National Seminar on Innovative Approaches in Biosciences

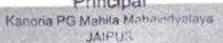


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ECOTOURISM: A NEW APPROACH TO SAVE BIODIVERSITY ALONG WITH EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

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Abstract

Exploitation of mother nature in our quest for chaterial wealth has resulted in global warming and massive poliution of our environment. There has been trausive destruction of forest habitats in the same of development and tourism This also caused biodiversity degradation and resulted into reduction in variety of books and other products, provin gene pools for animals and plants leading to weaker crops and livestock and also climate change due to runnings! destruction. Fortunately, ecotourism is emerging as one such responsible endeavor in order to unito some of this damage. The concept of ecotourism provides the local communities with an afternative form of revenue, thus reducing the communities impact on the forest and safeguarding the natural habitat along with different flora and fauna, it is defined as "responsible travel to matural areas that conserves the environment, sustains the well-being of the exist people, and metives interpretation and education" Economism is entirely a new approach in tourism. Economism is a preserving travel to natural areas to appreciate the outural and natural history of the environment, taking care not to disturb the integrity of the ecosystem, while presting economic apportunities that make conservation and protector of netural resources advertisgleous to the local people. In India, there are numerous flotanical and Zvological Cardonic th are working towards the enhancement of the Ecceystern and can be used for application stee. Economic ng about economic, andio gallural and equipmmental benefits for the government, private sector and local its if well implemented. Revenue from tourist visits help create job opportunities for locals, which in turn. Seed to 8 ensified economy for them. More importantly, ecotopism can support conservation and environmental roperty carried out. Ecotourism can also be a tool to raise awareness about the environment and to educate the p on conservation.

Key-words: Eocitic (sm. Biodiversity, Environmental conservation, Employment

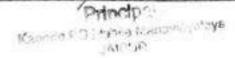
Introduction

Humans have traveled far and wide since the beginning of time, bod, water, safety and or acquisition of resources were the initial travel motivations. Travel is pleasure or exploration soon emerged 1% the area covered under travel has always repended upon the mode of technology. The earliest travellers walked or rode on door sticated animals. The invention of the whole and the sail provided new modes of trap contation. Each improvement in technology increased individuals opportunity to the intervention of the contact of the c

increased for education, sightseeing and religious purposes.

The word tourism is related to Tour, which is taken from a Latin word "tornus" which means a tool for describing a circle or turner's wheel. Only from this word the notion of 'round tour' or package tour developed which is the very much essence of tourism. The concept of tourism as a phenomenon involves the movement of people within their own country or across the national borders. Tourism involves basically three elements namely man (human element as the creator of the act of tourism), space (the physical element to be necessarily covered by

1





the act itself), and time (the temporal element which is compared by the trip itself and the stay at the destination). Conceptually, tourism is defined as the sum of phenomenon and relationships arising from the travel and stay of nonresidents in so far as they don't lead to permanent residence and are not connected with an earning activity (Burkart and Medlik, 1974).

Tourism industry in India plays a significant role in transforming the society and economy. Pandit Jawahartal Nehru's oft-quoted remark, namely welcome a tourist and send back a friend has been the essence of Indian tourism approach in the post-independence era. In India we can observed many facets of tourism like agrotourism, adventure tourism, cultural tourism, medical tourism, rural tourism, sports tourism, pilgrim tourism, beach tourism, backwater tourism, monsoon tourism, garden tourism. literary tourism and experiential tourism.

Experiential tourism is an ideal derivative of ecotourism for its seemingly endless benefits to all concerned. It is, in its simplest form, any type of tourism that allows lie to irist either individually or in a group as - ... que opportunity to experience true life in the host destination in its myriad forms. Ecotourism is a new concept in tourism, which was originally sparked off by the idea of making harmonious co-existence with nature a reality once again. The World Conservation Union (IUCN) defines ecotourism as: "environmentally responsible travel and visitation to relatively undisturbed natural areas, in order to enjoy and appreciate nature (and any accompanying cultural features - both past and present) that promotes conservation, has low negative visitor impact, and provides for beneficially active socio-economic involvement. of local populations' (IUCN, 1996).

The travel industry defines ecotourism as: "purposeful travel that creates an understanding of cultural and natural history, while safeguarding the integrity of the ecosystem and producing economic benefits that encourage conservation. The long-term survival of this special type of travel is inextricably linked to the existence of the natural resources that support it* (Ryel and Grasse 1991; Bandy, 1996).

