Eco-Tourism

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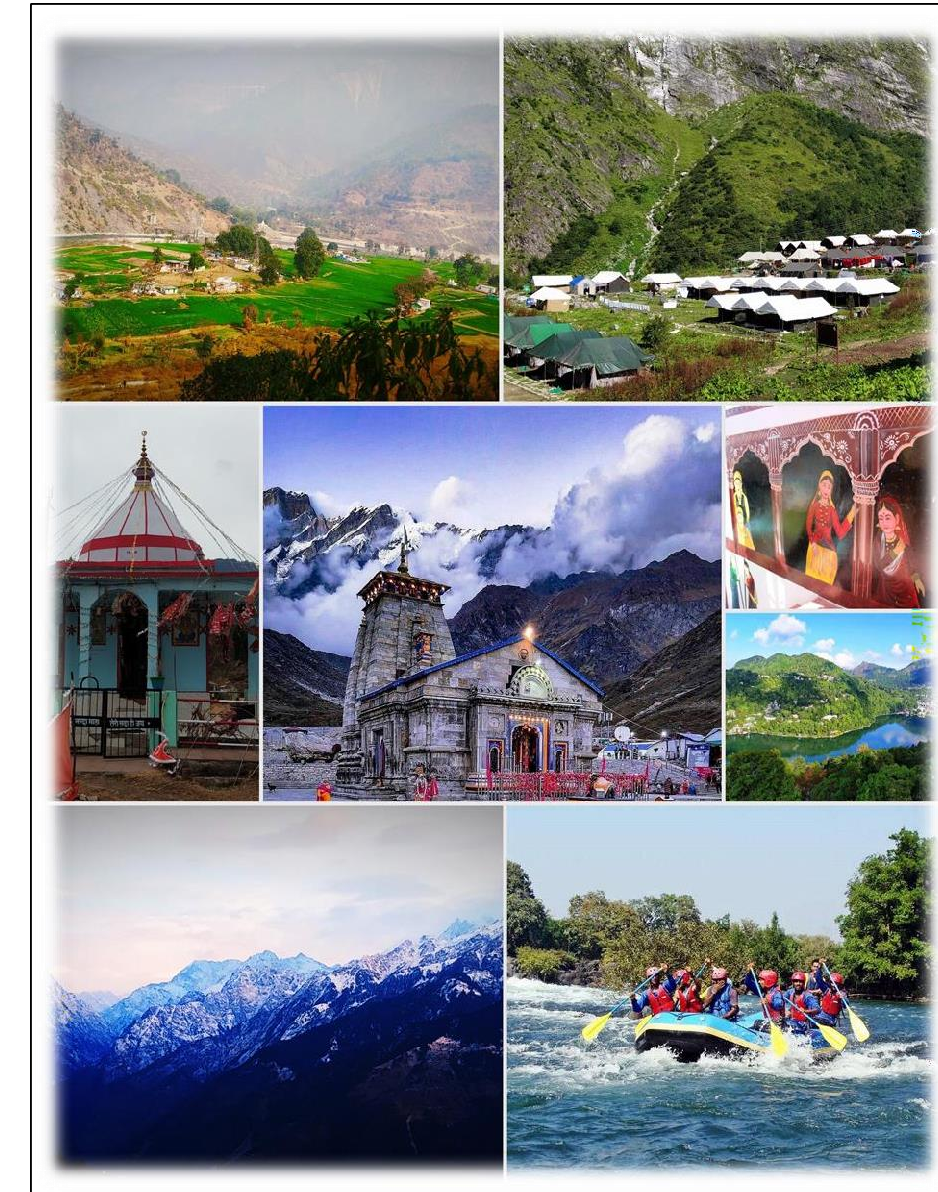**UTTARAKHANDOPENUNIVERSITY**
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Cover Page Design & Format Editing

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1.0 Learning Objectives

After completing this unit, you shall be able to:

- Understand the meaning of Eco-turism

- Understand the concept and definition of Eco-tourism.

- Understand the process of Evolution and characteristics of Eco-tourism.

- Discuss the classification and Benefits of Eco-tourism.

1.1 Introduction

The majority of the world's unusual destinations are now accessible to tourists because to advancements in technology and transportation infrastructure. The tourist sector is currently the largest in the world, and ecotourism and environment tourism are two of its fastest-growing subsectors. People today seek to experience nature and the world's most popular tourist destinations, but they should endeavour to do so without negatively impacting the environment. A new type of tourism known as eco-tourism has arisen in response to the growing desire to see nature up close. It is a type of tourism that strongly promotes environmental philosophy and travel to unspoiled and unusual places. Ecotourism is the term used to describe tourism that entails visiting natural regions or areas of ecological significance in order to see wildlife and gain

knowledge about the environment and ecology. Some of the fundamental and important ideas and elements of ecotourism are examined in this chapter. These ideas are fundamental to the definition, elements, comprehension, and significance of ecotourism in the travel sector.

1.2 Eco-tourism: Concept and Definitions

Eco tourism is originated from two different words i.e. - 'Eco system' and 'Tourism'.

Ecosystem ➕ Tourism activity ＝ Eco-Tourism
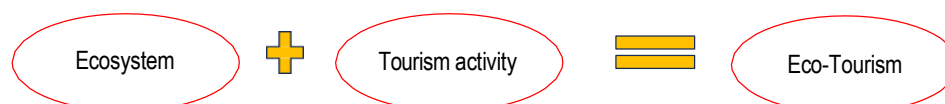
To understand the concept of Eco tourism, first we have to understand our Ecosystem. Ecosystem is defined as the system in which we live. An eco-system includes all the living things such as animals, plants and organisms in a given area interacting with each other and also with their non-living environments such as weather, sun, soil, earth, atmosphere is termed as eco system. But, there is no such specific and certain scale used to measure and explain an Eco system. Thus, the term "eco system" does not, definitely, agree to the terms "biome" or "ecological zone", but may also refers to any functioning unit at any scale. It could be, for example the sea, a pond, a forest, the river, a biome or the whole biosphere. And, tourism means - 'the activity in which one travels from one place to another place usually outside from his/her residence and stays there at least 24 hours but not more than 01 consecutive year for the purpose of leisure, pleasure except remunerative one; This phenomenon is termed as tourism.' Thus, a tourism which involves a visit to an Ecosystem is known as Eco tourism. Eco tourism not only involves travel to natural areas, but also preserving them from harm or destruction.

Eco-tourism can be understood as a tourism activity which involves travel to natural areas, mainly for a purpose of experiencing wildlife and learning about the environment and focus on flora and fauna and promoting awareness of preservation of the environment.

In a layman's language Eco tourism is defined as -"."

- A significant economic activity in pristine area.
- Provides economic value to eco system services.

- Helps to create income for the preservation of natural areas and endangered species.

- Helps to create direct and indirect income for local people.

- Encourage effective utilization of available natural resources.

- Minimize threats to bio diversity.

According to Hector Ceballos Lascurain: "Eco tourism is a kind of activity that consists of travelling to mainly unperturbed or decontaminated natural areas with a particular objective of studying, appreciating and adoring the serene beauty and its flora and fauna, as well as any existing cultural demonstration of past and present, found in these areas". Eco tourism is a form of tourism which involves travel to visit fragile, pure, clean, and unperturbed natural areas, intended as a low-impact. Its major purpose may be to educate the traveler, to directly benefit the economic development and political empowerment of local people and to provide funds for ecological conservation etc. The Eco Tourism Society of America defined eco-tourism as: "Responsible travel to natural areas that helps to preserves the environment and also helps to enhance the well-being of local communities". Thus, we can conclude that eco-tourism is promotion of reuse, recycle, water preservation, energy efficiency, and creation and development of jobs for local people.

1.3 Evolution of Eco-tourism

In the late 70's the world-wide movement for environment protection and lowering the greenhouse gases emission gave birth to the popularity of eco-tourism. The recent development in the concept of eco-tourism evolves with some new paradigm shift to more responsible form of tourism, such as sustainable tourism, community-based tourism, and green tourism. Since 1980 eco-tourism has been observed as a crucial factor by environment lovers in the direction of environment protection and sustainable development, so that new generations may experience tourist destinations in an environmentally stable state and with a scope of learning and education which results in conservation and preservation of nature and culture while addressing concerns related to economic benefits of local community.

Check your Progress 1

Q.1 What is the main objective of eco-tourism and how does it differ from conventional tourism?

Q.2 According to Hector Ceballos Lascurain, what are the key components of eco-tourism?

Q.3 How does eco-tourism contribute to the well-being of local communities and environmental conservation?

Q4. What factors led to the emergence and evolution of eco-tourism in the late 20th century?

1.4 Characteristics of Eco-tourism

Eco-tourism is travel to fragile, pristine, and usually protected areas that strives to be low impact and (often) small scale. It helps educate the traveler, provides funds for conservation, directly benefits the economic development and political empowerment of local communities, and fosters respect for different cultures and for human rights.

Some important characteristics of ecotourism are following as:

1. **Involves travel to the natural destination**. These destinations are often remote areas, whether inhabited or uninhabited, and are usually under some kind of environmental protection at the national, international, communal, or private travel.

2. **Minimize impact**. Tourism causes damage. Ecotourism strives to minimize the adverse effects of hotels, trails, and other infrastructure by using either recycled or plentifully available local building material, renewable sources of energy, recycling and safe disposal of waste and garbage, and environmentally and culturally sensitive architectural design.

3. **Builds environmental awareness**. Ecotourism means education, for both tourist and residents of nearby communities. Well before the <u>tour begins, tour operators</u> should supply travelers with reading material about the country, environment, and local people, as well as a code of conduct for both the traveler and the industry itself. Ecotourism projects should also help educate members of

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surrounding communities, schoolchildren, and the broader public in the host country.

4. **Provides direct financial benefits for conservation**. Ecotourism helps raise funds for environmental protection, research, and education through a variety of mechanisms, including park entrance fees; tour company, hotel, airline, and airport taxes. And voluntary contributions.

5. **Provides financial benefits and empowerment for local people**. Ecotourism holds that national parks and other conservation areas will survive only if, there are happy people around the perimeters. The local community must be involved with and receive income and other tangible benefits (potable water, roads, health clinics, etc.) from the conservation area and its tourist facilities.

6. **Respects local culture**. Ecotourism is not only "greener" but also less culturally intrusive and exploitative than conventional tourism. Whereas prostitution, black markets, and drug often are byproducts of mass tourism, ecotourism strives to be culturally respectful and the human population of a host country.

7. **Supports human rights and democratic movements**. The United Nations-sponsored World Tourism Organization proclaims that tourism contributes to "international understanding, peace, prosperity, and universal respect for and observance of human rights and fundamental freedoms for all.

Characteristics of eco-tourism

- Focuses small group of people travel to natural areas.
- Promoting environmental awareness among the tourist and locals.
- Ensures economic benefits for preservation of the area.
- Strengthen local communities.
- Respect local traditions and customs.
- Ensures protection of human rights and activities (i.e., conservation of ecological and cultural sustainability)

1.5 Objectives of Eco-tourism

The Objectives of eco-tourism are as following:

- Adopt low-impact tourism activity that protects ecological natural areas.

- Highlights the biodiversity richness and their values.

- Build environmental and cultural awareness

- Encourage environmental conservation and cultural preservation.

- Encourage the sustainability of ecotourism enterprises and activities.

- Promote community participation.

- Provide employment opportunities to local people.

Objective of Eco- tourism						
Environmental Conservation	Community Empowerment	Educational and Experiential Learning	Sustainable Development	Community Development	Cultural preservation	Economic Benefits

Check your knowledge 2:
Write one-word answers
Question 1. What type of tourism emphasizes minimal environmental impact and education of travelers?
Question 2. What kind of building materials does ecotourism prefer to use for infrastructure?
Question 3. What does ecotourism aim to raise through park entrance fees and voluntary contributions?
Question 4. What kind of awareness does ecotourism seek to build among tourists and locals?
Question 5. What does ecotourism provide to local people along with financial benefits?
Question 6. What international organization states that tourism supports peace and human rights?

1.6 Classification of Eco-tourism

According to Fennell eco-tourism exits within the broader classification at an initial level as following types:

1.   **Mass Tourism**

2.   **Alternative Tourism**
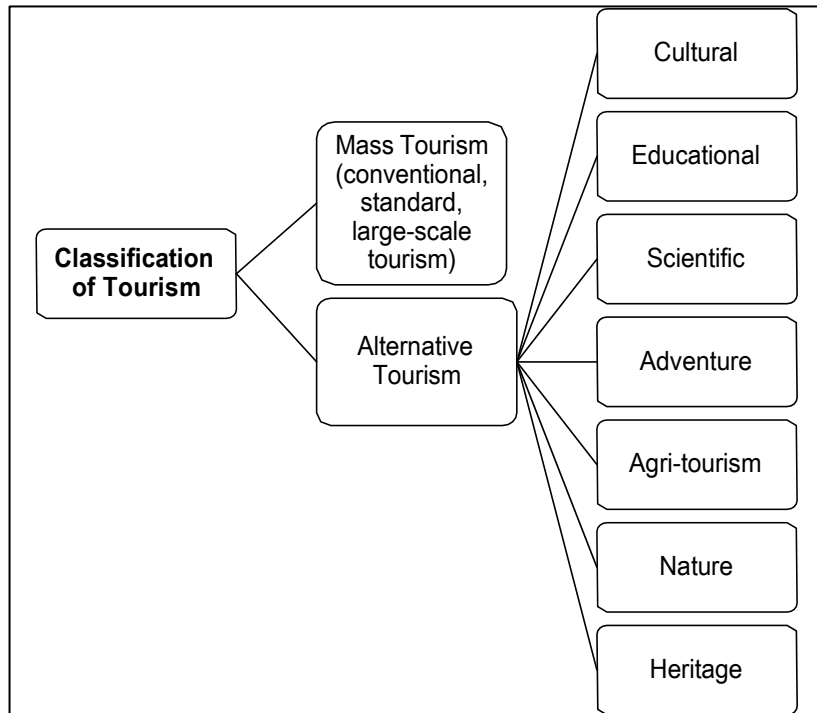
1. Mass tourism

Mass tourism has the more conventional type of tourism development, where income maximization is crucial and short-term, free-market concepts predominate. At first, the growth of the tourist sector was thought to be a desired and comparatively "clean" industry for countries and areas to pursue. This was especially true when it came to the advantages of employment, foreign exchange profits, and the construction of infrastructure like transit networks.

Nowadays, we are more likely to demonise or describe traditional mass tourism as a monster, a monstrosity with few positive aspects for the destination area, its inhabitants, and its natural resource base.

2.   Alternative tourism

The term "alternative tourism" refers to a broad category of tourism tactics, such as "appropriate," "eco," "soft," "responsible," "people-to-people," and "green" tourism, all of which claim to provide a more environmentally friendly option to traditional mass tourism in particular kinds of locations. Weaver correctly notes that there are a lot of objections to alternative tourism, though. It is evident that alternative tourism is neither

necessarily less destructive nor superior to its alternatives just because it emerged as a response to the bad effects of mass tourist.

The alternative tourism included the following:

- **Cultural tourism**

Cultural tourism allows tourists to participate in local cultural activities like festivals and rituals. It is an important part of economy for governments. Such type of tourism helps to a genuine cultural exchange with locals that enables the local people to accept their (tourist) culture which can be major driver for growth and diversity.

In India, cultural tourism is diverse, encompassing historical sites, traditions and festival.

Examples of cultural tourism in India includes historic sites like Taj Mahal, Hampi, Ajanta and Ellora caves Khajuraho Temples, Festivals and events like Kumbha Mela, Pushkar Mela, Famous evening arti on the banks of holy river in Haridwar, Rishikesh, Varanasi etc (Figure 1).

Other examples: Tourism Carnivals Archaeological sites, carnival of Rio de Janeiro

Figure 1. Cultural tourism in India (Image source: Google)

- **Educational tourism**

This kind of travel-based tourism emphasizes education and information gain, frequently through conferences, seminars, or educational tours (Figure 2).

Figure 2. Cultural tourism in India (Image source: Google)

- **Adventure tourism**

This entails traveling for physically demanding activities in natural or remote areas, potentially involving some risk, like hiking, camping, or hang gliding etc (Figure 3).

Figure 3. Various types of Adventure tourism (Image source: Google)

- **Scientific tourism**

Scientific tourism involved study of natural phenomena or engage in scientific research at specific locations, such as national parks or scientific research facilities.

- **Agri-tourism**

This focuses on the tourist experience on farms or agricultural sites, often involving activities like farm stays, education tours to farms, participates actively in picking fruits, or learning about agricultural practices.

In India, tourists

Figure 4. Various types Agri-tourim (Image source: Google)

participate in activities like visiting tea estates in Assam, paddy farming in Kerala, and mango picking in Maharashtra, just to name a few. These experiences create perfect opportunities for learning and and recreation by making one develop a relationship with nature and rural lifestyles (https://www.swasyaliving.com/post/agritourism-in-india). Agri-tourism play significant role in rural development, economic growth, environmental awareness, education etc.

- **Heritage tourism** Heritage tourism includes to explore the historical, cultural, or

Figure 5. Heritage tourism (Image source: Google)

natural value in order to examine and enjoy the preserved artefacts of the past is known as heritage tourism. It includes places like museums, historic structures, monuments, and natural landmarks, which let visitors learn more about the history, culture, and traditions of a place. This kind of travel seeks to promote a greater awareness and admiration of a location's historical and cultural legacy (Figure 5).

1.7 Benefits of Ecotourism

There are several advantages to ecotourism, but the main ones are cultural preservation, local economic growth, and environmental conservation. In addition to giving local populations financial opportunities and increasing tourists' knowledge of environmental issues, it aids in the preservation of wildlife habitats and natural resources.

Benefits of Eco-tourism

• Environmental Conservation
• Economic Benefits for Local Communities
• Education and Awareness
• Cultural Preservation
• Sustainable Tourism Development
• Enhanced Visitor Experience
• Protection of Endangered Species
• Promotion of Eco-Friendly Practices
• Climate Change Mitigation
• Community Empowerment and Participation

Economic Benefits for Local Communities

Ecotourism provides substantial economic benefits to local communities by creating employment opportunities for residents through tourism-related activities such as hospitality, guiding, and transportation. This empowerment in economic benefits encourages local communities to conserve the natural resources for their livelihood opportunities.

Environmental Conservation

The beneficial effects on environmental conservation are among the most important advantages of ecotourism. It promotes the preservation of species and their natural habitats. The money made from tourism can be used to keep parks and natural reserves in good condition, which will help to save endangered species and conserve biodiversity.

Education and Awareness

By increasing public knowledge of environmental problems and the value of biodiversity protection, ecotourism serves as an educational tool. Visitors have a greater comprehension of nature and the difficulties it faces.

Cultural Preservation

By including indigenous and local populations in tourism-related activities, ecotourism encourages the preservation of regional customs and cultures by showcasing and honouring their cultural heritage. In addition to improving the vacation experience, this cultural interchange aids in the preservation of distinctive cultural customs and practices for upcoming generations.

Sustainable Tourism Development

By encouraging actions that reduce their negative effects on the environment, ecotourism aids in the growth of sustainable tourism. It promotes the use of waste reduction techniques, renewable energy sources, and environmentally friendly lodging. This strategy guarantees that tourism operations are carried out properly while also preserving the integrity of natural locations.

Protection of Endangered Species

Ecotourism is essential to the protection of endangered species because it places a high priority on the preservation of natural environments. Rare and endangered wildlife can be found in many ecotourism sites. By discouraging illicit activities like poaching and logging, tourists can contribute to the protection of these species.

Promotion of Eco-Friendly Practices

Ecotourism encourages eco-friendly behaviour from both tourists and travel agencies. This entails lowering carbon footprints, promoting environmentally friendly modes of transportation, and promoting conscientious trash disposal. These actions eventually improve the planet's general health.

Climate Change Mitigation

Ecotourism can aid in reducing the effects of climate change by preserving wetlands, forests, and other natural places. Because they absorb and store carbon dioxide, these ecosystems are essential to carbon sequestration. Ecotourism helps the world fight climate change by preserving these places.

Community Empowerment and Participation

Community involvement in tourism development decision-making is encouraged by ecotourism. Through this empowerment, locals are guaranteed a voice in the management of tourism and the allocation of its advantages. It encourages pride in their cultural and natural heritage and a sense of ownership

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Check your knowledge 3:

Q.1 What are the primary benefits of Eco-tourism?

Q.2 How does Eco-tourism contribute to the economic development of local communities?

Q.3 In what ways does Eco-tourism support environmental conservation and biodiversity protection?

Q.4 How does Eco-tourism promote cultural preservation among indigenous and local populations?

Q.5 What role does Eco-tourism play in climate change mitigation and sustainable tourism development?

Summary

- Eco-tourism, one of the fastest-growing segments of tourism, focuses on experiencing nature and natural attractions responsibly. It encourages tourists to explore untouched and ecologically significant areas without causing environmental harm. The term "eco-tourism" combines "ecosystem" and "tourism"—where an ecosystem refers to a system of interactions between living and non-living elements, and tourism refers to travel outside one's place of residence for leisure, excluding remunerative purposes. Eco-tourism is defined as "travel to natural areas for the purpose of experiencing wildlife and learning about ecological systems, with an emphasis on preserving the environment and benefiting local communities".

- Various definitions emphasize eco-tourism as a low-impact, conservation-driven activity that promotes environmental awareness and supports community development. According to Hector Ceballos Lascurain, eco-tourism involves travel to undisturbed natural areas to appreciate both nature and cultural heritage, while the Eco Tourism Society of America defines it as responsible travel that preserves nature and improves local well-being.

- Travelling to isolated, protected, and often fragile places with little environmental damage is known as eco-tourism. It aims to maintain the natural and cultural

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settings, educate tourists and residents, raise money for conservation, and give locals a living and a sense of empowerment. Promoting low-impact travel, raising awareness of biodiversity, fostering cultural preservation, and guaranteeing the viability of ecotourism businesses while giving people jobs are some of its goals.

- Alternative and mass tourism are two major categories into which ecotourism can be divided. While alternative tourism includes a range of more environmentally friendly and culturally aware activities, mass tourism is primarily focused on financial gain and frequently results in serious environmental harm. Agritourism, which provides experiences on farms; educational tourism, which focusses on learning; scientific tourism, which involves research; adventure tourism in remote natural settings; cultural tourism, which involves participating in local festivals and heritage; and heritage tourism, which focusses on historic and cultural sites, are examples of alternative tourism.

- There are several advantages to ecotourism. In terms of the economy, it creates jobs and revenue for nearby towns, motivating them to preserve natural resources. In terms of the environment, it supports conservation initiatives and helps to preserve species and habitats. It acts as a platform for teaching, encouraging biodiversity protection and increasing public understanding of environmental issues. By interacting with locals and respecting their customs, ecotourism also aids in cultural preservation. Eco-friendly approaches promote sustainable development, endangered species protection, climate change mitigation through the preservation of natural carbon sinks, and community empowerment through community involvement in tourism planning and decision-making. Because of these many effects, ecotourism becomes a potent instrument for striking a balance between economic and cultural enrichment and environmental sustainability.

Answer Keys:

Check you Progress 2

Answer 1: *Ecotourism*

Answer 2: *Recycled*

Answer 3: *Funds*

Answer 4: *Environmental*

Answer 5: *Empowerment*

Answer 6: United Nations World Tourism Organization (*UNWTO*)

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https://bharatvarshnaturefarms.com/the-benefits-of-ecotourism-sustainable/

Image source: www.google.com.

UNIT 02: ECO-TOURISM- THE BASIC CONCEPTS

Unit Structure

2.0 Learning Objectives

2.1 Introduction

2.2 Types of eco-tourism

2.3 Concept of carrying capacity

2.4 Role of socio-cultural, economic and institutional factors

2.5 Gender dimension in eco-tourism

Summary

References

2.0 Learning Objectives

After completing this unit, you shall be able to:

- Know different types of Eco-turism

- Understand the concept carrying capacity.

- Know the role of socio-cultural, economic and institutional factors in Eco-tourism sector.

- Explain the role of gender dimension in Eco-tourism.

2.1 Introduction

The majority of ecotourism activities are conducted in natural settings, therefore ecotourism is a subset of nature-based tourism. Along with the locals and their culture, nature is the main component of ecotourism. Direct contacts between tourists and nature and culture with the purpose of appreciating, learning about, and appreciating the natural beauty and its usual interdependencies are one of ecotourism's distinctive traits. Soft or hard, low-impact or high-impact, participatory or non-participatory, exploitative or active or passive, consumptive or non-consumptive, and voluntary or nonvoluntary are the general categories into which ecotourism activities fall. 'Eco-tourists' participation in the various activities creates a direct demand for accommodations, cars, guides, food, handicrafts, etc., as well as an indirect need for auxiliary services to satisfy the eco-tourists' direct demand. In this process, the money

spent by tourists boosts local incomes, which in turn boosts the local economy. Negative social, economic, cultural, environmental, and ecological effects exist in addition to the favourable ones. However, ecotourism activities have both positive and bad effects, thus in order to maintain sustainable ecotourism development, the utmost precautions should be taken. The different types of ecotourism activities and their direct and indirect effects are covered in this chapter.

2.2 Types of eco-tourism

Ecotourism is a form of alternative tourism which mostly attracts nature and wildlife lovers from the urban, industrial and city places. Mostly the industrialized and developed countries have earmarked special budgetary and plan financial package for ecotourism projects. People of those industrialized countries are more motivated to visit the ecotourism places as the life in big cities becomes restless and stressful. There can be several types such as soft or hard, consumptive or non-consumptive, natural and unnatural and exploitive, passive and active for of ecotourism. You may find description of the types of ecotourism and their special features as given below.

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                        ┌──────────────────────────┐
                        │   Types of Eco-tourism   │
                        └──────────────────────────┘
    ┌───────────────┬──────────────┼──────────────┬───────────────────┐
┌─────────────┐ ┌──────────────┐ ┌──────────────┐ ┌──────────────────┐
│ Soft Vs Hard│ │Natural-      │ │Passive &     │ │Consumptive & Non-│
│ form of     │ │Unnatural     │ │Active Form   │ │consumptive       │
│ Ecotourism  │ │Ecotourism    │ │of Ecotourism │ │Tourism           │
└─────────────┘ └──────────────┘ └──────────────┘ └──────────────────┘
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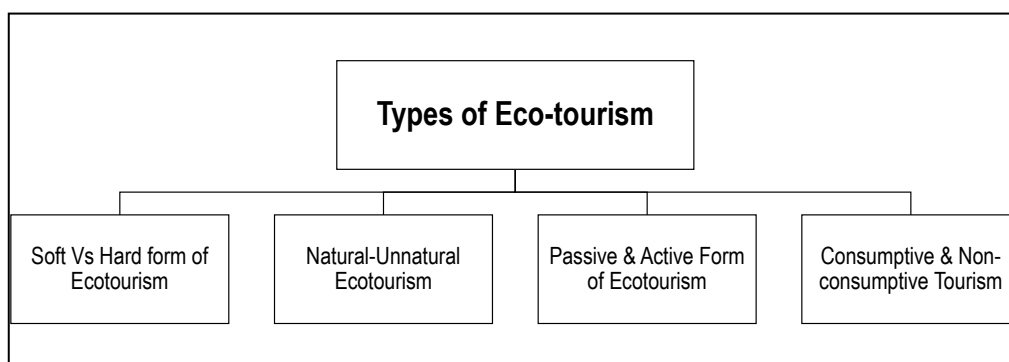
2.2.1 Soft Vs Hard form of Ecotourism

Laarman and Durst (1987) classified the ecotourism into two forms i.e., hard and soft from based on the level of interest, experience risk, physical strain, time commitment and cost involvement.

Characteristics of Hard-Core Eco-tourism

- It requires Highly experienced and committed eco-tourists.
- Engage in extensive physically challenging activities (Trekking, jungle walking, river rafting, rock climbing, wildlife and bird watching).

- Prefer longer stays with basic facilities to gain authentic wilderness experience.

- Tend to spend more time at interpretation centers.

Characteristics of Soft-Core Eco-tourism

- Casual and less prepared for physical challenges.

- Prefer comfortable experiences, less physical effort.

- Activities are more mediated and superficial.

- Generally unwilling to compromise on comfort.

- Tend to stay for shorter durations.

- Interested in multi-purpose and diverse experiences.

