



## STUDIES ON DEVELOPMENT OF ECOTOURISM AND ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT IN MADHYA PRADESH, INDIA

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### ABSTRACT

The paper deals with the Studies on Development of Ecotourism and Environmental impact in Madhya Pradesh, India. There are various issues related to the potential impacts of tourism on the environment. The knowledge gaps in the area have been identified and research work carried out has been discussed. Bandhavgarh National Park in Madhya Pradesh, which is one of the Tiger Reserves of India. Bandhavgarh is an ideal site for such a study as it is a tourism destination of international reputation with relatively high visitor influx and one in which the tourism infrastructure has been in existence for an extensive duration. To be with nature and enjoy its creations in the most natural way without endangering it is known as ecotourism. It can take several forms to be in a beautiful natural forest or landscape to enjoy in Madhya Pradesh india. Watching animals, birds and trees or corals and marine life in a sea; to engage in trekking, boating or rafting; and to wander into sand dunes. These are some of the common forms of ecotourism. Though the word ecotourism has gained importance only recently, India has been experiencing it through the ages. The tourism activity has reduced the total caring capacity of the area by about 36% from its original state. Though the impact still remains within the low impact category, it is perilously close to the moderate impact level. Management initiatives are required to mitigate the adverse impacts arising from the tourism activities and special emphasis should be laid upon the sensitive components as Ecological and Facility caring capacity in this case.

### INTRODUCTION

To be with nature and enjoy its creations in the most natural way without endangering it is known as ecotourism. It can take several forms: to be in a beautiful natural forest or landscape; to enjoy watching animals, birds and trees or corals and marine life in a sea; to engage

in trekking, boating or rafting; and to wander into sanddunes. These are some of the common forms of ecotourism. Though the word ecotourism has gained importance only recently, India has been experiencing it through the ages Tourism is the fastest growing industry in the world and the world's largest civilian industry [1]. According to a report by the World Travel and Tourism Council [2], India could generate 25 million additional jobs in the Tourism Sector by 2013. This is due to the reason that an increasing number of tourists now prefer to visit attractive natural environments or protected areas set aside

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for conservation. Undisturbed ecosystems, their plant and animal communities are critical in maintaining the clean air, clean water and healthy environments that are key tourism attractions in many destinations [3]. Located at the top of the environmental and industrial chain, tourism is extremely sensitive to environmental conditions and to the impacts others have on the system. In fact, the state of tourism itself may be a key indicator of system stability. Tourism, a multifaceted economic activity, interacts with the environment in the framework of a two-way process. On the one hand, environmental resources provide one of the basic "ingredients", a critical production factor, for the production of the tourist product: the natural and/or manmade setting for the tourist to enjoy, live in, and relax. On the other hand, tourism produces a variety of unwanted by-products, which are disposed, intentionally and unintentionally, to and modify the environment; the case of negative environmental externalities [4]. Moreover, economic activities besides tourism use up and modify environmental resources quality available for tourism purposes. Because of this linkage, the tourism sector needs increasingly to become a knowledge participant in the planning as the use of the environment and its impacts [5].

## METHODOLOGY

The methodology adopted to achieve the specific goal is consisted of both Experimental (Laboratory work, field) as well as Non-Experimental (field studies, surveys, questionnaires). An Integrated Model for Tourism Impact Analysis is adopted to attain the specific goal. An Integrated Economic / Environmental model is suitable for the analysis of the Environmental Impacts of Tourism and Ecotourism. This Integrated model is best for ex post impact Assessment (for regions already developed tourism ally) and also for ex ante (for regions considering some from of new or additional tourism development).

Three approaches can be adopted in the study

1. Systematic information collection and analysis approach.
2. Participatory approach.
3. Consultative approach.

## Framework of the methodology

Gathering Information of the study Area. Field and visitor survey for the purpose of determining Production and consumption characteristic of tourism and associated Sectors.