The International Ecotourism Society defines ecotourism as: "responsible travel to natural areas that conserves the environment and improves the welfare of local people". The idea of ecotourism is in fact an old one, which manifested itself during the late 1960s and early 1970s, when researchers became concerned over inappropriate use of natural resources (Fennell, 2002).

Until recently, there has been some confusion surrounding the origin of the term 'ecotoursm', as evident in the tremendous volume of literature on the topic. For example, Orarns (1995) write that the term can be traced back only to the late 1980s, while others (Fennell, 2002) suggest that it can be traced to the late 1970s, through the work of Miller on eco-development.

One of the consistent themes emergent in the literature supports the fact that Ceballos-Lascurain was the first to coin the phrase in the early 1980s. He defined it as traveling to relatively undisturbed or uncontaminated natural areas with the specific objective of studying, admiring, and enjoying the scenery and its wild plants and animals, as well as any existing cultural manifestations (both past and present) found in these areas' (Fennel. 2002).

Ecotourism can be distinguished from nature tourism by its emphasis on conservation, education, traveller responsibility and active community participation. Nature tourism, low impact tourism, green tourism, bio-tourism, ecologically responsible tourism and others have been used in literature and marketing although they are not necessary synonymous with ecotourism. In some foreign countries ecotourism is also termed as green tourism. Another name of ecotourism is ecological tourism. The main components of ecotourism are nature camps, eco-friendly accommodation.



trekking and nature walks, viewing of wildlife and river rafting, adventure activities, fishing, health promotion and spa, conservation awareness and environment education.

Ecotourism Initiatives in India

Mohan Krishan Khanna has identified ecotourism resources of India in his book 'Ecotourism in India'. In his opinion the geographical diversity of India makes it home to a wealth of ecosystems which are well protected and preserved. These ecosystems have become the major resources for ecotourism. In the 1990s, ecotourism has emerged as one of the most important sectors in tourism in India. During 1998, the Government of India prepared a policy document on ecotourism. The government of India has initiated vital role on ecotourism in 2002 tourism policy. The explanation of nature and strength could be seen in the sixth principle of 2002 tourism policy. This principle describes that ecotourism is a broader sense than those of nature tourism; it helps to eliminating poverty, generating employment even for the unskilled people, increasing the economic status of woman, preserving local culture and encouraging tribal and local crafts. In the ecotourism program, the Government of India supports state governments in the purchase of trekking and camping equipment, and also helps projects which use renewable energy resources. Non-governmental Organizations (NGOs) work as watchdogs to see that the tourism activities are managed on sustainable principles. NGOs also help the government and private sector in feasibility studies, development of strategies etc. Ecotourism lies mostly in the public sector and projects are being developed by government, but private sector support is expected by way of provision of accommodation, conduct of tours etc. There are not many ecotourism projects financed by international funding agencies.

All definitions of ecotourism showed that the concept of ecotourism is derived from seven

components. These are as follows: (1)
Contributes to conservation of biodiversity, (2)
Sustains the well-being of local people, (3)
Includes an interpretation/learning experience,
(4) Involves responsible action on the part of
tourists and the tourism industry, (5) Delivered
primarily to small groups by small-scale
businesses, (6) Requires lowest possible
consumption of non-renewable resources, (7)
Stresses local participation, ownership and
business opportunities, particularly for rural
people.

Ecotourism in Rajasthan

Rajasthan is a north-western state of India, which shares its border with Indian states like Uttar Pradesh, Haryana, Madhya Pradesh, Punjab and Gujrat, and Internationally with Pakistan. Major features include the ruins of the Indus Valley Civilisation at Kalibanga, the Dilwara Temples, a Jain pilgrimage site at Rajasthan's only hill station, Mount Abu, in the ancient Aravalli mountain range, and, in eastern Rajasthan, the Keoladeo National Park near Bharatpur, a World Heritage Site known for its bird life. Rajasthan is also home to three national tiger reserves, Ranthambore National Park in Sawai Madhopur, Sanska Tiger Reserve in Alwar and Mukundra Hill Tiger Reserve in Kota.

The weather of Rajasthan is broadly classified into four distinct seasons. They are - Premonsoon, which is the hot season preceding the monsoon and extends from April to June, the Monsoon that occurs in the month of June in the eastern region and mid-July in the western arid regions, the Post-monsoon that commences from mid-September and continues till November and the Winter that extends from December to March, January being the coldest month of the year. The average temperature in winter ranges from 8° to 28°C (46° to 82°F) and in summer the average temperature ranges from 25" to 46°C (77" to 115°F). The best time for visit of Rajasthan is October to April month when weather can be found pleasant not hot and humid.

Principal