Feature	Hard-Core Ecotourism	Soft-Core Ecotourism
Experience Level	High (expertise-based)	Low (casual interest)
Risk & Strain	High	Low
Commitment	Strong	Weak
Duration of Stay	Longer	Shorter
Comfort Level	Basic/Wilderness	Comfortable/Convenient
Motivation	Authentic adventure experience	Leisure, multi-dimensional travel
Activities	Physically intense	Mild, guided experiences

2.2.2 Natural-Unnatural Ecotourism

Natural-Unnatural Ecotourism refers to the spectrum within ecotourism practices that distinguishes between activities that align closely with nature (natural) and those that deviate due to human interference or mismanagement (unnatural). According to Miller and Kaae (1993), while ecotourism ideally promotes environmental conservation and benefits local communities, it inherently involves human presence, which introduces negative impacts on natural settings. The "natural" form of ecotourism adheres to ecological guidelines and minimizes harm, whereas the "unnatural" form emerges when tourism activities are poorly managed or ignore environmental safeguards, leading to degradation. Thus, true sustainability in ecotourism depends on minimizing unnatural interventions and maintaining harmony with natural ecosystems.

2.2.3 Passive & Active Form of Ecotourism

The passive form is more neutral and less intrusive, aiming to minimize environmental impacts. While not actively improving the environment or community welfare, it also avoids major harm. Community members and stakeholders support ecotourism passively, often without direct involvement or benefit. The operations under this model aim to maintain a balance, but their impact tends to be indirect on the economy and ecology.

Active ecotourism refers to direct and responsible engagement in environmental and community conservation efforts. It involves positive contributions, such as involving the local community in decision-making, ensuring equitable distribution of revenues, and supporting local businesses (like eco-hotels or handicraft shops). It is considered the most sustainable and beneficial form, as it fosters both community well-being and ecological conservation.

2.2.4 Consumptive & Non-consumptive Tourism

Consumptive tourism refers to ecotourism activities that involve the direct or indirect use, disturbance, or depletion of natural resources. While not as intensive as mass tourism, these activities still lead to ecological impacts such as resource consumption, environmental degradation, or physical interaction with wildlife and landscapes. Examples include horse riding, camel riding, boating, fishing, trekking, and even fossil fuel use for wildlife viewing, souvenir purchasing, and habitat disturbance from tourism infrastructure.

Non-consumptive tourism involves ecotourism activities that minimize direct environmental impact and avoid extracting or depleting natural resources. These activities focus on experiencing and learning about nature, wildlife, and culture without significantly altering or damaging the environment. Examples include bird watching and wildlife observation from designated watch towers, which allow for appreciation of biodiversity with minimal interference.

Check your Progress

Q.1 What is the main component of ecotourism along with local culture?

Q.2 Who classified ecotourism into hard and soft forms?

Q.3 Which form of ecotourism involves physically intense activities and longer stays— hard or soft?

Q.4 What does 'unnatural ecotourism' result from, according to Miller and Kaae?

Q.5 Give one example of a non-consumptive ecotourism activity.

2.3 Concept of carrying capacity

Carrying capacity in terms of tourism in simple terms means the measure of volume of tourists at a place, to define and calculate the capacity of a destination to hold an amount or number of tourists. Carrying capacity in broader sense is related to the size of population and limited natural resource. It is very important to calculate carrying capacity of a place to maintain the environmental balance of the place. In other words, carrying capacity for a region can be termed as, maximum number of people at a place, for a given time, with the limited resource that should not negatively affect the functioning of the ecology and should sustain the natural surroundings. In this way, the degradation of the natural surroundings can be controlled and stopped. For tourism, carrying capacity includes not only the natural sustainability but cultural, social, economic and environmental sustainability too. "Tourism Carrying Capacity" is defined by the World Tourism Organization as "The maximum number of people that may visit a tourist destination at the same time, without causing destruction of the physical, economic, socio- cultural environment and an unacceptable decrease in the quality of visitors' satisfaction".

Factoring influencing carrying capacity

There are seven factors influencing the carrying capacity (refference)

- Land availability
- Freshwater
- population
- Infrastructure facilities
- Pollution

- Ecological sensitivity
- socio-economic of the region

Application of Carrying Capacity in Tourism

Carrying capacity is a critical tool used in tourism to study and manage the impacts of tourist activity from ecological, socio-cultural, and visitor satisfaction perspectives. Although the relationships between these factors are complex and not always easily quantifiable, understanding them is essential for maintaining sustainable tourism practices.

Sustainable Tourism Planning: Carrying capacity helps in planning tourism in a way that aligns with environmental sustainability. It ensures that tourism growth does not exceed the destination's ability to handle it without causing long-term damage.

Environmental Management: By guiding the design and management of tourist destinations, carrying capacity helps minimize ecological damage. Infrastructure is developed in ways that do not alter the natural design, and visitor flows are managed to reduce environmental stress.

Educational Value: The concept promotes awareness among tourists, gradually educating them to become more conscious and cautious about their impact on the environment and local ecology. This fosters responsible tourism behavior over time.

Tourism Policy and Regulation: Recognizing the importance of carrying capacity helps governments and tourism authorities formulate policies that support the sustainable use of resources and control over-tourism in sensitive areas.

Destination Management: Tools like Recreational Carrying Capacity (RCC) or Tourism Carrying Capacity (TCC) are used to determine the optimal number of visitors a site can handle based on physical, social, and economic dimensions (as defined by Williams, 1994). This ensures that destinations remain attractive and functional without exceeding their limits.

Support for Mass Tourism Areas: In high-traffic tourism zones and protected areas, carrying capacity assessments help determine thresholds for development and visitor

numbers. This approach supports sustainable tourism development and prevents degradation of the destination's core attributes.

Check your Progress

Q.1 What does 'carrying capacity' in tourism primarily measure?

Q.2 Name any two factors that influence carrying capacity.

Q.3 Which organization defines 'Tourism Carrying Capacity' in terms of maximum visitors without degrading the environment?

Q.4 How does carrying capacity support sustainable tourism planning?

Q.5 What is the main goal of applying carrying capacity in destination management?

2.4 Role of socio-cultural, economic and institutional factors

There can be both positive and negative socio-cultural impacts resulting from tourism. This depends on the type and intensity of the tourism developed as well as the characteristics of the host society. Whether impacts are considered positive or negative depends, in part, on the objective criteria (such as income earned) and also on the perceptions of the host community. It is also possible that different community groups have varying reactions to their tourism development, with no consensus reached by the whole community. There are some generally accepted socio -economic policies and impact control measures that are being applied with some successful results in various places in the world. These are applied to prevent the negative socio-cultural impacts in future or mitigating the existing ones. Reinforcing positive impacts is the other side of these measures. Tourism can be used as a technique of cultural conservation and revitalisation. However, for achieving this, it should be based to the extent possible on the cultural resources of an area. By proper planning and policy, tourism can be deliberately used to help justify and financially support:

- The preservation of archaeological and historic sites,

- Conservation and even expansion of traditional dances, music, drama, arts and handicrafts unique to the area,

- Development of museums and cultural centres, and organization of cultural events.

As per the World Tourism Organisation's publication on National and Regional Tourism Planning (1994), tourism, if well planned, developed and managed in a socially responsible manner, can bring several types of socio-cultural benefits. These include the following:

i) Improves the living standards of people and helps pay for improvements to community facility and servic es, if the economic benefits of tourism are well distributed.

ii) Conserves the cultural heritage of an area which otherwise might be lost as a result of general development taking place.

iii) Helps develop and maintain museums, theatres and other cultural facilities. These are in part supported by tourism but are also enjoyed by residents. Many major museums and theatres in the world receive much financial support from the admission fee paid by tourists.

iv) Reinforces or even renews a sense of pride by residents in their culture when they observe tourists appreciating it. This is especially true of some traditional societies which are undergoing rapid change and loosing their sense of cultural and self-confidence.

v) Provides opportunity for cross-cultural exchange between tourists and residents who learn about and come to respect, one another's cultures. This exchange can best be achieved through certain forms of tourism-educational and other types of special interest tours.

Economic incentives Economic incentives should make biodiversity an asset rather than a liability. They aim to increase returns on activities that conserve or restore valuable biological habitats. Economic incentives tend to use market mechanisms to influence decision making. A brief description of important economic incentives is given below:

• **Positive incentives:** Any monetary (direct payments, cost sharing, tax advantages) or non-monetary (such as recognition and awards for outstanding performance) inducement, which incites or motivates governments, local people, and international organizations to conserve biodiversity.

• **Disincentives**: any mechanism that internalises the cost of use and/or damage to biological resources in order to discourage activities that deplete biodiversity.

• **Indirect incentives:** any mechanism that creates or improves upon markets and price signals for biological resources encouraging the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity.

Institutional factors play a crucial role in shaping ecotourism, influencing its development, sustainability, and impact on both the environment and local communities. These factors include government policies, regulations, infrastructure development, and the involvement of various stakeholders like local organizations, NGOs, and international bodies. Effective institutional frameworks are essential for promoting responsible ecotourism practices, ensuring that benefits are equitably distributed, and that the environment is protected.

2.5 Gender dimension in eco-tourism

Over the ages depending upon the capability, strength and weakness certain roles were attached to both sex and they were confined to these roles. Sex identity was created by god but its linkage with a particular job in society and restraints imposed due to this gave birth to what we know of as Gender. Gender is the socialised and culturally influenced denotation of sex often linked to specific roles within a given society. The World Health Organization (WHO) defines gender as: **"Gender refers to the socially constructed characteristics of women and men, such as norms, roles, and relationships of and between groups of women and men".** Gender includes roles, behaviour which are expected by a society with respect to a specific sex along with the thoughts and preconceived notions people have about behaviors, thoughts, and characteristics associated to a person's sex. Another related word is gender identity which means how a person feels inside: man, woman, boy, or girl.

It is practically impossible to imagine a world of only man or only women, both men and women complement each other and are the essential pieces of the life puzzle. With the time and expanding public understanding of gender we have been able to break the traditional binary approach and accept the transgender or non-binary individuals respectfully.

In our society domains like technology: computers, cars, construction works, even electric plants & air condition systems have maximum male presence. Agriculture and science fields are also dominated by men. Women care about children: at home and at schools. Women choose occupations related to caring for others. Women are better at housekeeping. Women bring beauty, harmony, peace, things that are not tangible but necessary.

Men and women need each other. By comparing and contrasting genders as if men truly are from Mars and women from Venus the gender gap widens. Equality between men and women means that both genders should be treated equally for the rights, opportunities and freedom. If men and women possess the same skill at the same level in the workplace, their benefits and pay should also be the same. There may be a difference in pay according to their skills, however pay should never be different because of their gender. When men and women are treated unequally this is called sexism. But the way to rapid development, prosperity and happiness lies in equality of men and women and in ensuring that women are not denied their share in society. Women must be given their rights.

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<u>Check your Progress</u>

Q.1 What are two ways tourism can help preserve a region's cultural heritage?

Q.2 What are the three types of economic incentives described in the context of biodiversity conservation?

Q.3 Name two institutional factors that influence the sustainability of ecotourism.

Q.4 According to WHO, what does gender refer to?

</div>

Summary

- Ecotourism is a nature-based tourism subset that emphasizes interaction with nature and local cultures, aiming for appreciation and learning.
- While ecotourism can boost income and infrastructure, it can also lead to negative socio-cultural and environmental impacts. Sustainable ecotourism development requires careful management to balance benefits and drawbacks.

- Ecotourism includes diverse forms (soft/hard, passive/active, consumptive/non-consumptive) with direct and indirect impacts on local economies.

- Carrying capacity defines the number of tourists an area can support without harming the environment, economy, or cultural integrity. It ensures sustainable tourism through factors like land, water, population, infrastructure, pollution, and socio-economic sensitivity. It is used in planning, environmental management, policy-making, and visitor education to maintain balance and prevent over-tourism.

- Socio-cultural impacts vary and depend on tourism type and local context; tourism can conserve culture and promote cross-cultural understanding. Economic incentives encourage conservation through financial and non-monetary benefits, while disincentives discourage biodiversity depletion. Institutional frameworks, including policies, stakeholder involvement, and infrastructure, are critical for effective and sustainable ecotourism management.

- Gender roles are socially constructed and influence opportunities in tourism and society at large. Gender equality in ecotourism is essential for fair treatment and equal opportunities, including pay equity. Recognizing all gender identities and ensuring inclusion promotes social justice and contributes to sustainable development.

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UNIT 3: IMPACTS OF TOURISM AND ECO-TOURISM

Unit Structure

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    3.4.4 Impact on Society and Culture
    3.4.5 The Function of Community
3.5 Roles of ethics in eco-tourism
Summary

3.0 Learning Objectives

After going through this unit, you will be able to understand:

- The economic, social, political, cultural, environmental and socio-cultural impacts of tourism.

- Opportunities and challenges in attaining sustainable ecotourism.

- Role of ethics in eco-tourism.

3.1 Introduction

One of the industries in the global economy that is expanding the quickest right now is tourism. Through increased foreign exchange revenues, infrastructure upgrades, the adoption of contemporary management methods, and educational possibilities, its rapid expansion is having an impact on a wide range of industries. A nation's overall social and economic development is positively impacted by each of these elements.

A major contributor to the wealth of many highly developed nations, such as Switzerland, Austria, and France, is tourism. The money made from tourism has bolstered local economies and enhanced quality of life. Approximately ten percent of all jobs and ten percent of global income are currently supported by tourism.

In India, tourism has emerged as a key factor in the creation of jobs, revenue, poverty alleviation, and sustainable development. The industry accounts for 6.23% of the national GDP and supports about 8.78% of all jobs. With about 20 million people working in India's tourism sector either directly or indirectly today, the sector is becoming increasingly significant as a backbone of the country's economy and a vehicle for inclusive growth.

3.2 Impact of Tourism

Several aspects of society are impacted by tourism. It offers chances for growth, but it also presents difficulties that must be properly handled. A destination's tourism growth has positive and negative impacts on the local community. The type of planning used for the destination's tourism development greatly influences whether the effects are favorable or bad. At the conceptual level, the multiplier effects of increased income and employment, faster GDP growth, lower balance of payments deficits, and poverty alleviation are some of the benefits of tourism development. The economic cost of additional sociocultural and environmental repercussions of tourist, such as pollution, carrying capacity problems, displacement effects, and demonstration effects, is one of the negative effects of tourism.

3.2.1 Economic Impacts

Positive Impact:

1. Income: The majority of tourism and hospitality's revenue comes from salaries, profits, rentals, and interest because these industries require a lot of labor.

2. Employment:

- Direct: service is offered by establishments such as pubs, restaurants, and motels.

- Indirect: services that vendors offer to lodging facilities, dining establishments, etc.

- Induced: services rendered by specialists who interact directly with employees in tourism-related positions as well as construction workers.

3. Balance of Payment:

- It is the accounting flow of money, products, and services into and out of the nation.

- A nation's balance of payments is in deficit if it pays or pledges to pay more than it gets.

- Its balance of payments is in surplus if it gets more money than it exports or sends.

4. Investment & Development: To handle the increased volume of visitors, communities may need to invest more on road, utility, and public service maintenance. Residents may occasionally have to pay extra taxes to cover the added costs.

Negative Impact:

1. Inflation and Land Values:

- Rising land values that cause locals to pay more than their homes; wealthy tourists may afford to purchase goods at higher prices that are typically out of reach for locals.

2. High Leakages:

- Results from the expense of importing products and services to meet the demands of travelers. For example: a. Bringing in vehicles like cars, buses, and trains to meet the demands of tourists; b. Bringing in trains to Manila.

- Paying salaries and profits to external parties. For example, a. if foreign capital is invested in a country's tourism and hospitality, the destination area's revenues may be reduced if rent, plant interest, or other profits must be given to the foreign nation. b. A low rate of exchange.

- The cost of publicity and promotion to entice travelers to a certain location. One significant expense that lowers a destination area's revenue is advertising.

3. Seasonality: Seasonal variations in demand result in low returns on investment. For example, lodging facilities and travel agencies.

4. Overdependence on Tourism and Hospitality: Some places have become too reliant on tourism and hospitality to support themselves, leaving them open to fluctuations in visitor demand. An example would be a pandemic or a shift in traveler preferences.

3.2.2 Social Impacts

Changes in the standard of living for locals in tourist sites are referred to as social consequences of tourism. Ensuring that travel is accessible to everyone is the aim of social tourism.

Positive Impact:

1. Social change and multicultural understanding:

- The ability to accept and comprehend the cultures and beliefs of many races;

- The changes in human interaction brought about by travelers and tourists. For instance, children who are exposed to diverse cultures during their schooling feel safer and more at ease with them in the future.

2. Adaptation to the realities of modern life and improvement of the host country's lifestyle:

- Infrastructure (housing, water system) development; access to healthcare, social services, and educational opportunities.

- A shift in perspective, morals, and social awareness.

- More social mobility led to job openings in the hospitality and tourism industries.

- A shift in family dynamics as a result of women working outside the home.

- A rise in the household income.

3. Use of foreign language:

- Facilitates communication between individuals and those other linguistic groupings.

- Encourage locals to become more interested in learning various languages.

4. Improved health conditions and disease control:

- Better public health facilities;

- Locals learn about health issues and proper cleanliness through tourism and hospitality.

Negative Impact:

1. Social saturation:

- Causes traffic jams for tourists.

- Traffic jams in streets, stores, and public transit.

2. Changes of social structure, behaviour, roles:

- Conventional job types are altered by tourism.

- Population movement, family dissolution, and a decline in the status of agricultural laborers.

3. Negative demonstrative effects:

- Locals imitating tourists' materialism and values.

- Employing people from more developed nations rather than natives.

3.2.3 Cultural Impacts

Positive Impact:

1. Intercultural Communication:

- In the travel and hotel industries, mobility fosters cross-cultural interactions.

- While maintaining local ethnic and cultural identity, cross-cultural engagement between residents and visitors fosters cultural transformation.

2. Renaissance of Native Culture:

- Traditional crafts and arts are preserved to educate visitors about the history and culture of the area. Dances, museums, and traditional attire are a few examples.

Negative Impact:

1. Destruction of the works of arts:

- While residents preserve and repair their culture, visitor traffic causes art and cultural artifacts to be destroyed.

- The locals are being convinced to give up all of their customary possessions.

- Its form and purpose as an art object have changed as a result of the growing demand for artifacts.

3.2.4 Environmental Impacts

The development and growth of tourism and hospitality can be traced back to the environment, as evidenced by their history. The beauty of nature and the distinctive cultures and landscapes of many locations drew people to travel and explore their surroundings in the early days of tourism. The environment continues to play a significant role in people's travel preferences today, with many people looking for places that provide chances for ecotourism, outdoor recreation, and nature encounters.

Positive Impact:

1. Conservation: The restoration of existing historic structures, monuments, and locations.

Negative Impact:

1. Environmental Conflicts:

- Air pollution: Caused by gas fumes released by factories, buses, airplanes, and cars. Air pollution is typically a problem in areas with a high automobile population.

- Untreated waste released from resorts, rivers, lakes, and springs causes water pollution. Additionally, this may lead to certain illnesses.

- Air and land traffic congestion are linked to noise pollution.

2. Geological Conflicts: Geological formations are impacted by tourism and hospitality. While some tourists damage natural formations by vandalizing them, others gather minerals, rocks, fossils, and coral from tourist destinations.

3. Resident Conflicts: Some underdeveloped areas are being transformed into high-rise structures for urban lodging due to tourism and hospitality, which drives locals to relocate.

3.2.5 Political Impacts

A tourism policy provides guidance for the industry. This policy is a collection of standards, norms, and directives pertaining to the growth and marketing of tourism. It offers a framework through which decisions made both individually and collectively

impact the growth of tourism. A code of behavior for tourists can be established by the government.

Positive Impact:

1. Political Stability: Any tourism spot that is safe and secure draws a lot of visitors.

2. Law and order:

- The government is in charge of maintaining law and order. It contributes to the influx of tourists if it is well managed.

- Site beautification and safety features that don't significantly change the surrounding environment are likewise very popular tourist attractions.

3. Political will-power:

- The degree to which political decision-makers are dedicated to promoting a specific policy solution to a given issue is known as political willpower.

- Infrastructure development in tourist destinations is facilitated by political willpower in the tourism and hospitality sectors, which promotes travel. Its amenities include accommodations, assistance, and easy access, among other things that travelers need.

Negative Impact:

1. Geopolitical uncertainty: Conflict and political unrest may have a detrimental effect on tourism since visitors may be less inclined to visit nations that are seen as dangerous. One recent instance of this is the conflict in Ukraine.

2. Terrorism: Because travelers are less inclined to visit nations that are viewed as unsafe because of terrorism, terrorism may also present a challenge to the growth and expansion of the travel and tourism sector in the future.

3.2.6 Socio-Cultural Impacts

Positive Impact:

- Cultural tradition's resurgence

- People who study other cultures and lifestyles are fostering greater tolerance, understanding, and peace.

- Economic incentives to preserve food, fashion, festivals, and history are examples of cultural preservation.

- Tourism-related funds are used for temple upkeep, schools, cultural projects, and upgrades.

- Boost the community's reputation

Negative Impact:

- Cultural identity change or loss (e.g., westernization, loss of indigenous identity and values, modernization, culture as performers, loss of authentic rituals, material culture)

- Conflicts between cultures

- Ethical concerns (such child labor exploitation or sex tourism)

- Cultural differences are being caused by inadequate investment in water supply, sewage treatment, and infrastructure.

- Bottlenecks in local traffic

- Sometimes, areas that are examined closely and defects are made public and exaggerated.

- Tourists disrespect the locations they visit by, for example, shouting in churches, leaving trash behind, and taking pictures of holy events without permission.

- Marginal jobs include low-skilled, low-paid jobs, menial labor, prostitution, drug trafficking, gambling, and hustlers.

Questions for Practice

1. Multiple Choice Question (MCQ)

Which of the following is a negative economic impact of tourism?

A. Creation of employment opportunities

B. Investment in infrastructure

C. High leakages due to import of goods and services

D. Increase in local income

2. Fill in the Blanks:

Tourism contributes to the _____ of native culture by reviving traditional arts, crafts, and dances.

3. True or False:

Tourism always has a positive impact on the environment because it promotes conservation.

4. Match the Following:

Column A	Column B
A. Direct Employment	1. Services by restaurants and hotels
B. Induced Employment	2. Services by doctors and construction workers
C. Negative Demonstration Effect	3. Locals copying tourists' behavior
D. Cultural Renaissance	4. Revival of traditional dance and crafts

5. Assertion and Reason:

Assertion (A): Tourism leads to seasonality, affecting the stability of local income.
Reason (R): Seasonal tourist demand results in underutilized infrastructure and low returns during off-peak periods.

A. Both A and R are true, and R is the correct explanation of A

B. Both A and R are true, but R is not the correct explanation of A

C. A is true, but R is false

D. A is false, but R is true

3.3 Sustainable Eco-Tourism

Traveling in a way that benefits people, the environment, and future generations is known as sustainable tourism. It's about experiencing pleasure in new locations while simultaneously preserving them for future generations to enjoy. The concept is straightforward: tourism should benefit rather than hurt. It should have been:

- Create jobs and revenue to support the local population.

- Preserve the environment, including wildlife, beaches, and forests.

- Honor and commemorate regional customs and cultures.

In a same way different organization have explained it as:

- According to the World Tourism Organization, sustainable tourism protects the environment and ensures that future generations can enjoy the destinations they visit, all while meeting the requirements of both visitors and local residents.

- ICOMOS goes on to say that as this type of tourism benefits the economy, society, and environment more than it harms them, it should be able to persist for a long time.

- The Global Development and Research Centre defines it as tourism that aims to safeguard local ecosystems, create jobs for people, and have a minimal impact on the environment and local culture. John Beech and Simon Chadwick define sustainable tourism as travel that doesn't harm communities or the environment in the long run.

Growing and improving living without harming the environment is known as sustainable development, and it includes sustainable tourism. Enjoying the globe while contributing to its preservation is the essence of being a responsible traveler.

Sustainable tourism can be explained using a **triangle model (fig.:1)**. Imagine a triangle with three important sides that all work together:

Figure1: Triangle Model to Understand Sustainable Eco-Tourism

Source:https://stvdomrep.wordpress.com/definition-of-sustainable-tourism/

1.social-cultural: The local communities—the residents of the destination—are the main focus of this side. In addition to providing advantages like jobs and improved

living conditions, tourism should respect their culture, customs, and means of life.

2. Environment: This covers both man-made (like parks or towns) and natural (like forests, beaches, and mountains) regions. The preservation of nature for future generations and the avoidance of environmental harm from tourism are crucial.

3. Economy: The revenue generated by tourism is the subject of this side. An effective tourist strategy should support local companies and boost the local economy, but not at the expense of endangering the environment or people.

Economy, environment, and socio-culture are all interconnected. Ignoring one side can negatively impact the others. For this reason, proper planning is essential when it comes to tourism. We can ensure that tourism has positive effects and steers clear of major issues by considering how it impacts the environment, locals, and the economy.

Questions for Practice

6. Multiple Choice Question (MCQ):

Which of the following is not a goal of sustainable eco-tourism?

A. Preserving natural environments

B. Maximizing short-term profits

C. Supporting local communities

D. Respecting cultural traditions

7. Fill in the Blanks:

Sustainable tourism is often represented by a triangle model focusing on the three interconnected pillars: _____, _____, and _____.

8. True or False:

According to the World Tourism Organization, sustainable tourism must protect the environment and meet the needs of both tourists and local residents.

9. Match the Following:

Column A	Column B
A. Social-cultural aspect	1. Involves forests, beaches, and towns
B. Environmental aspect	2. Focuses on preserving local traditions and customs
C. Economic aspect	3. Aims to support local businesses and generate income

10. Assertion and Reason:

Assertion (A): Sustainable tourism should be carefully planned to avoid harming any one area of the destination.

Reason (R): The economic, environmental, and socio-cultural aspects of tourism are all interdependent.

A. Both A and R are true, and R is the correct explanation of A

B. Both A and R are true, but R is not the correct explanation of A

C. A is true, but R is false

D. A is false, but R is true

3.4 Opportunities and Challenges in Sustainable Ecotourism

Locals benefit from tourism in different ways. It generates more jobs such as drivers, hotel staff, and tour guides. Spending by visitors on regional cuisine and handicrafts supports local families. Additionally, a lot of people launch small businesses such as homestays, artisan stores, or food stands. By delivering better roads, transportation, and cleaner public spaces, tourism can enhance the place. By sharing them with tourists, it also contributes to the preservation of traditional music, art, and festivals. The multiplier effect, in which visitor spending keeps helping more locals, is one significant advantage. In summary, if tourism is handled properly, it can improve the lives of many people.

Although there are numerous advantages to tourism, there are drawbacks as well. Some tourism-related employment may not pay well and are seasonal or temporary. Local people may not gain many benefits when large companies from outside take over hotels or travel agencies. Any decline in tourists, such as during inclement weather or world events, can severely harm the local economy if a place depends too heavily on tourism. Additionally, tourism may result in price increases, making it more difficult for locals to buy food, housing, and land. Last but not least, an excessive number of visitors may cause cultural damage, where customs lose their true meaning and are commercialized. Therefore, it's critical to develop tourism in a way that respects people and culture and is equitable. Some of the opportunities and challenges in some sectors are given below:

3.4.1 Biodiversity Conservation

The variety of life in an area, including plants, animals, and other living things, is referred to as biodiversity. Visits to national parks and wildlife sanctuaries, which are rich in biodiversity, are popular among tourists. One of the world's most biodiverse nations is India, which has:

- Despite making up only 2.4% of the world's territory,

- 11% of plant species worldwide and

- 6.5% of all creatures on the planet.

India has three main hotspots for biodiversity:

- The Western Ghats are home to numerous rare species.

- India's northeast, and

- The Himalayas.

However, there is a problem: these delicate areas are being harmed by unplanned tourists. Pollution is rising, animals are being disturbed, and forests are being torn down.

The ecosystem becomes unstable as a result. India's Ministry of Environment and Tourism have collaborated to address issue. They examined lodging options for tourists, including hotels and lodges, in locations like:

- The National Park of Corbett

- Kaziranga National Park

- Kanha National Park

- The Bandhavgar

- Tiger Reserve in Pench

- Wildlife Sanctuary at Mudumalai

Sacred Groves is an example of success. Small woodlands known as "holy groves" are preserved by nearby communities for spiritual or religious purposes. There, no one hunts or cuts down trees. The Gumpa Forest in Sikkim, which is guarded by Buddhist monks, is one example. These groves are excellent illustrations of conservation driven by the community.

Challenges:

- People require greater awareness and education.

- Systems of government are frequently ineffective.

- Sometimes we lack the information necessary to make wise choices.

