

# Environmental Management: A Strategic Tool to Enhance Eco-tourism in Existing Situation of Ecological Imbalance

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**Abstract**—Article 48(A) of Constitution of India provides for the protection and promotion of ecological refurbishment of nation. Undoubtedly, tourism offers unquestionable economic benefits; it comes with a precipitous environmental price tag. Either it is colossal carbon footprints created by air travel or the human footprints squashing immaculate environments, it immeasurably contributes towards the global ambience and is capable of destroying and depleting local ecosystems. Changing weather patterns, ozone depletion and desertification can potentially destroy or damage the elements of attractive tourist destinations and thus can disrupt the general tourism pattern. Extensive efforts are required to care for and conserve the nature to let the indigenes of places maintained. Hence, this paper will be highlighting the importance of upbringing the concept of eco-tourism and emerging issues arising due to unsustainable tourism practices and will try to provide solutions for the same.

**Keywords:** local ecosystem, sustainable tourism, economic benefits, indigenes, environmental impacts,

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Eco tourism has become a significant activity in terms of economy in the arenas of nature around the globe. It endows with the prospects for the visitors to become familiar with the dominant manifestations of Mother Nature and to discover about the magnitude and importance of the ecological conservation and local traditions and cultures. Simultaneously, Eco-tourism provides for the income generation and economic benefits for communities residing in far-flung, rural and remote regions (Ruhanen.L et al) [1]. The International Eco-tourism Society (TIES) defined Eco-tourism as, “responsible travel to natural areas that conserves the environment, sustains the well-being of the local people, and involves interpretation and education” (TIES 2015) [2]. Honey.M (2008) [3], explains the concept of Eco-tourism with following features:

- Involves travelling to natural destinations.
- Reduces the impact.

- Provokes the consciousness for environmental health.
- Provides financial assistance for local people empowerment and conservation.
- Promotion of local culture.
- Support of democratic movement and human rights.

As per the facts of WTO tourism highlights (2015) tourism contributes to 9% of the total GDP through direct, indirect and induced impact. Each single job out of 11 is related to tourism. It forms 6% of the world’s exports from 25 million round the globe tourists in 1950 to 1133 million in 2014. For the year 2030, about 1.8 billion of international tourists are expected. But as tourism contributes too much towards the healthier side of the economy, this continuous activity is using up and rupturing the natural resources which is potentially destroying the elements of nature and is disrupting the general tourism pattern [4].

Tourism in long term depends a lot on the eminence of the environment. It is this eminence or some other particular feature which accounts for the prime attraction of the tourists. And it won’t be wrong to say that today tourists are being more aware and sensitive towards the deteriorating conditions of the environment. Hence, in few areas, where the activity of tourism is quite popular, it is on the verge of decline due to environmental issues (IUCN publications) [5].

According to EQUATIONS, a widespread damage to the environment has been already made, hence any further delay will might cause to pay a high price for not conserving and showing impertinence towards the nature. The introduction, conceptualization and formation of tourism activity should be the responsibility of local people and all the projects must undergo a rigorous impact evaluation before they are actually implemented [6].

## 2. PURPOSE

The purpose of the study is to understand the importance of promoting Eco-tourism and the down beat affects of the conventional tourism practices. Much effort will be made to provide innovative ideas to make tourism, a more sustainable activity.

## 3. IMPORTANCE

Following points are self explanatory as to how the concept of eco-tourism is so important to be implied:

- Give economic value to ecosystem services that protected areas provide (Drumm,A. et al, 2004) [7].
- Adds value to the economy of safeguarded areas and services provided by those.
- Generate direct income for the conservation of protected areas (Buckley,R. 2012) [8].
- Benefit both the local residents and shareholders, thus encouraging conservation.
- Wise use of natural resources ensured.
- Preserving biodiversity and diminishing attacks on it.
- Promoting local untapped areas for tourism (ENVIS) [9].

