, and water treatment, the role of the MOT, about the grants and incentives offered by them and the roles of other line ministries. In addition, he highlighted that workshops are conducted and guest speakers are often invited from NLTB, FAB or other government ministries or departments to explain their roles. According to Tagivetaua (personal communication, 2004), some programmes are also targeted at the schools.
As highlighted earlier, the MOT works closely with the NGOs, who have been commended for their bottom-up approach to planning. The MOT in conjunction with NGOs has worked on many community and environmental related projects, which have gained success Fiji wide. To name a few, the Yasawas Impact Study with WWF, establishment of MPAs and qoliqoli management with FLMMA and PCDF and Coastal Management and Interpretational Project Coral Coast with IAS/ICM were some of these projects. The NGOs and educational institutes like The University of the South Pacific (USP) take care of the technical side of it such as conducting EIAs, survey and other scientific testing; the locals incorporate their traditional knowledge and as resource owners give them authority to establish projects like MPAs; while the government helps in the overall facilitation of the project to get approvals from relevant agencies.

One of the issues that was raised by TPAF during the Fiji Tourism Week workshop in 2004 was that the mekes performed in hotels and resorts have a more commercialised look to them rather than projecting an authentic cultural performance. In many circumstances, the cultural performance that is used to attract overseas visitors is recorded by the guests and resold to make money out of it. According to Nemani (personal communication, 2004), this action has been considered as a serious form of exploitation of Fiji island culture and its people. Another issue highlighted was that the handicrafts sold to the tourists are often fake and of a low standard. Hence, actions have been taken by the government to address these two serious issues dealing with the socio-cultural sustainability of the tourism industry.

According to Nemani (personal communication, 2004), DOCH has come up with a project that will protect against the commercialisation of traditional knowledge and expressions of culture in the tourism industry. This formulated framework is known as *Model Law on Traditional Knowledge and Expressions of Culture*, which takes more of a regional approach and is drafted by a group of forum island jurisdictions and commissioned by the Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC), World Intellectual Property Organisation (WIPO), United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural
Organisation (UNESCO) and the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat (PIFS). In addition, according to the Cultural Development Officer of DOCH, it is also been planned to use ‘authentic labels’ on handicrafts to protect the tourists from being sold fake, low standard products.

In addition, to enhance visitor satisfaction and experience the MOT is working on the Food Safety and Standards Policy. The lack of knowledge about food, bacterial dissemination, personal hygiene of hotel staff and poor service surfaced in the 2002 International Visitor Survey report and has been reported directly by a number of tourists. There have been a few cases in Fiji where poor food quality and handling has led to the closure of small-small ecotourism operations (Kuilamu, personal communication, 2004).

The strength of MOT lies in its strategy to work closely with all the relevant stakeholders of the tourism industry including the government line ministries and departments, the NGOs, the local community and the tourism industry. The Fiji Tourism Forum and the National Tourism Council Meetings have been the platforms bringing all these stakeholders under one roof to discuss issues and at the same time identify solutions to these issues.

The government has also been able to take significant steps towards addressing the political dimension of sustainability. The findings have revealed that proper tourism plans and policies were in place from regional, to national and down to sectoral level. According to the Technical Advisor of SPTO, Hopkins (personal communication, 2004) the organisation had a regional tourism policy, covering the South Pacific region. According to him “though we don’t have specific environment, socio-cultural, and economic sections within the strategy, but the vision relates to the three components of sustainable tourism development…that’s where we want to see the sector going to”. In addition, SPTO also works at country level responding to the requests each country makes to SPTO on policy area such as ecotourism and sustainable tourism development. An example was given of Tuvalu and SPTO’s contribution to their
tourism policy as part of their broader economic development framework and also development of a sustainable tourism policy.

According to Hopkins (personal communication, 2004) “though much has not been done in Fiji at a destination/country level, but its coverage has been equally made in the regional tourism policy designed by SPTO”. SPTO has been actively involved in the regional ecotourism workshops in Fiji. They are also involved in other sustainable development initiatives like the Oceans Forum and other CROP agency activities. They have also worked with an organisation in New Zealand in developing a responsible tourism code for the Pacific Island Countries. This code includes some very basic guidelines on things to be considered when visiting any Pacific Island Countries.

In addition, the publication of the SDP that includes tourism as a chapter is the testament to a national-level planning of the tourism sector, while the TDP fully focuses on a sectoral-level planning. Furthermore, MOT has also reviewed its TDP to re-negotiate on the future development of tourism in Fiji in order to achieve a greater level of sustainability in the sector. It is also to be noted that other specific MOT policies have been mentioned in the earlier discussion.

The MOT was also found working with the Fijian Affairs Board (FAB), which works to safeguard the interest of the locals and helps settle disputes between the tourism businesses and landowners. According to Nalatu (personal communication, 2004), “there is always misunderstanding and misinterpretation between the landowners and the tourism industry operators”. One of the common issues revealed during the interview with a FAB representative (Nalatu, personal communication, 2004) was the qoliqoli* issue. Many tourism operators were found opposing the proposed Qoliqoli Bill, which if enacted will transfer ownership of beaches and reef area to the highwater mark from the State to the NLTB in trust for the registered landowners, whose lack of understanding can cause a lot of anxiety to the tourism industry. On this note, an interesting issue was highlighted by one of the industry respondents: “for example, if

* traditional, community owned fishing ground
there are 350 qoliqoli around Fiji and there are only 40–50 waterfront hotels. This means that only 40–50 qoliqoli owners out of 350 will get the money while the 290 will get nothing…this will create internal conflict among the qoliqoli owners”. Hence, the FAB conducts awareness programmes for the locals and the tourism operators on the qoliqoli issue as one of the strategies to overcome the common problem of qoliqoli in the tourism industry in Fiji.

In addition, the FAB has helped set-up a Fiji Tourism Resource Owners Association (TROA). It has been stated in the Sustainable Development Section Quarter 1 Report – 2005 that the resource owners have often been neglected and overlooked in the past; however, recently the MOT has been playing an active role in facilitating their needs. This initiative is focused on encouraging meaningful participation of Tourism Resource Owners (TRO) as stated in the Policy Statement of the Tourism Sector Development Plan. The objectives of setting up the TROA were: to allow resource owners to understand the modes of operations of the industry; to establish a better understanding of the tourism resource owners’ expectations with regard to the industry, targeting business opportunity and human resources development; to establish better working relationships among TRO, industry operators and other stakeholders; to obtain a clear indication and direction of the concerns and issues facing TRO, who want to establish themselves or who are already established in the tourism industry; and finally, to develop a working framework with all the tourism stakeholders including the TRO to conduct their businesses.

Hence, it can be concluded from this section that at the theoretical/institutional level, the government is trying to give an equal weight to all the sustainability dimensions based on the WTO definition of sustainable tourism. In addition, the other line government agencies, with whom the MOT closely associates, have their own interpretation of sustainable tourism. The findings at the practical level revealed that the economic dimension was given the prime focus in the majority of MOT’s plans and policies. Therefore, the overall findings at the government level reveal that sustainable tourism has been interpreted differently by different government agencies at the
theoretical level of interpretation and furthermore, prioritised differently at the practical level. The next section will discuss the practical interpretation of sustainable tourism by the industry group.

5.2.2 The Tourism Industry Perspective

The preceding sections highlighted the findings on the theoretical and practical interpretation of sustainable tourism by the government as one of the selected stakeholder groups of this study. The theoretical interpretation of the term by the tourism industry has already been discussed in Section 5.1 of this chapter. This section will present the practical interpretation of the term by the tourism industry, by mapping the findings of this study on the sustainability dimensions identified in Chapter 2. This section consists five aspects: environmental initiatives, the economic contribution, the political juggle and finally, the Human Resource dimension. It is to be noted that a fifth dimension is added from the analysis of the data collected during field work. This was one of the dimensions, whose importance was emphasised greatly for the sustainability of the tourism industry in Fiji.

5.2.2.1 The Environmental Initiatives

The findings showed that the respondents were aware that the environment is one of the prime attractions to Fiji’s tourism industry; hence, they were actively involved in the environmental conservation initiatives. This usually meant that they valued and respected the environment, so that not only the hosts but also the guests can benefit in the present with consideration to future generations as well.

There was also evidence of respondents’ awareness that the growth in tourism development facilities in Fiji has begun to cause a lot of pressure on the environment. A statement was made by Kennedy (personal communication, 2004) that “the environment around us is becoming a matter of concern…the environment is something that has been stressed a lot because the growth in visitor arrivals has placed demands on the area”. The General Manager of Captain Cook Cruises (personal communication, 2004) added that “once the tourism business starts, things are never going to be the
same. The beach isn’t going to be without people on them. Once people arrive, they are fulfilled with the required facilities but in return, they also leave behind all sorts of rubbish on the islands. They have been doing this though not meaningfully but their actions are causing damage to the natural beauty of the islands, therefore we have to follow them for their inappropriate actions….to leave behind a positive attitude”.

Furthermore, the FIBA President (personal communication, 2004) supported this by giving examples of some of the resort practices that usually cause direct negative environmental impacts. These included the destruction of mangroves caused by massive tourism developments near coastal areas—as on the Coral Coast and elsewhere, where there has been destruction of corals resulting from the construction of over water bures especially with new tourism projects and dredging related activities undertaken by the resorts.

It is quite clear from the findings that the respondents strongly showed concern for the environment and believed that the future of the tourism industry lies in proper management and preservation of the environment. The tourism operators highlighted their involvement in various environmental initiatives that contributed to the sustainability of the tourism industry. These initiatives involved the three R’s, including reduce, reuse and recycle features, contributing to the environmental sustainability dimension in the tourism context.

For example, the Director of the Fiji Museum (personal communication, 2004) revealed during the interview that they no longer use brochures and the big paper tickets for the reason that it becomes a costly affair and is usually dumped into the gardens and outside the museum. They are currently using internet marketing as an alternative option. She also stressed that for the tickets they use recycled paper. Many operators claimed the reuse of bottles, plastics, and containers. Some of these were reused by the operators themselves while some were given to the nearby villagers.
In addition, the Hannibal’s Resort Manager (personal communication, 2004) mentioned that they have their own resort organic vegetable farm, which has been a major part of the resort since it started operating in Savusavu. She explained that the resort itself mostly uses the vegetables from the farm while the surpluses are sold to nearby restaurants. Furthermore, almost all operators mentioned their involvement in some kind of schemes that helped them save energy and water for environmental as well as cost saving purposes.

Many claimed to use solar power and low energy light fittings, as well as using generators for their power supply. For water saving, many operations had their own water tanks and made use of the rainwater, while the larger resorts and hotels had more sophisticated water treatment plants, which was part of the resort set-up. Some, for example the Fijian and the Sheraton have their own artificial wetlands that make water reusable for the gardens, while the others have even more advanced technology, for example, the installation of a water system that de-salted seawater to normal drinking water at Malolo Island Resort. According to the General Manager of Malolo Island Resort (personal communication, 2004) “this plant produced 50,000 litres per day and the usage was claimed to be 45,000 litres at 100% occupancy; a saving of 5000 litres of water per day”.

In addition, some resorts, especially the larger ones, claimed to have a marine biologist on board to offer environmental educational programmes to the in-house guests. Cousteau’s Resort Director (personnel communication, 2004) for example, explained that the marine biologist leads scuba dives and takes lectures for guests in the evening; educating them on the proper usage of the fragile reefs and the whole eco-system while taking part in any leisure water activities. He added that “the guests have always shown greater appreciation of the environment they are living in and sharing and they also acknowledge the information they get from the marine biologist. He supported this by explaining that lot of them see billion blue, yellow and green fish that cut a nice turn in front of them and the good part of the experience is that they are able to identify the specific names of the fishes”. There were some other operators who also showed their
concerns for the wildlife environment. For example, Lomalagi’s owner (personal communication, 2004) highlighted that they tell guests not to swim with the dolphins and not to feed them, as this will result in detrimental changes in their behaviour. She claimed, “We want to offer guests experience of wild dolphins in their natural environment”.

Furthermore, the Namale Resort also engages in conservation programmes like planting trees. According to the Assistant Resort Manager (personal communication, 2004), they are strict with employees for chopping down trees. In addition, the operators who were frequent users of the sea were also found to be cautious of their actions. For example, it was claimed by the Captain Cook Cruises that all their vessels use the sea frequently to transport tourists from the mainland to island resorts. He accepted the fact that they use the same sea all the time within a fixed schedule; and they keep going to the same places, the same beaches, villages, and coral reef. He said, “We have to take actions to make sure that they don’t get over used” (Bradfield, personnel communication, 2004).

Eco Dives, for example, elaborated that when they go on kayak trips, it is ensured that “everything we take should be brought back, that is, being mindful not to leave any rubbish out in the sea” (Carswell, personal communication, 2004). They often advise their guest during the trips not to touch anything in water nor take anything out of it. They also make sure that they do not over-visit villages; in other words, they do not take guests to the same village all the time.

The airlines were equally part of environmental conservation programmes. Air Pacific, for example, ensures that their fleet of aircraft meets the specific environmental certification standards on emissions, developed by ICAO. In addition, it was confirmed by the Manager Sales and Marketing (personal communication, 2004) that Air Pacific’s fleet comprises the latest technology aircrafts, all complying with noise abatement regulations and using biodegradable and non-polluting chemicals in aircraft maintenance and cleaning tasks.
It was interesting to find out that some hotels, mostly along the Coral Coast areas, were found to be actively involved in the coastal management projects. Hideaway, for example, was engaged with the coral-replanting programme and the resort worked in conjunction with the villagers, USP and NGOs on the project, especially concerning the tabu areas. According to the Managing Director of the resort their coral-replanting programme started 2 years ago and has been developed targeting two main agendas (Wade, personal communication, 2004). Firstly, he claimed that it had been developed as a commercial farm for the sale of coral and cultured rock overseas and secondly, it would be an income-generating proposition for the villages who work with the resort on the project. In addition, there was an area closer to the resort where guests can plant their own piece of coral so that they can also be part of the project. According to Mr Wade, the tourists acknowledge the resort for offering them the opportunity to make their contribution towards environmental conservation programmes (personal communication, 2004).

On this note, some of the respondents commented that the tourist market has changed, in other words, the needs and wants of the tourists have changed over the years to engage in sustainable forms of tourism in terms of the services and facilities they are offered at the destination. For example, the Trip and Tour Manager commented that “tourists themselves are environmentally friendly”. The Manager of a camping ground (Respondent T, personal communication, 2004) added that “most tourists educate us. They are very environmentally knowledgeable…it is rather disappointing to many guests the way the locals themselves are dealing with their natural resources”.

In addition, some of the regions had their own environment committees, which not only helped one operation to be part of the environmental initiatives but all the operators in the region to contribute their part. For example, according to the Mamanuca FHA (MFHA) President (personal communication, 2004) they have formed a Mamanuca Environmental Society (MES) comprising active and associate members of the MFHA. They have employed two full time marine biologists who work for the association. They lobby the government to fund certain environmental projects they have identified from...
their research. They have training programmes for the resorts, the tourists and the locals on all relevant environmental issues. In addition, they do reviews of the resorts from an environmental perspective and recommend environmentally friendly chemicals and products to use and sewerage treatment tactics.