3.4.2 Climate Change

Tourism is already being significantly impacted by climate change. It is resulting in:

- more severe weather conditions, such as droughts, floods, heat waves, and storms.

- harm to marine and terrestrial life.

- a direct impact on popular tourist destinations such as lakes, snow-capped mountains, beaches, and woods.

Particularly under risk are forms of tourism such as eco-tourism, green tourism, mountain tourism, and seaside tourist. This is a major problem in nations like India, where a large population depends on natural resources for their tourism companies. The steps which can be taken are as follows:

- Spread awareness of environmental conservation among visitors, residents, and company owners.

- Encourage tourists to travel responsibly, showing consideration for the environment and local customs.

- Enforce the legislation to safeguard the environment and wildlife.

- Fund conservation initiatives using the money generated by tourists.

3.4.3 Economic Importance

There are four main foundations of sustainable tourism. There are two of them:

- Economic sustainability (making money in a wise, long-term manner)

- assisting local communities

People can benefit much from tourism, particularly in isolated and underdeveloped places. It can lower poverty, strengthen local companies, and provide jobs.

People in rural areas have new sources of income thanks to tourism. For instance, the Pro-Poor Tourism (PPT) Approach is being applied in Uttarakhand. Its

objective is to ensure that tourism helps the underprivileged while avoiding negative effects on the environment and local culture.

Challenges:

- The loss or alteration of traditional culture is a possibility.

- Locals might not be sufficiently trained to handle tourists.

- Local communities, private businesses, and the government must work together.

- Locals ought to participate in decision-making and reap the rewards.

3.4.4 Impact on Society and Culture

Our world is becoming more international, and cultures are blending together. This can be beneficial, but if not handled properly, it can also undermine regional customs and social institutions. Indigenous cultures are preserved through sustainable tourism by:

- honoring regional arts, customs, languages, and beliefs.

- urging visitors to observe local customs and act with decency.

- encouraging the use of traditional arts and crafts, such as dance, music, and painting.

3.4.5 The Function of Community

The involvement of local communities in tourism must be significant. Involving locals makes tourism more considerate and advantageous. Additionally, it aids in avoiding "cultural contamination," which occurs when external factors undermine a community's identity.

- The best course of action is to instruct visitors on appropriate conduct.

- Encourage and support regional craftspeople and artists.

- Allow locals to participate in the organization and management of tourism-related events.

- Celebrate local culture by using tourism as a tool, not as a substitute for it.

3.5 Roles of ethics in eco-tourism

Public sector organizations get involved in tourism for a variety of reasons, including:

- Improving a nation's balance of payments condition;

- Creating jobs through tourism,

- Produce tax income for government agencies.

- Diversify local economies, revitalize metropolitan areas, and promote regional and rural development.

- Numerous methods that public sector organizations get involved in tourism have an effect on the economy.

The active involvement of the public sector raises several ethical issues:

- The notion that it is unfair to ask taxpayers in a region or nation as a whole to foot the bill for destination marketing initiatives when the private sector benefits from them and local hotels profit primarily when a local council uses public funds to advertise weekend getaways. The majority of locals who have paid to advertise the quick getaways typically receive little to nothing in return for their money.

- Inequitable competition may result from state subsidies for specific travel agencies. Large-scale examples include the unfair favoring of state-owned, subsidized airlines over smaller, privately held, non-supported airlines. On a smaller scale, it might be an instance of unfair competition for privately owned attractions by publicly owned, subsidized tourist attractions. Although strong arguments may be made in favor of the usage of subsidies in certain situations, generally speaking, one gets the impression that they are unjust and work against the interests of consumers.

The public sector's expenditure on tourism is an example of an opportunity cost. To put it another way, this money could be used for other purposes, including health and education, which would benefit a larger population in that nation.

Questions for Practice

11. Multiple Choice Question (MCQ):

Which of the following is a challenge of sustainable eco-tourism mentioned in the content?

A. Promotion of traditional arts

B. The multiplier effect of tourist spending

C. Seasonal or poorly-paid jobs

D. Better roads and public infrastructure

12. Fill in the Blanks:

India is home to three major biodiversity hotspots: the Western Ghats, _____, and _____.

13. True or False:

Sacred groves, like the Gumpa Forest in Sikkim, are community-preserved areas that prohibit hunting and deforestation.

14. Match the Following:

Column A	Column B
A. Pro-Poor Tourism (PPT)	1. Encourages tourism to reduce poverty in underdeveloped areas
B. Climate change	2. Causes floods, droughts, and impacts tourist destinations
C. Public sector ethical concern	3. Taxpayers fund tourism promotions that benefit private businesses
D. Sacred groves	4. Community-managed forests preserved for spiritual reasons

15. Assertion and Reason:

Assertion (A): Local community participation in tourism planning helps preserve cultural identity.

Reason (R): When locals are excluded from tourism decisions, it can lead to cultural erosion and loss of benefits.

A. Both A and R are true, and R is the correct explanation of A

B. Both A and R are true, but R is not the correct explanation of A

C. A is true, but R is false

D. A is false, but R is true

Summary

One of the sectors with the greatest rate of growth in the world, tourism is crucial to both social and economic advancement. It supports employment, contemporary

management techniques, infrastructural upgrades, and foreign exchange profits. Tourism boosts local economies in developed nations like France and Switzerland. It is essential to inclusive growth and the fight against poverty in India, where it sustains about 9% of jobs and contributes more than 6% of GDP.

Positive Effects of Tourism on the Economy: Tourism increases income, supports infrastructure expenditures, and creates direct and indirect jobs (for example, in hotels, transportation, and services). By drawing in foreign exchange, it also strengthens a nation's balance of payments.

Social and Cultural Benefits: It increases language acquisition, improves lifestyles through improved services and education, and fosters multicultural understanding. Festivals, crafts, and traditional arts are being resurrected as tourist attractions.

Environmental Benefits: Cultural and natural heritage can be preserved with the aid of sustainable tourism. National parks, holy groves, and protected regions frequently profit from tourism.

Political Benefits: Strong governance and a stable political climate encourage travel. Long-term economic advantages and the revitalization of rural and urban communities can be achieved by public investment in tourism.

Negative Effects of Travel:

Economic Drawbacks: Locals may find it difficult to afford living expenses due to rising prices and land values. Economic instability is caused by seasonal employment, and substantial leakages happen when foreign corporations control the industry. Social Challenges: Social systems can be upset by overcrowding, the loss of conventional jobs, changes in family structures, and the imitation of tourist lifestyles.

Cultural Harm: Commercialization may cause a loss of cultural authenticity. Visitors could inadvertently cause harm to historical places or disregard local customs.

Environmental Problems: Pollution of the air, water, and noise is on the rise. Wildlife, natural landforms, and delicate ecosystems may be harmed by the pressure of tourists.

Political and Ethical Issues: Terrorism and conflicts lower travel. Large company subsidies from the government may lead to unfair competition. Priority over healthcare and education is called into doubt when public monies are used for tourism.

Ecotourism that is sustainable: The goals of sustainable tourism are to conserve culture, save the environment, and assist local populations. The "triangle model" of the

economy, ecology, and society is emphasized. Promoting environmentally sustainable travel, honoring regional customs, and allocating tourism-related profits to conservation and development are a few examples.

Prospects and Difficulties: Jobs, cultural preservation, and local company expansion are all made possible by tourism. However, issues like cultural loss, climate change, lack of expertise, and unequal benefit distribution necessitate careful planning and collaboration between governments, corporations, and communities.

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Answers

1. C

2. Renaissance

3. False (Explanation: While tourism can promote conservation, it can also cause pollution, noise, and damage to geological formations.)

4. A-1, B-2, C-3, D-4

5. A

6. B

7. economy, environment, socio-culture

8. True

9. A-2, B-1, C-3

10. A

11. C

12. the Northeast, the Himalayas

13. True

14. A-1, B-2, C-3, D-4

15. A

UNIT 4: INSTITUTIONAL ASPECTS

Unit Structure

4.0 Learning Objectives

After going through this unit, you will be able to understand:

- The institutional aspects of Eco-Tourism; national and sate level guidelines and policies

- Tourism laws, bill of rights and tourism code

- Eco-branding and ecolabeling of eco-tourism products

- United state World Tourism Summit

4.1 Introduction

The institutional components of ecotourism include the stakeholder alliances, organizational structures, and regulatory frameworks required for its sustainable growth and administration. This covers international law, state and national tourist policies, and the participation of many stakeholders such as local communities, NGOs, and government organizations.

The goal of ecotourism is to properly explore the natural world while preserving wildlife, honoring local customs, and helping local populations. Working together, various groups can ensure that ecotourism benefits everyone. This includes local communities, state and central governments, forest departments, and tourism enterprises.

4.2 Guidelines for Ecotourism

Eco-Tourism guidelines are the strategic foundations for the world-wide growth of eco-tourism which has main seven pillars named below:

Pillar No.	Strategic Foundation
1.	Evaluation and Prioritization
2.	State Strategy for Ecotourism
3.	IEC (Information, Education, Communication), Capacity Building, and Certification
4.	Marketing and Promotion
5.	Destination and Product Development
6.	Public-Private and Community Partnerships
7.	The Institutional Framework and Governance

4.2.1 National Level Guidelines on Eco-Tourism

In order to promote environmental sustainability, biodiversity protection, economic sustainability, and socio-cultural sustainability, the Ministry of Tourism has also created a National Strategy on Sustainable Tourism. The goal of the strategy is to integrate sustainability into the travel and tourist industry. The two key markets for promoting sustainable tourism are ecotourism and adventure tourism.

4.2.1.1 Central Ministries

- Tourism Ministry promotes travel, builds infrastructure, and carries out skill-building programs.

- Ministry of Rural Development prioritizes infrastructure development, poverty alleviation, and sustainable rural growth.

- Ministry of Environment, Forests, and Climate Change develops conservation and eco-friendly travel policies. (Other Development Options)

- Ministry of Culture offers sustainable preservation and promotion of cultural treasures.

- North-East Region Development Ministry promotes socioeconomic growth in the states in the northeast.

- The Ministry of Entrepreneurship and Skill Development offers programs for developing skills in sustainable tourism.

- Ministry of Textiles promotes handicrafts and handlooms, supporting rural tourism.

- Department of Agriculture, Cooperation and Farmers Welfare supports agritourism and farm stays.

4.2.1.2 State Administrations

- Ecotourism Strategy: Create a state-level strategy for ecotourism that emphasizes sustainable development, community involvement, and conservation.

- Ecotourism Plans: Every Protected Area needs to create an ecotourism plan that has been authorized by the National Tiger Conservation Authority and the Chief Wildlife Warden.

- Revenue Generation: Put procedures in place to guarantee that tourism-related funds are allocated to local development and conservation.

- Monitoring and Evaluation: Put in place systems to evaluate the effects of ecotourism endeavors and guarantee that rules are followed.

4.2.1.3 Institutions of Panchayati Raj

- Local Governance: Have a significant impact on nearby communities and contribute significantly to the accomplishment of ecotourism projects.

- Community Involvement: Make sure that local communities actively participate in the processes of planning and decision-making.

4.2.1.4 Industry

- Infrastructure Development: Create and run ecotourism destinations while following sustainable guidelines.

- Partnerships: To advance ecotourism, work with the local government and community.

4.2.1.5 NGOs, or Non-Governmental Organizations

- Community Links: Establish linkages between local communities and ecotourism projects.

- Capacity Building: Assist local communities with sustainable tourism practices by offering them resources and training.

4.2.1.6 Neighborhoods

- Active Participation: Take part in ecotourism activities while making sure they have a positive social and economic impact.

- Sustainable Practices: To protect natural resources, implement eco-friendly procedures.

4.2.2 State Level Guidelines on Ecotourism

Planning and managing ecotourism are a major responsibility of state governments. They must do the following:

A. State-Level Ecotourism Strategy

The following should be the main objectives of every state's plan:

- Protecting Nature: Preserving forests, wildlife, and natural areas.

- Involving Local Communities: Ensuring that locals take part in decision-making and profit from tourism.

- Using Sustainable resources: Using locally obtained resources to construct environmentally friendly facilities.

- Public Education: Spreading awareness of conservation among residents and tourists.

- Impact Monitoring: Continually assessing the effects of tourism on communities and the environment.

- Training Locals: Assisting locals in overseeing and managing ecotourism operations.

B. Comply with National Regulations

The state plan should adhere to federal regulations and:

- Preserve the surrounding areas of wildlife sanctuaries and national parks.

- Make sure that everyone benefits from tourism, not only affluent travelers.

- Revise state legislation to encourage eco-friendly travel strategies.

C. No tourist facilities in Forest Lands

- Preserve wildlife habitats: new hotels and resorts cannot be built on forest property.

D. Make Conservation Use of Tourism Revenue

- The funds gathered from visitors ought to go toward managing and preserving protected places.

- Encourage local communities and their growth.

E. Decision-Making Role of the Forest Department

Whether tourism plans are environmentally friendly should be determined by the Forest Department. In the event of a disagreement, their choice ought to put the preservation of wildlife and the environment first.

F. Create Plans for Ecotourism in Protected Areas

- Every protected area needs a unique ecotourism plan that includes the following:

  a) Calculating the maximum number of tourists, the region can accommodate.

  b) Selecting which areas are accessible to visitors.

  c) Tracking the effects of tourism-related activities.

G. Establish a Steering Committee at the State Level

- The Chief Minister should chair a committee that:

  a) Regularly reviews the ecotourism plan.

b) Incorporate representatives from nearby communities, forest departments, and other pertinent organizations.

H. Put a Local Conservation Fee into Effect

- A fee should be charged by tourist establishments close to protected areas in order to:

    a) Support conservation initiatives.

    b) Encourage neighborhood development initiatives.

I. Encourage Landowners to Convert Forests

- To benefit wildlife and boost ecotourism, landowners who own non-forest land close to protected areas ought to be encouraged to turn it into forests.

J. Form an Advisory Committee at the Local Level

- A committee should be established in each protected area to:

    a) Examine and provide guidance on plans related to ecotourism.

    b) Keep an eye on visitor activities to make sure they don't negatively impact the ecosystem.

    c) Make certain that the growth of tourism honors regional customs and cultures.

Table 1: Principal Duties of State Governments Action Goal

Action	Goal
Make a state ecotourism	plan to direct the growth of sustainable tourism.
Comply with national regulations	Assure uniformity and adherence to the law
Ban the construction of new infrastructure on forest property.	Preserve the habitats of wildlife.
Utilize tourism-generated income to support conservation	invest in community and environmental projects
The Forest Department as the decision-maker	Put ecological welfare first

Create planning for ecotourism in protected regions.	Effectively manage the impact of tourism
Establish a steering group.	Monitor and assess ecotourism projects
Put in place a local conservation charge.	Encourage local development and conservation
Encourage landowners to convert forests.	Increase the value of ecotourism and biodiversity
Form a local advisory group.	Engage communities in the process of making decisions.

4.2.3 Ecotourism Stakeholders

Successful ecotourism requires cooperation from a number of groups:

- Governmental Organizations: Establish rules and guidelines.

- Forest Departments: Oversee wildlife and protected areas.

- Local Communities: Take part in ecotourism and reap its benefits.

- Tourism Sector: Offer amenities and services.

- Civil society and NGOs: Encourage community development and conservation.

- Visitors: Act sensibly and show consideration for regional customs.

4.3 Tourism Policy

A tourism policy is essentially a comprehensive plan that the government has developed to help tourism grow in a smart and organized way. It contains guidelines, objectives, and tactics to ensure that tourism contributes to the nation's growth, creates jobs, preserves culture, and keeps places clean and appealing to tourists. It also provides guidance to governments, businesses, and individuals on how to maintain tourist destinations and greet visitors in a sustainable and friendly manner.

4.3.1 Important Steps in Indian Tourism Policy

The primary government agency responsible for organizing and overseeing tourism nationwide is the Ministry of Tourism. India has implemented a number of laws and plans of action to increase tourism over the years.

4.3.1.1 The 1982 National Tourism Policy

In 1982, India's first tourist policy was introduced. Its objectives were to:

- Spread awareness of Indian customs and culture worldwide.

- Use tourism to boost the economy and create jobs. Young people should be encouraged to travel and discover new cultures and people.

4.3.1.2 National Tourism Committee, 1988

To develop a long-term tourism strategy, a committee was established. It recommended:

- Improved collaboration between the federal and state governments.

- The National Tourism Board was established.

- Enhance human resource development training for those employed in the tourism industry.

4.3.1.3 The 1992 National Action Plan

The actual demands of tourism were the main emphasis of this strategy, including:

- Improving hotels, airports, and roadways.

- Marketing travel locations.

- Increasing the number of individuals receiving training to work in the tourism sector and drawing in more foreign visitors.

4.3.1.4 Incredible India & Tourism Policy, 2002

According to this revised policy, tourism is a potent instrument for the advancement of the country. Its main objectives were:

- Creating jobs, particularly for women, young people, and those with impairments.

- Fostering national cohesion and peace.

- Improving services to make India more appealing to tourists.

The Incredible India campaign was started in 2002 to showcase India's variety, history, yoga, and culture to the globe. Despite the fact that some felt it omitted significant regions of India, it had a significant impact.

4.3.2 India's Five-Year Plans for Tourism

India focuses on several development areas, including tourism, through the implementation of five-year plans. This is how tourism has been incorporated over time:

A. Initial Strategy (1951–1956)

- Mainly concentrated on agriculture.

- Travel wasn't a top priority.

B. Second Plan (1956–1961)

- Constructed transportation and hotels in well-known tourist destinations.

- Encouraged domestic travel within India.

C. Plan Third (1961–1966)

- The development of tourism cost about ₹8 crore.

D. Plan IV (1969–1974)

- Acknowledged tourism as a means of fostering peace and generating foreign exchange.

- Encouraged religious and historical sites. Invited private businesses to contribute to the construction of tourism amenities.

E. The 1974–1978 Fifth Plan

- Concentrated on creating tourist areas.

- Promoted increased travel abroad.

F. Plan Six (1980–1985)

- Acknowledged the contribution of tourism to employment and cultural exchange;

- Supported regional artisans and artists. They lent money to private companies so they could construct hotels.

G. Plan Seven (1985–1990)

- Established a committee to organize novel forms of travel, such as adventure travel.

- Connected tourism to economic growth in general.

H. Plan Eighth (1992–1997)

- Encouraged the use of tourism as a means of fostering local growth, particularly in rural regions.

- Concentrated on Indian and middle-class travelers.

I. Plan Ninth (1997–2002)

- Paying attention to Sikkim and the Northeast.

- Encouraged locals to take part in tourism.

- Placed a focus on visitor comfort and safety.

J. Plan No. 10 (2002–2007)

- Dedicated to the preservation of museums and monuments.

- Encouraged the arts and cultural customs.

K. Eleventh Plan (2007–2012)

- 991 tourism projects received over ₹3,000 crore, and maintaining and cleaning tourist destinations became a top priority.

- The development of human resources was prioritized.

L. Plan Twelfth (2012-2017)

- The tourist budget was raised to ₹16,000 crore.

- Targeted 11 million foreign visitors.

- Encouraged pro-poor travel in an effort to lessen poverty.

- Promoted inclusive and sustainable travel with local communities' assistance.

4.4 Eco-branding and Ecolabeling of Eco-Tourism Products

An ecolabeling is a unique designation applied to environmentally friendly products. It makes it simple for users to identify products that are manufactured with environmentally friendly methods or that may be used and discarded in ways that minimize environmental impact. In India, this concept is symbolized by the Eco-mark symbol (Fig. 1). It demonstrates that the product is safer for the environment and satisfies specific environmental criteria.

Figure 1: Eco- mark Lebel

(Certifying agency: Bureau of Indian Standards, Effective Region: India, Effective since: 1991)

Even before India participated in the Rio Summit in 1992, the Ministry of Environment and Forests, Government of India, launched this eco-labeling program in 1991. This indicates that India was considering environmental protection strategies before many other nations did.

The Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS) oversees the Eco-mark program. The ISI label, which you may have seen on many products to indicate their high quality, is also the responsibility of BIS. A product must adhere to eco-friendly rules in addition to meeting high quality standards in order to receive the Eco-mark.

This program offers a wide range of commonplace commodities, including household goods and other objects we use frequently. These goods are eligible to bear the Eco-mark designation if they satisfy the necessary quality and environmental requirements.

4.4.1 Eco-mark Scheme's Objectives

Several specific and significant objectives guided the creation of the Eco-mark program. The 1991 announcement contained an official list of these objectives. The plan aims to accomplish the following:

1. Motivate Businesses to Go Green: It encourages producers and importers to create less environmentally damaging goods.

2. Give Credit for Eco-Friendly Work: The program values and acknowledges a company's genuine attempts to preserve the environment by enhancing its products.

3. Assist Individuals in Making Greener Decisions: When consumers go shopping, Eco-mark provides them with crucial information that helps them select environmentally friendly products.

4. Encourage People to Take Care of the Environment: People are inspired to adopt more ecologically conscious practices in their daily lives by selecting Eco-mark products.

5. Conserve the Environment and Make Sensible Use of Resources: Long-term goals include enhancing environmental quality and encouraging the sustainable use of natural resources.

The Indian government launched a unique labeling program called Eco-mark to assist citizens in making better informed and environmentally responsible decisions. Products

bearing this badge are environmentally safe and adhere to specific green guidelines. 16 categories of commonplace goods, including soaps, paints, paper, and even electronics, were selected by the government to be included under this program. There are currently established guidelines (referred to as "eco-criteria") for 14 of these categories in order to receive the Eco-mark.

The Ministry of Environment and Forests (MoEF) also conducted public awareness efforts to raise awareness of this. However, the program didn't gain much attraction because so few firms participated.

Following product categories are eligible for an Eco-mark label:

- Cleaners and soaps

- Paints, paper, food products, and additives

- Products made from wood;

- textiles;

- batteries;

- lubricating oil;

- packaging materials;

- plastics;

- aerosols (such as spray cans);

- cosmetics;

- medications and pesticides;

- vegetable oils; and

- electronic items

Selecting eco-labeled versions of these items can have a significant impact on the environment because we use them on a daily basis.

The awarding of Eco-mark is overseen by three primary committees:

1. Committee for Steering: This group, which was established by the Ministry of Environment and Forests, makes decisions about:

    - What kinds of goods should be covered by the program;

    - How to enhance and advertise the program.

2. Committee for Technical Affairs: The Central Pollution Control Board oversees this group. It:

- Chooses particular goods,

- Establishes priorities if there are numerous eco-criteria to take into account.

- Chooses the eco-criteria they must meet.

3. Indian Standards Bureau (BIS): This company verifies and assesses if a product satisfies environmental and quality criteria,

- Acknowledges the manufacturer and permits them to use the Eco-mark label in exchange for a nominal charge.

4.5 Tourism Law

The term "tourism law" refers to the basic rules that the government has enacted about particular legislation that are intended to control the travel and hospitality sector. In order for the travel sector to operate efficiently, it also refers to a confluence of federal, state, and international legislation. In order to safeguard customers' rights, these regulations are frequently referred to as guiding principles for business people.

4.5.1 Tourism Bill of Rights

This is similar to a unique set of "rules" and "promises" that nations have made to safeguard travelers and contribute to making travel fun, equitable, and secure for all.

Article I: Everyone Is Entitled to Rest and Travel

- As long as they abide by the law, everyone should be able to travel freely, take vacations, and unwind.

- Leisure and travel contribute to people's happiness and global awareness.

Article II: Governments Must Encourage the Growth of Tourism

- To encourage more people to enjoy tourism, nations should enact travel-friendly laws.

Article III: Actions Needed by Nations

Governments ought to:

- Encourage the growth of tourism in a planned and equitable manner.

- Ensure that their total growth includes tourism.

- Collaborate with nations and international institutions such as the United Nations World Trade Organization.

- Make travel easy for everyone, especially the elderly, young people, and those with impairments.

- Preserve the environment, customs, and culture for upcoming generations.

Article IV: Facilitate and Secure Travel

Countries ought to:

- Facilitate travel for tourists by easing visa requirements and other travel regulations.

- Assist visitors in comprehending and relating to locals.

- Ensure the health and safety of tourists.

- Put an end to harmful practices like drug misuse and forced prostitution in the travel industry.

Article V: Tourists' Freedom and Fairness

- Unless a location is limited, tourists should be able to move across a nation.

- They must be treated fairly, without exception.

- They should be aware of the customs and laws of the area; they should be able to get assistance from officials and their embassies if necessary.

Article VI: Local Residents' Rights (Host Communities)

- The local population ought to have access to its own cultural and natural landmarks.

- They are entitled to demand that visitors honor their customs, traditions, and beliefs.

- To help tourists understand and respect the local culture, history, environment, and sacred sites, nations should cooperate in exchanging information.

Article VII: Locals Should Greet Visitors

- With Hospitality, Friendship, and Respect Local communities should extend a warm welcome to tourists. This promotes stronger interpersonal relationships.

Article VIII: Professionals in Tourism Have Duties

- Travel agencies, tour operators, and hotel employees ought to: o Adhere to these rights and regulations.

- Provide quality services.

- Never exploit tourists for your own gain.

Article IX: Assistance for Tourism Employees

Employees in the tourism industry should:

- Receive equitable treatment and training.

- Collaborate with the government and other organizations to provide better services.

4.5.2 Tourist Code

Article X: Be a Friendly and Respectful Traveler

- By being courteous and understanding, tourists can foster friendship and peace.

Article XI: Honor regional customs and laws

Visitors are required to:

- Comply with local laws.

- Show consideration for the customs, values, and cultures of others.

- Don't act superior or flaunt your wealth.

- Never condone unethical behavior such as drug use or prostitution.

Article XII: Governments Must Facilitate Travel

To facilitate travel for tourists, nations should:

- Reduce travel documentation.

- Offering decent lodging and transportation choices.

Article XIII: Rights of Tourists

Travelers ought to enjoy the following rights:

- The freedom to visit locations without interference, unless prohibited by law.

- Accurate and understandable details regarding prices and services.

- Security for both themselves and their possessions.

- Healthful and hygienic lodging and dining options.

- Availability of medical care as required.

- Tools for communication, such as the internet or phone.

- Legal assistance in the event that something goes wrong.

- A location for their religious activities.

Article XIV: Advocate for Your Rights When Traveling

- If anyone has concerns or needs related to travel, they should be able to speak with the government or leaders. Additionally, anyone might start or join organizations that support improved travel rights.

4.5.3 World Tourism Organization (WTO)

From September 17–26, 1985, the World Tourism Organization (WTO) convened a significant meeting in Sofia, Bulgaria. They discussed and came to the following conclusion:

- The Significance of Tourism: According to the WTO, tourism does more than only facilitate travel; it also serves to:

    a) Foster greater understanding between people and cultures.

    b) Boost a nation's economy (jobs and money).

    c) Encourage international understanding, peace, and education.

Whether they travel for business, pleasure, or education, tourism plays a significant role in the lives of many individuals. However, issues like misplaced bags or canceled flights can occasionally arise for travelers. Each nation enacts separate rules to safeguard tourists and ensure seamless operations.

However, as tourism entails international travel, a global organization is required to help guide these regulations; this is where the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) comes in.

- The UNWTO develops global standards and assists nations in enacting just and secure tourism regulations.

    The tourism laws are to:

a) Protect travelers and corporations;

b) Ensure that services such as hotels, travel agencies, and tour operators adhere to regulations.

c) Make sure that tourism services are safe and of high quality.

However, regulations pertaining to tourism vary from one place to another. The UNWTO advises nations to take a few actions to improve and organize their tourism regulations. Among these are:

a) Ensuring that tourism regulations align with a nation's development and tourism objectives.

b) Examining outdated or missing provisions in previous statutes.

c) Speaking with tourism-related individuals and companies to learn about their perspectives.

d) Establishing precise guidelines for accountability, quality, and safety.

e) Determining which government agencies oversee tourism.

f) Organizing conferences and meetings to exchange ideas and solicit input.

g) Creating a strategy for the appropriate and equitable application of these laws.

Summary

Government agencies, local communities, non-governmental organizations, and private entities work together to promote ecotourism in India, which aims to preserve the environment, honor local customs, and sustain local livelihoods. Ecotourism, which is governed by national and state-level policies, places a strong emphasis on funding conservation, creating capacity, responsible travel, and controlled development, especially avoiding building on forest areas. Through a series of strategies and initiatives, such as the 1982 National tourist Policy and Incredible India (2002), India's tourist policies have developed, combining tourism with job creation, economic expansion, and cultural development. By certifying eco-friendly items, the Eco-mark labeling program promotes sustainable consumer choices. Legal frameworks, such as the Tourist Code and the Tourism Bill of Rights, which are backed internationally by the UNWTO, safeguard both visitors and host communities by encouraging equity, security, accessibility, and environmental conservation.

