



Eco-tourism: Combating the Challenges

Get top class preparation for UGC right from your home: Get **detailed illustrated notes covering entire syllabus**: point-by-point for high retention.

Introduction: Ecotourism is a word made by summation of two words. Ecology and tourism, where by ecology denotes the interrelationship of biotic and abiotic world and tourism implies a travel based recreation, This ecotourism means management of tourism & conservation of nature so as to maintain a fine balance between requirements of tourism & ecology on one hand and needs of local communities for job on the other hand. What India needs is to maintain a correct balance between the two aspects of ecotourism.

Tourism has undergone a significant transformation during the past thirty years. According to experts it was 'sand & sea beach' that attracted tourism during 1970s. However by 1980s the focus shifted to cultural tourism which involves visit to cultural & historical sports. Then the interest shifted to nature. It is the uniqueness of nature that the travelers are looking for these days. They can get the experience anywhere. What they are looking for is something very different. Hence, develops the need for proper regulation & monitoring in ecotourism. View to enforce regulations for conservation & protection of sensitive natural areas & safety of the tourists.

Characteristics: They can be summarized as follows

- Promote tourism as an industry
- Provide employment oppourtunities for all those who work in related sectors
- Enhance socio-cultural development
- Uphold traditional values & beliefs
- Contain educational features
- Minimize negative import upon society & nature
- Generate economic benefits for host country
- Generate name & fame for host country as regards international tourism & attract further more tourists
- Promote local area development
- Increase awareness towards conservation of areas
- Maintain biodiversity of country & flora & fauna
- Sustain once developed areas to fullest extent

Before looking to the present state of India & planning a bright future. Let us first look into the international prospect.

Analysis of world tourism scenario: Tourism is presently the world's fastest growing industry with us \$4 trillion annual gross output having nearly 616 million world travelers according to year 1999 and with an estimate to grow up to 1602 million by year 2020 AD. Costa Rica and Belize have the largest Source of foreign exchange earned by tourism whereas to Guatemala it is the Second largest aspect of national income. Nearly 10.6% of the world's work force is engaged in travel and tourism and about 10.2% of world's GDP is contributed by this Sector. Taking all these aspects in consideration, United Nations has declared year 2002 as the 'International year of Ecotourism' The declaration itself is the testimony of its being a friendly tool if it is properly planned, developed & managed.

World Ecotourism summit organized under the United Nations Environmental Programmer (UNEP) and world Tourism organization (WTO) during 19 to 22 May, 2002 in Quebec City, Canada with more than thousand delegates from 133 countries, showed the following basic features-

- To set up an preliminary agenda & the recommendations for development.
- To Emphasize Sustainability of tourism for poverty alleviation & environmental protection in endangered areas.
- To recommend national, regional and local gout to formulate policies.
- To recommend government to provide incentives & opportunities.
- To promote educational programs & awareness programs.

Analysis of Indian Tourism Scenario: As for as India is considered in above context, its relevance is for less than any of the developed tourist centre of attraction. It is quite amazing though being a real fact that a vast Indian Subcontinent receives less visitors than a tiny Singapore. The fact seems obvious that India stands at 43 rd position among the top 60 destinations of the world having only 0.38% of share in global tourism. It is encouraging that more & more travel & related organizations probing into the matter the targeted position shows a good breakthrough. It is estimated that during 1998 – 99 there was 2.38 million tourist arrival which is now targeted to rise up to 5 million by the year 2005 A. D. Likewise Supported jobs are to rise by 3.6 million that is, from 9.3 to 12.9 millions in a decade with expected growth rate of 8.4 per annum. There facts, not only prove the importance of the sector in development of human resource but also pave the way for future generations to step up into this sector when all others may seem to show a recessive trend. It is expected that by the year 2010 AD tourism will account for one in every fifteen jobs in India. To sum up, expected fortunes through tourism industry by 2010 AD are:

Share of tourism in India's export earning to go up to 12%.

International visitors spending (service exports) would grow by 216.7%.

Contribution of Rs. 5 lac crores to GDP by this sector.

Attracting Rs. 1, 30, 000 Crores in capital investment and Rs. 1, 60, 000 Crores in export earnings.

Such are the bright future prospects that lay beneath a simply incredible sector of human life. Has there been any such person who hasn't left his home and moved out? Any work personal or public official or unofficial, formal or informal makes a person move out of his home to another place & he is a tourist to that place. Thus, we see tourism lie in such a simple fact which is willingly or unwillingly attached to the life of each individual.

If each individual is aware of his rights & duties, what's the need to raise consciousness among the masses?

We have a lot of challenges which need to be combated at the earliest.

Challenges before Ecotourism in India:

- Lack of suitable marketing techniques
- Lack of well tarried guides.
- Lack of methods of community consensus.
- Lack of people's interest
- Lack of cooperation by masses.
- Lack of infrastructure facilities
- Lack of proper organization & planning

Steps to Strengthen ecotourism in India:

- Formulation of community based plans
- Development of appropriate models for infrastructure development
- Chalk out framework to tour operator and NGO partnership
- Development of methods to monitor impacts of tourism
- Introduction of tourism in school & college curriculum.
- Development of models of synergy
- Encouragement to pilgrimage tourism
- Provide channel through which tourist can work out his program
- Promotion through use of hoardings, pamphlets, websites and so on

- Security of tourist to be a major aim in present situations
- Provide proper rate bars of food & lodging, so as to avoid mass cheating.
- Provide certification of either performance based or quality based services
- Engage local people to formulate local regulations
- Ensure financial support & incentives for development
- Impose penalty or punishment in case of any hampering by tourists at any place
- Development of heritage hotels
- Preserve heritage, traditions, art & craft culture and people.

Hence, final objective of ecotourism is how maintain balance between conservation & tourism how to maintain equitable distribution of profits for overall development of region. Let's hope the addressed pros & cons related to tourism in general & ecotourism in particular will lead to our better & Sustainable future because 'Excellence is not a destination but a continuous journey that never ends'

Developed by: **Mindsprite Solutions**