## Production characteristic (Infrastructure and Superstructure)

Transport Network (Travel, Roads and Transportation). Water supply and sewage and waste disposal. Utilities like electricity, telephones etc. Man-made attractions - monuments, buildings, facilities etc. Specialized facilities (like trekking, picnicking etc.).Accommodation (Hotels, camping's etc.).

## For consumption characteristic

Number of tourists visits annually. Types of tourists. Reason for visitation. Frequency of visits. Willingness to pay (WTP).Duration of stay/length of tourists' period (Tourist night). Average consumption of water, energy etc. per tourist per day. Awareness about Ecotourism and environmental issues. Environmental Attractions. Average consumption expenditure by type of good and service.

## Development of ecotourism

India has consistently included environmental and ecological safeguards in the development of ecotourism in order to avoid gross commercialism. Opening ecological areas for tourism is generally done after careful assessment of carrying capacity to ensure that nature's bounty is not destroyed. India has also always tried to ensure that tourism does not impinge on the culture and heritage. In general, a sound and sensitive environmental approach is adapted to tourism development planning and is integrated with other activities to ensure the following: (a) Levels of development are to be compatible with the general capacity of the physical environment and resources. (b) Sufficient facilities and services need to be provided to serve tourists and the local population. (c) Hotel rooms must be distributed in such a manner that the natural characteristics and qualities of the area are enhanced. (d) The three dimensional manifestation of tourism development should be designed carefully and with a sensitivity that merges with the surroundings and enhances the natural beauty. (e) Architectural heritage sites and other areas of historic value are to be adequately protected. In the initial years of ecotourism development, greater emphasis was given to the development of tourism in the Himalayas and the deserts.

One of the earliest projects was the Gulmarg Winter Sports Resort. However, the focus has been on the provision of basic minimum facilities for visits by eco-friendly tourists to the hills, national parks and wildlife sanctuaries. Forest lodges and viewing towers were provided in some of the important sanctuaries along with transport facilities in the form of jeeps and elephants. There are several interesting trek routes of varying difficulty in the Himalayas. Facilities like camping sites, trekkers' huts, tents and trekking equipment are provided to encourage the development of a few of these routes and promote trekking tourism. Several bodies of water including lakes, back waters and seas constitute major sources of tourist attractions. Facilities like houseboats, water sports equipment, glass bottom boats, hovercraft, etc. are provided to benefit tourists.

Landscaping and upgrading the environment of parks, gardens and other natural areas has been another stream of developmental activity associated with ecotourism. Creation of public conveniences and road side amenities was also given considerable importance in the



development process. Some recent initiatives in the development of ecotourism include the establishment of a resort in 1988 with 70 beds at Bangaram Island in Lakshadweep with private sector participation.

### **Tourism and Environmental impacts**

It is undeniable that tourism has enormous potentials for the environment conservation of environment. However, it must also be borne in mind that the balance between tourism and the environment is very fragile one. Many developing countries, anxious to reap the full benefits of tourism have, without undertaking a proper analysis of the potential impacts transformed their virgin areas into tourists' centers to cater for the tastes and desires of mass tourism. Such rapid development may lead to a complete transformation of an area, producing irreversible impacts to the natural environment. Among the three impacts of tourism namely, the economic, socio-cultural and environmental, the economic impact has undoubtedly played a dominant role in tourism literature and policy making till 1960s. With the focus on the economic benefits obtained by the areas due to the development of tourism, the adverse non-economic, socio-cultural and environmental-impacts are totally ignored.