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Questions for Practice

1. What is India's national and state-level strategies for ecotourism's main goals?

2. In what ways do the various central ministries support and oversee sustainable tourism in India?

3. What is the Eco-mark labeling program's objective, and whose body is in charge of carrying it out?

4. What obligations and rights are highlighted in the Tourist Code and the Tourism Bill of Rights?

5. How has India's tourist policy changed as a result of national campaigns like Incredible India and its Five-Year Plans?

UNIT 5: ECO-TOURISM IN INDIA

Unit Structure

5.0 Learning Objectives

After completion of this unit, you will be able to:

- understand the concept of ecotourism in India;

- understand the concept of Indian biodiversity, parks and sanctuary;

- understand the principles and importance of eco-tourism;

- understand about eco and nature tourism;

- understand the significance and importance of eco and nature tourism in India.

5.1 Introduction

This unit focuses on the importance and principles of ecotourism, geography and nature tourism in India. According to the **International Ecotourism Society** (TIES), **Ecotourism** refers to a responsible travel to natural areas that supports environmental conservation and enhances the livelihoods of local communities. **Sustainable travel** refers to tourism that satisfies the demands of today's travelers and local communities, while also safeguarding and enhancing the resources and opportunities needed for future generations. When tourists are introduced to places rarely visited by outsiders, it inevitably

puts pressure on the environment due to new activities, people, and infrastructure. This form of tourism creates new interactions between humans and nature, as well as among people with different ways of life, leading to both change and continuity. These impacts can be felt at multiple levels, from global to local. In response to the harmful effects of traditional tourism, more eco-friendly and socially responsible forms of travel have emerged. These are commonly known as ecotourism and sustainable tourism, but are also referred to by terms such as responsible tourism, nature-based tourism, green tourism, and alternative tourism.

Ecotourism attracts a diverse group of travelers of various ages and interests. Those who opt for this type of tourism are typically mindful consumers who care about social, economic, and environmental sustainability. They often look for genuine local experiences and ways to contribute positively to the communities they visit, including through volunteer work. More and more, eco-tourists are also aiming to reduce their environmental impact by making thoughtful travel choices and considering the climate in their planning.

5.2 Eco-tourism in India

In India, ecotourism emphasizes ethical travel to natural locations that preserves the ecosystem and supports the local population. India's diverse landscapes, which include the Himalayas, tropical rainforests, and coastal areas, present a wealth of chances for nature-based travel. India's ecotourism industry is expanding and combines sustainable tourism methods with the nation's rich biodiversity and cultural legacy. Ecotourism stimulates community involvement, supports local livelihoods, and advances conservation and biodiversity protection. Through eco-lodges, nature hikes, and guided tours, it promotes low-impact travel and is associated with cultural preservation, particularly rural and tribal tourism. Some of the famous eco-tourist spots are discussed below:

Thenmala: Kerala was the first state to plan Thenmala, the nation's first ecotourism attraction. The first planned ecotourism destination in India is Thenmala. The tiny town is located in the Western Ghat Mountains' foothills. Thiruvananthapuram, the capital of Kerala, India's southernmost state, is 72 kilometers distant**."**Then" and "Mala" are the two words that make up the name Thenmala. In the local dialect, "Then" indicates honey, and "Mala" denotes a hilltop, therefore the name means "honey hills." Because of the distinct

floristic makeup of the forests, the honey collected from the Thenmala forest zone is of very high quality and is enhanced with significant therapeutic value.

To protect and care for deer that have wandered out of woodlands, the deer rehabilitation center was established. An inaccessible aspect of Thenmala ecotourism is the deer park, which is built in the wilderness beside the Kallada River. A little children's park with several ecologically mixed resting spots is one of the main attractions here, in addition to the various kinds of deer and tree houses.

Majuli, Assam: The world's largest river island, Majuli, is situated in the Brahmaputra River and is 20 kilometers from Jorhat, Assam. The Subansiri river connects the Brahmaputra and its anabranch, the Kherkutia Xuti, to form the island. Numerous migrating birds call it home, while the Deoris, Sonowal Kacharis, and Mising tribes call it home. Majuli is a unique ecosystem that offers a rich foundation for agricultural techniques because of its fertile ground. Up to a hundred different types of rice are grown in Majuli, which has a rich and varied agricultural heritage. All of these rice varieties are farmed without the use of artificial fertilizers or pesticides. The Mising tribes, who came to Majuli from Arunachal Pradesh decades ago, make up the majority of its residents.

Mawlynnong: Mawlynnong is situated in Meghalaya's East Khasi Hills. The town has a distinct reputation as one of the cleanest in Asia, which is especially noteworthy in a place like India where trash tracks are a typical sight. This community is surrounded by a wealth of natural beauty, including waterfalls, natural caves, a living root bridge, and an evergreen forest that provides refuge to several animal and bird species. The Khasi tribesmen have a strong desire to preserve the surrounding woodlands and keep the community tidy. Positive projects are carried out with the money received from tourism. Visitors can enjoy innumerable small and hidden pleasures in Mawlynnong. This ecotourism location is accessible by rail and air from Guwahati, Assam, and offers rural guesthouses for visitors.

Jotsoma in Kohima: Despite being a rural village deep within Nagaland's indigenous region, Jotsoma is regarded as one of the top ecotourism sites in Northeast India because of its abundance of natural beauty. Imphal is the state capital that is closest to Jotsoma, and it is 99 kilometers away. Tribal communities make up the majority of the hamlet, which

is located in the center of an extremely diverse ecosystem. The area is a great place to go birdwatching.

Jaintia Hills: Meghalaya is home to the Jaintia Hills. The Jaintia tribes call it home, and it is blessed by nature with an abundance of sunshine, rain, and greenery as well as plateaus, mysterious valleys, rivers, streamlets, and tumbling waterfalls. On Jaintia Hill, some of the most attractive Meghalayan sights. Visitors find the hill district's splendor to be an outstanding visual feast. In Meghalaya, the charming town of Jaintia Hills is encircled by the magnificent Myntdu River.

Mokukchung: Mokukchung is regarded as Nagaland's most picturesque and vibrant region. The Ao tribe calls it home. The area is renowned for its festivals, rich customs, and friendliness. Longkhum is a well-known location in Mokukchung that is regarded as a nature lover's heaven. Rhododendron adorns its hillocks, which eco-tourists can encounter. The surroundings of Mokukchung are immaculate. In addition, Longkhum is well-known for its ethnic handicrafts and handlooms, as well as the Limapur sect, which is an animist religion. Another noteworthy location in the Mokukchung area is Ungma, which is thought to have been established first by the Ao tribe upon their arrival in Nagaland from Chungliyimti.

Wokha, Nagaland: Wokha is peppered with hills, rivers, and multicolored flowers and orchards. It is a popular location for eco-tourists traveling to this state in the northeast. The travel from Kohima takes roughly four hours. One of the main attractions in Wokha area is a tourist town situated above Riphyim. This location is renowned for providing breathtaking views of a dam on the Donyan River. Because each room's window offers an uncluttered view, the tourist lodge at Riphyim is also a terrific site to visit. The Lotha tribe resides in Wokha, where visitors can engage with the locals and observe their traditional crafts and artwork.

Kerala Backwaters: Kerala's backwaters provide eco-tourists an incredible experience. Tourists are mesmerized by the appearance of the location when cruising the backwaters. These backwaters, which are sculpted out of the rivers that flow down from the Western Ghats to the shore, have their own soft rhythm amid the paddy fields and verdant palm groves.

Andaman and Nicobar Islands: Travelers looking for beach spots frequently visit the Andaman and Nicobar Islands. This archipelago is a popular destination for environment enthusiasts because of its serene, picturesque beaches. Tourists from all over the world are captivated by the Bay of Bengal's deep seas' marine life, as well as by the area's clean, fresh air and well-kept roads. These islands, which are shrouded in thick jungle, provide tourists with a wide range of daring sports.

Coorg: Coorg is a hill station with unparalleled natural beauty. Travelers are excited to experience and explore this ecotourism destination. A fantastic eco-vacation package includes its natural resources, waterfalls, Iruppu and Abbey, and the Nagarhole National Park. With a wealth of plant and animal species, this is a location of total delight, pleasure, and harmony. This hill station, which is between 900 and 1,800 meters above sea level, is well-known for its coffee and spice farms. Situated on the Western Ghats, Coorg boasts an abundance of natural components and has become a popular ecotourism destination in India.The Brahmagiri, Talakaveri, and Pushpagiri Wildlife Sanctuaries, as well as the Nagarhole National Park, are the three wildlife sanctuaries and one national park that make up Coorg.

Munnar, Kerala: A thick blanket of forests, grasslands, and tea orchards covers Munnar, which is also peppered with a variety of exotic plant species, such as the uncommon Neelakurinji flower. It is a small, charming hill town in the Western Ghats' Idukki region, situated at an elevation of 1,700 meters. The Nilgiri wood pigeon, Malabar whistling Thrush, Orange-Crowned Warblers, Nilgiri pipit, Scarlet minivet, and broad tailed grassbird are among the avifauna, while the Nilgiri Tahr, Grizzled Giant Squirrel, Nilgiri wood-pigeon, Elephant, and Gaur are among the mammals found in Munnar's numerous protected areas. Munnar is one of the most well-liked eco-green tourism locations in the world because of the cascading streams that cut through the woodlands and the winding lanes that cut through the mountains.

5.3 Geography, parks and sanctuaries of India

India's diverse landscape offers numerous travel destinations that not only help visitors to relax but also refresh their minds and bodies. There are many opportunities to experience nature in its most untouched form. Places like the Himalayan region, Kerala, Northeast

India, the Andaman & Nicobar Islands, and the Lakshadweep Islands are ideal for appreciating nature's beauty. Thenmala in Kerala stands out as the country's first planned ecotourism site, specifically designed for nature lovers and eco-conscious travelers.

The Indian terrain is rich in wildlife and vegetation, home to many rare and endangered species. Although excessive hunting by former rulers once threatened wildlife populations, the establishment of national parks and wildlife reserves has helped reverse the damage. Today, India has about 80 national parks and 441 wildlife sanctuaries dedicated to the protection and conservation of its wildlife heritage. India is home to many botanical and zoological gardens that contribute to improving the ecosystem. Poaching has significantly decreased due to strict laws and harsh penalties for those involved in illegal hunting, wildlife trade, or tree felling. Tree plantation drives are being carried out in various regions. In addition, several organizations advocate for the rights and protection of animals and plants. Many private groups and NGOs are also actively engaged in spreading environmental awareness and education among people at the grassroots level.

5.3.1 Geography of India

India's diverse geographical landscape is home to numerous tourist destinations, offering abundant opportunities for ecotourism across nearly every region. In the north, the monasteries and Himalayan glaciers of Ladakh draw many visitors. In the south, travelers are captivated by the lush coffee plantations and the globally renowned, tranquil backwaters of Kerala. The northeast offers adventure through mountaineering in the Kanchenjunga range, while the west invites exploration via camel safaris in the Thar Desert. With its vast and varied terrain, India presents a wide array of ecotourism experiences in unique and natural settings throughout the country. Eco-tourism is divided into 3 different segments: Wildlife, Botany and Geography.

Wildlife: India's rich and diverse plant and animal life has played a key role in the growth of wildlife tourism across the country. There are around 400 wildlife sanctuaries and nearly 99 national parks located throughout the nation. These protected areas are home to an estimated 350 species of mammals, around 2,100 species of birds, 350 types of reptiles, and countless insect species.

Botany: A botanical garden is a place where various types of plants, particularly ferns and flowering species, are cultivated and showcased primarily for research and educational purposes. These gardens often involve the study and observation of different forest ecosystems as well. Many visitors travel to India specifically to engage in such botanical research and exploration.

Geography: Snow-capped mountain ranges, including the Himalayas and the Aravallis, form the prominent features of northern India. The Thar Desert, the seventh largest in the world, spans the western part of the country. Central India is marked by three major plateaus: the Malwa Plateau in the west, the Deccan Plateau in the south, and the Chota Nagpur Plateau in the east. Along the east coast, the Eastern Coastal Plain stretches between the Eastern Ghats and the Bay of Bengal, from Tamil Nadu in the south to West Bengal in the north. India's wetlands vary significantly from the cold, dry conditions of the Ladakh region in Jammu and Kashmir to the humid climates of peninsular India. Most wetlands are closely connected to the country's river systems. The major rivers of India have their sources in one of three key watershed regions:

(a) The Himalayan and Karakoramranges

(b) the Vindhya and Satpura ranges in central India

(c) the Western Ghats in the west.

5.3.2 Parks and Sanctuaries

There are many national parks and sanctuaries that act as a well-known ecotourism site. Some of the famous parks and sanctuaries are discussed below:

Sundarbans: One popular destination for ecotourism is the Sundarbans. Bengal tigers call this region of West Bengal home. The delta's most notable features are its tidal rivers, water channels, mangrove trees, wildlife refuge, bird sanctuary, and crocodile projects, which make it an ideal location for ecotourism. Numerous animal species that are closer to extinction can also be found there. The Sundarbans are roughly 1,330 square kilometers in size. It is home to 54 little deltaic islands as well as a wide range of amphibians, birds, reptiles, and invertebrates. Saltwater crocodiles, River Terrapins, Olive Ridley turtles, Hawks Bill turtles, mangrove horseshoe crabs, ground turtles, Humpback whales,

Irrawaddy dolphins, and Ganges River dolphins are among the wild animals that can be found close to the coast**.**

Khangchendzonga, Sikkim: This reserve is a high-altitude national park in Sikkim that spans 1,784 square kilometers. The medicinal plants, animals, and birds at various elevations are among the most well-known flora and fauna. Snow leopards, Himalayan Tahrs, wild dogs, Himalayan black bears, red pandas, Himalayan blue sheep, serow, goral, and birds like Green Pigeon, Tibetan Snowcock, Blood Pheasant, Satyr Tragopan, Osprey, Himalayan Griffon, Lammergeier, Snow Pigeon, Impeyan Pheasant, Asian Emerald Cuckoo, Sunbird, and eagle can all be found in this park. The biosphere reserve has a diverse environment that contains numerous glaciers, waterfalls, lakes, and streams, making it the perfect site for anyone who enjoy the outdoors and wildlife.

Namdhapa National Park, Arunachal Pradesh: A well-liked national park, Namdhapa is a great place for ecotourism. It is well renowned for being home to four different species of wild cats: tigers, snow leopards, clouded leopards, and common Indian leopards. Numerous plant species and diverse landscapes at varying elevations, ranging from 500 meters to 4,500 meters, are scattered throughout the large ecosystem that consists of a wide montane forest. When visiting Namdhapa, eco-tourists can stay in forest tent dwellings.

Nanda Devi Biosphere Reserve, Uttarakhand: The northern state of Uttarakhand is home to Nanda Devi, a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Two of its component locations, Valley of Flowers National Park and Nanda Devi National Park, are well-liked by eco-conscious travelers, hikers, and mountaineers, making this area a feast for the senses. The Valley of Flowers is covered in a thick layer of snow and stays frozen for the majority of the year. However, it becomes a sanctuary for botanists and environment enthusiasts during the summer months when it blooms in a variety of colors. Numerous wildlife enthusiasts, naturalists, and leisure travelers are drawn to the huge forest, which is home to over 600 types of floral plants, medicinal plants, and other alpine trees. These trees also provide refuge to some of the rare Himalayan animals and birds.

Jim Corbett National Park: Jim Corbett National Park, which lies in Uttarakhand, is frequently called the "little Kenya of India." It was one of the first wildlife reserves to be

established in the nation. It is a well-liked destination for those seeking excitement and adventure. Tigers and a variety of other wild animals, including as elephants, barking deer, sambhar, and other bird species, can be found in the national park. With 110 tree species, 506 mammal species, and 580 bird species, Jim Corbett National Park, which is situated in the foothills of the Himalayas, is a thriving habitat for both flora and wildlife and is the ideal ecotourism destination for all animal lovers worldwide.

Great Himalayan National Park, Himachal Pradesh: The Great Himalayan National Park spans 1,170 square kilometers and has elevations ranging from 1,500 to 6,000 meters. Numerous plant species and over 300 animal species call it home. The park features alpine meadows, numerous streams, lakes, glaciers, and snow-capped summits, all of which contribute to its vast, extraordinary natural beauty and preservation of biological variety. Recently, it was designated a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

Tsomoriri Wetland Conservation Reserve, Ladakh: The Changthang plateau region surrounds the Tsomoriri Wetland, which is situated at an elevation of 4,595 meters and features Lake Moriri, one of India's high-altitude lakes. Black-necked Cranes, Bar-headed Geese, Brown-headed Gulls, Great Crested Grebe, Ferruginous Pochard, and Grebe Podiceps nigricollis are among the endemic alpine animal and bird species found in the region. Mammals include the Tibetan Wolf and Snow Leopard. When visiting Tsomoriri Wetland, visitors can stay in campgrounds.

Chennai Crocodile Bank: Covering 3.2 hectares, it is home to seven different kinds of crocodiles and is the biggest crocodile breeding facility in India. The sanctuary, which is 42 kilometers from Chennai's shore, is home to several African and Indian crocodiles and alligators. Over 6000 crocodiles have been produced by this bank. A sizable stock of both poisonous and non venomous snakes is also present. These ferocious carnivores require the wilderness to thrive, and this is the ideal location for them to live.

Gir National Park: Gujarat's Gir National Park is home to the endangered Asiatic lion. The park covers 3386 square kilometers. This protected region features a striking blend of banyan, teak acacia, and deciduous woodland. In addition, the Maldhari tribe is found in harmony with the area's natural ecosystem.

Shenduruney Wildlife Sanctuary: The Shenduruney Wildlife Sanctuary is Kerala's most important ecotourism destination. This wildlife sanctuary covers an area of about 100 square kilometers and is home to a diverse variety of vegetation. A wildlife sanctuary has been established in the Shenduruny forest in 1984. Its name comes from the endemic Chenkuruny (Glutatravancoria) tree species.

Check your progress

1. What is the full form of TIES?

a. International Ecotourism Society

b. International Ecotourism System

c. Traditional International Ecotourism Society

d. None of the above

2. Explain Ecotourism and Sustainable travel.

3. Discuss the key features of ecotourism in India.

4. Write a short note on:

a. Geographical features of India

b. Important National Parks

c. Important Sanctuaries

5. Ecotourism is divided into how many segments?

   a. 4

   b. 3

   c. 5

   d. 1

6. Discuss briefly about the nation's first ecotourism spot.

Answers:

1. A

2. See section 5.1

3. See section 5.2

4. **(a)** See section 5.3.1

4 **(b)** See section 5.3.2

4 **(c)** See section 5.3.2

5. B

6. See section 5.2

5.4 Nature tourism

Nature tourism means tourism focused on visiting relatively untouched or unspoiled natural environments with the purpose of observing, appreciating, and enjoying the landscape, wildlife, and any cultural features present. Nature-based tourism (NBT), the most rapidly expanding segment of the tourism industry, involves travel to national parks and remote natural areas, particularly in developing nations that harbor much of the world's biodiversity. While these activities center on appreciating the natural environment, they also place considerable pressure on the ecosystems they depend on, threatening vital ecological services like clean water, soil health, and pollination. Additionally, nature-based tourism introduces various risks to broader socio-economic systems, both locally and internationally. Before the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, the World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC) had projected that the global tourism industry would grow at an annual rate of 3.9% over the following decade. When properly managed, nature-based tourism can support both the protection of biodiversity and the reduction of poverty. It offers a way for local communities to gain financial benefits from protected areas, wildlife, and natural habitats, encouraging them to safeguard these resources. In such cases, tourism and conservation can complement each other or even form a mutually beneficial relationship. The key challenge lies in ensuring that nature-based tourism truly works in harmony with conservation efforts. There are 3 aspects of nature-based tourism *i.e.*, experience, style and location.

5.5 Scope of nature-based tourism

Nature-based tourism (NBT) encompasses all types of tourism that rely on natural resources in their untouched or undeveloped state. It is driven by the desire to experience

wildlife or pristine natural environments and may involve natural features such as landscapes, landforms, rivers, plants, animals, and cultural heritage. Activities under NBT can include things like hunting or white-water rafting. Various terms are often used to refer to NBT, including ecotourism, wildlife tourism, and geotourism. Effective nature-based tourism (NBT) depends on the capacity to create and promote tourism experiences that showcase the unique features of a protected area (PA), while also preserving the quality of these resources for long-term use. The tourism value of a PA is influenced by several factors, such as its location, ease of access, market interest, closeness to other well-known tourist spots, promotional efforts, the presence of local tourism enterprises, and supporting infrastructure like lodging, food services, and tour guiding.

5.6 Principles of Ecotourism

Ecotourism aims to bring together environmental conservation, local communities, and responsible travel. As such, anyone involved in organizing or taking part in ecotourism should adhere to the core principles established by TIES (The International Ecotourism Society). The main principles of ecotourism are to:

Reduce negative effects on the environment and promote understanding of local ecosystems and cultures. Create meaningful and

Fig. 1. Principles of Ecotourism
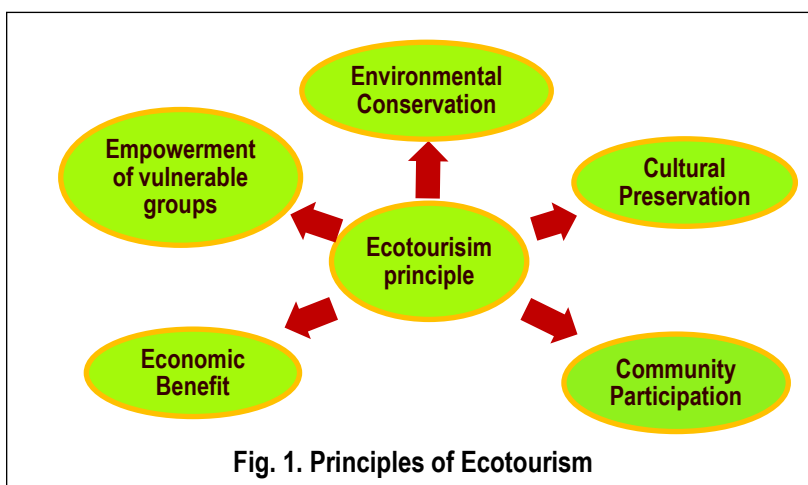
enjoyable experiences for both travelers and local residents to support conservation efforts through direct financial contributions. Ecotourism offers economic benefits and strengthen the role of local communities and enhance awareness of the host country's political, environmental, and social conditions. Ecotourism practices such tourism activities that have minimal impact and help preserve natural ecosystems. It emphasizes the value and diversity of local biodiversity and promote awareness and appreciation of both

environmental and cultural heritage. Encourage local community involvement and create job opportunities for residents and ensure that ecotourism ventures are sustainable over time.

5.7 Significance of Ecotourism

Ecotourism plays a vital role in supporting the economy while aiding the protection and enhancement of both biological and cultural diversity. It also contributes to safeguarding the Earth's natural and cultural heritage. Ecotourism increases biodiversity of an area and also promotes sustainable use of natural resources. Ecotourism is very significant, as it helps to uplift the financial condition of the local residents and investors. Ecotourism supports different ecosystem services.

Check your progress

1. What do you understand by the term nature tourism.

2. How many aspects are there in nature-based tourism?

    a. 3

    b. 4

    c. 5

    d. 2

3. What is the full form of NBT.

    a. Natural base Term

    b. Nature based tourism

    c. Nature basic tourism

    d. Natural biotic tourism

4. Discuss the scope of nature-based tourism.

5. What is the full form of WTTC?

    a. World Travel and Tourism Council

    b. World Tourism and Travel Council

    c. World Tourism and Traveling Center

d. None of the above

6. What are the principles and significance of eco-tourism.

Answers:

1. See section 5.4

2. A

3. B

4. See section 5.5

5. A

6. See section 5.6 and 5.7

Summary

This unit describes the importance and principles of ecotourism, geography and nature tourism. Ecotourism refers to a responsible travel to natural areas that supports environmental conservation and enhances the livelihoods of local communities. In India, ecotourism emphasizes ethical travel to natural locations that preserves the ecosystem and supports the local population. India's diverse landscapes, which include the Himalayas, tropical rainforests, and coastal areas, present a wealth of chances for nature-based travel. India's diverse landscape offers numerous travel destinations that not only help visitors to relax but also refresh their minds and bodies. There are many opportunities to experience nature in its most untouched form. Places like the Himalayan region, Kerala, Northeast India, the Andaman & Nicobar Islands, and the Lakshadweep Islands are ideal for appreciating nature's beauty. There are many national parks and sanctuaries that act as a well-known ecotourism site. Nature-based tourism (NBT) encompasses all types of tourism that rely on natural resources in their untouched or undeveloped state. Ecotourism aims to bring together environmental conservation, local communities, and responsible travel. Ecotourism plays a vital role in supporting the economy while aiding the protection and enhancement of both biological and cultural diversity.

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UNIT 6: COMMUNITY BASED ECOTOURISM

Unit Structure

6.0 Learning Objectives
6.1 Introduction
6.2 Ecotourism planning
   6.2.1 Carrying capacity
   6.2.2 Infrastructural Development
6.3 Significance of ecotourism planning
6.4 Sustainable tourism
6.5 Community based ecotourism
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Summary
References

6.0 Learning Objectives

After completion of this unit, you will be able to:

- understand the importance of ecotourism planning;

- understand about community-based ecotourism;

- understand the benefits of sustainable tourism;

- understand people's initiatives on ecotourism;

- understand about community education and awareness.

6.1 Introduction

This unit begins with outlining the function of tourism in the broader development of the country and emphasizes the significance of planned tourism in this regard.Community-based tourism (CBT) is one of the most popular strategic options adopted by various destinations in comparison to mass tourism, as sustainable tourism development gains popularity among world leaders. The goal of policymakers who promoted mass tourism was to boost visitor numbers at a particular location while also building infrastructure that enhanced visitor satisfaction. However, the mass tourism model has had detrimental effects on destinations over time, resulting in negative environmental

effects, overuse of carrying capacity, contaminated air and water, and other related problems.

Community-based tourism, which has emerged in the last 20 years, has a lot of potential to build a more sustainable travel sector. One of the main goals of the community-based tourism approach is to reduce poverty and promote sustainable rural development by providing social and economic advantages to the local communities. Tourism has a huge potential to create jobs and economic benefits for the local population because it is consumed in the same location as it is produced.The empowerment of local communities and their subsequent inclusion in the planning and decision-making process of tourism development are central to the community-based tourism approach. The local communities are sufficiently inspired to engage in different facets of the tourism industry as well as other areas associated with destination development.

6.2 Ecotourism planning

The strategic process of creating and overseeing tourism-related activities that are culturally aware, environmentally conscious, and economically advantageous to local communities is known as ecotourism planning. It emphasizes community involvement, traveler responsibility, education, and conservation. Assessment of the region, stakeholder involvement, the creation of sustainable infrastructure, the creation of educational opportunities, monitoring and evaluation, and marketing and promotion are the main elements of ecotourism planning.

The National Five-Year Plans' primary areas of focus for tourism development that have an impact on physical planning for tourism in both macro and micro contexts are listed under:

1) Development of a few tourist circuits and centers that are well-liked by visitors rather than distributing scarce resources across a lot of circuits and centers.

2) Diversification of India's tourism industry towards the rapidly expanding tourism market within the country's environment, paying careful attention to the aesthetic, environmental, and socio-cultural implications of tourism projects, as opposed to the traditional sight-seeing tour centered· (mainly places of cultural tourism interest).

3) The growth of non-traditional tourism sectors, like a) trekking, b) winter sports, c) wildlife tourism, and d) beach resort tourism, to capitalize on the Himalayas' tourism resource-the extensive coastline with sandy beaches, plenty of sunshine, and wildlife-in order to draw more visitors and extend their stay.

4) The restoration and balanced development of national heritage projects of historical, cultural, and tourism significance in order to capitalize on India's distinct position as a destination for cultural tourism and to use tourism as a powerful tool to support "national heritage conservation."