Furthermore, many tourism operators in Fiji are also involved in ‘green programmes’. Sheraton, for example has a Green Room Programme. According to the General Manager of Sheraton (Bussiere, personnel communication, 2004), “Sheraton’s size has results in a huge amount of laundry including bed sheets, pillow cases and towels. Hence, this programme allows for an agreement to make with the guests not to wash their sheets, pillowcases and towels daily and this programme helps the Resort to save water and chemicals and also limit the amount of waste water. Cards are placed along the beds and when the guest sees it when they check in, they can make a choice. If they leave the card on the bed, that means they do not want the sheets to be changed and if they take it off then that means they do. It is very much the customer’s choice to be part of the programme…however, so far our guests have been responding positively to it” (Bussiere, personal communication, 2004).

A few of the resorts in Fiji such as the Treasure Island Resort and Sonaisali are Green Globe Certified. Many respondents, especially the large-scale hotels, showed interest to be part of the Green Globe Programme and had future plans to get the accreditation. The respondents were asked their opinion on the Green Globe Programme in Fiji as proposed by the MOT in 2004. Very few respondents, mostly large scale resort operators, showed a positive attitude towards the programme and insisted that it should be made a compulsory criterion for the renewal of licenses of tourism operators in Fiji. On the other hand, many small and medium scale operators opposed the scheme as they felt it was a costly affair and its complexities did not suit the Fiji context.

In addition, it was found that there was regular monitoring of the resorts on the impacts they have on the environment. It was again noted that this was a common practice in large-scale resorts. To name a few, Turtle Island Resort, Sheraton and Outrigger have
been monitoring the status of the environment around their sites and these were done with the help of EIAs. Environmental groups such the Mamanuca Environment Society (MES) do the regular checks at the regional level such as the impact the resort has on the refs etc and proper scientific research is done to monitor the impacts over regular intervals. In addition, these groups help the resorts to identify environmental friendly strategies for the resorts and the tourism operators in the region. Funding issues, lack of experts and complexities in EIAs procedures were some of the reasons given by the small and medium scale operators for not being able to carry out EIAs at their operations.

There were suggestions by most respondents that Fiji has a lot of potential for ecotourism, which can make a contribution to the sustainable tourism development in Fiji, considering the fact that its natural environment is still appreciated by tourists and the tourism industry. Some respondents on the other hand argued that ecotourism is more used as a marketing mechanism than its contribution to the environmental concerns. For example, Respondent T (personal communication, 2004) said that “some operators call themselves eco friendly but in reality these tourism businesses try to form an eco-friendly image for tourists, in other words, using ‘eco’ as a marketing gimmick”. In addition, a respondent with ‘Eco’ added to the name of his operation was asked during the interview to explain as to why he thought to add ‘eco’ to the name of his operation. The answer to his question confirmed Respondent T’s argument. He explained that “it was a popular term and because everyone was making hay on the name eco and I did it too for publicity” (Carswell, personal communication, 2004).

It is important to note that the basic three R’s were common among the small and medium tourism operators whereas the more sophisticated and scientific environmental projects were affordable in terms of funding, hiring experts and other required resources by the large scale tourism operators only. A distinctive quality of these large-scale tourism operators was that these were multinational corporations. There is a possibility of greater awareness and exposure to such projects owing to the fact that the parent company is based in developed countries.
5.2.2.2. Interests of Hosts and Guests

The findings revealed that issues surrounding the interests of hosts and guests have been barriers for most of the respondents to engage in environmental conservation and protection projects. However, the socio-cultural issues were valued highest by the respondents at the practical level. The contributing factor to this is that the majority of the tourism operators in Fiji are located close to Fijian villagers therefore the tourism businesses and the locals have a ‘give and take’ relationship irrespective of their personal opinions of each other. In addition to that, maintaining this relationship with the villagers does not require costly resources nor help of the experts. The majority of the respondents emphasised that the socio-cultural aspects are the core to the tourism businesses in Fiji’s context; as highlighted by one of the respondents during the interview, “we try to tell and show our guests that the Fijians have interactions with their sea and land…it is a cultural bond, which needs to be respected by the outsiders” (Bradfield, personal communication, 2004).

“Richard Evanson, the Director of Turtle Island Resort, has always believed that if we don’t make a significant effort to enhance the opportunities for the people who live in our community, then we have no right to be doing business in the area” (Fairley, 2004: 3). This study revealed that the tourism businesses had positive socio-cultural contributions towards the local communities, although a few respondents highlighted some of the negative issues. Crusoes Retreat for example, mentioned “we are very fortunate that we have the village next door and that is basically our biggest asset from marketing, business and also from a personal point of view. It gives us opportunity to give directly back to the people” (Costello, personal communication, 2004).

The interviews revealed that the tourism industry was making a huge contribution to the local communities in terms of offering jobs, training them, and finally contributing towards the nearby village projects. For example, according to the General Manager of Sheraton, the employment figure at Sheraton is approximately 900, and the majority of them are locals. He further added that over the years the staffs have also given local
staff the opportunity to travel for business reasons to overseas (Bussiere, personal communication, 2004).

More examples included Captain Cook Cruises assisting in the development of three schools in the Yasawas, Rivers Fiji claiming they pay land fees to 20 mataqalis they deal with in business and helping them with the required equipment and Coral Sun providing cheaper bus service in their area and helping school students with their stationery. In addition, according to the Sales and Marketing Manager of Air Pacific, “Air Pacific considers itself as ‘wings of hope’ for the locals. They have been contributing largely in charity funds and some of their recent projects were building a boys hostel up in the Sabeto Hills, helping renovate the Children’s Ward of the Hospital in 2003 and also offering help to one of the handicapped schools in Lautoka by assigning them the job to pack their headsets, for which they pay the school. Likewise, Namale Resort provides transport for the two villages to take children to school on a daily basis and is actively involved with similar kinds of community projects throughout the year.

Conversely, Kennedy (personal communication, 2004) highlighted that though it is quite clear that the local communities appreciate the existence of tourism businesses for economic reasons mostly, there were circumstances when the locals have come into conflicting situation with the tourism businesses. One of the reasons identified by Taylor (personal communication, 2004) for this was that “there is certainly a feeling with the community that when they see guests coming down and they look around the resort, they feel that the resort has got an immense amount of money. I think there is a feeling among the community that it is not distributed as evenly as possible”.

Some of the respondents also highlighted that crime was one of the things that have damaged the relationship between the tourism operators and the locals. Another issue pointed out by a respondent was the impact of alcohol on the locals and its after effects on the resort properties. It was found that these issues were becoming major concerns for many mid to large-scale tourism properties in Fiji. One of the respondents claimed
that “we have put a note in every room not to provide alcohol to staff or the locals (villagers)...If they have duty free and want to give to locals, they need to give it to the management and we will keep it for the Christmas party” (Costello, personal communication, 2004).

She further related during the interview a case that the previous manager of that tourism operation would not allow villagers within the premises of the property. The villagers were not happy with his rules and they started causing damage to the property such as damaging things deliberately and even the staff (from that village) started stealing. She insisted that when the current management to the resort, it was a big challenge for them. They consulted the village chief on this matter and assured him of their commitment to the business and towards the locals equally.

On the other hand, resorts or hotels in low tourism density areas did not encounter these issues. As highlighted by Cousteau Resort’s Director (Taylor, personal communication, 2004), “since tourism is at a low density here in Savusavu, so communities react in a very positive and friendly approach towards the guests...the locals value the guests and like them...it is a great exchange, where the village life is exposed to the guests, and on the other hand, the villagers have an opportunity to learn new ways from the guests...”.

The findings also revealed that the tourism industry was mindful of local culture and showed commitment in conducting tourism awareness programmes for the hosts. According to the Nadi FHA President (Chan, personal communication, 2004), tourism awareness programmes are conducted by the TPAF. They organise a tourism awareness week, where the educational institutions, the local communities and the tourism industry operators actively participate to contribute their fair share. Another respondent (McKenny, personal communication, 2004) mentioned that he invites various organisations to carry out workshops and meetings in different villages. They give out handouts, and discuss some of the tourism industry issues they face and how the community can help them overcome those problems.
As mentioned earlier, the tourism industry showed a lot of respect to the local culture by also educating their guests about the Fijian culture. Some of the respondents claimed that they advise their guests on some of the village protocols that need to be followed when entering the village. For example, Costello mentioned, “We have a sign in front of the village... It asks them not to wear a hat, to dress moderately, to be respectful to the local people” (personal communication, 2004). Another example, Namale Resort’s Assistant Manager (Hazelman, personal communication, 2004) said “tourists need to take off their shoes when going to the spa and the kava bowl area (entertainment area), which is given the same significance as a bure in a natural Fijian village setting”.

Some respondents also mentioned they employed tour guides, who were provided with in-house training sessions to ensure that accurate information is related to the guests during their tour. This information is a combination of facts and figures, for example, size of Fiji, population, land area etc. with some stories related to historical and cultural background of Fiji. They also tell them about various cultural sites of the different ethnic groups in Fiji. In addition, it is assured that the guests are advised on some of the environmental or community projects that are seen on the way, such as a brief explanation given on the OISCA project when they cross the Coral Coast area. Others take the opportunity to discuss some of the plants and animals found in the area, including information on some of the medicinal uses of the plants. They also tell tourists stories related to these plants—where were they originally from, how they got to Fiji, how and for what purpose people used them in olden days.

In addition, many respondents said that they normally had a compendium in the rooms for guests to know about some of the basic information about Fiji. It contained information on basic Fijian language, some rules to be followed when visiting Fijian villages, menus etc. A few of the respondents mentioned that they kept in-house videos for the tourists to watch in their leisure time. These videos normally contained information on tourist attractions in Fiji, some of the rules to be followed when going to these attractions (related to environmental and socio-cultural aspects).
As mentioned earlier during the discussion, the tourists tend to have a stronger educational background and are more conscious of their behaviour so that they do not end up harming the destination’s physical and social environment. There was also evidence of respondents mentioning that some of the tourists want to learn even more about the country they visit apart from the general knowledge they acquire through brochures, pamphlets and Internet or any other sources. They have been quite active in actually participating in activities to contribute towards the socio-cultural sustainable development of the tourism industry. For example, Outrigger offers Fijian culture and traditional aspects as part of their indoor activities for their guests. They have a story telling session, kava ceremony session, weaving sessions etc. and it was interesting to know from the Resort Manager that the tourists actively participated in activities like mat weaving, pottery making and drinking kava with the locals.

The findings also revealed that the local community were treated very much as part of the tourism industry. For example, Respondent H (personal communication, 2004) mentioned a project that has been planned where the locals will be solely involved in planning, management and control of the project. This project is known as ‘Slice of Fiji’ and is carried out in conjunction with the Waidroka Bay Resort. For example, the Waidroka Resort will call the villagers and tell them that they have 20 guests ready for ‘Slice of Fiji’. It will be the villagers’ responsibility to make arrangements to accommodate 20 people and at the end of the day they should be able to satisfy the visitors with their product and services. According to the Manager (Respondent H, personal communication, 2004), “since the village is in partnership with the tourism business there are no community issues and there is a feel of ownership for the locals. The land belongs to the village, the children of the village work for the project; therefore there is a win-win situation”.

5.2.2.3 The Economic Contribution
Very few of the respondents mentioned much about their economic contribution towards the tourism industry in Fiji though a handful of them made general comments that they provide employment to most of the locals in the area. For example, Air Pacific
claimed that it ensures the employment of approximately 1,050 people, helps to build tourism numbers from all source markets and the most important of all, its turnover makes an 18% contribution to the GDP of Fiji (Kamakamica, personal communication, 2004)

There was also talk about expansions on their current tourism operation sites – renovations, extensions and improving infrastructure to accommodate the increase in the visitor arrivals. For example, according to the Fiji Museum Director (Sagale, personal communication, 2004), “we are trying to get more visitors to the museum. There is a plan for new mini-museum in Nadi for next year”. In addition, Sheraton also outlined its future plans to undertake a $22m refurbishment project. The Resort Director (Bussiere, personal communication, 2004) asserted that “by developing and promoting our product to a new level we will provide considerable exposure to Denarau and also for Fiji…we will continue to upgrade our existing products and make sure that we are developing new markets from that as we are trying to increase demand from new areas – greater market means greater customer base which means more growth opportunity for Fiji”.

Some of the respondents also mentioned about searching for new products to diversify their visitor market and ways they were trying to change their business management style to attract a fair share of tourists to Fiji. In addition to that, some respondents also commented on targeting more visitors with improved marketing and promotions. For example, the following quotation from McPharlin (personal communication, 2004) emphasises that issue:

“We are officially rated by the AAA Tourism as a five star property in Fiji. We are 4 years old; we have done complete refurbishments of the bures that is not normal for a brand new hotel. We have tried to identify our niche market. We decided that we wanted to go five star, the infrastructure, the presentation of the resort, the upgrades overall is because of that. And also the change of name—we needed to set ourselves a benchmark to rename it. We have a new spa, which has cost us close to million-dollar investment—again we are targeting the up-market clientele…right now we are concentrating on obtaining a very good occupancy on a 12-month cycle. We are trying
to market for off-peak periods beginning of the year. When we get to the point where we can maintain 80% occupancy, then that’s fantastic and now its time to move on…..

Furthermore, some respondents mentioned that they were trying to meet the visitor demands and standards by offering quality facilities and services. Nadi FHA President, Mr Chan (personal communication, 2004) and the CEO of FVB, Mr Gavoka (personal communication, 2004) emphasised that they work on a regional level towards the objective of making sure that whenever the visitors come they prefer to stay for a longer period of time, enjoy their stay while in Fiji and also show interest in repeat visits to Fiji. For these respondents, repeat guests meant more income for the tourism businesses. One of the respondents produced the equation during the interview that “a satisfied visitor = a repeat visitor”. Considering this equation in mind, the respondents asserted that there is a need to identify the areas that satisfy a visitor to Fiji and most important, the dissatisfying issues that need immediate action by the industry.

It was revealed during the interview that many tourism operators in Fiji gauge their performance and visitor satisfaction levels by getting feedback from the visitors by filling in questionnaires or forms. Namale Resort, for example, puts the guest feedback, questionnaires into the guest bures. It depends on the visitor to fill in this questionnaire but it always remains the duty of the staff to ask for that feedback as a standby questionnaire is also placed on the checkout counter in case the guest has overlooked the questionnaire in the bure. According to the operators, some guests also provide verbal comments, which again are appreciated by the operators.

Hazelman (personal communication, 2004), on the other hand, is trying another tactic to please his guests and especially the repeat guests. According to the Manager, his resort keeps a database of his guests, which contains some general information about the guests, such as, information on their favourite food, music, flower, drinks etc. He claimed that though his operation is small scale, he often receives repeat guests, to whom he is able to pay special attention with the help of his database. For example, if they receive a reservation from a guest who has already been to their resort, upon
check-in, the guest is usually welcomed with his favourite flowers and drinks (data retrieved from the database). McKenny (personal communication, 2004) claimed that to her, enhancing visitor satisfaction is sustainable tourism. She asserted that it was a big achievement for her operation when a guest came back 4 times in 18 months. Lal (personal communication, 2004) concluded, “We teach our staff to make the guests happy. If the guests are happy, the more people will come here, the more goes to the village…this will help your villagers to gain from them both economically and socially”.