*“We are now running out of the time, and the question now is not what is happening, but how bad will it be before the world starts doing enough?”*

—Jonathon Porritt

## 4. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The thought of implementation of the concept of eco-tourism is not an easy work to do. It requires the amalgamated efforts of local people, government bodies, tourists and tourism industry (Wood,M.E. 2002) [10]. Eco-tourism is frequently supposed to be an admirable implementation for the promotion of sustainable development in developing countries. It is a practical and viable way to care for natural environment and preserve it. Eco-tourism creates economic as well as social benefits for the local communities (Buchsbaum,B.D. 2004) [11]. Industries make false declarations over issues like carbon neutrality, carbon off-sets and emission reductions. Tourism is capable of using up 0.34% of world’s terrestrial land and deliberately contributes in spreading pollution (Buckley,R. 2012) [8].

## 5. CURRENT ISSUES ARISING DUE TO TOURISM

There is no doubt in the fact that the “tourism” activity acts as the catalyst for the growth of economy but in return it can also not be denied that the environment is paying a higher price in terms of its health. Finnessy.L (2012) [12] explained that sometimes tourists want to see natural environment in

uninterrupted state but they might be totting up towards more degradation of environment.

UNEP has clearly stated the impacts of tourism which are discussed as below [13]:

The impacts of tourism have been divided into three parts which are:

- a) Environmental impact
- b) Socio-cultural impact
- c) Economic impact

### 5.1. Environmental impact:

Certain tourism activities are within the acceptable limits of environment, thus causing harm to it. Intense damage is being made to the natural resources which are near to impossible to recover even if wished to.

**5.1.1. Water resources:** Water is life and its conservation is future! Swimming pools, golf courses, hotels and personal use of water by the tourists may lead to the over use of the water resource thereby causing water shortage and release of polluted water in large volume.

Nowadays, golf resorts are gaining popularity among tourists. An average size of a golf course uses as much as water utilized 60,000 villagers in a year. In addition it requires 1500kg of pesticides, insecticides and herbicides in its maintenance.

**5.1.2. Local resources:** A great pressure can be put up on the local resources such as food, energy, raw materials etc by the tourists. It may occur that these resources are already sparse in nature. Some destinations are also famous for seasonal tourism. There is a high demand for such resources in peak seasons of tourism, thus becomes difficult to meet up to their expectations.

**5.1.3. Degradation of land:** Fertile soil, minerals, wildlife and forests are the treasures of land. Recreational spots, amusement parks and increased construction for the purpose of tourism are being the main cause for land degradation and deforestation.

**5.1.4. Pollution:** Like other industries, tourism industry also increases pollution. Due to increase in the number of tourist worldwide, pollution caused by road, rail and air transport is also increasing. Tourists account as 60% of the total air passengers.

Global warming, acid rains and photochemical pollution are the results of the harmful transport and factory emissions. Noise pollution caused by cars, buses, trains and other recreational vehicles such as jet skis causes a threat to the wild life and to humans by causing nausea, annoyance, hearing loss or stress. Increased recreational facilities, construction of hotels and other facilities contribute heavily towards sewage pollution. This in turn pollutes seas and oceans where the

sewage water is released. Eventually marine life is affected too.

**5.1.5 Marine activities:** Activities such as dynamiting for the resort constructions near the coastal areas is consciously rupturing the coral reefs. Over-fishing, sewage pollution, trampling by divers and tourists destroys coral habitat.

Direct dilapidation of marine ecosystem occurs when activities such as fishing, scuba diving, yachting, anchoring and cruising takes place.

**5.2 Socio-cultural impact:** Tourism and tourism industry may have direct or indirect impact over a community. Such impacts may not be noticeable as they are not easy to measure. For many reasons, the host community may prove to be a weaker party, thus there are many chances of community to get influenced by their guests.