In order to achieve the best possible outcomes for social, economic, and ecological goals on the one hand, and to satisfy the needs of tourists for leisure, recreation, and infrastructure on the other, tourism complexes should be planned and developed in their macro, meso, and micro dimensions. In terms of tourist nodes, areas, and networks, there is a spatial interaction between tourism resources and facilities. In order to maximize the benefits of investments in a regional or area-level context, organized development of tourism complexes should be oriented toward a system of functionalities generated in space that are both interdependent and interconnected. With environmental preservation in mind, tourism development plans must address the diverse demand for infrastructure supporting a broad range of tourism activities anticipated for various destination area typologies.

A vast range of destination points are included in tourism activity areas: 1) Vast tracts of scenic natural areas for leisurely enjoyment. 2) Recreational and leisure destinations, such as beach resorts; 3) Climate-friendly destinations, such as hill resorts; 4) Cultural tourism destinations, such as historical sites, monument complexes, fairgrounds, and festivals; 5) Religious tourism destinations, such as pilgrimage centers and temple towns; 6) Adventure tourism destinations, such as mountaineering, trekking, rock climbing, skiing, etc. 7) areas of special interest, such as bird sanctuaries, areas with exotic plants and animals, and wild life sanctuaries.

6.2.1 Carrying capacity

The maximum number of tourists that an ecotourism destination can handle without unacceptably harming the environment, nearby communities, or the visitor experience is

known as carrying capacity. There are different types of carrying capacity like Environmental carrying capacity, Physical carrying capacity, Social carrying capacity, Economic carrying capacity and Psychological carrying capacity.

Tourism is a resource-based industry, and in order to promote tourism in relation to other demands, it is critical to identify areas for resource conservation. Identifying and designating the resource under multiple competing uses is also essential, as is determining the capacity that the supply will match both location-wise and activity-wise. The idea of carrying capacity is important for the scientific planning of infrastructure and facilities for the tourism industry, especially when it comes to sensitive tourist destinations like hilly areas. It is the limit of tourist activity beyond which the environment deteriorates (environmental or ecological capacity), facilities are fully utilized (physical capacity), or visitor enjoyment is reduced (perceptual or psychological capacity).

These ideas are currently widely acknowledged, the use of carrying capacity as a planning tool has been limited by challenges in measuring the thresholds (perhaps with the exception of physical capacity). Finding the ideal capacity guidelines is made possible by combining the elements that determine the social (perceptual) and ecological capacities of recreational areas. More reliance must be placed on ecological capacity guidelines in nature reserve areas and ecologically sensitive areas, such as the hilly environment. These guidelines must be developed with consideration for the environment, of which the habitat is an essential component.

6.2.2 Infrastructural Development

Infrastructural development refers to the development and improvement of organizational and physical frameworks that promote environmentally conscious and socially responsible tourism that emphasizes the preservation of natural areas and the welfare of local populations.The construction of infrastructure related to tourism becomes essential if it is to successfully operate as a crucial part of any region's development package. Additionally, infrastructure should be designed with the host population's and the area's overall needs in mind. Adding a sufficient amount of appeal to a resort is essential to its growth as a tourist destination.

In general, the three primary components that collectively contribute to this quality of the tourist center are Recreation, Accommodation Facilities and Services, and Accessibility. **Accessibility** includes being able to get to the particular tourist destination within the town from the closest transportation hub, such as an airport, train station, or road terminal, or from the town's entrance, if applicable. In order to make it easier for visitors to move around the town and its environs, it also entails connecting roads from one location to another and providing sufficient parking, maintenance, and garage facilities.

Accommodation: One crucial element is the provision of suitable lodging in tourist hubs and destination locations that meets both the quantitative and qualitative needs of visitors. Sometimes lodging can serve as a motivator for visitors to stay longer. In the current Indian context, the absence of this fundamental facility has even served as a stronger disincentive to tourists than "lack of accessibility."The amount and kind of lodging that should be offered at each center will again depend on the needs of each individual, but generally speaking, tourist accommodations should be cozy, fully equipped with all the amenities and services needed for residential development in the area, and of a variety of options from both an economic and physical standpoint.

6.3 Significance of ecotourism planning

The national and state governments are placing increasing emphasis on the importance of proper planning in the rapidly growing tourism industry. This is being done to make sure that there is a balance between promoting tourism, which has been shown to increase GNP (Gross National Product), especially in developing nations, and protecting the destination areas' physical, social, and cultural environments. In order to achieve a balance between tourism-related activities and the surrounding environment, planning is crucial when developing tourism-related activities. This is especially true in developing nations. The impact is greatest here since they have to create an infrastructure that both supports overall socioeconomic development and protects the distinctive cultural features that currently exist. To encourage tourism, they should simultaneously protect and improve their physical surroundings. There will inevitably be a number of sociocultural, socioeconomic, physical, and environmental effects on the habitat from tourism promotion and infrastructure development for tourism-related activities. Before development

decisions are made, these effects must be systematically evaluated and analyzed using scientific methods. These stand out more in hill, wildlife, and beach resort environments, as well as other traditional culturally sensitive locations. Therefore, the fundamental goal of any tourism development program should be clear.

Check your progress

1. What is the full form of CBT?

a. Community based tourism

b. Common baseline tourist

c. Community based travel

d. None of the above

2. Explain Ecotourism planning.

3. Discuss the key components of ecotourism planning.

4. Write a short note on:

a. Carrying capacity

b. Accessibility

c. Accommodation

5. What is the full of GNP?

    a. Gross National Product

    b. General Nation Producer

    c. Gross National Producer

    d. None of the above

6. How the planning of ecotourism is important?

Answers:

1. A

2. See section 6.2

3. See section 6.2

4. (a) See section 6.2.1

4 (b) See section 6.2.2

4 (c) See section 6.2.2

5. A

6. See section 6.3

6.4 Sustainable tourism

Sustainable tourism refers to reaching a specific mix of visitor numbers and types whose activities at a particular location, along with the actions of the businesses that provide services, can continue for the foreseeable future without compromising the quality of the environment that the activities are based on.According to Richard Buller's (1994) tourism in a form that can maintain its viability in an area for an indefiniteperiod of time, whereas sustainable development in the context of tourism is tourism that isdeveloped and maintained in an area in such a manner and at such a scale, that it remainsviable over an indefinite period and does not degrade or alter the environment in which it existsto such a degree that it prohibits the successful development and well-being of other activitiesand processes.

The benefits of sustainable tourism include: preservation of cultural and natural resources, decreased environmental deterioration and carbon footprint, enhanced standard of living in the host communities, increased awareness and satisfaction of visitors.

6.5 Community based ecotourism

Goodwin and Santilli define community-based tourism (CBT) as a type of tourism "where the local community has substantial control over, and involvement in, its development and management, and a major proportion of the benefits remain within the community, even those who are not directly involved in tourism enterprises gain some form of benefit as well."In the context of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), Community-Based Tourism (CBT) is defined as a tourism initiative that is community-owned, operated, and managed or coordinated at the community level. This activity aims to promote

community well-being by supporting sustainable livelihoods, preserving valued socio-cultural traditions, and safeguarding natural and cultural heritage resources.

Community-based tourism is "a form of 'local' tourism, favoring local service providers and suppliers and focused on interpreting and communicating the local culture and environment," according to the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation Tourism Working Group. Communities, local government organizations, and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) have all supported and pursued it.

6.6 Principles of Community based ecotourism

Community-based tourism should involve locals from the beginning of any project and in all aspects of tourism development; encourage locals to get involved and build community pride; protect and preserve local tourism resources and maintain the community's uniqueness; ensure environmental sustainability; improve the quality of life for local residents; provide enough jobs and economic earning opportunities; provide equitable benefits to all sections of the community; respect cultural differences and promote cross-cultural learning; maintain tourism assets and make financial provisions for infrastructure.

6.7 Benefits of Community based ecotourism

The local communities benefit from the Community Based Tourism approach in a number of ways. The following headings can be used to group these benefits:

Economic Benefits: One of the main advantages of CBT is that it creates job opportunities, which raise household income. Additionally, it could provide the locals with an independent source of income.

Social Benefits: CBT improves locals' quality of life and fosters a sense of community. Additionally, there is proof that CBT increases community management organizations' capacity. As people from different social groups come together to support the local tourism industry, it has also been discovered that CBT fosters social inclusion.

Cultural Benefits: CBT promotes cross-cultural interaction, particularly between the host and visitors. Both the host and visitor communities get along well with one another and gradually develop respect for one another.

Environmental Benefits: When the local community participates in the process of developing tourism, they develop a greater awareness of environmental issues. They take the initiative to protect and preserve the neighborhood and make extra efforts to control waste disposal, which promotes environmental responsibility.

Educational Benefits: CBT generates new jobs in the community and inspires residents to learn new skills, such as cooking or learning a new language, in order to serve the visitors. They pick up new abilities and information, and ideas are shared among communities.**Political Benefits:** Since community empowerment is at the heart of cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT), a community-based approach boosts community power. They put extra effort into developing new prospects for the growth of tourism in the area because they feel more empowered.

Health Benefits: CBT encourages proper hygiene and motivates residents to learn more about the preferences and tastes of visitors. This pushes locals to try new foods, which may affect their nutritional status.

Infrastructure Development: As communities play a bigger part in the growth of tourism, locals are more inclined to build infrastructure that will help the area's tourism industry.

Check your progress

1. What do you understand by the term sustainable tourism.

2. Richard Buller defined sustainable tourism in which year?

    a. 1995

    b. 1994

    c. 1996

    d. 2000

3. What is the full form of CBT.

    a. Community base Term

    b. Community based tourism

    c. Communal basic tourism

    d. Common biotic tourism

4. Explain community-basedecotourism.

5. What is the full form of ASEAN?

    a. Association of Southeast Asian Nations

    b. Association of Southeast Asian National

    c. Assistant of Southeast Asian Nations

    d. None of the above

6. What are the principles of community-based ecotourism?

7. What is the full form of NGO?

    a. Non-governmental Organization

    b. None government Organization

    c. No Government Official

    d. None of the above

8. Explain different benefits of community-based ecotourism?

Answers:

1. See section6.4

2. B

3. B

4. See section6.5

5. A

6. See section6.6

7. A

8. See section 6.7

Summary

This unit describes the importance and benefits of ecotourism planning and define Community-based tourism (CBT) as one of the most popular strategic options adopted by various destinations in comparison to mass tourism, as sustainable tourism development

gains popularity among world leaders.Community-based tourism, which has emerged in the last 20 years, has a lot of potential to build a more sustainable travel sector. One of the main goals of the community-based tourism approach is to reduce poverty and promote sustainable rural development by providing social and economic advantages to the local communities.The strategic process of creating and overseeing tourism-related activities that are culturally aware, environmentally conscious, and economically advantageous to local communities is known as ecotourism planning.The maximum number of tourists that an ecotourism destination can handle without unacceptably harming the environment, nearby communities, or the visitor experience is known as carrying capacity.The benefits of sustainable tourism include: preservation of cultural and natural resources, decreased environmental deterioration and carbon footprint, enhanced standard of living in the host communities, increased awareness and satisfaction of visitors.

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UNIT 7: TOURISM ENTREPRENEURSHIP

Unit Structure

7.0 Objectives
7.1 Introduction
7.2 Concept of Tourism
7.3 The components that make up tourism
7.4 Different Types of tourism
7.5 Entrepreneurship
7.6 Entrepreneurship in Tourism
7.7 Growing Indian Tourism Entrepreneurship
7.8 Importance of Tourism Entrepreneurship
Summary

7.0 Objectives

After reading this unit students should be able to:

- Understand the concept of Tourism & Tourism Entrepreneurship

- Need of Tourism Entrepreneurship

- Importance of Tourism Entrepreneurship

7.1 Introduction

Since globalization has profoundly changed the terrain of the tourism business, it is currently not just one of the sectors with the highest rate of growth but also the largest employer. The focus of this industry has changed from staying overnight and airline travel to the full range of activities related to destinations for tourists. The changing way of life and an upcoming generation of tourists have an impact on this new noticeable fact in addition to the rising income levels. Travelling throughout the world to experience different cultures, the outdoors, and education is becoming more and more popular.

Tourists who would like to meet locals and gain insight into the local cultures and communities are a completely new kind of visitor brought about by this drift. As more

domestic and foreign travelers travel, this new trend opens up new potential for the tourism industry. Despite rising demand, there is a mismatch between supply and demand since there aren't enough qualified tourism workers to meet demand. Thus, tourism entrepreneurship is necessary to make India a more appealing travel destination and to take advantage of the local opportunities that are accessible.The strange aspect of tourism is that, with very few exceptions, the two fields of entrepreneurship and tourism continue to be distinct themes that should be combined in order to create linkages. Therefore, initiatives that combine the two concepts and create tourism entrepreneurship are necessary.

7.2 Concept of Tourism

Tourism is an economic, social, and cultural trend that includes individuals travelling for personal, business, or professional reasons to nations or locations outside of their regular surroundings. Tourists and excursionists, as well as residents and non-residents, are referred to as visitors, and tourism is associated with their daily activities, particularly those which involve spending money on tourism. It can also be defined as the *"Activities of the individuals traveling to and accommodating in places outside their normal surroundings for not more than one successive year for vacation, trade and other reasons not linked to the activity related to the place visited."*

There are several subfields within tourism:

- Inbound international tourism: Incoming international tourism is the term used to describe travel to a country by people who are not citizens of that nation.

- Outbound international tourism: it is the term used to describe travel by citizens of one nation to other nations.

- Domestic tourism: Domestic tourism is the term used to describe travel by citizens of the same nation.

- Internal tourism: It is a mixture of domestic and inbound international travel, refers to both domestic and foreign visitors.

- National tourism: This refers to both domestic and international travel, which is when citizens of a nation travel both within and outside of their own nation.

7.3 The components that make up tourism

There are five components of tourism industry:

- **Accessibility:** It concerns to the potential of visitors to get to the location. This includes transport, which must be regularly planned, affordable, secure, and comfortable. The four main forms of transportation are air, sea, train, and road.

- **Accommodation:** It indicates that visitors will have lodging and food when they get at their location. Primary and secondary accommodations are the two categories into which it can be divided. Secondary lodging options include motels, youth hostels, vacation centers, and other establishments, whereas primary lodging options include hotels, resorts, heritage hotels, and so on.

- **Attraction:** This means that a destination should be so appealing that it attracts tourists. There are two kinds of attractions: man-made and natural. Man-made attractions include historical sites, theme parks, and museums, whereas natural attractions include things like beaches, mountains, and climate.

- **Amenities**: These are the essential services that should be offered and are taken for granted by all visitors. For instance, public restrooms, transportation, communications, and water used for drinking.

- **Activities:** These are the kind of fun that local tourists can enjoy. It might also be artificial or natural. Sea sunbathing and fishing are examples of natural activities, whereas water parks and entertainment parks are examples of man-made ones.

7.4 Different Types of tourism

The following are several types of tourism in India:

- Tourism based on heritage (Heritage Tourism): India's rich cultural heritage makes heritage tourism there likely. Millions of tourists visit India's heritage tourist sites every year, fascinated by the country's rich cultural diversity and remarkable past. Although many tourists are interested in India's temples and historical landmarks, heritage tourism has also grown in the country. India's heritage tourism industry has grown recently, but there is still room for growing its presence, which can be accomplished with cooperation from the Indian government and travel agencies.

- Ecotourism:Ecotourism is the practice of visiting locations renowned for their rich social culture and natural beauty while taking care about protecting the natural equilibrium. Ecotourism is concerned with conserving the area's natural beauty and cultural legacy while conserving its range of attractions. In order to promote ecotourism in India as well as other forms of travelling, the Indian government established the Ministry of Tourism and Culture.

- Adventure tourism: In India, adventure tourism is a relatively new phenomenon. This includes travelling to far-off places and exotic places. Trekking destinations in the Himalayas, Sikkim, and Ladakh are popular with tourists. They travel to Jammu and Kashmir and Himachal Pradesh for a variety of skiing activities. In places like Uttarakhand, water rafting is also attracts the tourists.

- Wildlife Tourism: India has a diverse range of animals, including some extremely rare species, and a rich forest cover. India has seen a rise in wildlife tourism as a result. Wildlife tourism is promoted by India's wildlife sanctuaries.

- Pilgrimage Tourism: India is home to many distinct religions and is perhaps the greatest place for people of all faiths to travel. Due to their spiritual significance, numerous locations in India are revered by people of many different faiths. People came from all across the world to witness the nation's religious peacefulness.

7.5 Entrepreneurship

In different scenarios, the term "entrepreneurship" has distinct meanings. Someone who creates innovation and anyone who aspires to work towards realizing their aspirations is an entrepreneur. This term has been defined in a variety of ways by scholars over time, depending on their opinion and applicability.

For defining entrepreneurship here are some prominent definitions; According to Peter Drucker (1964), an entrepreneur seek out change, adapt to it, and grabs chances. Since invention is one of an entrepreneur's precise tools, a successful entrepreneur turns an opportunity into a valuable asset. *"Entrepreneurs use individual initiative, and engage in calculated risk-taking, to create new business ventures by raising resources to apply innovative new ideas that solve problems, meet challenges, or satisfy the needs of a clearly defined market."*

7.6 Entrepreneurship in Tourism

The term "tourism entrepreneurs" describes commercial ventures centeredaround tourism that adhere to specific business standards. According to Sinclair and Stabler (1997), it is "a mixture of products comprising accommodation, natural resources, food service, transportation, entertainment, and other services and facilities, such as tour operators, shops, and banks." Tourism entrepreneurs are individuals or groups who produce and oversee tourism-related products. In addition to having experience in the service industry, entrepreneurs in the tourism industry should have every attribute of an entrepreneur.

According to Shaw and Williams (2002) two fundamental goals are involved in service sector proficiency: "The first concerns the industry's profitable structure, namely the dominance of a small number of activity components and possession groups, while the second is an awareness of the overall relationships across financial authority structures"

Thus, the process of developing a tourist-related idea and then applying professional skills and competencies to grow a new business or to expand an existing one in order to create jobs, wealth, and goodwill in the community is known as tourism entrepreneurship. To put it another way, tourism entrepreneurship describes the activities of the most significant group of service sector stakeholders, primarily designed to satisfy the needs and supplies of the tourism industry while simultaneously achieving competitive professionalism and profitable socioeconomic position.

Put simply, it comprises all of the activities involved in establishing and operating an authentic tourism firm. Types of tourism and tourism-related activities that violate generally accepted rules of the land are not considered to be part of an acceptable tourism enterprise. For example, drug trafficking, shooting wildlife, trading in flesh (prostitution), etc. are all illegal in India and do not fall under the purview of tourism-related enterprises. In addition to strengthening local resources and making the most of them, tourism entrepreneurship aids in overall economic development.

7.7Growing Indian Tourism Entrepreneurship

It is widely understood that a nation like India has a wealth of tourist options nowadays, in spite of our initial sluggishness in advertising the country as a destination for tourists.

Following liberty, the tourism industry was not given prominence, and it was placed too low at 269th on the First Planning Commission's list of major sectors.

Before independence, the tourism industry was neglected because it was thought to be a luxury that only a select few could afford, despite the fact that there were close to 15,000 tourists visiting India each year. Instead, priority was given to infrastructure and agriculture.

Over the previous few decades, not much has changed. Tourism received about 0.11% of the overall plan expenditures during the third five-year plan (1961–1966). It was Rs 272 crores in the Eighth Plan (1992–1997), which was still 0.11% of the whole plan expenditure. In a few countries, tourism has grown at a fairly reasonable rate since the notion of tourism first appeared. Today, tourism has grown as it has become the world's largest business with a wide range of options.

Currently, it accounts for 8% of global trade and around 20% of the global service industry. It has helped countries progress from underdeveloped to develop. For instance, in certain nations, such as Singapore and Malaysia, the tourism sector contributes over 70% of their total national income.

According to the World tourist Organization (WTO), the tourist sector will create 385 million jobs globally in the next ten years, and 25 million more jobs will be created domestically if India's employment rate matches the global average. But as seen by its negligible contribution to both global trade and national GDP, tourism in India has grown at a relatively slow rate thus far (Bezbaruah 2001). More than 70% of the national income of some nations, such as Malaysia and Singapore, comes from tourism, yet only 2.5% of India's national income comes from this industry.

Despite having 2.5% of the world's land and 15% of the world's population, India only accounts for 0.40 percent of global tourism. India ranked 47th out of the top 60 tourist destinations worldwide in 2006. The bad state of Indian tourism isn't because there isn't any potential for travel; rather, it's because so much of it isn't being used (Bhatia 1978).India has the potential to become the world's most popular tourist destination, according to the World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC), which also noted that demand is expected to expand by 10.1% year.http://www.yourarticlelibrary.com/essay/developing-tourism-entrepreneurship-in india/41108/

In India, tourism is the third largest source of foreign exchange earnings behind ready-made clothing and gem jewelry, despite the fact that it has not grown to that level.

In India, the travel and tourism industry supports 18 million jobs, or 5.9% of all jobs, and contributes 5.6% of GDP. The demand for travel and tourism in India is currently worth Rs 1200 billion, and by 2010, it will have grown to Rs 6,200 billion, growing at an annual rate of 8.3%, more than twice the global forecast of 4.1%.

Table 1. Some statistics and facts on Indian tourism:

(a)	Contribution of tourism to the national GDP in 2008	6.23%
(b)	Contribution of tourism to total employment in the country	8.78%
(c)	Revenue generation by tourism industry in 2008	US$ 100 billion
(d)	Tourism revenue is expected to surge from 2007 to 2017	42%
(e)	Rank of the Indian tourism in terms of pricecompetitiveness in the world	6th
(f)	Rank of Indian tourism in terms of safety and security in 2007	39th
(g)	Number of foreign tourists visited India in 2006	4 million
(h)	Increase in tourist arrivals for the past 02 years	13% annually
(i)	Foreign exchange earnings from tourism in 2007	Rs 23 billion
(j)	Growth of domestic tourism from 2002 to 2004	15 to 20%
(k)	Expected growth of tourism industry during the next decade	10%

source: http://www.yourarticlelibrary.com/essay/developing-tourism-entrepreneurship-in india/41108/)

The Indian tourism industry's significant contribution to the country's economy is further demonstrated by the following characteristics: source:

a) The number of foreign visitors to India increased by 12.7% in the year between 2006 and 2007. With a 14.3% growth in 2006, the Indian tourism industry reached around 3.89 million visitors in 2007.

b) The foreign exchange revenues greatly increased as a result of the foreign tourists' entrance, rising from US$ 5.03 billion from January to October 2006 to US$ 6.32 billion from January to October 2007—a 25.6% increase.

c) However, the Indian tourism industry's outbound and inbound charts are equal. The number of people travelling domestically or overseas from India has increased by 25%.

According to the United Nations World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO), by 2020, there would be about 50 million outbound visitors. Given the potential for tourist development in the nation, the Indian government has consistently prioritized it, and in 1949, a tourism cell was established inside the Department of Transportation. In the 1960s, the first steps were taken to establish a distinct Ministry of Tourism, headed by a Cabinet Minister.

Later, in 1982, the Government of India released an inclusive tourist strategy that emphasized the goals of the nation's tourism growth. In 1986, the tourism industry was granted industry status, which entitles it to several advantages and perks, such as tax breaks, subsidies, and preference when it comes to loan approval from state financial institutions. Additionally, in July 1991, it was designated as the sector of priority for foreign investment.

For two main reasons, the Indian government is giving the tourism industry the attention it deserves and has announced distinct tourist policies to increase travel to the nation, similar to those of other Third World countries. First, tourism doesn't require any industrial gestation time and requires less capital investments. Second, a wide range of people, from talented to unskilled, can find work thanks to it. Additionally, it provides a number of advantages:

Among other things, it helps us to:

i. Promote economic growth.

ii. We should enrich our life with diverse experiences.

iii. To acquire tolerance for various cultures.

iv. Contributes to global peace and international collaboration

Tourism is a significant industry with significant economic benefits both domestically and internationally. For their survival, some nations rely entirely on the tourism industry. Therefore, in order to utilize tourism's potential for the nation's economic development, there needs to be an increase in tourism-related entrepreneurship.

7.8 Importance of Tourism Entrepreneurship

- Job opportunities: Because it is a labor-intensive business, it serves to provide work opportunities to a vast population, ranging from skilled to unskilled.

- Foreign Exchange: It is the third-largest source of foreign exchange earnings for India and aids in the generation of foreign exchange for the nation.

- Capital Generation: It increases money because it has a lot of potential and helps draw a lot of tourists.

- Growth in Gross National Product: Consequently, as income rises, so does the GDP. It contributes to the gross national product, which raises GNP.

- Infrastructure development: It promotes infrastructure development by assisting in the construction of highways, railways, etc.

- Economic diversity: By establishing connections with regional resources and goods, tourism entrepreneurs contribute to economic diversification.

- Government Revenues: By making money, it contributes to an increase in government revenue.

- Standard of living: Due to the increased income, tourism entrepreneurship contributes to a greater standard of living, which in turn improves living standards.

- Conservation of Heritage and Tradition: In order to draw in a big number of visitors, tourism aids in the reinforcement of heritage and tradition preservation.

- Improvement of cultural heritage: Tourists' interest in the local way of life creates jobs for musicians, artists, and other performers, which contributes to the improvement of the cultural heritage.

- Improvement of local amenities: A tourism entrepreneur offers visitors the essential conveniences and leisure spaces that the local community may utilize.

- Positive perception: Tourism contributes to the dismantling of linguistic, sociocultural, class, racial, political, and religious barriers, thereby establishing a positive global perception of a location.

- International cooperation and peace: It fosters world peace and understanding, which in turn strengthens the global community.

Summary

India might attract a lot of tourists from all over the world because of its rich past. Even though tourism has grown significantly in recent years, India still has a lot of untapped potential. India offers a wealth of exploration opportunities. The country's economy is greatly impacted by tourism since it creates jobs, foreign exchange, and revenue, but this effect can only be produced if the tourism resources are well utilized. Therefore, the necessity for tourist entrepreneurs who can fully use local resources is critical for the proper use of tourism resources. Consequently, tourist entrepreneurship has the potential to revitalize the nation's tourism industry, generating additional foreign exchange and advancing the nation's economic growth.

Terminal Questions

1. Discuss the concept of tourism

2. Describe the types and components of tourism

3. What is Entrepreneurship? Discuss in detail about Tourism Entrepreneurship and its Importance.

4. Write a note on developing tourism entrepreneurship in India

Reference

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Rural Tourism and Rural Tourism Entrepreneurship.

Salient Features of Tourism Promotion in India Since 1991

UNIT 8: NATURE BASED TOURISM PRODUCTS

Unit Structure

8.0 Objectives
8.1 Introduction
8.2 Nature-Based Visitor/Tourist
8.3 An Overview of Nature-BasedTourism
8.4 Understanding the Tourism Based on Nature
8.5 Categorization of Nature Based Tourism / Tourists
8.6 Needs for Nature Based Tourism
8.7 Cultural Aspect
8.8 Development of Nature Based Product
8.9 Concerns about Sustainability
Summary

8.0 Objectives

After reading this unit students should be able to:

- Understand nature-based tourism products

- The categorization of nature-based tourism

- Nature-based tourism products Formulation

- India and nature-based travel

8.1 Introduction

In the previous unit you have learned about the Tourism Entrepreneurship and now you have the understanding of Tourism and Hospitality: Concept, Component, Status and Trends Concept of Tourism & Tourism Entrepreneurship, Need and importance of Tourism Entrepreneurship. The current unit deals with Nature Based Tourism; Formulation of Nature Based Tourism Products and Nature based Tourism and India.

One of the largest sectors of the global economy is tourism. Hiking and other outdoor pursuits all entail interacting with nature-based tourism offerings. Nature-based tourism includes fishing, biking, and photo safaris. It gives rural communities an additional

source of income. The latest trends in nature-based tourism include ecotourism and sustainability, which aim to preserve these locations and even help the local people.

8.2 Nature-Based Visitor/Tourist

Any domestic or foreign visitor who actively engages in the following activities, as listed below, can be considered a nature-based visitor: visited zoos, wildlife parks, and other places; Any adventure sport that involves a natural setting, such as safaris, whale/dolphin watching, Biosphere, National Park, Reserved Forest, Wilderness, Bushwalking, Rainforest Walk, or Botanical Gardens, could be considered.

8.3 An Overview of Nature-Based Tourism

The experience will feature some or all of these creatures, plants, and human cultural diversity, and it will center on the natural products of the region. The following principles must be incorporated into the plan: Respect for Local Societal and Cultural Norms; Resource Use with Sustainability; Zero Environmental Degradation; Adding to the Region's Sustainable Development; Geographic and Historical Education; and integrating it with Tourism and Health Business.