The economic benefits are basically the monetary gains from the tourism ventures whereas the social dimension integrates at this point, where tourism gains are able to create backward linkages with the locals. In a nutshell, the respondents had a common goal of getting more tourists to the shores of Fiji Islands so that they are able to generate more revenue into the economy and build a stronger strength in terms of multiplier effect in Fiji. The Managing Director of one of the five star resorts reconfirmed this issue by highlighting that, “The benefits and importance of tourism are not only realised directly but people should realise that there is always a trickle down effect. For instance, I pay my staff from the money I get from my guests (tourist dollar); they go shop at Gulab Dass (name of a shop). Gulab Dass makes money directly from my staff’s payment but the workers of Gulab Dass benefit indirectly as they are paid salary with the same tourist dollar my staff paid to Gulab Dass. The workers of Gulab Dass will use the same dollar to buy their groceries etc… and the link goes on and on (McKenny, personal communication, 2004)”.

According to Seay (personal communication, 2004), they pay the community a set amount each month for the meke they perform at the hotel. They give opportunity to women from the nearby villages to set up a market for their craft at the hotel site on every Friday though he pointed out that it was disappointing to see that many crafts that they brought to be sold at the hotel were imported either from Indonesia or China. He further claimed that this is one way the hotel is able to give back the communities their fair share.
In addition, the tourism operators have designed their own projects, which make a special contribution back to the local economy. For example, Outrigger’s involvement in a farming project, which is supported by the Pacific Enterprise Development Facility, will basically train the local villagers from subsistence farming to commercial farming. The Outrigger signed a memorandum of understanding with the villagers outlining that the Resort will be the major buyer of their produce. The Resort Manager claimed that the reason for engaging in such a project is that the local produce is not recognised by the tourism industry currently and such efforts can bring an opportunity for the locals to benefit from the industry as well.

According to Outrigger Manager, Mr Cavu (personal communication, 2004) the tourism industry demand is there but the locals are unable to supply them with the quantity and quality. Another Resort Manager (Respondent R) supported this view and claimed, “We buy 65% of our food from overseas. We buy those food items that we can get locally but it is difficult. We would love to purchase more fruits and vegetables here but there is not a consistent supply so we have to resort to imported things. There is reluctance of many farmers to move away from what they are comfortable with, which is the sugar industry and that’s not unique to Fiji but also applied to Asia (rice farming). According to Cavu (personal communication, 2004) “the tourism industry if it links up with the agricultural sector is an area that can quite easily and should be explored, for the benefit of the locals especially.”

The Outrigger Manager also made his claim that the Resort paid approximately $160,000–$200,000 in 2003 to cash crop farming while a quarter of a million was paid separately for the fruits. He further stated that according to their market survey in the Coral Coast area, one hotel spends approximately an average amount of $17,000 a month on local fruits and vegetables. He claims there is a lot of potential for the locals to gain their fair share of wealth and contribute to the sustainable development of the tourism industry.
As another example, the Turtle Island Resort has policies on buying local produce from the locals (Evanson, personal communication, 2004). In addition, transport companies like Coral Sun asserted that they buy tyres and parts for their coaches from local dealers (Monnie, personal communication, 2004). A few of the respondents also mentioned that they buy Fiji made clothes to be sold in the resort shops. Some mentioned that they deal with the locals to do the brochures for their operations. In addition, it was also revealed that the majority of the tourism operators put some local dishes on their menus (Chan, personal communication, 2004). The researcher was shown some of these menus as evidence.

Some of the respondents, especially the small and medium tourism businesses, highlighted on the rate at which multinational hotels were investing in Fiji and suggested that an impact assessment be carried out before such investments are approved. While some respondents for a large sum of economic gain from multinationals were in favour of their investment rate, others mindful of its negative environmental and socio-cultural impacts appealed for some sort of control to be put in place in the form of policies or legislation so that caution could be exercised against some of the major impacts of these large-scale developments. According to Wati (personal communication, 2004), “tourism investment in multinationals especially means big money for the Fijian economy…but there is a need to control tourism development in Fiji…I don’t say that we don’t keep saying yes, yes, yes to development. Hotels and more hotels!!!! There is definitely a need for awareness and control by the stakeholders…and most important of all the ‘fruit’ from the industry should be retained in Fiji so that the local people can benefit from it as well”.

To conclude this section, though some of the respondents had their minds set on just reaping economic benefits from the tourism industry in Fiji, some other respondents thought that which getting a return from the tourism investment was an important factor, contributing back to the economy was equally important.
5.2.2.4 The Political Juggle

One of strengths that lie within the tourism industry in Fiji is that the industry has its own sector associations, which govern the concerns and rights of its members. Examples of such associations are the regional FHA chapters, such as the Coral Coast FHA, and Nadi FHA, who fall under the national body of the Fiji Island Hotel and Tourism Association (FIHTA). There are also associations like Savusavu Tourism Associations, and the Nacula Tikina Tourism Association whose interests are similar to those of FIHTA. There are also associations that look after specific market segments, such as the Fiji Islands Backpackers Association (FIBA), who looks at the interests of the backpacker market in Fiji, and sector associations like the Society of the Fiji Travel Association (SOFTA) addressing issues of the travel and transport sector of the tourism industry.

It is important to note that these associations not only have strong linkages with their own members, but they negotiate well with other associations and further, reaching to another level of collaboration by networking with the government agencies and the NGOs. The majority of the respondents highlighted that one of the opportunities of sustainable tourism development is the collaboration among the tourism industry stakeholders. They explained that without the full cooperation from them, the tourism industry would never reach sustainability as mentioned by FIBA president (Fifer, personal communication 2004): “All stakeholders have to promote sustainable tourism and keep each other informed about the individual issues that contribute to sustainable tourism in Fiji”.

In addition, these associations had a common goal of not just promoting their own properties but promoting that particular destination area as a whole. This shows the unity in the interests of the members. For example, Wade and McPharlin (personal communication, 2004), a member of X tourism association, claimed that “being part of the tourism association gives an opportunity to get together with industry colleagues and discuss issues which are of a mutual concern to us…we promote not my property
only, or Property, X, Y or Z but the whole destination...and by destination I mean the Coral Coast/Mamanucas as a destination.

However, the interviews did reveal an important aspect of sustainability, that is, the concept of ‘power’ in relation to the sustainable tourism development in Fiji. This was intuited within the voices raised by some of the respondents when asked to identify some of the challenges or current issues they were facing in the tourism industry. The core issue highlighted was that foreign investment creates insecurity in terms of local control over the tourism industry in Fiji.

Some of the respondents, especially the local tourism operators, felt that the foreigners had a lot of influence and control on the tourism industry in Fiji. In other words, they had a concern that these foreign owned operations had overseas based headquarters. They claimed that these multinationals had the advantage of being backed by the resources of a developed world. There was the idea among local operators that translating those resources and knowledge of the developed world would double the return when translated into a developing world context. Some of the respondents claimed that “though we know these foreign investors bring in a lot of money to Fiji, help to upgrade the economic and socio-cultural environments, contributing to the sustainable development of Fiji; but we fear them…they have the wealth to get the market share…it is sometimes hard for us to survive competition with them” (Respondent T, personal communication, 2004). Hence, the multinationals exercise their power in terms of wealth, resources and knowledge in a developing country like Fiji.

It was also revealed during the interviews that many small-scale operators were found not happy with the treatment they received from their respective tourism associations. Some of them felt that the foreign owned, large-scale operators were dominating the discussions in every tourism association meeting. In addition, it was also highlighted that “only Europeans and part Europeans were members of the tourism associations and they made decisions on what needs to be done. According to Lal (personal
communication, 2004) “locals are not given the same rights and no one treats them equally…they feel we don’t know anything! We don’t have the knowledge and because Europeans are from overseas they know everything and they should be the decision makers”…we feel ‘the other’ on our land and country”. Wati (personal communication, 2004) re-confirmed that the “European community is very strong here and they only help their own group, for example, some European hoteliers take tourists to their friends’ handicraft centres only and this does not give us locals the equal opportunity to compete for the market share”.

Kennedy (personal communication, 2004) highlighted another very important and interesting issue. He said: “We have the Europeans coming in here. They get hotel services done by the maids—make beds, cleans bathrooms and toilet, serves with meals—but the maid who tidies the room and maintains it at a particular standard, doesn’t sleep on a bed, doesn’t have a bathroom…she sleeps on the mat with a mosquito net, the latrine is on the side of the house, the kitchen is somewhere at the back there and she does not live to that standard. The whole question arises about standards—that’s someone else’s lifestyle that she is working for and not necessarily adapting to herself!!” The respondent argued that this again is covered under the umbrella of sustainable tourism where the locals are to serve the First World people and satisfy their needs and wants irrespective of their own conditions.

In addition, it was highlighted by Respondent AI that lots of freehold land is being sold to foreigners and especially for tourism development purposes. He argued that this action has put up the price of the land in their area; therefore the locals are unable to afford to buy land in their own town. According to Bower (personal communication, 2004) “though tourism benefits the local communities and has helped in uplifting the town” he strongly argued that he does “not want to see it as a ‘town for tourists only’ or ‘little America’; and get deprived of using their own resources in their own very land”.

There was also mention of the tourist enclaves by some respondents. This was another feature of especially the accommodation sector with which many tourism operators
were not happy about. According to Sherlock (personal communication, 2004): “In the past, things were working quite right because everyone was working together but now no one is working together. One single hotel is branching out…they offer the rooms, they provide diving, snorkelling, shopping, restaurants within their sites…we are no longer benefiting from the tourists who go to such accommodation because they get everything as a package at one place…we have lost that link with such operators now”. Wati (personal communication, 2004) added that what the “big hotels are trying to do is lock guests into their resorts and not let others share”. Respondent T (personal communication criticised that the “tourist enclaves have made their own world within a world…the are a lot of these operations out there and many more to come with these new big developments”. Hence, foreign tourism development can be acclaimed for its contribution to mainly the economic sustainability of the industry; however, it can also be a realm of criticism for circulating power with the usage of the term sustainability.

Political instability is another area that deals with the sustainable tourism development of Fiji. As mentioned by many tourism operators, they fear any political upheavals in Fiji. Many tourism operators highlighted that tourism is a fragile industry and gets immediate impact, as tourists do not have the will to travel to unsafe destinations. They also emphasised from past experiences that the loss takes many years to recover, as it is not easy to influence tourists back to a politically disturbed destination. According to Sherlock (personal communication, 2004), “The May 2000 coup it was just a nightmare…overnight the phones stopped ringing and the resort was empty for one year. Political stability is the biggest issue Fiji has right now. If there is any political unrest, it would be a long time before we can come back…Fiji rebounded very quickly from the coup due to problems in other regions for example, SARS in Asia, Sept 11 crisis in USA, Bali bombing and natural disasters in Indonesia”.

5.2.2.5 The Human Resource Dimension

Human resources were another commonly mentioned dimension by the respondents in addition to the triple bottom line for the sustainable tourism development in Fiji. For the tourism industry, the human resource was one of the biggest challenges as far as where
sustainability of the industry was concerned. For example, according to Seay (personal communication, 2004) “sustainability lies in our trained people...because the demand for tourism service is high...People in Fiji tend to think that it’s easy just to go and say hello and look after people, but you are expected to deliver your best to people... If you have a thousand guests in a hotel, so a thousand people with a thousand different needs...remember what might be best for the host might not be best for guests...So sustainability then in terms of human resources, is a continuing dialogue to ensure that with trained staff, the industry is able to meet visitor demands”.

Gavoka (personal communication, 2004) suggests that the staff should be well equipped with theoretical and technical knowledge about the industry. He emphasised, “Human resources has to be sustainable. It cannot be said that we will train them up tomorrow...Today Fiji is suffering from the leadership; a lot of training done today sadly is not efficient to the industry. As it has been public that a lot of the new five star hotels being built cannot find skilled labourers within Fiji and they have to get them from abroad... hence, training should meet the needs of the industry for the industry to continue”. Furthermore, according to McKenny (personal communication, 2004) “the tourism industry in Fiji is carrying a lion’s share...this share will even continue to grow as we have lots and lots of big projects in Viti Levu. The locals can also gain from it, but they will need the skills to be part of it!” In addition, it was also highlighted that Fiji has very few locals occupying senior positions in the tourism industry especially...this issue needs to be addressed...there is a need to get human resources into place by training and education programmes”.

The tourism industry has taken action and has begun to offer employee training in-house. Some of the operators are working in conjunction with the educational institutes to train the staff. According to Chan (personal communication, 2004) “the standard of the service of the hotel (food and beverage) is low...we are working in line with TPAF where they are conducting training on food handling and quality and service of food. We are getting them to design programs, which will suit different resorts and markets.
We also seek advice from expatriates who normally then throw in a contribution to TPAF”.

Some of the respondents, on the other hand, claimed they were not happy with some of the programmes designed by the educational institutes therefore they do their own in-house training. For example, McKenny (personal communication, 2004) highlighted “I train my staff in-house. I am a great critic of FNCTC (now called the TPAF). They are parasites people because they don’t help us as they don’t offer the courses that are needed for our personnel…I am not happy with the way these institutions design their hospitality courses—they spend half the day folding napkins”.

The contribution of the tourism industry does not stop short at barely offering training programmes to its employees, but a further step is taken to look after the interests of the employees to keep them happy. This approach not only benefits the employees per se but the industry also is the beneficiary from the enhanced productivity injected through the system of rewards. It was revealed through the findings that the majority of the tourism operators in Fiji use the reward system in nurturing the employee performance. Some of the ways the employees are rewarded by the businesses is, as the quotes indicate via hard cash, in kind such as food or travel vouchers and being awarded with certificates in their respective fields for best chef of the month, year etc.

There was a project initiated by Outrigger on human resources development with the objective of employment promotions for the rural community around the resort area. According to Cavu (personal communication, 2004) the tourism industry can boast of being the highest revenue earner for Fiji even while, on the other hand, it has received criticism for not having adequate skilled labour to meet the industry demands. This issue has also been highlighted in the Fiji Tourism Forum since 2002 until present. Outrigger has finally shown commitment to the issue and at the same time addressed the issue of high unemployment of youths in villages, a major social issue for the whole of Fiji.
Government (see Figure 5.1) has also accounted for human resources in its SDP and TDP. There have been plans for new hotel training schools, maintaining and strengthening of management training programmes (SDP). A proposal for a human resources development plan has been made in the TDP to “establish an overall national training system to respond to sectoral needs at all levels, for all specialisations and occupations, in all necessary parts of the country, through both pre-employment and post employment training, and for all categories and types of hotel and tourism facility and service (TDP: 58).

5.3 Chapter Summary
To conclude this section, the tourism industry in Fiji is involved in a wide range of sustainable tourism practices. The findings on its theoretical interpretation of the term sustainable tourism showed pleasing results as a majority of the tourism businesses were aware of this concept and were able to interpret the term in some way. In addition, the findings have showed that the term has not just remained as an ideology but has shaped practice in the tourism industry in Fiji to some extent. Even those few businesses that were unaware of the term sustainable tourism and did not know what the term meant at all were found engaged with some sort of sustainable principle that not only contributed to sustainability in the tourism context but to the sustainable development of Fiji.

However, on the practical level it was noted that the theoretical interpretations of the terms did not conform to their practice of sustainable tourism. In addition, it was revealed that there was a missing link or a gap where the tourism industry did not know precisely the projects the government has initiated for sustainable tourism development in Fiji while the government on the other hand, did not know to what extent the tourism industry is working towards sustainable tourism development in Fiji. This was found when none of the respondents, from either government or the industry, mentioned that they were part of a project working together towards the sustainable development of the sector. One of the valid reasons justified for the government and the industry to be unaware of each other’s actions and the extent to which they are have addressed
sustainable tourism in Fiji, is that there is no measure to verify their actions. Hence, in such a circumstance the drawback is that any form of tourism development in Fiji can tag itself as a sustainable tourism operation. The next chapter will discuss the analysis and interpretation of the results using a model as a framework, which will summarise all the key findings of this study.