When there is a change in the value system and behaviour of a society, there is when the threat to the indigenous identity of the host community takes place. Changes may take place in the form of ceremonies, morality, lifestyles, community structure, relationships etc. But tourism must not be seen as hanging by a thread activity. It might bring out sanguine results by bringing out better changes. It can be a supportive force by bringing in peace, providing employment through tourism activities or bringing pride to local cultures.

**5.3 Economic impact:** Tourist's native county and the host country, both settle with significant economic benefits. When a developing country promotes itself as a destination for tourism, it plants the ways for economic benefits. And along with such positive impacts tourism bring in negative impacts as well.

As per the details by World Tourism Organisation, 698 million people by spending more than US\$ 478 billion, travelled to a foreign country. World Travel And Tourism Council [14] in 2014 made a claim that in 2013 the contribution by travel and tourism industry made the global economy rise to 9.5% of global GDP. Due to this, sectors like transport, manufacturing and financial and business services also grow hand in hand. Around 266 million jobs were provided by tourism activity in the year 2013 which accounts for 1 out of 11 jobs all over the world. It is expected that this industry may provide 346,901,000 jobs by 2024.

## 6. SOLUTIONS

- The tourism buses must work on the fuel that causes the least pollution. Thus buses operating on CNGs i.e. Compressed Natural Gas can be used.
- Plastic cups or other non bio degradable material should not be used for food serving purpose. Concepts like, the use of banana leaves for serving food in South India must be promoted. Earthen mugs must also be encouraged instead of cans or plastic cups.
- In few areas, radiation levels can be lowered for safeguarding of birds and other species thus creating a radiation free and safe area for animals to survive and breed.
- For general or sport fishing, plastic nets can be avoided and the use of wool net can be made which is not harmful for marine ecosystem if disposed in water body. Relatively, it is much strong than plastic nets too.
- People can be made aware of the existing situations of rivers and other water bodies in context to water pollution thus, they must be inspired to not to pollute water bodies in the name of spiritual beliefs.
- There can be a creation of waste belt around the coastlines of the country where the wastes by tourists or local people gets accumulated and can be used for useful purposes like creation of electricity, extraction of useful metals like silver, nickel, gold or copper etc.
- While travelling tourists can use newspapers or paper bags to carry their luggage in bags or to carry other stuff. Use of polythene bags must be avoided in cases where it can be.
- Resorts and other destinations can make use of LED bulbs instead of using high voltage bulbs. LEDs have a longer life span and thus frequency of disposal of such bulbs.
- Tourism places must be constructed by keeping in view the zoning and protected areas. A specific code of conduct must be made for improvised building of colonies and zoning codes must be strictly followed by the masses.
- Jets, airbuses and helicopters consume a lot of fuel and even cause air pollution. Thus travellers using such air transport for shorter distance must be motivated to use hot air balloons which are harmless for the environment. This mode of air transport needs to get more popularity for its acceptance.
- The carrying capacity by each traveller must be controlled not only outside one country but even within the country to reduce the level of wastage at tourist spots.
- There must be a provision of maintenance of a regulated density of tourists and traffic inside the enclosed tourist place. More the tourists, more pressure will be exerted on the limited resources to fulfil their demands and to meet up their expectations.
- Electric mode of transport must be promoted to save non renewable sources of energy.
- Many highways and roads are constructed for covering up longer distance in a shorter while but when vehicles at high speed travels, many times wild animals lose their life by getting hit.

- While camping, for cooking and lighting purpose kerosene or L.P.G. or any other non-wood fuel must be used.
- Another thing that can be avoided at camp can be the camp fire, by encouraging camp-fun instead.

## 7. CONCLUSION

The more we will conserve the more our future generations will thank us. There is a big need to understand, promote and accept the concept of eco-tourism to contribute towards the well being of the nature. Eco-tourism serves as a big platform to make a developing country more develop, to increase the local culture, to bring in positive changes for growth, to employ more people and to generate more jobs, to bring in economic stability and most importantly by doing the tourism activity in environmental friendly way.

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