There are several reasons why nature-based tourism is important for a place. When it comes to drawing tourists to a location, nature has a big stake. The tourism sector is multifaceted and not a single industry. Numerous research have focused on nature tourism, which involves tourist activities conducted in natural settings with visitors as the actors and their experiences in the natural world. Nature-based travel is frequently mistaken for ecotourism or green tourism.

An advanced kind of tourism is ecotourism, which involves visiting pristine, protected, and delicate regions while ensuring that visitors have as little impact as possible on the local ecological, social, and cultural fabric. The subset of ecotourism is nature-based tourism, which is a universal set. Additionally, ecotourism describes how ecotourism should progress and considers the visitor's attitude and level of understanding. All of these constraints do not apply to nature-based travel. One of the demands of tourists for any place is the presence of nature, which is an integral part of tourism.

It's difficult to identify who is a nature-based tourist and who isn't since while tourists may be drawn to a location by its natural beauty, it's debatable if they will engage in it.

Many people find that conducting research is difficult due to incorrect definitions, which even affect the size of the segment and data collection. In order to address the definitional problem, one approach to identify these tourists is by the activities they engage in, the degree of their engagement with nature, and the overnight stay. However, outdoor enthusiasts frequently fall within the category of nature-based tourism in such a situation. It is common for nature-based tourism service providers to be improperly categorized or segregated. Economically speaking, it is frequently the activity alone that is counted, not the lodging, transportation, or food services they use. Thus, we benefit from some of their economic impact.

8.4 Understanding the Tourism Based on Nature

According to the majority of scientists and experts, the nature-based tourism is relaxation travel within a natural setting. This introduces two elements. The first is the visitor, who has left his house and is in an unfamiliar setting. The second is the experience, which might be any of these three: reliant on nature, enhanced by nature, or experiences in which nature is an incidental factor. The consumer's perspective is used to draw this distinction.

When discussing the philosophy of cultural designation, some scientists point out that the first classification is technical and has to do with visitor mobility to specific locations that are outside of their natural habitat. This could be conceptual in nature, when people move towards the natural environment with the goal of actively participating in nature-based activities.

Therefore, the behavior of tourists will exhibit two features and, consequently, two functions from the motivating aspect of tourism. The first function will be a supporting one, in which the visitor creates expectations through an external factor without actually engaging with nature. From the second perspective, nature becomes a defining element in the motivation of tourists. Visitors are there for activities that involve nature.

8.5 Categorization of Nature Based Tourism / Tourists

Depending on the location, activity, reason, and type—sustainable, organized, or commercial—nature-based tourism can be divided into a variety of categories. It

makes it simple to quantify tourism and tourists based on natural factors and assists in the production of tangible statistical findings. Nature-based tourism segmentation can also result from tourism categorization. Six types of nature-based tourists are recognized by several studies:

i.   Devoted nature lovers: these tourists are rare in that they not only appreciate nature but also take action to preserve it.

ii. Interested Nature Tourists: These tourists care about and are interested in nature tourism, but they don't have a strong bond with the natural world.

iii. Casual nature tourists—those who combine a trip to the outdoors with a getaway.

iv. Nature tourists: are those who have particular cultural preconceptions.

v.   Sports or Adventure Tourists: These tourists have an interest in sports or adventure travel in landscapes.

vi. Hunting and Fishing Tourists: For these tourists, nature serves only as a venue for their amusement and activities.

8.6 Needs for Nature Based Tourism

An aspect of the constantly expanding tourism industry is nature-based tourism in its widest sense. Such a phenomena is brought about by tourists' need for something unique and unexplored. Due to the many studies and research projects, the role that humans play in the destruction and degradation of the world is now much more evident than it was before. Customers have also woken up, and tourists have begun to demand sustainable products and alternatives. A consequence of this new consumer awakening in the tourism sector is alternative tourism, which is a departure from or a way to avoid mass tourism.

Now, tourists prefer small-scale travel and will travel in smaller groups. Tourist destinations that are busier and more crowded will be avoided. It is common for tourists to avoid large-scale planned activities and excursions. They would look for experiences and interactions that are more unique, genuine, and localized. In many respects, alternative travelers can find a solid alternative in nature-based tourism. Such

experiences are less developed in the tourism industry and are more accessible in rural areas. However, giving up facilities and services for tourists is not simple.

Therefore, nature-based tourism is a worldwide business that has social and economic significance in both local and global contexts. Therefore, nature-based tourism discusses the experiences and activities that visitors have while in natural settings.

8.7 Cultural Aspect

To be a nature-based tourist does not mean to exclude others. It incorporates culture as a fundamental component of culture. It respects other people's opinions and interactions. It is actually possible for cultural tourism to coexist alongside and even enhance environmental tourism. A culture is a way of life as much as an object. Culture "is both creative and traditional, and it has both ordinary common meanings (behavior) and unique individual meanings (art and education)". The term "natural tourism" refers to the curiosity in everyday living. This has made way for the most inclusive category of culture and nature-based attractions. Recreational tourism is the umbrella term under which both of these might be written.

Natural tourism and cultural tourism are interdependent. Ice fishing expeditions are one example; they take place in a unique natural setting with a cultural component. "The environment to observe, activities to participate in, and experiences to remember" are the three components that make up a tourist destination. Activities and experiences can also be cultural if the surroundings are natural, demonstrating the mutually reinforcing nature-culture interaction. Instead, a cultural component enriches the experience of nature-based tourism.

8.8 Development of Nature Based Product

It is particularly true in the tourism industry that products can also be services. Whether a product is a service or a product, it must have some aspect of differentiation to be positioned in the market. High product quality is not enough; a compelling backstory is also necessary. This narrative should evoke a strong emotional response from the tourists and encourage their involvement. Don't forget the six A's of merchandise.

- Attractions: Location should be attractive and unique.

- Accessibility: Transportation to and within the destination is a component of accessibility.

- Activities: Tourists are going to engage in these activities.

- Amenities: These include things like lodging and food.

- Available Packages: Combining several services into one package.

- Additional Services: Regular services unrelated to tourism are known as ancillary services.

These must be constructed, and a narrative must be developed around them. Services and much more should be the focus. It's difficult to maintain a balance between telling stories and making the product more appealing. Kotler's methodology outlines the five steps and explains how to increase customer value.

- The primary advantage is the service itself, such as a snowmobile safari, that the buyer is purchasing.

- The primary benefits are converted into basic product features in the second stage. Snowmobile rentals and tour services.

- The Expected Product comes in third. the qualities and attributes that a traveler anticipates from a product. For instance, a nice ride, a courteous guide, and a contemporary snowmobile.

- The fourth is the augmented product, which should surpass the customer's expectations and produce a wow effect. For instance, the product's backstory and extra benefits.

- The fifth step is the Potential Product, which covers all the potential additions and changes a product might experience in the future. Novel approaches to consumer satisfaction and product differentiation are sought.

Development of new products is a continuous process that cannot be completed in an empty space. In product creation, marketing and market research are integral components. The production of more customer value is the value chain that must be considered. A paradigm proposed by Stephen Smith is more closely related to nature-based tourism.

Here, the PHYSICAL PLANT is the first component. This is a key component of the tourism product, which could include a natural location, amenities, climate, etc. The tourists want to see it in person.

The second is SERVICE. To connect with the tourists, the physical component requires some kind of service.

The third component is HOSPITALITY, which goes above and beyond excellent service quality. Hospitality defines how the task is carried out. Hospitality is comprehensive and less measurable.

The fourth component, FREEDOM OF CHOICE, describes the possibilities or choices that clients must make in order to be satisfied. Surprises are also possible.

Here, "INVOLVEMENT" refers to the customer's whole involvement. These five component combinations can result in a high-quality and fulfilling nature-based tourist package.

Product development is a challenging task. The product should address the target market's wants, requests, and expectations while also adding value for the customer.

8.9 Concerns about Sustainability

Development of nature-based tourism products would be lacking without consideration of sustainability and stakeholder involvement. Anyone who can influence or be influenced by the achievement of an organizational goal is considered a stakeholder. The relationship between stakeholders and sustainability is that the former refers to a conscientious approach towards stakeholders, the environment, and the economy.

Responsibilities might range from legal to ethical to financial. Communication, engagement, win-win solution-finding methods, equity, and equitable representation of stakeholders are all important when there are several stakeholders.

Sustainability could seem like a waste of time, but talking to stakeholders about daily operations and developments builds a solid foundation, preserves the environment, and keeps unfavorable attitudes from coming from various directions. On the whole, it produces advantages.

India's vast array of flora and wildlife places it at tenth place among countries with the highest levels of biodiversity in the world. In Asia, it ranks fourth. The development of natural regions is supported by the soil, land, climate, rainfall, temperatures, and many seasons of India. The rainy season is prolonged by retreating monsoons and southwest monsoons.

India has more than twenty-two percent of its land covered by evergreen forests, accounting for two percent of the world's total forest cover. Tropical rain forests, tropical deciduous forests, tropical thorn forests and shrubs, mountain forests, mangrove forests, and tropical rain forests are some of the ways that India's diverse vegetation can be categorized.

These areas are home to both commercial and noncommercial tree plantings. Wildlife like as elephants, lemurs, one-horned rhinoceroses, deer, wild boars, and others flourished as a result of the abundance of food and cover. Additionally, measures are being taken by the government to preserve this. In the country, there are fourteen designated biosphere reserves. Since 1992, funding has been provided for botanical gardens. There are several ongoing projects, such as Project Tiger, Project Rhino, and others. India has established numerous zoological gardens and wildlife conservation centers, as well as 89 well-defined national parks and 49 wildlife sanctuaries.

Several natural resources, including regions, climates, landscapes, and the environment, are included in Indian natural tourism products. They draw tourists to India. The natural tourism offerings of India are diverse and fall into the following categories:

o   Countryside

o   Climate: Sunshine Days, Rain, Snowfall, Temperature

o   Mountains, hills, deserts, gorges, backwaters, terrain, and other natural features are examples of natural beauty.

o   Water: lakes, rivers, ponds, springs, waterfalls, the sea, and the oceans

o   Wildlife;

o   Plants and animals;

- o Beaches, including rocky, sandy, and white sand beaches.

- o Lakshadweep, Andaman, Nicobar, and other islands;

- o SPAS;

- o Scenic Destinations

Natural resources are vital for the growth of the nation's tourism industry. In an effort to conserve resources, ecotourism pathways have been established. Rivers, lakes, sanctuaries, and locations for adventure sports have all been marked off for tourism. The 5,000-year-old histories that are entwined with the products to promote tourism are attached to this.

The diversity of Indian weather enhances the whole vacation experience. People who live in regions of the world with harsh climates migrate across nations. Another aspect of nature's kindness is the presence of winter warmth and sunshine. The British created "Hill Stations" in many of India's highland cold regions. The mountains, particularly the powerful Himalayas, Vindhayas, Satpuras, and others.

Attractions include cliffs, peaks, canyons, and coral reefs. Canyons, geysers, lakes, waterfalls, Kerala's backwaters, Dal Lake, and other water features draw tourists and offer recreational opportunities. Everyone is drawn to the forests and wildlife of the northeastern states. Sports that need the outdoors, such as trekking, rock climbing, wind surfing, scuba diving, mountaineering, canoeing, and kayaking, are widely available in India. Kerala offers ayurvedic resorts and spas because of its tranquilly and lushness. A popular destination for spiritual and holistic retreats combining nature and wellness includes Haridwar, Rishikesh, etc. The vegetation and animals of islands are abundant. For those who enjoy adventure, the outdoors, and culture, islands are the perfect retreat. All-encompassing island geography offers diverse flora and animals as a bonus.

Summary

Researchers have long been studying nature-based tourism, and they are currently focusing even more on the topic. Previously, it was thought that any activities that occur in a natural settings were included in nature-based tourism experience and the

tourist were the two elements that characterized nature tourism. The increase of such kinds of tourism is tremendous. However, social, cultural, and economic factors certainly have a role in nature as well. Ignoring these viewpoints will result in an incomplete understanding of the phenomenon.

A value chain for the tourism experience is provided by the role of culture and its blending in nature-based tourism, which improves the whole experience. The nature tourism product itself is not a single, complete thing; rather, it has multiple dimensions. An experience is made up of several related products. Therefore, while developing an offer for nature-based tourism, every aspect of the product must be considered.

Terminal Questions

1. What do you understand from Nature based Tourism?

2. Discuss the categories of Nature Based Tourism

3. Discuss in detail about the demands for Nature Based Tourism

4. Describe the Cultural Aspect of Nature based Tourism.

5. What do you understand from the Nature Based Tourism Products?

Reference

EPG Pathshala: Subject: Tourismand Hospitality; Paper 10: Tourism Products of India; Module- 04: Types of Tourism Products: Nature Based.

UNIT 09: PLANNING AND MANAGEMENT CRITERIA

Unit Structure

9.0 Learning Objectives
9.1 Introduction
9.2 Management of visitors
   9.2.1 Carrying Capacity
   9.2.2 Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA)
   9.2.3 Access Control
   9.2.4 Education and Awareness
   9.2.5 Monitoring and Regular Evaluation
   9.2.6 Developing visitor infrastructure facilities
9.3 Management of natural resources including human and nature
9.4 Quality control and code of conduct
9.5 GIS and ICT in planning and management
9.6 Sustainability issue in ecotourism
9.7 Ecotourism certification
Summary

9.0 Learning Objectives

After the study of this unit, a learner would be able to:

- Know about the significance of ecotourism planning and management

- Understand the management of visitors and natural resources in ecotourism

- Understand about quality control and code of conduct in ecotourism planning

- Explain the criteria of ecotourism certification

9.1 Introduction

Ecotourism is an integral part of environmental sustainability, locals earning source and resources management. This is also one of the fastest growing industries in the world. It provides both short as well as long-term environmental, social and economic profits and eventually helps in the country's economic development. Well planned and managed ecotourism eventually gives better outcomes.

Planning involves those methods, helpful in making decisions regarding the future. Planning helps in attaining the objectives, through rational thinking and using the resources in an efficient & effective way in order to maximize output, income and employment. It ensures balanced growth of tourism sector which is unidirectional, focused and to achieve the desired goals. In tourism, planning is very important and brings a lot of benefits. Though, in the developed countries, the importance of this sector was realized soon, but lately recognized in the developing countries. This sector was greatly recognized post second world war. In 1960's UNO also recognized the importance of tourism and the need of planning in it. The UNO in 1963 organized the International conference on "International Travel and Tourism" held in Rome (Italy) and recognized the importance of planning in the tourism sector and ended up with subsequent suggestions:

What exactly the ecotourism management is?

Ecotourism Management includes the proper regulation and interaction between the natural environment and tourism activities. This travel should be responsibly sustainable and should minimize negative impacts on ecosystems. However, everyone should effectively promote environmental awareness and cultural respect among tourists.

Generally, ecotourism management is the process of managing and organizing eco-friendly travel practices along with conservation prioritization and local inhabitant's involvement. The main goal is to preserve natural habitats and to promote sustainable tourism. For instance, if we visit wildlife sanctuary where the management committee limits the number of visitors, provides educational guide to each, promote environmental awareness and ensures economic benefit to the local communities. This is a perfect example of effective and well managed ecotourism management. Therefore, the importance of ecotourism management lies in its control to promote a healthy balance between environmental conservation, tourism and local community benefits. The main roles of a sustainable and effective ecotourism management are:

- Conservation of natural resources, biodiversities and susceptible ecosystems from over-tourism

- To disseminate awareness among travelers on environmental issues and cultural heritage in order to promote their deeper understanding and respect for nature

- Involvement of local inhabitants in decision-making processes and generating economic opportunities for locals from tourism activities such as employing locals as tour guides or selling local products.

Planning is the major components of ecotourism management in order to create a well prepared framework which preserves natural habitats along with economic benefits for local inhabitants. The following criteria should be keep in mind while designing an effective management planning:

1. The potential effect of ongoing ecotourism activity on the local ecosystems

2. Environmental impact assessments

3. Proper boundary demarcation and regulation of highly sensitive areas

4. Local community participation and input to ensure buy-in and cultural aspect.

Concept of Planning

Planning is the forethought of any idea and developing necessary action for the upcoming activity to get a desired goal. It includes the creation of a plan that needs theoretical skills. Planning is a significant time management method. Planning is orderly arrangement of action steps. An effective and efficient planning can decrease the needed time for achieving the goal.

An ecotourism management plan is develop to guide the process of tourism in an area by synthesizing the vision shared by all parties involved without disturbing the conservation objectives. The management plan will also identify the zoning arrangement for the area, which in turn will assign those sectors that will be available for tourism purposes. The step-by-step process for preparing an ecotourism management plan is presented as follows in a linear sequence:

Assessment to Prepare an Ecotourism Management Plan

⇩

Find Funding Source

⇩

Create a Planning Team

⇩

Information Gathering

⇩

Analysis of Available Data

⇩

Prepare Plan

⇩

Publicize and Distribute Plan

⇩

Implement and Evaluate Plan

The real procedure is not, however, as simple in practice. At different points along the process, planners will frequently need to revisit one or more of the processes. For example, if the planning team reaches the data analysis stage but returns to the information gathering step because crucial information is missing.

9.2 Management of visitors

A systematic approach and appropriate planning is necessary to provide all the necessary resources for visitors. Ecotourism involves the planned placement of tourist facilities including lodges (living arrangement), trails (path through natural areas like forests for walking, biking and horse riding etc) and observation decks (an elevated platform usually prepared to view the natural surroundings). A well-managed

ecotourism plan can considerably increase the carrying capacity of an area without degrading the biodiversity and their surroundings. Now a day, tourism is a critical issue for many protected areas, because presence and actions of visitors directly or indirectly cause many serious problems for biodiversity conservation. Therefore, tourism has to be managed with utmost care and site management committee must calculate the costs and benefits of tourism in protected areas.

World tourism organization defines tourists as people "travelling to and staying in places outside their usual environment for not more than one consecutive year for holiday, business and other purposes". Visitor management in ecotourism is greatly helpful on minimizing negative impacts and maximizing positive impacts on nature. This visitor management practice should include a proper controlling on visitor numbers along with educating visitors, regulating their activities and behavior.

There are some major aspects of visitor management in ecotourism:

9.2.1 Carrying Capacity

Carrying Capacity of tourism is simply the assessment of accommodation of tourists at a place without causing damage or in other words the capability of a destination to hold number of tourists. Carrying capacity in broader sense is related to the size of population and limited natural resource. It is very important to calculate carrying capacity of a place in order to maintain the environmental balance. In other words, carrying capacity for a region can be termed as, maximum number of people at a place, for a given time, with the limited resource that should not negatively affect the functioning of the ecology and should sustain the natural surroundings. In this way, the degradation of the natural surroundings can be controlled and stopped. For tourism, carrying capacity includes not only the natural sustainability but cultural, social, economic and environmental sustainability too.

9.2.2 Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA)

EIA is related to the assessment and calculation of the effects of visitors on the existing biodiversity (including flora and fauna) environment and local communities of the ecotourism area.

9.2.3 Access Control

Access control is helpful in ensuring sustainable practices, timed entry of visitors, predefined trails to manage visitor flow and preserving sensitive areas. For protecting fragile ecosystems and cultural sites, it restricts entry of visitors to sensitive areas. Ultimately, it prevents overcrowding and maintains the natural and cultural resources.

9.2.4 Education and Awareness

All the information about the natural and cultural importance of the area should be given to the visitors, in order to promote understanding of the environment.

9.2.5 Monitoring and Regular Evaluation

Time to time regular assessment and up gradation of the visitor management strategies is required to properly control the ongoing ecotourism activity.

9.2.6 Developing visitor infrastructure facilities

All the infrastructure facilities like accommodations, local food options, campsites, trails and interpretive centers to improve visitor experience.

Therefore, an effectively managed ecotourism can contribute to the conservation of natural resources, as well as the well-being of local communities, and the long-term sustainability of tourism destinations.

9.3 Management of natural resources including human and nature

As a way to manage natural resources, ecotourism emphasizes eco-friendly travel that enhances local economies and protects the environment. It ensures maintaining sustainability, reducing adverse effects, and maintains a balance between economic gains and environmental protection. Natural habitat conservation, wildlife protection, community engagement, education, and cultural heritage preservation are important components.

The goal of ecotourism management is to maintain a balance between protecting natural resources, human welfare, and cultural preservation in undeveloped places. This entails incorporating customs and local people into tourism-related activities, making sure that sustainable practices are followed, and raising visitor knowledge of

environmental issues. Ecotourism seeks to reduce its negative effects on the environment while generating income for locals and conservation.

Natural resource management is frequently utilized as a specific tool for ecotourism. Natural resources are many in various locations across the world, yet they are being depleted due to habitat destruction and human expansion. Programs for ecotourism are frequently implemented in order to preserve those resources. There are numerous organizations, including nonprofits, and scientists working in this subject, and several plans and appropriate management procedures are frequently created to ensure that these resources remain unspoiled. Natural Resource Management in Ecotourism mainly includes the following criteria:

i.   Land Use Planning

Careful land use planning is frequently necessary in ecotourism sites to guarantee that development does not adversely affect the environment or nearby populations.

ii.   Utilizing Renewable Energy

Renewable energy resources like solar panels and wind energy can be utilized to power tourist facilities.

iii.   Water Management:

In order to avoid pollution and guarantee water supply for both visitors and local populations, ecotourism relies heavily on sustainable water management techniques. By using rainwater harvesting systems and introducing well-organized handling practices.

iv.   Natural Building Materials

Constructing using locally sourced, sustainable materials that blend with surroundings

v.   Biodiversity Conservation:

Protecting and conserving biodiversity should be one of the focus while considering Ecotourism planning, frequently by creating protected areas or aiding conservation initiatives that are centered in the community.

By applying these strategies, ecotourism initiatives can lead to the sustainable development of tourism sites that attract tourists while preserving a untouched environment. Human resource management in Ecotourism mainly includes the following criteria:

i.   **Community Involvement**

In order to preserve their cultural inheritance and take advantage of the economic potential, local people actively participate in the development and management of ecotourism operations.

ii.   **Cultural Education**

Through promoting cultural awareness, ecotourism helps visitors appreciate and comprehend local customs and lifestyles.

iii.   **Human Rights**

Supporting democratic movements and human rights in local communities is another aspect of ecotourism planning.

Check your progress

1. When did the United Nations first formally recognize the importance of planning in the tourism sector?

A) After World War I

B) In the 1950s during economic recovery

C) In 1963 during an international conference in Rome

D) In the 1980s with the rise of global tourism

2. Which of the following is an example of effective ecotourism management?

A) Allowing unlimited visitors in a wildlife sanctuary to boost tourism revenue

B) Limiting visitor numbers, providing educational guides, and involving local communities

C) Promoting luxury resorts in environmentally sensitive areas

D) Constructing highways through protected forest areas for easier access

3. What is the *main goal* of ecotourism management in relation to natural resource management?

A) To increase luxury tourism in remote natural areas

B) To maximize profits regardless of environmental impact

C) To balance environmental protection, human welfare, and cultural preservation

D) To allow unrestricted access to natural habitats for educational purposes

Answer key: 1-C, 2-B, 3-C.

9.4 Quality control and code of conduct

Code of Conduct in ecotourism provides guidelines to guarantee responsible and sustainable interactions between local communities, tourists and the environment. It emphasizes regarding local cultures and minimizing environmental impact. As a result tourists can help preserve destinations for future generations while enhancing their own travel experiences. In ecotourism planning and management, both quality control and a code of conduct are essential for ensuring accountable and sustainable practices. Quality control mainly focuses on maintaining standards and reducing negative impacts, while a code of conduct provides moral guidelines.

The following standards are part of quality control:

1. Reducing the negative effects of tourism on the environment, by promoting waste management planning, energy and water conservation and protection of natural resources and wildlife.

2. Another crucial component of quality control is making sure that tourism helps local communities by creating jobs, assisting small companies, and honoring local customs.

3. It is crucial to put safety precautions in place to keep visitors and employees safe, such as emergency plans and first aid training.

4. To guarantee client happiness and establish a good reputation, it's critical to set up clear guidelines for all the services offered, such as lodging, meals, and entertainment.

5. To identify areas for improvement and make the required modifications, it is essential to regularly analyze the performance of tourism activities and assess their effects on the environment and local populations.

The Code of Conduct consists of:

1. A code of conduct lays out moral standards for all parties involved, including travelers, tour companies, and local communities.

2. The code of conduct places a strong emphasis on actions that can be interpreted as disrespectful or hurtful as well as honoring regional traditions, customs, and beliefs.

3. Tourism operators are encouraged under the code of conduct to put local communities' welfare first.

4. The stakeholders ensuring that the principles of the code of conduct are followed.

9.5 GIS and ICT in planning and management

GIS can be utilized as a decision-supporting tool for impact assessment, sustainable tourism planning, visitor flow management and site selection. This may involve using GIS technology to map out areas of high conservation value as well as to identify untouched areas. Analysis of a satellite image is helpful in identify difficult areas inside the deep forest or even in the deep ocean. Environmental conservation is the main issue of ecotourism planning (Maurya and Kumar, 2024). Role of GIS and ICT in Ecotourism planning and management includes:

1. By analyzing the possible environmental effects of tourism growth, GIS makes it possible to pinpoint places that need mitigation or preservation.

2. Traffic management, crowding reduction in sensitive locations, and visitor route optimization are all possible using GIS.

3. To maintain the sustainability of natural resources, such as vegetation and wildlife populations, GIS aids in monitoring and management.

4. ICT technologies, such online platforms and mobile apps, facilitate communication between local communities, tourists, and tourism operators by disseminating information about activities, destinations, and responsible tourism practices.

5. Booking ecotourism activities and accommodations is made easier by online platforms and booking systems, which enhances visitor satisfaction and efficiency.

6. Data about tourism activities, visitor demographics, and environmental impacts can be efficiently collected, stored, and analyzed thanks to ICT tools.

7. ICT makes it possible to advertise ecotourism locations and activities via social media, digital marketing campaigns, and online platforms.

8. Local communities can profit from ecotourism and be involved in its development and management by using ICT technologies to improve communication and interaction.

9.6 Sustainability issue in ecotourism

Tourism creates very diverse impacts of natural environment because it includes numerous exercises that may have unfriendly natural impacts. Ecotourism, while aiming for sustainability, faces sustainability issues related to environmental degradation, social impacts, and economic concerns. Specifically, overexploitation of natural resources, infrastructure development, and potential conflict with local communities can pose challenges to both the environment and local livelihoods. Some Sustainability issues in ecotourism are as follows:

1. If ecotourism activities like hiking and wildlife viewing are not properly managed, they may cause habitat degradation and wildlife disturbance.

2. If lodges and trails are not planned and constructed sustainably, they may have a detrimental effect on natural ecosystems.

3. If ecotourism is not adequately managed, it can lead to waste production and pollution.

4. Local resources may be strained by the demand for electricity and water.

5. The growth of ecotourism may lead to conflicts over land and natural resources, unequal economic sharing, and cultural exploitation, especially if local populations are not sufficiently engaged.

6. Local communities may be displaced from their homes and lands as a result of the development of ecotourism infrastructure.

7. Development of ecotourism may not result in significant economic gains for locals if it does not give priority to local involvement and advantages.

8. Ecotourism locations are susceptible to economic downturns in the tourism industry if they grow unduly reliant on tourism.

9. Ecotourism projects must be properly organized and run to reduce any negative effects on the environment and society.

10. Projects related to ecotourism should be actively planned, carried out, and managed by local communities.

11. It is essential to educate both visitors and locals on the value of environmental preservation.

12. To maintain sustainability and pinpoint areas for development, ecotourism programs should be regularly monitored and evaluated.

9.7 Ecotourism certification

Ecotourism certification is done for the evaluation of tourism businesses and destinations, based on their commitment to environmental conservation, sustainable practices and the security of local communities. Ecotourism certification programs typically focus on the following key principles:

1. **Environmental Conservation:** Companies who are certified ecotourism operators must show that they are dedicated to preserving biodiversity and natural resources. This includes utilizing renewable energy sources and aiding regional conservation initiatives.

2. **Community Involvement:** Businesses are frequently required by ecotourism certification programs to interact with and assist local communities. This may entail supporting neighborhood initiatives, employing local personnel, and honoring regional customs and cultures.

3. **Educational Opportunities:** Travelers, employees, and local communities are required to have access to educational opportunities from certified ecotourism firms. This could be giving employees training on sustainable practices or organizing guided excursions that showcase the local nature and culture.

4. **Quality and Safety:** The quality and safety of the travel experience are also taken into account by ecotourism certification programs. To guarantee that passengers have a good and pleasurable experience, certified establishments must adhere to strict requirements for facilities, customer service, and safety procedures.