CHAPTER 6
Discussion: A Useful Confusion

6.0 Introduction
Collecting the data is about using the selected methods of investigation. After data have been collected in an enquiry, they have at some stage to be analysed and interpreted. Analysis is necessary because, generally speaking, data in their raw form do not speak for themselves, as the messages stay hidden. The analysis process is able to provide the basis for interpretation and conclusion, which can make meaningful contribution to the study area. According to Perry (2002) the two considerations that make it difficult are to blend qualitative details and to synthesise the patterns in the data, that is, to blend the ‘wood’ and the ‘trees’. He clarified that the pattern in the data that explain why and how the world operates is the ‘wood’. In addition, he justified that the details of the ‘trees’ also have to be presented to confirm the trustworthiness of the patterns with a special reference to under-researched topics and qualitative studies.

Therefore, this chapter will provide a comparative discussion on the perspectives of government and industry on sustainable tourism development by taking an in-depth look at the analysis and interpretation of the results, which have been presented in Chapter 5 with a revisit to the theories of sustainable tourism articulated in Chapter 2. Some direct and indirect quotes from both the chapters will be used for justification and testimony purposes. For the reader to easily follow the discussions in this chapter, the researcher will present a model (see Figure 6.0) that encapsulates the summary of key findings of this study using the four sustainability dimensions (to maintain a level of consistency throughout the thesis). In other words, the researcher with the help of this model will ‘take the reader by his/her hand and walk around the model to remind the reader of some key study findings and to what extent they conform to the theories presented in Chapter 2. This model will be used as a framework to facilitate the discussion in this chapter, which is divided into six sections. The first section will discuss the theoretical interpretation of sustainable tourism, followed by the second section on the practical interpretation of the term. The third section will discuss some intersecting areas on these interpretations (both at theoretical and practical levels) by the two stakeholder groups while section four will highlight the discussion on the conflicting areas. Section five will outline some of the factors that contribute to sections
three and four, that is, the factors that have contributed to the interpretation of the term sustainable tourism and finally conclude the chapter will conclude with the chapter summary.

Note the circles in the model represent the dimensions of sustainability (refer to the key under the model for specific dimensions). The upper semi-circle plots the significant findings on the theoretical interpretation of sustainable tourism, the lower semi circle on the practical interpretation of the concept. The left half of the circle identifies the organisations, specific areas and documents that conceptualises the term within a particular dimension while the right hand side illustrates the interpretations of the tourism industry. The upper half of the circle highlights of general themes and organisations presenting their views under each sustainability dimension, while the lower half identifies very specific documentations, and actions/applications of sustainable tourism undertaken by them. Inter/intra generational equity and timescale or the continuity of the tourism industry were the common components used together with the dimensions of sustainability to conceptualise the term sustainable tourism at the theoretical level by both the stakeholder groups. Lines A, B, C, and D show the flows of the debates around sustainable tourism.
Figure 6.0: The Sustainable Tourism Interpretation Model

Intra/Intergenerational Equity

Source: Developed from this research
6.1 The Theoretical Interpretation of Sustainable Tourism

Comparing to similar studies done in other countries on the theoretical interpretation of the concept, the results of this study show there was awareness of the term sustainable tourism among both the stakeholder groups and only 26 per cent of the respondents had no idea what the term sustainable tourism development meant though a handful attempted to interpret it by highlighting the tourism and environment relationship. A study by Hobson and Essex (2001) in Plymouth, UK found that no operator interpreted the term in an environmental context though a few outlined the outer shell of resource base needed for the tourism industry to grow and over 25% had no understanding of the term at all and had never even heard of the concept. Stabler and Goodall’s (1997) study results, in which only 18% were aware of the concept; was a near match with Cottrell’s et al. (2004) study on Manuel and Texel, rating environment as the most important followed by socio-cultural, economic and finally the political dimensions.

A total of 45 respondents were interviewed in this study. It was noted that the 12 respondents who did not have any idea on the term sustainable tourism, some of them highlighting that they have never heard of the term, were all locals; though they were found engaged in some sort of sustainable practice at their tourism operations. This suggests that a majority of the locals are not aware of sustainable tourism as a technical term although they understand the need to protect the natural, social and cultural environment for the future of the tourism industry in Fiji. This was evident when some of the respondents who did not know what sustainable tourism is and had never heard of the concept, asked the researcher to explain to them what it meant. After the researcher’s explanation on the concept, the respondent took over the discussion on the term and explained what they are doing for the sustainable tourism development at their operations, giving examples of their involvement in conservation projects at their operations though as highlighted earlier they were not aware that there is a technical term for that. This confirms that because sustainable tourism is a term whose origins lie in the developed world, the developing countries like Fiji may still not be familiar with the term. Therefore, it is quite clear from the findings that the foreigners have introduced sustainable tourism—again as a ‘type of colonialism’ that circulates power.
The results showed that sustainable tourism development was never interpreted using one dimension only. The respondents always referred to various dimensions of sustainability, though there were situations where one of the dimensions was given more weight than others. The main dimensions mentioned when interpreting sustainable tourism development included environment, socio-cultural, economic and political, and another most mentioned contemporary dimension in sustainable tourism literature – the human resource dimension. It was noted during interviews that as more and more respondents from different backgrounds (occupation, nature of work, ethnicity, age) were included to give their perceptions on the concept, the term began to lose agreement on the definition of the concept.

It is illustrated in Figure 6.0 by the outward movement of the circles representing the sustainability dimensions. The perspectives on sustainable tourism by both stakeholder groups were not limited to the three traditional dimensions of sustainability though these were the most mentioned ones. It should be noted that references to the political and human resource dimensions were not made directly by the respondents but specific issues and areas of the respective dimensions were highlighted. Hence, it can be said that sustainable tourism is considered as a ‘packaged’ concept, reaching to multiple dimensions of its parent concept – sustainable development. ‘Packaged’ in this case refers to the fact that sustainable tourism incorporates a variation in its coverage and often these issues have a direct relation to the context of the tourism destination region.

Lines labelled A, B, C, and D in the model show the flow of debates that revolved around the sustainable tourism concept. For example, most of the respondents started off their interpretation with aspects of the environmental dimension in mind. It was noted that while environmental dimension was discussed, their perspectives remained very much at the theoretical level, sector-specific and focusing mainly on small-scale operations. Sustainable tourism very much remained an ideology. This means that when they said that sustainable tourism is about taking care of the natural environment they did not mean that they were actually doing this themselves at their sites, neither were they involved with any environmental projects with the communities in the area.
However, as other dimensions were incorporated, for example, the socio-cultural dimension, the respondents began to give examples of the socio-cultural sustainability principles they practised with the local communities around their business locations. It was noted that their interpretations reached consensus to some extent in their discussions when perceptions remained in the circle of environmental dimension, that is, all said sustainable tourism was about protection of the natural environment protection. This was in the case of findings from both the government and the industry operators.

As earlier discussed, sustainable tourism was hardly defined using only one dimension, hence the other dimensions were mentioned as part of their interpretation. While incorporating these other dimensions of sustainability, the perspectives moved towards the practical part of sustainable tourism in Fiji and were applicable from small to large-scale tourism operations. It was found that both types of tourism operations practised sustainable tourism in one way or another. This reconciled the argument presented by Clarke (1997) on the issue of scale and sustainable tourism basically putting forward the notion that ‘scale of operation is not a prerequisite to achieve sustainable tourism’.

The perspectives began to suggest that sustainable tourism should not be viewed as something benefiting just the tourism sector; rather, it is considered more as a holistic concept, where the tourism sector can contribute towards the larger sustainable development of Fiji’s economy. In addition, it was mentioned that the tourism sector would not be able to survive in isolation, rather it needs to work in conjunction with other sectors to achieve sustainability at all levels. For example, a major emphasis was placed by the industry respondents on the idea that it is important to link up with other sectors in Fiji, so that money does not leak out of the economy but a good portion flows back to the local communities.

The discussions on different sustainability dimensions in the tourism context also incorporated some of the recent major issues faced by the tourism industry in Fiji. Hence, this even further led the term to lose consensus though there were circumstances
when agreement was sensed in their interpretations. On the other hand, some interpretations made it sound like ‘chalk and cheese’.

The findings of this study, however, have confirmed that the term sustainable tourism though widely accepted and used, lacks consistency in its meaning among the stakeholders of the tourism industry, hence allowing it to remain a debatable or contested concept, as has been claimed by the academic community in the sustainable tourism literature (Garrod and Fyall, 1998; Butler, 1999; Sharpley, 2000; Macbeth, 2005; Weaver, 2006). This confirmation was made when the respondents generally commented on the sustainable tourism concept being “widely used concept” (Nadi FHA), becoming very popular in the last couple of years” (Air Pacific), “the term difficult to define in an easy and most agreed way” (Sheraton) and, “loosely used in many areas (Captain Cook Cruises).

In addition, words like ‘balance’ and trade-offs were treated as a requirement for sustainable tourism development in Fiji. Though there are authors who have supported the time scale, intra- and intergenerational equity as a contribution to sustainable tourism development (Barke and Towner, 2003), these have been areas of critique in the sustainable tourism literature, such as Sinclair and Jayawardena’s (2003) concern on how much is needed by the future generations and McCool and Moisey’s (2001) question on who represents the future. In addition, Hunter (1997) criticised sustainable tourism as being conditioned by rhetoric such as ‘balance’ or ‘trade-offs’ as these conditions results in favour of a skewed distribution of priorities.

Timescale, as in the continuity of the tourism industry forever and intra- and intergenerational equity as mentioned earlier, were other components used by the respondents of this study to interpret sustainable tourism. For example, the respondents used phrases such as “tourism that has a lasting life...” (Captain Cook Cruises), “tourism that sustains consistently over a period of time...” (Crusoes Retreat), “ensure that tourism survives in perpetuity” (FVB), “continue to meet expectations.... long term” (FVB), “…input that can be here 50 years down the track...” (SOFTA) to highlight that sustainable tourism deals with timescale; and phrases like “keep tourists
coming” (Coral Coast FHA), words like “consistently”, “maintaining”, “sustaining”, “surviving”, and “continued growth” depicted that it also ensures the continuity of the tourism industry. Intra- and intergenerational equity was highlighted in the use of phrases like “using the resources for today’s daily needs and leave behind for future generations” (Department of Environment)…workable for future generations…” (FIBA) and “…tourism for today and tomorrow’.

The findings have revealed that there is similarly no common understanding of the term at governmental level. For example, according to the MOT, which is the main tourism body, it follows the WTO definition of sustainable tourism. The problem is that no MOT document has precisely mentioned this nor has MOT provided the WTO definition of sustainable tourism in any of their publications, where the term sustainable tourism has been loosely used, possibly on the assumption that all the stakeholders have a common understanding of the term. It became even more concerning when many respondents mentioned that they were unaware of the WTO definition of sustainable tourism.

On the other hand, the other relevant line government agencies with whom MOT has to work closely as they lack a mandate to enforce tourism policies had their own interpretation of sustainable tourism, mostly confined to the nature of their work (see Figure 6.0). For example, the DOE interpreted sustainable tourism with a major focus on the environmental dimension of sustainability while the DOCH on the socio-cultural, the FAB that works for the interest of locals on the political dimension. It is to be noted as illustrated in Figure 6.0 that no government agency mentioned especially about the economic dimension at the theoretical level; however, it was found that the MOT is heavily focusing on this dimension at the practical level and similarly for the human resource dimension.

On one hand, it is appropriate for the respective government agencies to be responsible for their part. However, it would be more helpful if there were an agreed working definition of the term. This would enable all the agencies to view the bigger picture, in
other words, all the dimensions that would contribute to sustainable tourism in Fiji instead of each government agency limiting itself to their own areas. This is one aspect about the concept of sustainable tourism that has received an immense amount of critique in the literature (Hunter, 1997; Sharpley, 2000; Hardy et al., 2001). The current interpretation of the term has a very sector-specific focus. On the other hand, the other suggested approach, which is visioning the bigger picture, would have the advantage of getting the parent concept sustainable development re-engaged with the tourism context.

One of the major limitations of sustainable tourism development in Fiji as identified by the MNP was that there is lack of coordination from the national to the line ministries and further down to the grassroots level and NGOs. According to Dawai (personal communication, 2004): “There is some sort of missing link in the area of the protection of environment or natural resources…for example, the Qoliqoli is looked after by the Ministry of Lands, but the fishing licence is given by the Fisheries Department, though the Environment Department is there to protect the marine resources or ecosystems. On the other hand, we have the resource owners, who own the qoliqoli.”

He adds that one of the reasons the stakeholders in some areas do not coordinate is simply the lack of manpower, capacity, and resources in order to conduct it. For example, the Coral Coast alone is a huge place. In addition, for the villages, “we cannot go and tell them how to dump their waste or we cannot ban them not to dig pits. Villagers are governed under a totally different Act – under the Fijian Affairs Act. They do not come under the town council planning, where we enforce legislation on health issues. These health officers can only do inspection visits but cannot enforce any health legislation on the villages”. This complicated system takes a lot of time to get policies enforced via different government agencies and for the MOT, they simply lack a mandate of their own and because the sector cuts through all other sectors (agriculture, manufacture, fishing, forestry etc.), the mandate of a variety of ministries governs tourism concerns.
On the other hand, the tourism industry had their own interpretation of sustainable tourism, which related to the current tourism industry issues in their own tourism destination regions. Some of these include the need for skilled and trained workers for the current and future tourism development in Fiji. Some respondents highlighted that sustainable tourism is about proper infrastructure in the destination region and according to the respondents Fiji needs a lot of improvement in its infrastructure, while a few of them emphasised political stability since Fiji has experienced coups that have caused a lot of impact on the industry while others tried to explicate that the tourism sector needs to link up with other sectors such as agriculture that is a lacking area in Fiji. Therefore, the term sustainable tourism at theoretical level was interpreted differently within the group, that is, within the government agencies and the tourism industry, as well as between the groups.

The overall theoretical interpretation of sustainable tourism fits in well to Barke and Towner’s (2003) model of sustainable tourism as presented in Chapter 2 (see Figure 2.0). The findings have confirmed that sustainable tourism was interpreted using the four core sustainability dimensions, timescale and can be applicable from small to large scale tourism operators and furthermore accounts for Swarbrooke’s (1999) intra- and inter-generational equity.

There were calls made by some respondents in that there is a need for a working definition for the term sustainable tourism that should suit the Fiji context. One of the government officials emphasised that “Fiji has 22 government agencies and to get these 22 talking the same language is a challenge in itself…and then we have the industry with hundreds of minds...this is just working round and round in circles looking for something to be called sustainable tourism!...sometimes motivations work against each other”. Another official added that “They need to refocus and come up with a Fiji specific working definition of sustainable tourism that is standard to all stakeholders...unlike today who is doing what for the sustainable tourism development in Fiji in their little corner is simply making sense to them only...there is always argument that we should tailor things with a region”. One of the tourism industry
representatives highlighted that “one of the ways to do this is by getting views and ideas from all industry stakeholders at all levels...those who will use it have a right to decide what it should mean to them”.

A respondent explained that “If you set an objective as— 15% increase in sustainable tourism activities in 3 years— you have still got to work out how they are going to work on that objective simply because we don’t know what sustainable tourism means and then how do we know we have met our objective...that’s why we need to have our working definition as a yardstick, which is understood by all the stakeholders of the industry”.