Environmental costs continued to be neglected because of the prevalent belief of the nature being inexhaustible and renewable. This led to an indiscriminate and unplanned growth of tourism infrastructure in many countries and soon the negative effects in the form of social and environmental degradation started emerging. Specialists tours such as photographic safaris and wildlife watching, which can affect animals through noise, visual and scent disturbances, and by affecting predation and breeding behavior. Similarly, wildflower tours can affect plant biodiversity if participants collect plants or fruit, introduce weeds or pathogens, or start fires. In some destinations, tourism can produce a local economic boom leading to uncontrolled high-impact private development, high resource consumption, waste generation beyond the capacity of local waste treatment disposal systems, if any, and land clearance and harvesting with major impacts on biodiversity. In addition, infrastructure built for tourism may be used for illegal collection of endangered plant and animal species. Small-scale operations may eventually turn into much larger and more destructive operations [6].

### **Ecotourism resources in Madhya Pradesh**

Indian tourism industry has expanded its horizon in the name of eco tourism. Eco tourism or ecological tourism can be described as "nature-based travel to relatively undisturbed areas with an emphasis on education." Eco tourism is considered as a conservation tool as it encourages local communities, government as well as private agencies to protect natural resources of the region. This natural resource plays an important role in attracting the travelers which in turn increases the economy of the state and simultaneously fulfills the growing demand

of saving the natural wilderness. Ecotourism also helps in creating general awareness among the local communities, tourists, government and the private sector about environment. Eco tourism mainly focuses on those areas which are rich zone of diverse flora and fauna and are enriched with unique cultural heritage. Similar to other Indian states, Madhya Pradesh also has enormous potential to grow as an ecotourism hub. Madhya Pradesh is located at the central part of India and is embellished with endless array of scenic beauty and virgin landscapes, lush jungles, diverse wildlife and cultural heritage. Madhya Pradesh has rich spectrum of tourist attractive spots like the picturesque Pachmarhi and Amarkantak, World heritage site of Khajuraho temples, Great Stupa that houses the statue of Lord Buddha, forts and palaces, ancient rock paintings, Ashoka pillar, Gateways of Sanchi, Buddhist Vihara, Gupta Temple Sanchi Museum and many more things. However, the tourism industry of Madhya Pradesh mainly depends on the diverse and distinct wildlife of the state. It has the largest forest area (94,669 sq km) in India. It is one of the most popular wildlife destination of India especially for "Tiger viewing" as this state has five tiger reserves. Moreover, nine national parks and 25 wildlife sanctuaries. Madhya Pradesh is blessed with some of the endangered species of India such as Gangetic Dolphin, the Ghariyal, the Great Indian Bustard and the Kharmor etc. Recently, Madhya Pradesh government is paying special attention in developing eco tourism in the state. Its prime focus is on the conservation of natural resources with the help of awareness building, diversification of tourism activities and destinations, and local community participation. Madhya Pradesh forest department which includes MPEDB (Madhya Pradesh Eco-tourism Development Board) that establishes in July 2013 act as the nodal agency for development and promotion of eco- tourism in the State. The state government has authorized the MPEDB to identify and promote eco-tourism destinations in the entire state, develop and enforce the norms to regulate the operations and also to encourage the public, people and private partnerships. Along with this another main aim of MPEDB is to generate a synergy among the Forest department, Tourism department and various stakeholders. Madhya Pradesh government is now focusing on those activities and facilities which could be counted under eco tourism such as nature camps, nature walks, wildlife viewing, river cruise and various adventure sports like trekking, rock climbing, rappelling and para sailing along with some water sports such as river rafting, boating, canoeing and angling. It is also trying to develop herbal tourism, eco- friendly accommodation and eco parks to promote eco tourism in the urban areas. It is also trying to spread conservation education among the local people, school and college students to maintain and increase the support for eco-tourism in the states. MPEDB is planning all these things in consultation and cooperation with experts or the concerned department or agencies having control over.



## CONCLUSION

The study concluded that Development of Ecotourism and Environmental impact in Madhya Pradesh, India, publicity and promotion of ecotourism. As a major segment of Indian tourism, ecotourism is given considerable importance in publicity and promotion. The places being developed for ecotourism are given publicity through print and electronic media. A brochure listing some simple codes to follow in order to become an eco-friendly tourist has been published recently by the Department of Tourism.

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