Popular Ecotourism Certification Programs

Around the world, a number of ecotourism certification programs assess travel agencies. Among the most accepted programs are:

Green Globe: Green Globe is an international certification scheme that honors companies in the travel and tourism sector for their dedication to environmentally friendly operations. Businesses are evaluated by the program according to standards for social responsibility, environmental management, and cultural preservation.

Earth Check: EarthCheck is a well-known certification program for the travel and tourism sector that aims to assist companies in operating responsibly and minimizing their environmental effect. The initiative gives companies the instruments and materials they need to assess, track, and enhance their sustainability performance.

Rainforest Alliance: Promoting environmentally and socially responsible tourist practices is the main goal of the Rainforest Alliance certification program. Companies that are Rainforest Alliance accredited must fulfill requirements pertaining to cultural preservation, community involvement, and environmental conservation.

Travelife: Travelife is a certification program that assists travel agencies in meeting global criteria for responsible tourism and enhancing their sustainability performance. Businesses looking to lessen their environmental effect and encourage sustainable practices might benefit from the program's advice and assistance.

Summary

➢ Ecotourism is an integral part of environmental sustainability, locals earning source and resources management.

➢ Ecotourism Management includes the proper regulation and interaction between the natural environment and tourism activities.

➢ Generally, ecotourism management is the process of managing and organizing eco-friendly travel practices along with conservation prioritization and local inhabitant's involvement.

➢ Ecotourism involves the planned placement of tourist facilities including lodges (living arrangement), trails (path through natural areas like forests for walking, biking and horse riding etc) and observation decks (an elevated platform usually prepared to view the natural surroundings).

➢ Code of Conduct in ecotourism provides guidelines to guarantee responsible and sustainable interactions between local communities, tourists and the environment. It emphasizes regarding local cultures and minimizing environmental impact.

➤ Quality control mainly focuses on maintaining standards and reducing negative impacts, while a code of conduct provides moral guidelines.

➤ GIS can be utilized as a decision-supporting tool for impact assessment, sustainable tourism planning, visitor flow management and site selection.

➤ Ecotourism certification is done for the evaluation of tourism businesses and destinations, based on their commitment to environmental conservation, sustainable practices and the security of local communities.

Terminal questions

1. What do you understand by ecotourism management?

2. What is the concept of ecotourism planning?

3. Define various management criteria in ecotourism?

4. Role of GIS and ICT in ecotourism planning?

5. Explain ecotourism certification?

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UNIT 10: ECOTOURISM MARKETS I

Unit Structure

10.0 Learning Objectives
10.1 Introduction
10.2 Ecotourism Markets
10.3 Role of local institutions and grass root agencies
10.4 Paradigm shift due to climate change
10.5 Possible influence of carbon economy on existing ecotourism market
Summary

10.0 Learning Objectives

After going through this unit you will be able to:

- Understand about ecotourism market

- Define the role of local institutions and grass root agencies on existing ecotourism market

- Gave examples of grassroots organizations and local institutions

- Understand the paradigm shift due to climate change on existing ecotourism market

- Describe the possible influence of carbon economy on existing ecotourism market

10.1 Introduction

The growth of the tourism industry has both beneficial and bad effects on a nation, region, or locality's economy. Every organization either public or private participates in the tourism marketing process in one way or another. There is a national tourist organization or tourism board in almost every nation in the globe today. You might wonder why this is the case. Indeed, tourism is a significant contributor to global economies, and in many instances, it has been discovered to be the only source of income for governments. It is estimated that 14 million people in India work directly or indirectly in the tourism industry. There is still room for the tourism business to grow more quickly, especially when considering the potential in India and the worldwide

tourism estimates. The entire development process will then be impacted by this. It is important to remember, though, that in the developmental role of marketing, the focus should be on the needs and desires of the host population and local communities at the destinations rather than the customer.

10.2 Ecotourism Markets

The ecotourism market is a global demand for tourism activities that prioritize nature and environmental conservation. It includes travel to natural areas, aiming to reduce environmental impact, profit local communities, and provide educational awareness. Traveling to natural locations is becoming more and more popular these days, both for their own mental health and to experience the atmosphere of nature. The rise in the GDP of tourists also demonstrates the high demand for these types of locations. Traveling to hilly regions, beaches, and green spaces is popular right now, which has opened up opportunities for travel agencies that specialize in these destinations. Businesses highlight destinations that people haven't been to using this platform, which is a crucial component of their marketing strategy. E-marketing encourages individuals to travel to all-natural locations and enjoy themselves, which helps the ecotourism industry. The inaugural Global Tourism Investors Summit was held in New Delhi, India, in May 2021. This summit's objectives were to present India's travel and tourism sector as a desirable place to invest and to give the federal and state governments a forum to talk about possible investments in the blooming industry. India aimed to draw more foreign investment into its growing tourism sector by bringing together investors from all over the world.

India can advance its tourism industry and encourage inclusive, sustainable, and responsible travel within the nation by utilizing its G20 leadership. When tourists travel to a new location, they not only enjoy the surroundings and ambiance but also get knowledge about the local culture. In order to satisfy the needs of tourists and facilitate their travels, operators make it easier for them to remain in the natural and cultural area of origin. They include lodging establishments (hotels, guesthouses, holiday apartments, rural residences, etc.) and catering companies. It includes the elements as well as other services (tourist information offices, tourist guides, trip planning, and air, land, and sea transportation). Having a beneficial impact on the places they visit and experiencing genuine cultural ties are two of the main advantages of ecotourism that

draw travelers. A crucial component of this kind of tourism is helping local communities, which enables visitors to have a more fulfilling trip. Ecotourism offers a way to learn about the lives of local communities in addition to providing enjoyment in a specific place. Services are focusing more and more on offering eco-friendly transportation options, like electric cars, transportation powered by bio-fuel, and even innovative solutions (Kumar and Yadav, 2024).

Traveling responsibly with an emphasis on protecting the environment and helping local populations is known as ecotourism. Growing environmental consciousness and a desire for distinctive, sustainable travel experiences are fueling the ecotourism industry's rapid expansion. The emphasis on environmental initiatives, community involvement, and offering educational opportunities to both tourists and local populations define this sector. According to the International Ecotourism Society, ecotourism is ethical travel to unspoiled locations that preserves the environment and enhances the quality of life for locals.

The eco-tourism business strategy emphasizes all of the services that they offer to customers, such as recycling biodegradable goods and using renewable energy sources. In order to encourage eco-travel, conscientious tourists anticipate that tour operators will offer a wide range of green tourism services. By allowing the reader and tour operator to experience powerful manifestations of environment and culture, this positive business model aims to teach people about the importance of local cultures and biodiversity conservation. Built on the basis of the traditional industrial economy, the "green economy" is a new economic model that seeks to balance the demands of the economy and the environment. It is driven by the market.

10.3 Role of local institutions and grass root agencies

Grassroots agencies tackle many environmental issues daily to ensure a better sustainable future. Grassroots groups are common citizens that come together to address objection on a local level to bring about change on a local, regional, national, or international level.

Local institutions and grassroots organizations are essential to sustainable ecotourism markets because they guarantee environmental preservation and community benefits. They serve as a bridge between the local community and the larger tourism sector,

promoting ethical behavior and optimizing financial prospects for locals. Here is a closer look at their responsibilities:

I.   **Empowerment and Community Engagement:** Local organizations and grassroots organizations work to guarantee that ecotourism projects are created in conjunction with and for the benefit of local communities. They empower locals and provide a sense of ownership by facilitating involvement in planning, decision-making, and revenue sharing (Scheyvens, 1999).

II. **Environmental Conservation:** These groups frequently have a significant impact on the implementation and promotion of environmental protection policies in ecotourism locations. They might be in charge of conservation initiatives, inform visitors about the value of preservation, and promote environmentally friendly behaviors.

III. **Improvement in Livelihood:** Communities can profit economically and economically from ecotourism, and grassroots organizations and local institutions work to make sure that these advantages are distributed fairly. They might promote ethical labor practices, offer training and skill development, and aid with the growth of nearby companies.

IV. **Cultural Preservation:** In the context of ecotourism, grassroots organizations and local institutions frequently play a critical role in protecting and advancing regional cultural customs and history. They might support the creation of cultural attractions, advertise regional handicrafts, and inform visitors about the beliefs and habits of the area.

V.   **Resolving disputes and promoting peace**: Particularly in regions impacted by conflict or post-war trauma, local organizations and grassroots organizations may occasionally be able to help resolve social and political conflicts associated with tourism. They might encourage communication, foster mutual understanding, and strengthen bonds between various groups.

VI. **Capacity Building:** Developing local communities' ability to oversee and profit from ecotourism may also be a function of grassroots organizations and local institutions. They might offer resources, technical support, and training to help

locals acquire the abilities and know-how required to work in the tourism sector (Nugroho et al., 2020).

Examples of grassroots organizations and local institutions include:

I.   **Non-governmental organizations (NGOs):** A large number of NGOs concentrate on community development and environmental preservation, frequently collaborating closely with nearby communities to carry out ecotourism projects. In many developing nations, ecotourism has been promoted by non-governmental organizations (NGOs).

II. **Community-based tourism organizations:** Usually founded by locals, these organizations are in charge of overseeing ecotourism operations in their region (Woldu, 2024). To advance the objectives of conservation and sustainable community development, local community involvement in ecotourism planning is essential. It most probably implies that the local community's empowerment and active engagement are essential to the planning process. The local community must have the authority to determine what kinds of tourism amenities should be built in their areas and how the expenses and benefits of tourism should be distributed. A community-based approach to ecotourism is intended to address the needs of rural residents while also enhancing their standard of living in rural areas. Therefore, empowering the local population has emerged as a major concern in ecotourism planning, particularly to support sustainable development.

III. **Regional administrations:** Local governments may occasionally contribute to the growth of ecotourism, especially by offering infrastructure and regulatory assistance.

IV. **Religious institutions and traditional leaders:** These groups could be crucial in advancing ecotourism's emphasis on community involvement and cultural preservation.

10.4 Paradigm shift due to climate change

The ecotourism sector is undergoing a paradigm shift due to climate change, shifting from traditional tourism to more strong and sustainable methods. Growing awareness of the effects on the environment, the increased susceptibility of natural areas to

climate change, and the possibility for ecotourism to lessen these effects and promote environmental protection are the main drivers of this trend (Zhang and Deng, 2024). This includes mainly:

I.   **Changing Traveler Preferences:** As a result of growing environmental consciousness and worries about climate change, travelers are looking for more sustainable and eco-friendly travel options, such as ecotourism (Bansal, 2018).

II. **Destinations' susceptibility:** Traditional tourist models are facing difficulties as a result of climate change's effects on ecotourism destinations' accessibility, infrastructure, and natural attractiveness.

III. **The Solution of Ecotourism:** Ecotourism provides a feasible route for sustainable tourism practices that can lessen the effects of climate change because of its emphasis on environmental preservation, conservation, and local community involvement.

IV. **Adaptation and Resilience:** To improve the resilience of ecotourism sites, ecotourism operators are employing tactics including investing in technological improvements, employing data analytics, and diversifying into less climate-dependent industries.

V.   **Encouraging Ecological Methods:** By encouraging social justice, environmental preservation, and local economic prosperity, ecotourism can act as a model for sustainable development.

Examples of Paradigm Shifts:

I.   **From mass tourism to responsible tourism:** moving away from tourism-related high-impact activities that harm the environment and toward experiences that put the needs of the local community and the environment first.

II. **From the Circular Economy to Linear Consumption:** employing renewable energy, cutting waste, and encouraging ethical labor practices as examples of sustainable tourism businesses.

III. **Transitioning from profit-driven companies to social enterprises**: Emphasizing the development of beneficial social and environmental effects in

addition to financial gains, such as aiding regional communities and encouraging biodiversity preservation.

10.5 Possible influence of carbon economy on existing ecotourism market

An economic structure that prioritizes sustainability and reducing carbon emissions is known as a "carbon economy." It refers to a shift from a fossil fuel-based, high-carbon economy to one that is low- or even zero-carbon. Strategies including carbon capture technologies, energy efficiency, and renewable energy are frequently used in this transition.

A new type of economy that places a price on carbon is beginning to emerge as the globe becomes increasingly concerned about climate change. The objective is the same whether carbon credits, taxes, or stringent emissions regulations are used: make pollution more costly and environmental protection more profitable. Additionally, this change is already beginning to affect a number of industries, including ecotourism.

Figure1. The interrelationship between carbon emissions, tourism, economy, and energy use (source: Raihan, 2024)
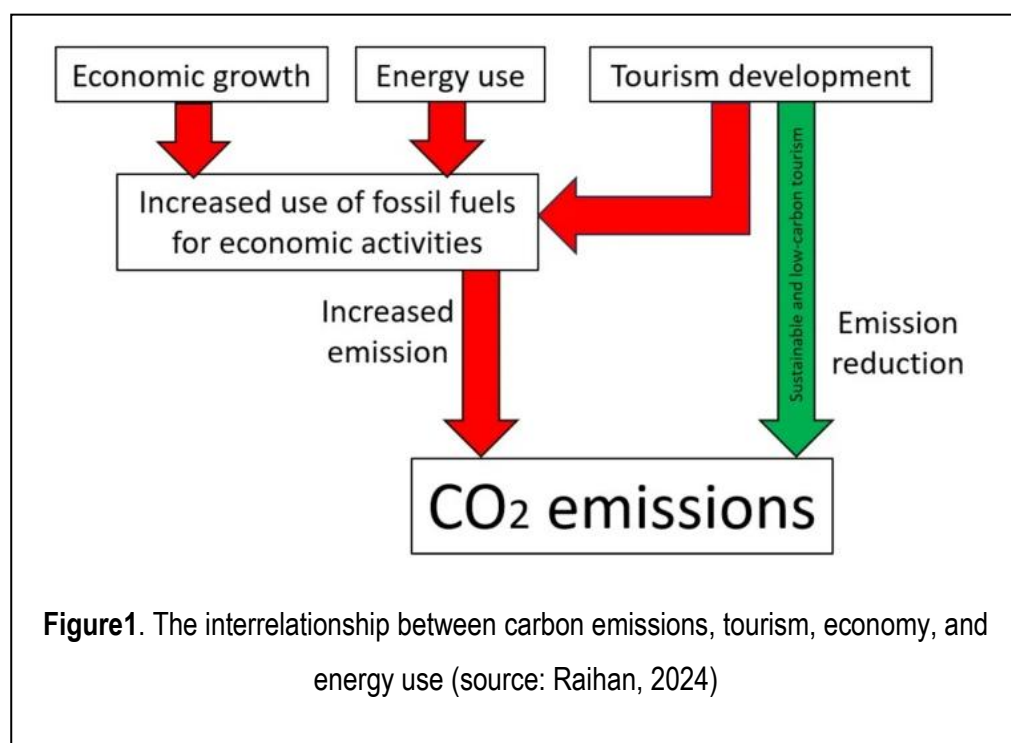
Ecotourism has long been a means of seeing the world without causing harm to it for tourists who are concerned about sustainability. Imagine solar-powered jungle hotels, eco-friendly tour operators, and guided treks that teach you about the local ecosystems. However, the stakes and opportunities for ecotourism are going to rise

significantly as the carbon economy expands. Ultimately, the carbon economy may contribute to the development of ecotourism into something even more powerful and transparent. However, support will also be necessary to guarantee that the market expands in a way that is equitable and inclusive, particularly for smaller companies. If implemented properly, this change could aid tourists in both seeing and healing the planet.

The rise of a carbon economy could significantly influence the ecotourism market, potentially creating both challenges and opportunities. Ecotourism, which emphasizes environmental conservation and sustainable practices, aligns well with the goals of a carbon economy, making it a promising sector. However, the carbon economy also necessitates addressing the carbon footprint of tourism activities, potentially impacting existing ecotourism models and requiring adaptation. The interrelationship between carbon emissions, tourism, economy, and energy use is shown in figure 1.

As people look to reduce their environmental footprint, the carbon economy may lead to an increase in demand for ecotourism and other sustainable travel options. Funding and incentives for ecotourism enterprises to invest in carbon reduction initiatives may be offered by governments and international organizations. Ecotourism enterprises can embrace innovative sustainable tourism technologies like carbon capture and renewable energy solutions that are fueled by the carbon economy. By demonstrating their dedication to sustainability and cultivating a favorable reputation among eco-aware tourists, ecotourism companies that successfully manage carbon emissions can obtain a competitive edge. In order to create and carry out sustainable tourism policies, governments, non-governmental organizations, and ecotourism enterprises can work together and form partnerships thanks to the carbon economy.

The ecotourism industry faces both potential and challenges as a result of the carbon economy. Ecotourism companies may prosper in the new economic climate and contribute significantly to the advancement of a low-carbon future by embracing sustainability and adjusting to the changing needs of environmentally concerned tourists.

Summary

➢ The ecotourism market is a global demand for tourism activities that prioritize nature and environmental conservation. It includes travel to natural areas,

➢ aiming to reduce environmental impact, profit local communities, and provide educational awareness.

➢ Growing environmental consciousness and a desire for distinctive, sustainable travel experiences are fueling the ecotourism industry's rapid expansion.

➢ The eco-tourism business strategy emphasizes all of the services that they offer to customers, such as recycling biodegradable goods and using renewable energy sources.

➢ Grassroots agencies tackle many environmental issues daily to ensure a better sustainable future.

➢ Local institutions and grassroots organizations are essential to sustainable ecotourism markets because they guarantee environmental preservation and community benefits.

➢ The ecotourism sector is undergoing a paradigm shift due to climate change, shifting from traditional tourism to more strong and sustainable methods.

➢ An economic structure that prioritizes sustainability and reducing carbon emissions is known as a "carbon economy." It refers to a shift from a fossil fuel-based, high-carbon economy to one that is low- or even zero-carbon.

Check your progress

1. What do you understand by the term ecotourism markets?

2. Explain the role of local institutions and grass root agencies on existing ecotourism market?

3. Describe paradigm shift in ecotourism market due to climate change with suitable examples?

4. What are the possible influence of carbon economy on existing ecotourism market?

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UNIT 11. ECOTOURISM MARKETS II

Unit Structure

11.0. Learning Objectives
11.1 Introduction
11.2. Eco-Circuits of Western Ghats
11.3. Rain forest (Silent Valley)
11.4. Mountains (Himalaya)
11.5. Coastal Areas
11.6. National Park
11.7. Sanctuaries
11.8. Biosphere reserve
11.9. Village rural Eco-tourism
11.10. TQM in Ecotourism resorts
11.11. Terminal Questions
11.12. Summary

11.0. Learning Objectives

After you have studied this unit, you should be able:

✓ Understand the concept and significance of ecotourism markets.

✓ Identify and analyze key ecotourism destinations in India, including rainforests, mountains, coastal areas, national parks, sanctuaries, biosphere reserves, and rural villages.

✓ Recognize the role of Total Quality Management (TQM) in enhancing the quality of ecotourism resorts.

11.1 Introduction

Eco-tourism is a form of tourism that focuses on nature, with a particular emphasis on educating visitors about the natural and cultural surroundings. It serves as a tool for preserving nature while also providing sustainable economic advantages for local residents (Hall and Brown, 2000). Ecotourism illustrates the interconnected relationships among tourists, the environment, and culture, resulting in significant benefits for the local

economy and ensuring conditions for long-term development and optimal enjoyment for tourists. The primary goal of ecotourism is to offer high-quality tourism experiences while safeguarding the environment and promoting lasting local growth. Essential elements of ecotourism include engaging the local community, securing financial resources, and utilizing environmental assets. Operational considerations for effectively managing ecotourism sustainably include evaluating capacity limits, improving transportation management, conservation efforts, adapting strategies, overseeing developments, aligning marketing strategies with sustainability principles, and involving local communities in planning eco-friendly tourist destinations (Cater,1993).

11.1.1. The Western Ghats

The Western Ghats, extending along the west coast of India, covers an area of 160,000 square kilometers2 and is one of 34 global biodiversity hotspots for conservation as defined by Conservation International (the Western Ghats and Sri Lanka are the two on the Indian subcontinent, the third being the Himalayas)3. The Western Ghats, also known as the Sahyadri Hills stretch for 1,600 kilometres along the west coast of India, interrupted only by the 30 kilometers long Palghat Gap, through the states Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Goa, Maharashtra and Gujarat. About 60% of the Western Ghats is in the state of Karnataka.

The area is extraordinarily rich in biodiversity. Although the total area is less than 6 percent of the land area of India, the Western Ghats contains more than 30 percent of all plant, fish, fauna, bird, and mammal species found in India - over 5,000 flowering plants, 139 mammals, 508 birds and 179 amphibian species. Like other biodiversity hotspots, the Western Ghats has a high proportion of endemic species. At least 325 globally threatened species occur here. The region also has a spectacular assemblage of large mammals and is home to several nationally significant wildlife sanctuaries, tiger reserves, and national parks. The Western Ghats contains numerous medicinal plants and important genetic resources such as the wild relatives of grains (rice, barley, Eleucine coracana), fruits (mango, garcinias, banana, jackfruit), and spices (black pepper, cinnamon, cardamom, and nutmeg).

In addition to rich biodiversity, the Western Ghats is home to diverse social, religious, and linguistic groups. There is high cultural diversity of rituals, customs, and lifestyles in the region including a significant population of advisers and forest dwellers. The ecosystem provides important services for human well-being, such as clean air and water, flood and climate control, and soil regeneration, as well as food, medicines and raw materials – and the dependency on it for livelihoods, cultural and spiritual sustenance is high.

Approximately 245 million people live in the peninsular Indian states that receive most of their water supply from rivers originating in the Western Ghats. The range forms the catchment area for a complex of river systems that drain almost 40% of India.7 Thus, the soils and waters of this region sustain the livelihoods of millions of people. With the possible exception of the Indo-Malayan region, no other hotspot impacts the lives of so many people.

11.2. Eco-Circuits of Western Ghats

The Western Ghats, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, stretch along the western coast of India, traversing the states of Maharashtra, Goa, Karnataka, Kerala, and Tamil Nadu. Known for their exceptional biodiversity and endemism, the Western Ghats are one of the eight "hottest hotspots" of biological diversity in the world. In an effort to promote sustainable tourism while preserving the ecological integrity of this region, eco-circuits—strategically planned tourism routes—have been developed to balance conservation with community livelihood.

11.2.1. Concept of Eco-Circuits

Eco-circuits are thematic travel routes that integrate multiple destinations within a geographical region, focusing on nature-based, community-led, and environmentally sustainable tourism. These circuits are designed to:
- ✓ Promote low-impact tourism.
- ✓ Educate visitors on local ecology and culture.
- ✓ Provide economic benefits to local communities.

✓ Encourage conservation of natural and cultural heritage.

In the context of the Western Ghats, eco-circuits help tourists experience the unique biodiversity, landscape features, traditional knowledge systems, and indigenous lifestyles in a responsible and immersive way.

11.2.2. Major Eco-Circuits in the Western Ghats

1. **Dandeli-Anshi Tiger Reserve Circuit (Karnataka)**

The Dandeli-Anshi Tiger Reserve, encompassing moist-deciduous and evergreen forests, is home to over 200 bird species and large mammals like the black panther. Key attractions include:

- **Kali River**: Popular for white-water rafting.
- **Kavala Caves**: Limestone caves with historical significance.
- **Syntheri Rocks**: Tall granite cliffs.
- **Sykes Point**: Offers panoramic views.

Tourism has increased from 6,000 visitors in 2001 to over 25,000, with Eco-Development Committees (EDCs) managing activities and revenue-sharing among local communities .

2. **Athirappilly-Vazhachal Circuit (Kerala)**

Known as the "Niagara of South India," Athirappilly Falls is the largest in Kerala. The nearby Vazhachal Falls and the surrounding forests are rich in biodiversity, including elephants, tigers, and various hornbill species. The area attracts approximately 7 million tourists annually.

3. **Siruvani Waterfalls Circuit (Tamil Nadu)**

Located 36 km west of Coimbatore, Siruvani Waterfalls is renowned for its scenic beauty and the indigenous Mudugar and Irulas tribes. The area has become a popular spot for ecotourism, offering trekking and nature walks .

4. Chinnar Wildlife Sanctuary Circuit (Kerala)

Chinnar, a biodiversity hotspot, offers nature trails and walking safaris. Eco-Development Committees, such as those in Champakad and Alampatty, manage tourism activities and share benefits with local communities .

5. Agasthyakoodam Trek Circuit (Kerala-Tamil Nadu Border)

Agasthyakoodam, the second-highest peak in the Western Ghats, offers a challenging 20 km trek through rich biodiversity. The trek requires permits from the Kerala Forest Department and is a haven for trekkers and nature enthusiasts.

6. Palani Hills Circuit (Tamil Nadu)

The Palani Hills are home to diverse flora and fauna, including Bengal tigers and Nilgiri tahr. The region offers trekking opportunities and is part of the larger Western Ghats ecosystem.

Socio-Economic and Environmental Impacts

Ecotourism in the Western Ghats has led to:

- **Economic Benefits**: Increased revenue for local communities through tourism-related activities.
- **Employment Opportunities**: Creation of jobs in guiding, hospitality, and conservation efforts.
- **Cultural Preservation**: Promotion of indigenous cultures and traditions.
- **Environmental Awareness**: Enhanced understanding of biodiversity and conservation needs.

However, challenges include:

- **Over tourism**: Potential degradation of natural resources due to high visitor numbers.
- **Community Displacement**: Conflicts arising from conservation efforts and land use.
- **Resource Management**: Balancing tourism growth with sustainable practices.

Sustainable Practices and Community Involvement

Successful ecotourism circuits emphasize:

- **Community Engagement**: Involving local communities in decision-making and benefit-sharing.
- **Conservation Education**: Educating visitors on the importance of preserving natural habitats.
- **Sustainable Infrastructure**: Developing eco-friendly accommodations and facilities.
- **Monitoring and Evaluation**: Regular assessment of environmental and social impacts.

11.2.3. Major Ecotourism Circuits in Uttarakhand

1. **Dehradun–Rishikesh Circuit**

This circuit offers a blend of natural beauty and spiritual experiences. Key attractions include:

- **Thano**: A serene forest area known for its biodiversity.
- **Sanjay Jheel**: A picturesque lake surrounded by lush greenery.
- **Ranichauri**: A tranquil spot offering panoramic views of the Himalayas.
- **Dhanolti**: A hill station known for its cool climate and scenic beauty.
- **Devalsari**: A village offering insights into rural life.
- **Chaurasikuti (Beetles Ashram)**: A place of spiritual significance.

This circuit is designed to promote nature walks, bird watching, and cultural experiences.

2. **Kotdwar Circuit**

Located in the Garhwal region, this circuit is rich in wildlife and historical sites. Attractions include:

- **Rasiyabad and Chidiyapur**: Forested areas teeming with wildlife.
- **Ladang**: A village known for its traditional lifestyle.
- **Kanvashram**: An ancient hermitage with historical significance.
- **Sendikhal and Sneh**: Scenic spots offering panoramic views.
- **Tadkeshwar Temple**: A revered religious site.
- **Kolhuchaur**: A dense forest area ideal for nature walks.

This circuit aims to promote wildlife tourism and cultural heritage.

3. Ramnagar–Nainital Circuit

This circuit offers a mix of wildlife, birding, and scenic beauty. Key attractions include:

- **Sitabani and Chunakhan**: Wildlife-rich areas known for their diverse flora and fauna.
- **Pawalgarh, Kilbari, and Vinayak**: Popular spots for bird watching.
- **Soni**: A village with a significant Mahadev temple.
- **Kausani**: A hill station offering breathtaking views of the Himalayas.

This circuit focuses on promoting wildlife conservation and birding activities.

4. Yamuna–Tons Valley Circuit

This circuit encompasses a variety of attractions, from forest areas to waterfalls. Highlights include:

- **Jhajhra and Timal Forest Area**: Dense forests rich in biodiversity.
- **Asan Barrage**: A site for boating and bird watching.
- **Chakrata and Kanasar**: Scenic spots offering panoramic views.
- **Budher, Sandara, and Jarmola**: Forest guest houses over 100 years old.
- **Kempty Falls**: A popular waterfall attracting tourists.

This circuit aims to promote sustainable tourism and heritage conservation.

5. Nandhour–Champawat Circuit

Located in the Kumaon region, this circuit offers a blend of wildlife, religious sites, and cultural experiences. Key attractions include:

- **Chorgaliya in Nandhour Wildlife Sanctuary**: A wildlife sanctuary known for its rich biodiversity.
- **Boom near Sharda River**: A spot for angling activities.
- **Champawat**: A town with rich forest areas and historical significance.
- **Dhunaghat**: A Devi temple known for its unique tradition of hurling stones by villagers.
- **Bhingrada**: A Sikh religious place with historical importance.