The issue of context was highlighted by a few respondents who expressed the opinion that the definitions set by other countries do not suit the Fiji context. For example, Respondent X claimed, “we need to understand that the definition of sustainable tourism that has been put up in Australia, America cannot be applied here...we have a different tourism structure, types and scales of tourism and resources from them...we have socio-cultural issues which are unique to Fiji such as the Qoliqoli issue!” This argument corresponds with Cvetko’s (2002: 28) argument that “a sustainable tourism project in India will no doubt vary from one in Vanuatu as a result of social and cultural parameters although some common denominators will still exist. It is important that we apply solutions that fit the social and cultural parameters of the relevant community or society. An appropriate process in one community may not lead to the same results when implemented in another. If this is clearly the case, are we not then talking about two different sustainable tourism developments that would require in some way an identification of different points in any definition?” Hence, the study’s approach to include views of the two main stakeholders groups has supported Twining-Ward’s (2004) call that there should not be only lip service to the participation of all stakeholders and place-based factors when addressing tourism issues.
6.2 The Practical Interpretation of Sustainable Tourism

Another way to interpret a term is finding out how it has shaped practice – “the walk of the talk” (Bramwell and Lane, 1999: 3). It is often difficult to define something using a string of words or there could be a possibility that there is lack of awareness of such terms technically, though people have a fair idea on what needs to be done in order to achieve that. Some people are not always good at expressing something verbally but they are good when it comes to real action. Hence another way to the respondents’ perspectives on sustainable tourism as a concept was to find out what they practised at their sites, which contributed to the sustainable tourism development in Fiji.

Therefore, implementation of sustainable tourism practices by tourism stakeholders in Fiji is looked into in this study at a secondary level, to comprehend the verbal expression of the term giving another fine layer to this study. It is important for readers to note that though the practical aspects of sustainable tourism development are not the prime focus of this study, they do contribute a considerable amount to answer the central question of this thesis.

The respondents were asked to explain what their contribution was to the sustainable development of the tourism industry in Fiji. In addition, as mentioned in the methodology chapter, there were sections in the questionnaire focusing on the main sustainability dimensions, for respondents who did not understand the term ‘sustainable tourism’ technically.

6.2.1 Environmental Dimension

It was noted in the findings that both stakeholder groups were aware of the environment and tourism relationship, as evident in the quote by one of the industry respondents: “the environment around us is becoming a matter of concern…the environment is something that has been stressed a lot because the growing visitor arrivals has placed demands on the area”. However, the government and the industry viewed this relationship differently. Buhalis and Fletcher (1995) identified two main relations between the environment and the tourism industry. The government viewed this
relationship more as a ‘symbiotic’ relationship, where the environment was mainly seen as an asset to the tourism industry whereas, the tourism industry had a similar view but more towards the ‘antagonist’ relationship, where the industry’s concern lay in the tourism actions that caused negative impacts on the environment. The industry’s views also reflect Brisassoulis’s (1995) argument on the ‘environmental internalities’ where the tourist activities or the actions of the tourism industry, during production and consumption for tourists, have a negative effect on the quality and quantity of resources for tourism.

It was also identified by the content analysis of the government plans, especially the TDP, that the preservation and conservation of the environment were not because the government cares about the environment for the overall sustainable development of the country nor for the future of its own people, but for the economic gains from the tourism industry This, according to Kousis (2001), is a ‘treadmill’ view of sustainability. Swarbrooke (1999) has criticised this view as he disagrees with the self-interest ideology on economic gains by the tourism stakeholders and to preserve anything to everything under the banner of sustainability that leads to the establishment of a large tourism infrastructure, which at end of the day damages the environment. Wheeller has also criticised that “by clothing itself in a green mantle, the industry is being provided with a shield with which it can both deflect valid criticism and improve its own image while, in reality, continuing its familiar short-term commercial march” (1991: 96).

It was also encouraged in the TDP (p.41) that “hotels can contribute to environmental management of natural resources, and often improve their profitability, by operating under a ‘green code’…while such actions [recycle, reduce and reuse] will benefit Fiji’s tourism image, they should also benefit the hotels, given the growing demand by tourists for such practices in destinations that promote their natural resources”. This can be misused as the industry can just use the green-code for marketing purpose without seriously engaging in the environmental management of the resources.
The TDP has also given some attention to the environment dimension as it mentions about the conservation and protection of the environment. Section 7.7 (p.34) of the TDP was devoted to the tourism development design guidelines, which noted areas on building controls, structure and a list of issues highlighting alternative sources of water and energy, proper sewerage and waste treatment, and type and the scale of development. Small-scale tourism development, which is believed to have little impact, has been recommended for islands.

As part of their programme, the government’s environmental initiatives (see Figure 6.0) is a contribution in their call for the implementation of the EMB, promoting and assisting in ecotourism projects with assistance from DOE, Green Fiji Initiative, and the SEA Report recommendations. On the other hand, the industry respondents were involved in some sort of environmental conservation and preservation schemes associated with the three R’s – the reuse, recycle and reduce schemes at their operations. However, the large-scale operations, mostly the multinationals had the privilege of more sophisticated initiatives such as bigger and more expensive treatment plants, their affordability in terms of project funding and availability of experts to carry out impact assessment measures such as, conducting EIAs and certification to Green Globe Standard, which seemed costly affairs to the small and medium tourism enterprises. In addition, the coastal environment was taken care of by the tourism industry mostly by the large operators, through engaging in reef restoration projects, and some operators also formed environmental committees for their destination regions.

Small-scale tourism development, which is believed to have few impacts, has been recommended for islands because there is no regulation in place to distinguish between densities allowed in mainland and island resorts (TDP 1998–2005). Note could well be taken of Clarke’s (1997) argument that any scale of tourism can achieve sustainable tourism. There were no regulations in place either by the government or by the industry on carrying capacities, which according to Butler (1997), Batta (2000) and Mowforth and Munt (2003) are another key to sustainability in the environmental context. However, considering McCool and Moisey’s (2001) argument, it is difficult to figure
out ‘how many is too many?’ therefore making the implementation measures such as carrying capacities not viable.

It is important to note that none of the tourism industry respondents mentioned that they were practising the environmental initiatives outlined by the government, neither did any of the industry respondent mentioned working with the government on any of the environmental initiatives.

The industry operators claimed that they have been noticing changes in the attitude of their guests. It was highlighted during the interviews by many tourism businesses that their guests showed interest in the environmental projects carried out by the tourism businesses and the more interesting aspect to them was that many of their guests never missed the opportunity to be part of this project. In addition, some of them claimed that some of their guests were very particular in buying environmentally friendly items only. This finding confirms to the argument that De Villiers’s (1997) ‘old tourists’ have been replaced by Weaver (2000) and Mowforth and Munt’s (2003) ‘new travellers’, equating to Miller’s ‘green consumerism’, which has been a major influence towards achieving greater sustainability by the tourism industry.

As highlighted earlier both the government and the industry initiatives to ecotourism projects or environmental concerns, however, it was also brought to attention by a few operators and confirming to some authors’ criticism that this claiming to be under the banner of sustainable tourism was used as a marketing gimmick (Berry and Ladkin, 1997; Jamieson, 1997; Wall, 1997; Wheeller, 1999; and Cohen, 2002). For example, it was claimed by Respondent A that “some operators call themselves eco friendly but in reality these tourism businesses try to form an eco-friendly image for tourists, in other words, using ‘eco’ as a marketing gimmick”. In addition, a respondent with ‘Eco’ added to the name of his operation was asked during the interview to explain as to why he thought to add ‘eco’ to the name of his operation. The answer to his question confirmed Respondent A’s argument. He explained that “it was a popular term and because
everyone was making hay on the name eco and I did it too for publicity” (Respondent B, personal communication, 2004).

The government interpreted sustainable tourism as a balance of all the sustainability dimensions, particularly, after the confirmation from the MOT representatives during the interview that MOT follows the WTO (2004) definition of sustainable tourism. However, their practical interpretation showed an imbalance in these dimensions as a greater emphasis was placed on the economic dimension. This was confirmed by a content analysis of government’s two major tourism development plans, the TDP and the SDP. It should also be taken into consideration that the main objective of both these plans was achieving a sustainable tourism industry; hence it was considered that the plan was a reflection on how this will be achieved.

6.2.2 Economic Dimension

Very few of tourism industry respondents, on the other hand, mentioned about economic dimensions though a handful mentioned about their contribution in terms of offering employment and income to locals, tourism business’s contribution to Fiji’s GDP and methods used to get more visitors to the shore. These methods included expansion works at the operations, a search for new product for market diversity, applying new marketing and promotional tactics and enhancing visitor satisfaction by meeting the visitor demands and offering quality service. In addition, the mention of repeat guest visits by a few respondents gave another indicator of the economic side of sustainability.

However, this perception towards sustainable tourism has been a major critique of the concept. Many authors have argued that this attitude is too tourism-centric or sector-specific, which has been inconsistent with the general aims, principles and requirements of the parent concept, sustainable development (Butler, 1993; Hunter, 1995; Wall, 1997). Some researchers (Butler, 1993 cited in Ioannides, 2001) have argued that it can be easily claimed that sustainable tourism deals with a continuous growth in tourist numbers in a destination area, at a sectoral level, over an extended period of time,
giving Niagara Falls, Disneyworld, Las Vegas, London and Paris as examples; because of the mere fact that these destinations are able to maintain their appeal through product diversification, however little they may be environmentally or socio-culturally sustainable.

An interesting aspect of the findings was that the respondents on the point of maximising their returns from the tourism industry also showed their concerns for the local communities. The respondents, confirming Mathieson and Wall’s (1982) claim on the creation of multiplier effect with tourist dollars, were practically involved in projects that made a direct contribution back to the local communities. For example, the Managing Director of one of the five-star resorts reconfirmed this issue by highlighting that, “The benefits and importance of tourism is not only realised directly but people should realize that there is always a trickle down effect. For instance, I pay my staff from the money I get from my guests (tourist dollar); they go shop at Gulab Dass (name of a shop). Gulab Dass makes money directly from my staff’s payment but the workers of Gulab Dass benefit indirectly as they are paid salary with the same tourist dollar my staff paid to Gulab Dass. The workers of Gulab Dass will use the same dollar to buy their groceries etc… and the link goes on and on”.

The issue of leakages as identified by some authors in Chapter 2 (Lea, 1988; UNEP, 2001; Mowforth and Munt, 2003) was also raised by the industry respondents with a special emphasis on the amount lost through food imports due to inconsistency in quality and quantity of local supply. In addition, it was also highlighted that the involvement of multinational hotel chains as discussed by Freitag (1994) and Shaw and Shaw (1999) especially forming tourist enclaves (Mbaiwa, 2002) drains much out of the local economy, and Lea (1988) has called this export leakages. As argued by Archer (1997) there is a need to evaluate economic impacts of tourism using appropriate measures. On this note, the MOT has been involved with the TSA as one of the instruments implemented by the government to gauge the in- and outflow of tourism earnings. The tourism industry on the other hand is working actively to deal with the issue of leakages by linking up with the agricultural sector in Fiji. As we saw the
Outrigger for example, is involved in a farming project, which will train the local villagers from subsistence farming to commercial farming. The Outrigger signed a memorandum of understanding with the villagers outlining that the Resort will be the major buyer of their produce. In addition some operators have purchasing policies to ‘buy local’ to retain the earnings in the local economy.

6.2.3 Socio-Cultural Dimension

In comparison with government, the tourism industry was found more actively involved in the social-cultural dimension of sustainable tourism. One of the reasons for the government to play a lesser role in this area is Haley’s et al. (2005) justification that compared to the economic impacts, the socio-cultural impacts are subjective and intangible, which makes it difficult to measure and forecast its effects. In addition, the involvement of human behaviour and perceptions under this dimension (Hardy et al., 2002) even makes it more complex to realise the social impacts of tourism.

On the other hand, owing to the fact that the majority of the tourism operations in Fiji are located near to local villages gives greater advantage to the industry to establish closer relationships with the locals. Crusoes Retreat, for example, mentioned, “we are very fortunate that we have the village next door and that is basically our biggest asset from marketing, business and also from a personal point of view. It gives us opportunity to give directly back to the people”. Richard Evanson, the Director of Turtle Island Resort, has always believed that “if we don’t make a significant effort to enhance the opportunities for the people who live in our community, then we have no right to be doing business in the area” (Fairley, 2004). Hence, this study has proved the industry relationship with the local communities to be socio-culturally favourable to the guests, the hosts and the tourism operators as well.

The practice of Swarbrooke’s four E’s — including equity, equal opportunities, ethics and equal partnership — were the means for the industry to contribute to the socio-cultural dimension of sustainable tourism. In addition, the tourism industry was found to be contributing towards improving the living standards of the locals, though there were
some conflicting areas uncovered during the interviews. These included social issues such as crime, alcoholism and misunderstandings between the tourism operators and the landowners. Another common issue outlined was the qoliqoli issue. Many tourism operators were found to be opposing the proposed Qoliqoli Bill, which if enacted will transfer ownership of beaches and coral reefs up to the highwater mark from the State to the NLTB in trust for the registered landowners, whose lack of understanding can cause a lot of anxiety to the tourism industry. Of interest in this regard is the prediction, already quoted, that the concentration of the payments in only a few groups of owners will lead to increases in tension among the qoliqoli owners.

Furthermore, the tourism industry respondents revealed that to overcome some of these issues, they were part of host educational programmes in conjunction with the educational institutes and other relevant line government agencies. In one way, through host educational programmes, the tourism businesses and the tourists will be able to benefit in terms of getting a welcoming approach from the hosts.

Tourism industry operators also mentioned that some guest educational programmes were offered to help minimise the negative socio-cultural impacts of tourism on the hosts. These educational programmes are a contribution to a win-win situation for the stakeholders. This study has confirmed some of the authors’ claim that the socio-cultural dimension advocates tourism development in a way that respects the social identity and social capital and improves the long term integrity of the locals with the tourism industry (Mathieson and Wall, 1982; Long, 1993 Swarbrooke, 1999; Mowforth and Munt, 2003; Choi and Sirakaya, 2005).

The government, on the other hand, also has conducted host and guest educational programmes. Furthermore, they were found to be closely working with the relevant stakeholders, mostly the NGOs, the line government agencies and the tourism industry. Two major projects were identified on the socio-cultural dimension of sustainable tourism during the research, on both of which the MOT and the DOCH are working very closely. The first project, known as Model Law on Traditional Knowledge and
Expressions of Culture, is a formulated framework by the DOCH to protect the commercialisation of traditional knowledge and expressions of culture in the tourism industry. The second project, again falling under the portfolio of DOCH, is the use of authentic labelling on handicrafts to protect the tourist from being sold fake and low standard products.

On standards, the MOT has also come up with a Food Safety & Standards policy for further visitor satisfaction. This action was taken after the results of the 2002 IVS research revealed that the guests were not satisfied with the lack of knowledge of locals on food, bacterial dissemination on foods served to them, poor personal hygiene and services. Hence the government was also found to be contributing to the socio-cultural dimension of sustainable tourism through more of a reactive approach. This reactive approach could be the reason that the social cultural impact is not realised till it actually happens and furthermore, the jeopardy highlighted by Swarbrooke (1999) and Robinson (1999) that the social and cultural impacts are realised slowly in any tourism destination.

6.2.4 Political Dimension
This study also conforms to some authors’ (Pearce, 1993; Hall, 1994; McIntosh et al., 1995 cited in Choi and Sirakaya, 2005) claim about sustainable tourism being a political concept. Some positive prospects on this issue include the strong stakeholder collaboration among the tourism industry, government, NGOs and the local communities and this, according to Owen et al. (1993), Haywood (1993) and WTO (2004) is a prerequisite to the sustainable tourism development under this dimension. In addition, there was a closer confirmation of Swarbrooke’s (1999) argument that the sustainability dimensions are interrelated and overlap each other to a certain extent. It was noted that some of the findings and in particular the consideration to the rights of the residents and their participation in tourism development under this dimension had an overlapping feature to the socio-cultural dimension of sustainability.
The establishment of tourism industry associations, and for the government the organisation of tourism meetings and forums, were the major means through which stakeholder collaboration prevailed in the tourism industry in Fiji. In addition, the MOT’s effort in the proper placement of tourism policies from regional to sectoral level was another way to pay considerable attention to this dimension. The SDP, TDP and other specific MOT policies on food standards and ecotourism are testimony to this. Furthermore, tourism development plans have been reviewed in the SEA Report and according to Becker et al. (1999 cited in Choi and Sirakaya, 2005) such reviews help in re-negotiating the goals of future sustainable tourism and to establish a system of governance that is able to implement policies moving towards sustainability at all levels.

In addition, though there were no separate tourism planning strategies laid for the tourism destination regions, for example specifically for the Coral Coast area, the North or the Mamanucas, this was however, included in the TDP with an aim to develop the area for future tourism investments. According to Godfrey (1998) tourism should be included in development plans at a local level, where impacts are acute due to face to face linkage, resulting in greater prospective towards real implementation of sustainability guidelines. Fallon’s (2001) comparative study on Rowok and Mangsit on the island of Lombok, Indonesia, has vindicated Godfrey’s argument. His study findings show that the sustainability of Rowok’s tourism industry was undermined due to conflict over the use of scarce resources between the tourism developers and the host community. According to the author, lack of democracy was the reason for this conflict (Fallon, 2002). In contrast, the other region, Mangsit, experienced a successful tourism industry based on proactive leadership and interpersonal skills, which helped build a positive affiliation with the adjacent local communities.

Fiji can have problems with its tourism industry in this area as the Ministry of Tourism supported the constraint identified by the MNP that they do not have any legal power to enforce policies, while all other ministries have their own Acts (Kuilamu and Tagivetaua, personal communication, 2004). Addressing the SOFTA on 24 March 2006, the Chief Executive of the Ministry of Tourism, Napolioni Masirewa, asserted
that the Ministry of Tourism had no say on issuing or renewal of the licences to tourism operators in Fiji, which he considered as an unfair system to his ministry (FT, 26/3/06). His direct words as quoted: “it’s not fair we don’t give the licences but we have to deal with them…the industry to be looked after by its own stakeholders because they are the ones who are familiar with all aspects of the industry”. He suggested that the Hotel Licensing Board should be under the Ministry and a call was made for a draft of a new Tourism Act, which was supported by the Fiji Island Hotel and Tourism Association (FIHTA) president Mr Dixon Seeto.

In addition, the government’s initiative on the establishment of the Fiji Tourism Resource Owners Association has helped to protect the rights of the locals. The findings revealed that this association was developed with the main objective of encouraging meaningful participation of the resource owners in the tourism planning and development. This finding has disproved Cohen’s argument where he has claimed that sustainable tourism in theory is couched in terms of ‘locals-as-partners’; however, in reality the situation is more like ‘locals-as-users’ in the tourism industry (2002: 273). However, the involvement of the TROA and the MOT’s ecotourism initiatives for indigenous people corresponds with Zeppel’s (1998) examples from various regions in the world (Pacific region, South, Central and Eastern Africa, Australia, New Zealand, Canada, and USA) where the locals or indigenous people are moving away from being the providers of cultural experiences for the guests and engaging in entrepreneurship as tourism operators and contributing towards a fair distribution of economic gains from tourism businesses.

As highlighted by some authors, the political dimension of sustainable tourism also deals with the extent tourism development is controlled internally (Butler, 1993; Pearce, 1993; Hall, 1994; Butler, 1999 and Barke and Towner, 2003). The findings revealed in the study that Fiji’s tourism industry is extensively influenced and controlled by foreigners. Foreign investment was held liable for this and it was claimed by the respondents that though foreign investments contributed to the economic sustainability of tourism development in Fiji, it does not address the environmental and socio-cultural
dimensions seriously. To some respondents these foreign investments threatened their businesses and they felt that the interest of First World was served in the name of sustainability via these foreign investors. This reflects Mowforth and Munt’s (2003) argument that sustainability is a notion through which power circulates, and is supported by Macbeth (2005) in his justification that this has resulted from to the conflicting interests of “North” and “South” over the paradigm of sustainability concepts, involving power and inequality.

The tourism industry respondents highlighted various scenarios in which they felt that the foreigners were taking the lead in the industry. This was in the form of multinational investments whose wealth, brand, size and resources contributed for them to dominate the industry. In addition, voices were raised about tourist enclaves, which according to the respondents “locked guests into their resorts and does not let others share”. Moreover, some respondents also mentioned that the foreigners were mostly members of the tourism associations and there was a myth that because they were from overseas they know everything, therefore they should be leaders of the associations. In scenarios as such, the local tourism operators were mostly ignored in association meetings. In addition, some of the respondents, mostly from the Northern part of Fiji, claimed that there were lots of foreigners buying land in their region especially for tourism projects. This action has caused the prices of land to accelerate, resulting in the locals not being able to afford to buy land in their own towns.

There has been a similar case in Cohen’s (2002) study on West Africa, where price discrimination resulting from limiting access to tourist elites as an environmental protection measure had never given the opportunity to the locals to see the wild animals for which their country is famous. The findings of both Fiji and West Africa have shown similar scenarios owing to the earlier justification of Macbeth (2005) on the developing country context of both of these countries.

According to Swarbrooke (1999) sustainable tourism is about giving locals an equal chance for the enjoyment of being tourists and someone else serving them, rather than
they being always taken granted as serving others. However, the findings are not supportive of Swarbrooke’s argument as it was highlighted by one of the respondents: “We have the Europeans coming in here. They get hotel services done by the maids – make beds, cleans bathrooms and toilet, serves with meals but the maid who tidies the room and maintains it at a particular standard, doesn’t sleep on a bed, doesn’t have a bathroom…she sleeps on the mat with a mosquito net, the latrine is on the side of the house, the kitchen is somewhere at the back there and she does not live to that standard. The whole question arises about standards – that’s someone else’s lifestyle that she is working for and not necessarily adapting to herself!” The respondent argued that this again gets covered under the banner of sustainable tourism where the locals are to serve the First World people and satisfy their needs and wants irrespective of their own conditions.

6.2.5 Human Resource Dimension
The human resource dimension was another dimension that was mentioned by both the government and the industry respondents. It was highlighted that considering Fiji’s current problem of lacking skilled and trained labour to meet the sector specific needs, sustainable tourism development in Fiji can never be achieved. One of the respondents claimed, “Only smiles will not do…they have to provide a standard of service…and the biggest challenge for all of us is to raise our standards to international standards – what our clients expect. If we can’t do it, it will all dry up very quickly”. Both the industry and the government have taken actions to this challenge. The tourism industry is extensively involved in training programmes for its staff. The tourism industry is working with the educational institutes in Fiji to train the staff in addition to the in-house training. The government, on other hand, has plans to establish training school specifically for the tourism and hospitality sector.

6.3 Some Common Grounds in the Sustainable Tourism Interpretation
It was noted in the findings that the stakeholder groups both, at a theoretical level, mentioned about the sustainability dimensions to conceptualise the term sustainable tourism. In addition, at the theoretical level there was agreement between the
stakeholder groups that sustainable tourism incorporates the sustainability dimensions, the inter/intra generational equity and timescale in terms of its continuity as leading components of the concept. This study confirms Swarbrooke’s (1999) and Barke and Towner’s (2003) claim that to some extent the core sustainability dimensions constitute consensus to the term sustainable tourism and in addition the claim that the environmental dimension dominates in the debates of sustainable tourism (Butler, 1999; Farrell, 1999; Swarbrooke, 1999; and Twining-Ward, 1999).

6.4 Some Conflicting Areas in the Interpretation of Sustainable Tourism

The perceptions held by the two stakeholder groups on the sustainable tourism concept clearly showed that there was a gap identified in their theoretical interpretation level, where the industry and the government’s nature determined their interpretation of the term. In addition, there was a mismatch at their conceptual level of interpretation when compared to the practical actions undertaken by each stakeholder group. For example, none of the government agencies mentioned the economic dimension of sustainability; however, at the practical level, the MOT was found to be actively targeting this dimension. The tourism industry to some extent had a closer relationship between their theoretical and practical levels of interpretation although, in some circumstances their motives were questioned, that is, were they doing it as a promotional gimmick or out of genuine environmental interests. In addition, there was never a situation the researcher came across where the two stakeholder groups complemented each other’s practices within each dimension. It was not known to many industry respondents what the MOT was doing in terms of sustainable tourism; on the other hand, the MOT did not have any idea to what extent Fiji is experiencing sustainable tourism development, as no measures were taken to implement and monitor the tourism development in Fiji. The researcher agrees with Butler that in such a situation “…almost any form of tourism can be termed sustainable” (1999: 20).

Considering this fact, it was found that there was practical contribution from both the government and the tourism industry on the four sustainability dimensions, as discussed in this chapter. However, the weight or priorities given to each of these dimensions by
the respective groups was affected to a certain extent by the regional issues. Hence, this contributed to their interpretation/conceptualisation of sustainable tourism.

6.5 Factors Contributing to the Sustainable Tourism Interpretation

Some of the reasons for the failure to reach consensus on the meaning of the term sustainable tourism lie in the diverse range of people presenting their interpretation on the concept. For example, for the government, sustainable tourism can only be given an interpretation in their plans, policies and publications. It is important to note that the government is not a stand-alone body or one mind making decisions on the plans; therefore the involvement of all the ministries and government departments, including the national level representatives down to the local level concerns on sustainable tourism, makes it a highly debatable concept. For example, for the Ministry of National Planning sustainable tourism means the contribution of tourism as a sector to the larger sustainable development of the economy; on the other hand, for a town council it means establishing a proper channel from the national level to the grassroots level.

The same justification is applied to the tourism industry. For the accommodation sector, sustainable tourism was mostly interpreted by the tourism industry as environmental friendly practices, while for the tourism attractions (museums, tour operators etc.) it is more to do with the socio-cultural aspects of sustainability, such as their contribution to the local community. Furthermore, within the accommodation sector, for the large resorts, green programme certifications and installation of sophisticated treatment plants tagged sustainable tourism while for the small and medium sustainable tourism, operators sustainable tourism was the basic three R’s (recycle, reuse and reduce), which did not require large sums of funds nor expert advice. Hence these findings depicted that the tourism industry is diverse, and conformed to the arguments made by Hobson and Essex (2001) that the high fragmentation of the tourism industry is one of the contributing factors for the term sustainable tourism not yet having reached a common interpretation.
In addition, the findings of the study also reconcile with Ioannides’s (2001) observation that there is a shift in the stakeholders’ attitude towards tourism development and sustainable development depending on their tourism region’s position on the destination life cycle, specifically highlighting Butler’s Resort Life Cycle in his explanation. The findings revealed that the theoretical interpretation of sustainable tourism by the tourism industry has a direct relation to the current tourism industry problem. It is important to note that different tourism operators are facing different issues, mostly depending on their location, and as Ioannides claims, different areas take different positions on the destination life cycle in relation to the position of the whole country. For example, areas like the Coral Coast, the Mamanucas and the Yasawas have more development of the tourism sector compared to areas such as the North including Savusavu, Taveuni and other islands like Levuka in Ovalau. In a nutshell, the two main points highlighted here are that because each tourism area has different issues, sustainable tourism is interpreted accordingly and secondly, because each area has a different position on a destination life cycle and with further tourism development shifting to a different position on the lifecycle, sustainable tourism is never likely to maintain a standard interpretation.

It was found that different tourism regions in Fiji face different issues, concerns and reactions to and from tourism development depending on the location, as highlighted earlier during the discussion. For example, it was claimed by one of the respondents that “since tourism is at a low density here in Savusavu, so communities react in a very positive and friendly approach towards the guests…the locals value the guests and like them…it is a great exchange, where the village life is exposed to the guests, and on the other hand, the villagers have an opportunity to learn new ways from the guests…it is always fascinating for the staff here who have a good relationship with the guests, so when guests go there to see where they live it becomes a memorable experience”. This finding confirms to Andereck’s (2005) claim in his recent study that the locals appreciate the way tourism enriches the community fabric, but this does not discount its negativities to any extent. In addition, it reconciles to Aronsson’s (1994) justification that different communities and areas have different levels of tolerance in regard to tourism impacts depending on how robust they are, as differences might be due to the
number and types of visitors, but also to the economic differentiation, social and cultural structure and physical and ecological capacity of the area.

As it is a fact that the issues of the destination change with time, new issues come up because new factors have begun to affect the industry and as a result, their interpretations and conceptualisations of sustainable tourism change. In addition, the inclusion of new stakeholders as members in each stakeholder group will add another interpretation of the concept. For example, the interpretation of the concept held by the Nadi FHA President today will change with a new president. This results in changes in the practice of sustainable tourism development in Nadi with a change in president-ship of the Nadi FHA.

The issue that the researcher would like to highlight to the readers is that the Nadi FHA case is just one example. There are so many stakeholders, taking into account each individual, where a change in a member will automatically mean a change in the interpretation of the term. In other words, this means that if the situation remains as such, the interpretation of the term will never reach consensus at the theoretical level. This would raise further questions about the concept’s practicality, which can perhaps never exist. If in case it does then everyone will have his or her own agenda for to the sustainable tourism development in Fiji. There can be a risk that everyone might skew to one dimension only, while the rest remain unconsidered totally or simply the stakeholders can confine to their personal gains in the disguise of sustainable tourism.

Finally, the various interpretations of sustainable tourism owe much to the ideology that no two people can think alike on one aspect. However, there can be people with common views who can be grouped together and can work together with that common view.

This study reiterates Mowforth and Munt’s (2003) argument that sustainable tourism is ideological in the sense that it is the First World interests (due to its emergence from the First World) getting served or rather enforced upon the Third World; furthermore, it is a
discourse owing to the different perspectives on the concept presented by different stakeholder groups and finally, a hegemony, which again relates to the contested feature of sustainability (as with discourse) but is extended to the continued renewal, re-definition and defence of the term.

6.6 Chapter Summary

To conclude this chapter, it was found that there is very little practical common ground on the sustainable tourism development by both stakeholder groups. That is, the industry looks only to what each operation is doing themselves, while the government is confined to its institutional perspective on the term. The study has shown that there is lack of integration of sustainable tourism activities between the tourism industry and the government in Fiji. Therefore, this study confirms that without a working definition of sustainable tourism to suit the context of Fiji and its tourism industry, the term is definitely loosely used and as highlighted in Chapter 2 by various academics, has a risk of becoming an ‘empty cliché’ as it means different things to different people. Even greater risk lies in the fact that because sustainable tourism deals with continuity in tourist growth as one of the components of the whole concept, tourism operations at a sectoral level can concentrate on just this aspect without addressing any other sustainability dimension – the environment or the socio-cultural. With greater marketing and promotions they can attract more and more visitors and can tag their operation as sustainable because it is able to persist as a business.

The next chapter will conclude this research by making a call for a working definition of sustainable tourism for the tourism industry in Fiji. Such working definition would need to be developed with consideration to all the relevant stakeholder views on the concept and the context specific factors to benchmark the sustainable development of the tourism industry in Fiji.
CHAPTER 7
Conclusion: Progress and Prosperity or Pillage and Plunder?

7.0 Conclusion

Tourism impacts and forecasted growth have put the continuity of the industry at risk. Hence, Fiji has chosen its direction for a sustainable tourism industry, putting sustainable tourism as mission, vision and goal of the tourism development plan in Fiji. In addition, sustainable tourism has become the talk of the tourism industry as witnessed in themes of tourism conferences, forums and workshops in Fiji. Though sustainable tourism has been a recognised strategy for combating the jeopardy of current tourism industry status, there has been absence of a working definition of the term. Hence, the term loosely used has the identified risk in the sustainable tourism literature that it can mean different things to different people. Therefore, as highlighted by Hardy and Beeton (2001) the vulnerability of such a situation has a possibility to compound the confusion of the concept at conceptual or theoretical level to the practical level resulting in sustainable tourism remaining as mere rhetoric. Furthermore, as Butler (1999) has argued, almost any form of tourism can be termed sustainable.

This study has sought to describe and compare the perceptions of government and the tourism industry on sustainable tourism development in Fiji, at both theoretical and practical levels. The major research question that this thesis asks is: ‘Does Fiji need a working definition of sustainable tourism?’ The justification of this will be based on the objectives of this study, in other words, the level of awareness of the term in the two key stakeholder groups of the tourism industry in Fiji. These two groups are as identified earlier, the government where the sustainable tourism is conceptualised in policies etc. and the second group as the tourism industry itself, where sustainable tourism is practised.

The literature review chapter has confirmed that sustainable tourism is a concept open to various interpretations, as there is no widely accepted definition of the term to date (Garrod and Fyall, 1998). The sustainable tourism literature has confirmed (see Chapter 2) that sustainable tourism is a borrowed concept and its origins lie in the parent
concept – sustainable development. The inherited features from sustainable development have been one of the justifications of sustainable tourism to remain a contested concept. These features include the confusions on its conceptualisation to politicisation to institutionalisation and finally to its implementation. In addition, some authors have claimed the high fragmentation of the tourism industry (Hobson and Essex, 2001; Ioannides, 2001) and the shift in attitudes of the stakeholders in accordance with the destination life cycle (Ioannides, 2001) as reasons for the lack of consensus about the definition of the term. Hence, the fact remains that the definition of sustainable tourism is still evolving.

Cvetok (2002) has emphasised that there is no doubt that a sustainable tourism project in India will vary from one in Vanuatu because of social and cultural parameters of the place where these projects have been implemented. He adds that this factor will not allow an appropriate process in one community to lead to the same results in another community though some common denominators will exist. Hence, he concludes that it is important to apply solutions that fit the social and cultural parameters of the relevant community or society. Twining-Ward (2004) supports the solution identified by Cvetok and adds that stakeholder participation and a place-based approach can be a means through which such ill-defined terms can be handled.

One individual may not make a major impact, but the combined efforts of all players in an area have the potential to significantly change attitudes and behaviour of the rest. It is important for the stakeholders of the tourism industry to interpret the ideologies and practices of ‘sustainable tourism’ and these perspectives to band together around a common theme. Therefore, a definition that is developed in consultation with the stakeholders, who will be the users of the term, and that includes the placed-based factors that affect them definitely provides a greater chance that discourses such as sustainable tourism can obtain a context-specific conceptualisation, and operationalisation that will eventually lead to its successful implementation.
The sustainable tourism literature confirmed that many commentators using different ways have attempted to define the term sustainable tourism (Wheeller, 1991; Bramwell and Lane, 1993; Butler, 1993; Müller, 1994; Beioley, 1995; Coccossis, 1996; McCool & Moisey; 2001; WTO, 2004). However, the academic community in the effort to prove the precision of their definition via continued renewal, re-defining and defending of the term has landed the term in Harrison’s (1996) ‘muddy pool’ of debates on sustainable tourism and further to what Mowforth and Munt (2003) call the hegemony of the term.

On the other hand some authors (Swarbrooke, 1999; Barke and Towner, 2003) have argued that though the term sustainable tourism lacks clarity in its meaning, the recognition of the core sustainability dimensions has given the hope for the term to reach agreement to a greater extent. These include the environmental dimension, the most focused out of all, the economic, socio-cultural and the political dimensions. Therefore, this study used the framework of the sustainability dimensions to articulate this research in order to maintain a level of consistency throughout the thesis. Hence, all the chapters have been based on this framework.

This research was conducted under the interpretive paradigm, where the nature of reality is ‘socially constructed’, that is on the lived experiences of the respondents. As mentioned earlier the two key stakeholder groups, the government and the tourism industry, were selected to unfold the socially constructed meaning of sustainable tourism to answer the central research question of this thesis. This study has taken an inductive approach, firstly, based upon a pre-understanding based on previous empirical search and secondly, upon reliance on data collection through in-depth interviews. A semi-structured interview questionnaire was used (a combination of standard predetermined questions and open-ended questions) to collect ‘rich data’ on the phenomenon under study.

The research design was unstructured in order to respond to the field setting. The predominant approach to this study is qualitative and as asserted by Blaikie (2000). This
approach helps describe the behaviour, social relationships, social processes, social situations, and in particular, meanings people give to their activities, the activities of others, and the objects and social contexts. Considering the issue that “with qualitative research, it is the ‘quality’ not the ‘quantity’ of the data that determines the sampling” (Sarantakos, 1998 cited in Jennings, 2001: 149) a purposive sampling method was chosen to provide rich and meaningful data to fulfil the objectives of this study. As mentioned earlier the two key stakeholder groups were selected for this study. The government was selected because they decide on sustainable tourism policies and the tourism industry is where the sustainable tourism policies are implemented. It was considered important that their perceptions based on the current level of awareness they have of the term (both at theoretical and practical level) will be able to answer if there is a need for a working definition of sustainable tourism in Fiji.

The study showed that 74% of the respondents were aware of the term sustainable tourism; however, the 26% had never heard of the concept were all locals. It was found that though this 26% of respondents did not understand the technical term sustainable tourism but there was evidence of sustainable tourism practices at their business operations. Therefore, they did have an idea of what the term meant.

The key findings of this study at theoretical level revealed that sustainable tourism was interpreted differently, though within the four sustainability dimensions, environment being the most mentioned one. It was noted that the interpretations of the term by government agencies were very much coloured by the nature of the work the agency was involved in. For example, the DOE interpreted the sustainability of environment in a tourism context. The MOT, the government tourism body in Fiji, highlighted that they follow the WTO (2004) definition of sustainable tourism.

On the other hand, the tourism industry interpreted sustainable tourism as the solution to the tourism industry problems they faced within their destination regions. For example, the Coral Coast tourism operators’ challenges were different from those in the Mamanucas or the North. Hence, the place-based factors determined their interpretation
of the term. However, the concerning aspect under this level of interpretation was that some of the respondents were not aware what the WTO (2004) definition of sustainable tourism was. This led to the situation that there was a gap in the theoretical interpretation of the term within the stakeholder groups and between the groups.

The practical level of interpretation also showed that the respondents were contributing to the sustainable tourism development of Fiji and again within the four sustainability dimensions. For this study, the human resource dimension joined the list of sustainability dimensions, as this was an area addressed by both the government and the tourism industry for the sustainability of the tourism industry in Fiji, particularly in economic terms. It was noted that the sustainable tourism practices were addressing the context specific issues of the tourism industry, for example, trying to come up with strategies on the qoliqoli issue, which is a problem unique to Fiji’s tourism industry, working on project to train labour to meet the sector needs and standards, and strengthen the linkage of the tourism sector with other sectors, especially the agriculture sector in Fiji. Hence, these are again said to be place-based factors that are determining the interpretation of the concept at a practical level.

However, the theoretical interpretation of sustainable tourism did not match to the practical interpretation. For example, at theoretical level, no one emphasised the economic dimension but at practical level, the MOT was found to be heavily focusing on this dimension. Another issue is that, the researcher has doubts that some tourism operators for their image, can mislead that they practice the principles of sustainability. However, if in reality they are doing it, then again their motives were questionable, in other words, whether they were practising such principles for promotion purposes or were really concerned about the sustainable development of the tourism industry. In addition, it was found that neither of the stakeholder groups complemented each other on their sustainable tourism practices. For example, no respondent mentioned that they are working on a sustainable tourism project initiated by the government. For instance, no one mentioned the Green Fiji or the Food Policy initiatives. On the other hand, the government did not have an idea to what extent the tourism industry is working toward
sustainable tourism and what precisely they are doing in each destination region. This was because there was no definition of sustainable tourism outlined anywhere in any documents to benchmark the sustainable tourism practice in Fiji and in such a case almost any tourism operator can tag his/her operation as sustainable. This outlines the most significant issue from the research and calls for the need for integration of the government and the industry initiatives for the sustainable development of the tourism industry in Fiji.

The findings of this study have reiterated many of the theories outlined in Chapter 2 of this thesis. It was confirmed that a widespread usage of the term sustainable tourism was made in various documentations and publications in Fiji. In addition, the findings confirming the argument of many authors in the sustainable tourism literature that sustainable tourism is interpreted differently by different people (Butler, 1993; Hardy and Beeton, 2001; Weaver, 2006) consequently, as outlined by Sharpley (2000) losing clarity in its meaning and objectives and finally diving into Harrison’s (1996) ‘muddy pool’ of debates on sustainable tourism. Hence, sustainable tourism can become an “empty cliché” as feared by Müller (1994).

As mentioned earlier at both theoretical and practical level there were gaps identified in their interpretation of the term, that is, there were cases of mismatches of theoretical interpretation to the practical interpretation of sustainable tourism. In addition, as more and more respondents were included in the study, the term kept losing consensus as to its meaning; hence, supporting to Hobson and Essex (2001) and Ioannides (2001) claim that the highly fragmented nature of the tourism industry is one of the causes for the term to be variously interpreted. However, at theoretical level, many authors (Swarbrooke, 1999: 2003) hold the viewpoint that sustainable tourism has reached consensus in three main areas: the inclusion of four sustainability dimensions; the mention of timescale and continuity of the tourism industry; and the consideration of intra- and intergenerational equity.
In addition it was noted that the interpretation of sustainable tourism was determined by one of the core elements of the study area and that is again confirmed in the argument of Cvetok (2002) that the social and cultural parameters affect the sustainable tourism projects, hence it is important to apply solutions that fit these parameters and are relevant to the society or community. Hence these study findings have well demonstrated that with stakeholder participation and with consideration to the place-based factors as claimed by Twining-Ward (2004), ill-defined concepts such as sustainable tourism can be given a working definition that will allow them to serve as the yardstick for the sustainable tourism development in Fiji and definitely not permit any tourism operation to be termed sustainable.

To sum up, the findings have identified the two core aspects about sustainable tourism as identified in the Chapter 2 on the theories of sustainable tourism. The first aspect is that sustainable tourism can mean different things to different people. This was clearly evident in the following quote of a government official (see Chapter 6) emphasising that “Fiji has 22 government agencies and to get these 22 talking the same language is a challenge in itself…and then we have the industry with hundred minds...this is just working round and round in circles looking for something to be called sustainable tourism!...sometimes motivations work against each other”. Secondly, its interpretation is determined by the physical, natural, social and cultural (place-specific factors) of the context of the destination region. Therefore, a definition from another country or context cannot be applied to Fiji and it is concluded that there is a need for a working definition of sustainable tourism for Fiji’s tourism industry.

7.1 Strengths and Weaknesses of this Study and Future Research
There are many identified strengths of the study. Firstly, the two key stakeholder groups were selected to be part of this study. These two stakeholder groups, the government and the tourism industry, are the most important groups when it comes to sustainable tourism policy making or laying down the sustainability principles and the actual sustainable tourism practices. The government usually decides on sustainable tourism agendas at policy level and later the tourism industry implements them. Therefore, the
views of these two stakeholder groups are considered most important when it comes to the interpretation or conceptualisation of the term as they are considered to be the main users of the definition.

Secondly, respondents were selected from the main tourism destination regions in Fiji, for example, the Coral Coast region, the Nadi region, the Mamanucas, and North. Incorporating views of respondents from these regions has contributed to the validity and reliability of the study findings. In other words, respondents from mature tourism regions will better understand about the need for sustainable tourism development as they have more experience and knowledge of the tourism impacts on the region and overall Fiji; while those from the developing regions will not concentrate much on sustainability issues at this stage because they will not understand the impacts unless they have experienced them and their motivation is more directed in further tourism development in the region. This argument has been well supported by Butler (1999) that it is easy to claim that sustainability principles are more successfully implemented in emerging tourism destinations than in matured ones; however, in reality he warns that the actuality is vice versa, as mature destinations have experienced the tourism impacts and are aware of its consequences, whereas the emerging destinations have not witnessed this stage and will not understand the necessity for sustainable forms of tourism.

Thirdly, the study has taken perceptions on sustainable tourism from a cross-section of the tourism industry in Fiji. These included respondents from various segments of the tourism industry including: accommodation - small, medium and large; transport – land, air, water; and attractions – cultural, natural, sightseeing, diving companies and the museum. Because the study is mainly qualitative in nature, a mixture of tourism industry representatives in the sample was able to provide rich and meaningful data to help in the analysis, interpretation and legitimate conclusion of this study. In addition, all the tourism association presidents’ views, representing their whole regions, have further added to this. Even for the government the main tourism bodies were part of the
study and also all the relevant line government agencies, including the NGOs with whom the main tourism ministry closely affiliates for sustainable tourism projects.

Finally, this thesis has contributed to the very few studies done on the topic of sustainable tourism in Fiji and hence gives room for further studies in the field based on the findings from this study. This study provides a foundation for further quantitative studies. Quantitative studies are necessary to identify and develop indicators and monitor trends and changes over time.

With strengths, the study also has identified weaknesses. The major weakness of this study is that due to time and resource constraints the views on the term held by other key stakeholder groups could not be taken. The study would have been more meaningful if this was incorporated into the study, especially the views of the tourists because of whom we have a tourism industry in Fiji and the local communities with whose help sustainable tourism practices can take a nicer shape. It would have been good to find out the extent these grassroots people have awareness of the term sustainable tourism to help the tourism industry operators to contribute to a sustainable tourism industry in Fiji.

Due to its qualitative approach, this study does not lend itself to the kind of generalisation that can emerge from quantitative research (results generalising beyond the population that is studied); however, it is confined to generalisation made to the study site that is to Fiji. In addition, replication will be not relevant to this research topic because of variation in the researcher’s study context. It is important to note that social situations are never sufficiently similar across time and space. To summarise, qualitative research like this enables the researcher to highlight detailed and in-depth snapshots of the participants under study, presenting a slice of life of the participants under study (Jennings, 2001).

In addition, this study does suggest that there is a need for a working definition of sustainable tourism in Fiji and how it could be established, but did not precisely identify
what this working definition of sustainable tourism should be for Fiji. In other words, specific components or indicators of the term were not identified, though some common themes were outlined during data analysis and interpretation in Chapter 6. Furthermore, the researcher was not able to verify with all the tourism industry respondents whether they were really involved in the sustainable tourism practices identified by them during the interview, though some site visits of such projects were done during fieldwork. There are chances that the respondents would say that they are doing this and that to make contribute to the sustainable tourism industry in Fiji; however, they could be saying this to satisfy the researcher.

7.2 Recommendations

Recommendations made based on the study findings are:

There should be greater efforts to raise awareness, especially among local people, of the principles of sustainable tourism and why there is a need. Some of the ways could be through, for example, workshops in various tourism destination regions, run by government and made it compulsory for all tourism operators and local communities part of the tourism industry to attend a workshop or other mechanism (for example, mentoring programmes) appropriate to the objectives.

Fiji should come up with its own working definition of the term sustainable tourism and its own set of sustainable tourism indicators. This can only be achieved with strong consultation from all the relevant tourism industry stakeholder groups in Fiji. The sustainable tourism indicators will help to monitor the sustainable development of the tourism industry over a period of time.

Fiji as a whole, including its major tourism destinations, should explore where it stands on the destination life cycle. This will help to come up with a different set of programmes targeting different regions to solve their issues, which is applicable to their destination regions. There is a need to deal with chunks of the whole; otherwise it will
be very difficult to work across the whole of Fiji because of the highly fragmented tourism industry structure and holding on to different features and nature.

In addition, there is a need to instigate conflict negotiations in localities representing each stage of resort cycle. Due to their longer-term vision, national or regional planners and others should take a lead as mediators by seeking to establish a common ground between all stakeholders. This approach will help in skilful dialogue between all groups, contributing to the sustainable development of the industry. The Ministry of Tourism should have a mandate to enforce sustainable tourism policies and not wait for other ministries’ assistance. The Ministry of Tourism should also be sufficiently resourced to carry out such actions.

There is a need for a code of conduct for different sectors of the tourism industry in Fiji. It should include conducts for variation within the sector, for example, from small to large scale operations because the findings have revealed that there were lots of conflicts between different scales of operators in Fiji when dealing with sustainability issues.

It is hoped that the identification of issues from this study can act as a foundation on which to develop more strategic integration of initiatives between industry and government and that these efforts will work towards the development, management and monitoring of indicators and initiatives which, rather than giving merely lip service, will enhance the practical realisation of commonly owned and shared principles of sustainability for tourism development.
References


Interview List


Appendix A: Tourism Industry Interview Questionnaire

Section 1: About Business

General Business Details
a. Name of Operation 
   b. Location 
   c. Years of Operation 
   d. Ownership 
   e. Mission and Vision Statement 
   f. Aims and Objectives 
   g. Roles and Functions 

Employee Information 
a. Total Number of employees 
   b. Number of local employees 
   c. What sort of jobs do they engage in at the operation (level of job – skill/unskilled jobs) 
   d. Number of foreigners 
   e. Designation of foreigners at operation 
   f. Number of male employees 
   g. Number of female employees 
   h. Is there any gender specific role allocated to employees at your operation? Give example. 

Future Plans 
a. What are your future plans in relation to the following and indicate time frame for each: 
   i. Marketing? 
   ii. Building/Infrastructure? 
   iii. Local Community?
iv. Environmental Conservation etc?

v. Management of the Business (Employee related etc)?

vi. Facilities and Services offered by your business?

Section 2: About Sustainable Tourism Development Concept

General Conceptualization of the term
a. Have you heard of the term sustainable tourism?

b. What do you understand by the term sustainable tourism development (STD)?

c. Where did you get the initial idea about the concept?

Application of sustainable tourism to business
a. Would you classify your business as a sustainable tourism operation?

b. Can you give examples of such STD practices implemented at your business?

c. When were these practices implemented at your operation?

d. How was this idea initiated?

e. Who benefits from the sustainable tourism practices implemented at your operation and how?

f. (stand by question) In what way these practices will benefit:
   i. Your business in particular?

ii. Fiji, as a tourism destination?

g. Did you encounter any problems while implementing STD practices at your operation? How were these issues solved?

h. Is there use of any STD measures/indicators at your operation to monitor the results of sustainable operation of your business? Can you explain the use of these measures/indicators

Business involvement with Local Community
a. What relationship does your operation have with the local community?

b. What impacts does your business have on the local community?

c. Has your business encountered any sorts of problems with the local community?
d. How did you manage to solve these problems? Is that the normal approach taken by your operation to solve problems you mentioned earlier in regards to local community?

e. Is there any tourism awareness programmes offered by your operation to the local community. Give details.

**Environmental Issues**

What efforts were made to minimise environmental impacts of your operation?

**Political Issues**

a. How did your operation cope with the recent coup (May 2000)?

**5. Employee Selection and Training**

a. What criteria do you use for employee selection at your business?

b. What sort of training is provided to your staff?

c. How regular is this training?

d. Who provides it?

e. What techniques are used to increase productivity of your employees?

f. What sort of non monetary rewards is given to the employees? On what basis?

g. During low season, what strategy do you normally apply to your employees (are they given no job at all, cut down on working hours etc)?

12. What strategies could be implemented to enhance sustainable tourism operations in Fiji? Who is responsible for the implementation of strategies?
Appendix B: Government Interview Questionnaire

Mission and Vision Statement
Aims and Objectives
Roles and Functions of the Ministry
What do you understand by the term sustainable tourism?
Were there any surveys or research done by government on sustainable tourism development in Fiji?
When was this survey done?
Type of survey/research
Purpose of the survey
Were other stakeholders in the industry involved in this research/survey
What was the outcome of research?
How did it help government in policy making in tourism sector?
What are your current plans or policies on sustainable tourism in Fiji?
Who are other stakeholders involved with policymaking process?
Do you involve other ministries as well? Which ministry? What is their role?
What type of support do they provide?
Who is in charge of implementation of such policies in Fiji?
How do you ensure that sustainable tourism practices are implemented at current tourism operations in Fiji?
Are there any tools the government uses to monitor or evaluate current sustainable tourism operations in Fiji?
Explain answer to above question. How and when?
What sort of planning approaches do you take to designing and/or implement policies, plans etc?
What are your future plans?
Is there a future plan specifically focusing sustainable tourism development in Fiji?
Is there any legislation, guidelines, indicators or regulations in regard to sustainable tourism development in Fiji?
What is your role to encourage sustainable tourism practices in Fiji?
Who are the beneficiaries of sustainable tourism practices in Fiji?
How do you think Fiji, as a destination will benefit from sustainable tourism development?

What are some of the constraints in achieving sustainable tourism development in Fiji?

Have you done any recent publication on sustainable tourism in Fiji?

Is there any tourism education and awareness programs carried out by the government?

What is the content of your tourism awareness program and to whom is it directed to (industry operators, tourists, local communities etc)?

How do the above groups benefit from such educational and awareness programs?

Can you give examples of current sustainable tourism operators in Fiji and explain how you have determined them to be sustainable operations?

On what basis/criteria does the Ministry of Tourism approve licences to tourism operators in Fiji?

Does the ministry undertake any sort of research periodically? Give details of the research.

Is there any plan to implement accounting systems for tourism? Give details.

What sorts of policies have been implemented by the government to protect the rights of the following stakeholders?

Tourism industry

NGOs

Local Community

Tourists

Media

Educational and training institutions

Check List of Documents

☐ International Visitor Survey

☐ Tourism Development Plans

☐ Environmental plans
- Stakeholder policies
- Marketing plans
- Legislation/Acts
- Future plans
- Organizational chart
- Website
- Annual report
- Industry listing
- Industry Licence criteria
- Ownership (Foreign vs Local) list
### Appendix C: SDP Policy for Tourism Sector

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Policy Objectives</th>
<th>Key Performance Indicators</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>To increase visitor arrivals.</td>
<td>- Direct flights to new markets.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Over 448,000 visitors by 2004. Target 500,000 visitors by 2005.</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td>- An additional 2000 rooms available with the new 3 to 5 star hotel completed by 2005.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Hotel Aids Act reviewed by 2003.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- “Keep Fiji Clean” program established by 2003.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Three year rolling plan for FVB established by 2003.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- “Tourism areas” established to improve destination-marketing campaigns such as Destinations Suva by 2003.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To increase economic contribution and the retention of the tourist dollar.</td>
<td>- 26,500 new jobs created by 2005.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Tourism investment regime reviewed by 2004.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Establishment of Nadi Bay and Mamanucas as Pilot Tourism Development Area by 2005.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Increased local supply of agriculture produce to hotels and restaurants.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Increased length of stay and higher hotel occupancy rates.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Regular public awareness programmes such as Bula Pride.</td>
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<td>To increase resource owner’s participation in the tourism industry.</td>
<td>- More resource owner businesses established.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Resource owners’ representative body established by 2003.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- More senior management positions held by resource owners.</td>
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<td>To promote Human Resources Development in tourism.</td>
<td>- New Hotel Training School operational established by 2004.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Maintain and strengthen management-training programmes.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Scholarship provision for higher education.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To promote sustainable eco-tourism development and public awareness at all levels of society</td>
<td>- 2 nature parks and walkways by 2004.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
At least 50 percent of nature based and community based tourism operations meet or exceed ecotourism best practice guidelines and standards by 2004.

Ecotourism awareness education for hosts and guests established by 2005.


Appendix D: Charter for Sustainable Tourism

We, the participants at the World Conference on Sustainable Tourism, meeting in Lanzarote, Canary Islands, Spain, on 27-28 April 1995,

Mindful that tourism, as a worldwide phenomenon, touches the highest and deepest aspirations of all people and is also an important element of socioeconomic and political development in many countries.

Recognizing that tourism is ambivalent, since it can contribute positively to socioeconomic and cultural achievement, while at the same time it can contribute to the degradation of the environment and the loss of local identity, and should therefore be approached with a global methodology.

Mindful that the resources on which tourism is based are fragile and that there is a growing demand for improved environmental quality.

Recognizing that tourism affords the opportunity to travel and to know other cultures, and that the development of tourism can help promote closer ties and peace among peoples, creating a conscience that is respectful of the diversity of culture and life styles.

Recalling the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, adopted by the General Assembly of United Nations, and the various United Nations declarations and regional conventions on tourism, the environment, the conservation of cultural heritage and on sustainable development.


Recalling previous declarations on tourism, such as the Manila Declaration on World Tourism, the Hague Declaration and the Tourism Bill of Rights and Tourist Code.

Recognizing 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.

Considering it a priority to protect and reinforce the human dignity of both local communities and tourists.

Mindful of the need to establish effective alliances among the principal actors in the field of tourism so as to fulfil the hope of a tourism that is more responsible towards our common heritage.

APPEAL to the international community and, in particular, URGE governments, other public authorities, decision makers and professionals in the field of tourism, public and private
associations and institutions whose activities are related to tourism, and tourists themselves, to adopt the principles and objectives of the Declaration that follows:

1️⃣ Tourism development shall be based on criteria of sustainability, which means that it must be ecologically bearable in the long term, as well as economically viable, and ethically and socially equitable for local communities. Sustainable development is a guided process which envisages global management of resources so as to ensure their viability, thus enabling our natural and cultural capital, including protected areas, to be preserved. As a powerful instrument of development, tourism can and should participate actively in the sustainable development strategy. A requirement of sound management of tourism is that the sustainability of the resources on which it depends must be guaranteed.

2️⃣ Tourism should contribute to sustainable development and be integrated with the natural, cultural and human environment; it must respect the fragile balances that characterize many tourist destinations, in particular small islands and environmentally sensitive areas. Tourism should ensure an acceptable evolution as regards its influence on natural resources, biodiversity and the capacity for assimilation of any impacts and residues produced.

3️⃣ Tourism must consider its effects on the cultural heritage and traditional elements, activities and dynamics of each local community. Recognition of these local factors and support for the identity, culture and interests of the local community must at all times play a central role in the formulation of tourism strategies, particularly in developing countries.

4️⃣ The active contribution of tourism to sustainable development necessarily presupposes the solidarity, mutual respect and participation of all the actors, both public and private, implicated in the process, and must be based on efficient cooperation mechanisms at all levels: local, national, regional and international.

5️⃣ The conservation, protection and appreciation of the worth of the natural and cultural heritage afford a privileged area for cooperation. This approach implies that all those responsible must take upon themselves a true challenge, that of cultural, technological and professional innovation, and must also undertake a major effort to create and implement integrated planning and management instruments.

6️⃣ Quality criteria both for the preservation of the tourist destination and for the capacity to satisfy tourists, determined jointly with local communities and informed by the principles of sustainable development, should represent priority objectives in the formulation of tourism strategies and projects.

7️⃣ To participate in sustainable development, tourism must be based on the diversity of opportunities offered by the local economy. It should be fully integrated into and contribute positively to local economic development.
All options for tourism development must serve effectively to improve the quality of life of all people and must influence the socio-cultural enrichment of each destination.

Governments and the competent authorities, with the participation of NGOs and local communities, shall undertake actions aimed at integrating the planning of tourism as a contribution to sustainable development.

In recognition of economic and social cohesion among the peoples of the world as a fundamental principle of sustainable development, it is urgent that measures be promoted to permit a more equitable distribution of the benefits and burdens of tourism. This implies a change of consumption patterns and the introduction of pricing methods which allow environmental costs to be internalised. Governments and multilateral organizations should prioritize and strengthen direct and indirect aid to tourism projects which contribute to improving the quality of the environment. Within this context, it is necessary to explore thoroughly the application of internationally harmonised economic, legal and fiscal instruments to ensure the sustainable use of resources in tourism.

Environmentally and culturally vulnerable spaces, both now and in the future, shall be given special priority in the matter of technical cooperation and financial aid for sustainable tourism development. Similarly, special treatment should be given to zones that have been degraded by obsolete and high impact tourism models.

The promotion of alternative forms of tourism that are compatible with the principles of sustainable development, together with the encouragement of diversification represent a guarantee of stability in the medium and the long term. In this respect there is a need, for many small islands and environmentally sensitive areas in particular, to actively pursue and strengthen regional cooperation.

Governments, industry, authorities, and tourism-related NGOs should promote and participate in the creation of open networks for research, dissemination of information and transfer of appropriate knowledge on tourism and environmentally sustainable tourism technologies.

The establishment of a sustainable tourism policy necessarily requires the support and promotion of environmentally-compatible tourism management systems, feasibility studies for the transformation of the sector, as well as the implementation of demonstration projects and the development of international cooperation programmes.

The travel industry, together with bodies and NGOs whose activities are related to tourism, shall draw up specific frameworks for positive and preventive actions to secure sustainable tourism development and establish programmes to support the implementation of such practices. They shall monitor achievements, report on results and exchange their
experiences.

Particular attention should be paid to the role and the environmental repercussions of transport in tourism, and to the development of economic instruments designed to reduce the use of non-renewable

The adoption and implementation of codes of conduct conducive to sustainability by the principal actors involved in tourism, particularly industry, are fundamental if tourism is to be sustainable. Such codes can be effective instruments for the development of responsible tourism activities.

All necessary measures should be implemented in order to inform and promote awareness among all parties involved in the tourism industry, at local, national, regional and international level, with regard to the contents and objectives of the Lanzarote Conference.

FINAL RESOLUTION

The World Conference on Sustainable Tourism considers it vital to make the following public statements:

1. The Conference recommends State and regional governments to draw up urgently plans of action for sustainable development applied to tourism, in consonance with the principles set out in this Charter.

2. The Conference agrees to refer the Charter for Sustainable Tourism to the Secretary-General of the United Nations, so that it may be taken up by the bodies and agencies of the United Nations system, as well as by international organizations which have cooperation agreements with the United Nations, for submission to the General Assembly