- **Paharpani and Mahesh Khan**: Forest guest houses offering insights into rural life.

This circuit focuses on promoting eco-friendly tourism and community involvement.

1.3 Forms of Tourism

We highlight here the two key forms of tourism in the Western Ghats region – Ecotourism & Wildlife and Pilgrim and Religious tourism.

Other forms are cultural (and heritage) as well as social and business travel.
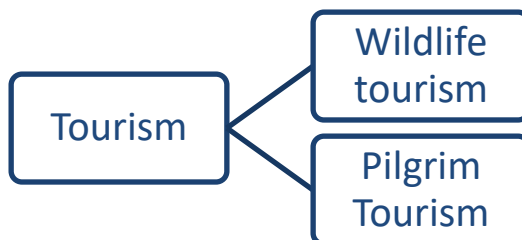
1.3.1 Nature based Tourism: Ecotourism and Wildlife Tourism

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                    ┌──────────┐
          ┌─────────│ Wildlife │
┌────────┐│         │ tourism  │
│Tourism ││         └──────────┘
└────────┘│         ┌──────────┐
          └─────────│ Pilgrim  │
                    │ Tourism  │
                    └──────────┘
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According to IUCN, "ecotourism is 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.

Ecotourism is based on principles of participation; consultation and sharing of benefits among all stakeholders especially the local community on whose resources ecotourism thrives. The participation of local people in ecotourism projects is essential for reasons that cover ethical, environmental and economic objectives. It is important that local people play an important role in managing their own destiny rather than be imposed by decisions taken by policy makers from outside. It must however be recognized that the resources that ecotourism relies on belongs to local people and their partaking of the benefits is only fair.

Biosphere reserves and forests are identified as ecotourism resources. The guidelines highlight scientific planning based on the thorough understanding of local resources and carrying capacity as well as continuous monitoring and detailed codes of conduct for developers, operators, visitors, host communities, NGOs and research institutions.

1.3.2. Pilgrim Tourism

From the earliest times, the mountains have been considered the abode of Gods and revered and worshipped. There are hundreds of shrines and temples built atop the hills and innumerable caves and monuments linked to Hindu, Buddhist and Jain traditions all over the Western Ghats. Mohan Pai an ecologist has documented some of the well known pilgrim sites in the Western Ghats. The smaller sites are too numerous to be documented here.

Pilgrim tourism is one of the most popular forms of tourism in the Western Ghats. Very few regulations have lead to huge number of tragedies like the recent stampede and loss of over 100 lives at Pullumedu, in Kerala's Iddukki district. While the Kerala government has ordered a judicial probe into the horrific tragedy that occurred in the reserved forest region part of the Periyar Tiger Reserve, unauthorised vehicular traffic, lack of basic amenities for the huge crowds that flow in on days of religious significance, inadequate crowd control measures and deployment of police and disaster management trained personnel, contribute in hindsight to such tragedies.

The scale of pilgrimages have increased and the impact of such large numbers of people on resources and the ecology and quality of life of local people becomes a complex and highly charged political issue.

11.3. Rain forest (Silent Valley)

Silent Valley National Park, nestled in the Western Ghats of Kerala, India, stands as a testament to successful conservation efforts and sustainable ecotourism. Spanning over 237 square kilometers, it is one of the last undisturbed stretches of tropical rainforest in the country, harboring a rich tapestry of biodiversity. This chapter delves into the ecological significance of Silent Valley and examines how ecotourism initiatives contribute to its preservation and the well-being of local communities.

Ecological Significance

Silent Valley is recognized for its exceptional biodiversity. The park is home to approximately 960 species of flora, including 17 listed on the IUCN Red List, and 315 species of fauna. Notably, it shelters the endangered lion-tailed macaque (*Macaca silenus*), with over half of its global population residing within the park's boundaries. Other significant species include the Nilgiri langur, Malabar giant squirrel, and various endemic birds such as the Nilgiri wood pigeon and the Great Indian hornbill .

The park's diverse ecosystems range from tropical evergreen forests to montane wet temperate forests, supporting a plethora of plant species like *Cullenia exarillata*, *Mesua ferrea*, and *Calophyllum elatum*. These habitats are crucial for maintaining ecological balance and supporting the myriad species that inhabit the region .

Ecotourism Initiatives

Guided Treks and Nature Walks

Silent Valley offers a range of ecotourism activities, primarily centered around guided treks and nature walks. These excursions are designed to educate visitors about the park's unique flora and fauna while minimizing human impact on the environment. Trails such as the Sairandhri and Kunthi River routes provide immersive experiences, allowing tourists to observe wildlife and learn about conservation efforts firsthand.

Community Involvement

Local communities, particularly the Irula tribe, play a pivotal role in the park's ecotourism framework. They are actively engaged as guides, educators, and participants in sustainable practices. This involvement not only provides economic benefits to these communities but also fosters a sense of ownership and responsibility towards conservation efforts.

Educational Programs

The park conducts various educational programs aimed at raising awareness about biodiversity conservation. These programs target school groups, researchers, and the general public, emphasizing the importance of preserving ecosystems like Silent Valley. The Sairandhri Interpretation Centre serves as a hub for these activities, offering exhibits and information on the park's ecological significance.

Conservation and Challenges

Ecotourism in Silent Valley has contributed to increased awareness and support for conservation initiatives. However, challenges persist, including the need for sustainable infrastructure development, management of visitor numbers to prevent ecological degradation, and addressing the impacts of climate change on local biodiversity.

Ongoing research and monitoring are essential to adapt management strategies and ensure that ecotourism continues to benefit both the environment and local communities. Collaborative efforts between governmental agencies, non-governmental organizations, and local stakeholders are crucial in overcoming these challenges.

11.4. Mountains (Himalaya)

The Himalayan mountain range, spanning five countries including India, Nepal, Bhutan, and Tibet, is renowned for its breathtaking landscapes, rich biodiversity, and unique cultural heritage. In recent decades, the region has emerged as a prominent ecotourism destination, attracting travelers seeking authentic experiences amidst pristine natural settings. This chapter delves into the ecotourism markets of the Himalayas, highlighting notable destinations, community-driven initiatives, and sustainable practices that contribute to the region's growing appeal.

Eco-Circuits of the Himalayas

The Himalayas offer diverse ecotourism circuits that cater to various interests, from trekking and wildlife observation to cultural immersion. Some prominent circuits include:

- **Uttarakhand Circuit**: Home to the Valley of Flowers National Park, a UNESCO World Heritage Site known for its alpine flora and endangered species like the snow leopard and musk deer. The region also boasts sacred sites like Hemkund Sahib, attracting pilgrims and trekkers alike.
- **Himachal Pradesh Circuit**: Features destinations such as Spiti Valley and Great Himalayan National Park, offering opportunities for trekking, wildlife viewing, and cultural exploration.
- **Ladakh Circuit**: Known for its high-altitude deserts, monasteries, and unique Buddhist culture, Ladakh offers experiences like homestays, village walks, and stargazing.
- **Sikkim and Arunachal Pradesh Circuit**: Encompasses the Khangchendzonga Biosphere Reserve and the Eastern Himalayas, known for their rich biodiversity and indigenous cultures.

These circuits promote sustainable tourism by integrating conservation efforts with community development.

11.5. Coastal Areas

Coastal areas, with their rich biodiversity and unique ecosystems, have become prominent destinations for ecotourism. In India, the vast coastline stretches over 7,500 kilometers, encompassing diverse habitats such as mangroves, coral reefs, estuaries, and sandy beaches. These regions not only attract tourists but also support the livelihoods of millions through fishing, agriculture, and tourism. This chapter delves into the coastal ecotourism markets in India, highlighting key destinations like Goa and the Andaman and Nicobar Islands, and discussing their significance, challenges, and sustainable practices.

1. Goa: Ecotourism in the Western Coastal Region

Ecotourism Attractions

Goa, known for its pristine beaches and vibrant culture, also offers unique ecotourism experiences:

Mangrove Ecosystems: Goa's mangroves play a crucial role in ecological stability. Initiatives like kayaking tours through these mangrove forests help in conservation efforts and raise awareness among tourists about the importance of these ecosystems

Forest Areas: The state government has plans to develop forest areas as ecotourism destinations, promoting nature trails and wildlife observation while ensuring minimal environmental impact.

2. Andaman and Nicobar Islands: A Model for Island Ecotourism

Ecotourism Attractions

The Andaman and Nicobar Islands offer diverse ecotourism experiences:

- **Marine Biodiversity**: The islands are renowned for their rich marine life, including coral reefs, sea turtles, and dolphins. Responsible wildlife tourism practices are promoted to protect these habitats.
- **Cultural Heritage**: Indigenous communities, such as the Nicobarese, play a vital role in preserving the cultural heritage of the islands. Their involvement in ecotourism helps in maintaining traditional practices and promoting cultural exchange.

Sustainable Strategies for Coastal Ecotourism

- **Education and Awareness**: Implementing programs to educate tourists and local communities about the importance of conservation and sustainable practices.
- **Regulation and Management**: Establishing guidelines and regulations to control visitor numbers and activities, ensuring minimal impact on ecosystems.
- **Community Participation**: Involving local communities in decision-making processes and providing them with economic incentives through ecotourism activities.
- **Monitoring and Evaluation**: Regularly assessing the impact of ecotourism activities on the environment and communities to make necessary adjustments and improvements.

Key Coastal Ecotourism Destinations in India

1. Gulf of Mannar Marine National Park, Tamil Nadu

Established in 1986, the Gulf of Mannar Marine National Park comprises 21 islands and adjacent coral reefs. It is home to diverse marine life, including the endangered dugong.

Ecotourism activities include glass-bottom boat rides, snorkeling, and guided tours, promoting marine conservation and providing alternative livelihoods to local communities .

2. Chilika Lake, Odisha

Chilika Lake, Asia's largest brackish water lagoon, is a hotspot for migratory birds and supports a vibrant fishing community. The Chilika Development Authority has implemented community-based ecotourism initiatives, such as boat tours and handicraft centers, to promote sustainable tourism and empower local communities.

3. Gahirmatha Beach, Odisha

Gahirmatha Beach is the world's most important nesting site for olive ridley sea turtles. The Gahirmatha Marine Wildlife Sanctuary, established in 1997, protects this critical habitat. Ecotourism activities focus on turtle conservation awareness and responsible wildlife observation .

4. Ashtamudi Lake, Kerala

Ashtamudi Lake, a Ramsar Wetland of International Importance, offers unique backwater experiences. Boat cruises, coir retting demonstrations, and cultural tours provide tourists with insights into local traditions and ecosystems, supporting sustainable livelihoods .

5. Marine National Park, Gulf of Kutch, Gujarat

Established in 1982, this park encompasses 42 islands and is known for its coral reefs and mangrove ecosystems. Ecotourism activities include guided snorkeling tours and nature walks, promoting marine conservation and community engagement .

Successful examples include:

- **Chilika Development Authority**: Implemented community-based ecotourism initiatives, such as boat tours and handicraft centers, to promote sustainable tourism and empower local communities.

- **Gulf of Mannar Marine National Park**: Offers glass-bottom boat rides and guided tours, promoting marine conservation and providing alternative livelihoods to local communities.

11.6. National Park

National parks play a pivotal role in the conservation of biodiversity and the promotion of sustainable tourism. In India, parks like **Corbett National Park** and **Kanha National Park** have become prominent ecotourism destinations, attracting visitors from across the globe. This chapter delves into the ecotourism markets of these parks, highlighting their significance, challenges, and sustainable practices.

1. **Corbett National Park: A Legacy of Conservation**

Established in 1936 as **Hailey National Park**, Corbett is India's oldest national park and a pioneer in wildlife conservation. Located in Uttarakhand, it spans over 1,300 square kilometers and is renowned for its population of Bengal tigers.

Ecotourism Activities

- **Safari Tours**: Jeep and elephant safaris offer visitors a chance to observe wildlife in their natural habitat.
- **Bird Watching**: With over 600 species of birds, the park is a haven for bird enthusiasts.
- **Nature Walks**: Guided walks provide insights into the park's diverse ecosystems.

Socio-Economic Impacts

Ecotourism in Corbett has led to:

- **Employment Opportunities**: Local communities are engaged as guides, drivers, and hospitality staff.
- **Revenue Generation**: Entrance fees and safari charges contribute to the local economy.

However, challenges such as **over tourism** have emerged, leading to habitat degradation and strain on resources.

2. **Kanha National Park: A Model of Sustainable Ecotourism**

Kanha National Park, located in Madhya Pradesh, is one of the largest national parks in India. It is celebrated for its efforts in conservation and community involvement.

Ecotourism Activities

- **Jungle Safaris**: Visitors can explore the park's rich biodiversity through guided safaris.
- **Cultural Interactions**: The park offers opportunities to engage with indigenous communities like the **Baiga** and **Gond** tribes.

Socio-Economic Impacts

Ecotourism in Kanha has:

- **Empowered Indigenous Communities**: The Baiga tribe, once relocated, now participates in tourism activities, promoting their culture and traditions.
- **Enhanced Local Incomes**: Residents benefit from employment in tourism-related sectors.

Sustainable practices include waste management, tree plantation drives, and community-based tourism initiatives.

Sustainable Practices in Ecotourism

Both parks have implemented sustainable practices to mitigate the negative impacts of tourism:

- **Corbett**: Initiatives like the **Pawalgarh Conservation Reserve** aim to promote community-based tourism and reduce pressure on the main park area.
- **Kanha**: The **Surwahi Social Ecoestate** focuses on stakeholder engagement, landscape planning, and poverty alleviation through ecotourism.

11.7. Sanctuaries

Wildlife sanctuaries play a crucial role in the conservation of biodiversity and the promotion of sustainable tourism. In India, sanctuaries like **Bharatpur Bird Sanctuary** and **Satpura**

Tiger Reserve have become prominent ecotourism destinations, attracting visitors from across the globe. This chapter delves into the ecotourism markets of these sanctuaries, highlighting their significance, challenges, and sustainable practices.

1.   Bharatpur Bird Sanctuary: A Haven for Avian Enthusiasts

Ecotourism Attractions

Bharatpur Bird Sanctuary, also known as **Keoladeo Ghana National Park**, is a UNESCO World Heritage Site renowned for its rich avian biodiversity. The sanctuary is home to over 350 species of birds, both resident and migratory, making it a paradise for bird watchers.

- **Bird Watching**: The sanctuary offers guided tours for bird enthusiasts, providing opportunities to observe a diverse range of bird species in their natural habitat.
- **Cultural Experiences**: The region's rich cultural heritage adds to the ecotourism experience, with visitors exploring local traditions and cuisines.

Socio-Economic Impacts

Ecotourism in Bharatpur has led to:

- **Employment Opportunities**: Local communities are engaged as guides, drivers, and hospitality staff, benefiting economically from tourism activities.
- **Revenue Generation**: Entrance fees and safari charges contribute to the local economy, supporting infrastructure development and conservation efforts.

2.   Satpura Tiger Reserve: A Model of Sustainable Ecotourism

Ecotourism Attractions

Satpura Tiger Reserve, located in Madhya Pradesh, is known for its rich biodiversity and unique landscape. The reserve offers a range of ecotourism experiences:

- **Jungle Safaris**: Visitors can explore the reserve's diverse ecosystems through guided jeep and boat safaris.
- **Trekking and Nature Walks**: The reserve offers trekking routes and nature walks, allowing visitors to experience its flora and fauna up close.

- **Cultural Interactions**: The reserve's proximity to indigenous communities provides opportunities for cultural exchange and learning.

Socio-Economic Impacts

Ecotourism in Satpura has:

- **Community Engagement**: The reserve has implemented initiatives to involve local communities in conservation efforts, providing employment and livelihood opportunities.
- **Revenue Generation**: Tourism activities contribute to the local economy, supporting infrastructure development and conservation initiatives.

Sustainable Strategies for Sanctuary-Based Ecotourism

To promote sustainable ecotourism in sanctuaries, the following strategies are recommended:

- **Community Participation**: Involving local communities in decision-making processes and providing them with economic incentives through ecotourism activities.
- **Regulation and Management**: Implementing guidelines and regulations to control visitor numbers and activities, ensuring minimal impact on ecosystems.
- **Education and Awareness**: Conducting programs to educate tourists and local communities about the importance of conservation and sustainable practices.
- **Monitoring and Evaluation**: Regularly assessing the impact of ecotourism activities on the environment and communities to make necessary adjustments and improvements.

11.8. Biosphere reserve

Biosphere reserves are designated areas that aim to conserve biodiversity while promoting sustainable development. In India, biosphere reserves like the **Nilgiri Biosphere Reserve** and the **Nanda Devi Biosphere Reserve** play a crucial role in balancing conservation efforts with the needs of local communities. This chapter delves into the ecotourism markets of these biosphere reserves, highlighting their significance, challenges, and sustainable practices.

1.   Nilgiri Biosphere Reserve: A Model of Tropical Biodiversity

Ecotourism Attractions

The Nilgiri Biosphere Reserve, located in the Western Ghats, is one of the world's biodiversity hotspots. It encompasses several protected areas, including **Mudumalai National Park**, **Bandipur National Park**, and **Wayanad Wildlife Sanctuary**. The reserve is home to a rich variety of flora and fauna, including tigers, elephants, and numerous endemic species.

- **Wildlife Safaris**: Visitors can embark on jeep and elephant safaris to observe wildlife in their natural habitats.
- **Trekking and Nature Walks**: The reserve offers various trekking routes and nature walks, allowing tourists to experience its diverse ecosystems up close.
- **Cultural Experiences**: The region's rich cultural heritage adds to the ecotourism experience, with visitors exploring local traditions and cuisines.

Socio-Economic Impacts

Ecotourism in the Nilgiri Biosphere Reserve has led to:

- **Employment Opportunities**: Local communities are engaged as guides, drivers, and hospitality staff, benefiting economically from tourism activities.
- **Revenue Generation**: Entrance fees and safari charges contribute to the local economy, supporting infrastructure development and conservation efforts.

Challenges

Despite its popularity, the Nilgiri Biosphere Reserve faces challenges such as:

- **Uncontrolled Tourism**: The rapid growth of tourism has led to habitat degradation and strain on resources. Unregulated development, including resorts in elephant corridors, has disrupted wildlife habitats .
- **Population Pressure**: The region's population has increased significantly, leading to overexploitation of natural resources and increased human-wildlife conflicts.

2.   Nanda Devi Biosphere Reserve: Balancing Conservation and Livelihoods

Ecotourism Attractions

The Nanda Devi Biosphere Reserve, located in the western Himalayas, is known for its stunning landscapes and rich biodiversity. The reserve encompasses the **Nanda Devi National Park**, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, and is home to rare and endangered species such as the musk deer and blue sheep.

- **Trekking and Adventure Tourism**: The reserve offers challenging trekking routes, attracting adventure enthusiasts.
- **Cultural Interactions**: The reserve's proximity to indigenous communities provides opportunities for cultural exchange and learning.

Socio-Economic Impacts

Ecotourism in the Nanda Devi Biosphere Reserve has:

- **Community Engagement**: The reserve has implemented initiatives to involve local communities in conservation efforts, providing employment and livelihood opportunities.
- **Revenue Generation**: Tourism activities contribute to the local economy, supporting infrastructure development and conservation initiatives.

Challenges

The Nanda Devi Biosphere Reserve faces several challenges:

- **Tourism Restrictions**: In 1982, adventure tourism was banned in the core zone to protect the environment. While this led to ecological improvements, it also resulted in a decline in local incomes and migration from the area.
- **Conflicts with Management**: Studies have shown that local communities felt a loss of benefits after the establishment of the biosphere reserve. While the Forest Department implemented eco-development programs, villagers felt that these did not compensate for the loss of income from tourism and access to natural resources.

Sustainable Strategies for Biosphere Reserve-Based Ecotourism

To promote sustainable ecotourism in biosphere reserves, the following strategies are recommended:

- **Community Participation**: Involving local communities in decision-making processes and providing them with economic incentives through ecotourism activities.
- **Regulation and Management**: Implementing guidelines and regulations to control visitor numbers and activities, ensuring minimal impact on ecosystems.
- **Education and Awareness**: Conducting programs to educate tourists and local communities about the importance of conservation and sustainable practices.
- **Monitoring and Evaluation**: Regularly assessing the impact of ecotourism activities on the environment and communities to make necessary adjustments and improvements.

11.9. Village rural Eco-tourism

Village rural ecotourism is a form of sustainable tourism that emphasizes the conservation of natural resources, the preservation of local cultures, and the enhancement of local livelihoods. It involves the active participation of rural communities in tourism activities, ensuring that the benefits of tourism are equitably distributed and that the ecological integrity of rural areas is maintained.

Significance of Village Rural Ecotourism

Village rural ecotourism offers several benefits:

- **Conservation of Biodiversity**: By promoting awareness and appreciation of local ecosystems, rural ecotourism contributes to the conservation of biodiversity.
- **Economic Development**: It provides alternative livelihoods for rural communities, reducing dependence on traditional agriculture and mitigating poverty.
- **Cultural Preservation**: It encourages the preservation and promotion of local traditions, crafts, and languages.
- **Sustainable Development**: It fosters sustainable land-use practices and minimizes the environmental impact of tourism activities.

Case Studies

1. Mawlynnong and Sohliya, Meghalaya

In Meghalaya, the villages of Mawlynnong and Sohliya have successfully integrated ecotourism into their development strategies. Mawlynnong, known as the "cleanest village

in Asia," and Sohliya, dubbed the "Strawberry village," have leveraged their unique cultural and natural assets to attract tourists. Community participation is central to their ecotourism initiatives. The village council (Dorbar Shong) plays a pivotal role in organizing home stays and local eateries (dhabas), and in establishing tourism cooperatives to coordinate activities among stakeholders. These efforts have led to increased community engagement and sustainable tourism development .

2. **Binsar Wildlife Sanctuary, Uttarakhand**

The Binsar Wildlife Sanctuary in the Kumaon Hills has implemented a homestay program that involves local villagers in ecotourism activities. This initiative has influenced villagers' attitudes and behaviors towards conservation objectives. Positive attitudes towards the homestay program have manifested in behaviors such as participation in public-private partnerships, involvement in tourism-related cultural programs, and contributions to nature interpretation activities. The program has encouraged local guardianship behavior and has the potential to expand conservation efforts with greater cooperation from stakeholders .

3. **Orchha Sanctuary, Madhya Pradesh**

Orchha Sanctuary in Central India has significant potential for community-based ecotourism development. Integrating the community requires skill development and capacity building, particularly among the youth, in tourism business skills. Establishing village-level institutions to manage ecotourism activities can facilitate infrastructure development, benefit sharing, and participation in conservation efforts. This approach ensures that the local community is actively involved in and benefits from ecotourism .

Challenges in Village Rural Ecotourism

Despite its potential, village rural ecotourism faces several challenges:

- **Lack of Infrastructure**: Inadequate infrastructure, such as roads, electricity, and sanitation, can hinder the development of ecotourism.

- **Limited Capacity**: Limited skills and knowledge among local communities can affect the quality of tourism services.
- **Overdependence on Tourism**: Overreliance on tourism can make communities vulnerable to fluctuations in tourist numbers.
- **Environmental Degradation**: Poorly managed tourism can lead to environmental degradation, including pollution and habitat destruction.

Strategies for Sustainable Village Rural Ecotourism

To promote sustainable village rural ecotourism, the following strategies are recommended:

- **Community Capacity Building**: Provide training and capacity-building programs to enhance the skills and knowledge of local communities in tourism management.
- **Infrastructure Development**: Invest in basic infrastructure to support tourism activities while ensuring minimal environmental impact.
- **Diversification of Livelihoods**: Encourage the diversification of livelihoods to reduce overdependence on tourism and enhance economic resilience.
- **Environmental Management**: Implement measures to manage and mitigate the environmental impact of tourism activities.
- **Policy Support**: Advocate for policies that support sustainable rural ecotourism development and provide incentives for community participation.

Central Government Schemes for Promotion of Rural Tourism in India.

The Government of India has taken various initiatives and introduced policies to grow rural tourism. This section takes a look at some key schemes and policy decisions.

1. **Rural Tourism Infrastructure Development Component under PIDDC scheme – Promoting Village Tourism:** The Ministry of Tourism has released a Rural Tourism Infrastructure Development Component, which is part of the Product Infrastructure Development for Destinations and Circuits (PIDDC) Scheme. 100 percent Central Assistance is provided in this scheme. The objective of this scheme is to showcase rural life, art, culture and heritage in villages, that have core competence in art and craft, handloom, textiles, and natural environment. Central Financial Assistance (CFA) up to Rs.50.00 Lakh for infrastructure development and up to Rs.20.00 Lakh for capacity building is provided. The activities permitted under this scheme are improvement of village surroundings and village connectivity within the panchayat limits (does not include major roads which connect the village), providing solid waste management and sewerage management, village illumination, tourism related activities such as procurement of equipments and tourist accommodation. The State government will identify the region suited for promotion of rural tourism, and is also

responsible for seeking convergence of other schemes and allocations for broader development at the site to benefit local communities.

2. Swadesh Darshan – Positioning Tourism as an Engine of Growth:

The Ministry of Tourism introduced Swadesh Darshan, a Central Sector scheme for Integrated Development of Theme-Based Tourist Circuits. A Tourist Circuit is a route on which at least three major tourist destinations are located such that none of them are in the same town, village or city, while a tourist circuit with a consistent theme such as religion, culture, ethnicity and niche is known as Theme Based Tourist Circuit. The allocated budget for the scheme is Rs.600.00 crore for 2015-16 and components eligible for financing are infrastructure development; capacity development, skill development and knowledge development; and online presence.

3. Scheme for Organizing Fair, Festival and Tourism related events – Domestic Promotion & Publicity including Hospitality (DPPH) :

Ministry of Tourism provides financial assistance to State Governments to organize fairs and festivals and tourism related events such as seminars, conclaves and conventions. These events are to be selected by the State Government based on the tourism potential. Maximum financial assistance to be provided to each State Government during 1 financial year should not exceed Rs.50.00 lakh.

4. Hunar Se Rozgar Tak (HSRT), Ministry of Tourism

Fully funded by Ministry of Tourism, this programme offers courses in hospitality trades of food production, food and beverage service, housekeeping and bakery and patisserie. Apart from that courses to bring up tourist escorts, tourist facilitators, event facilitators, security guards, tour assistants, transfer assistants and office assistants have also been set up. This programme is delivered by Institutes of Hotel Management, Food Craft Institutes and State Tourism Development Corporations amongst others.

5. Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana (PMKVY) – Developing Human Capital

This is a flagship outcome-based skill training scheme aimed at benefiting 24 lakh youth across the country. A monetary reward is provided to trainees on assessment and certification. The National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC) will implement the scheme and involve the Sector Skill Councils to identify job roles for which training could be imparted through the PMKVY. A budget of INR 1,500 crore has been allocated for the same which would also include awareness, mobilization and administrative expenses. NSDC supports vocational training institutes by providing funding up to 75% of the total project cost in case of for-profit entities and up to 85% of the total project cost in case of not-for-profit entities. Candidates who successfully complete the courses are given a Skill Card.

11.10. TQM in Ecotourism resorts

Total Quality Management (TQM) is a comprehensive approach to improving organizational performance by focusing on customer satisfaction, continuous improvement, and employee involvement. In the context of ecotourism resorts, TQM becomes particularly crucial as these establishments aim to provide exceptional service while adhering to sustainable practices and preserving natural resources. Implementing TQM in ecotourism resorts can enhance service quality, foster customer loyalty, and contribute to the overall sustainability goals of the resort.

TQM Principles in Ecotourism Resorts

The core principles of TQM, when applied to ecotourism resorts, include:

1. **Customer Focus**: Understanding and meeting the needs and expectations of guests, ensuring their satisfaction and loyalty.
2. **Leadership**: Establishing a clear vision and direction for the resort, fostering a culture of quality and sustainability.
3. **Engagement of People**: Involving all employees in quality initiatives, empowering them to contribute to continuous improvement.
4. **Process Approach**: Managing activities and resources as processes to achieve consistent and predictable results.
5. **Improvement**: Continuously enhancing processes, products, and services to achieve better performance.
6. **Evidence-Based Decision Making**: Using data and information to make informed decisions that drive improvements.
7. **Relationship Management**: Building and maintaining mutually beneficial relationships with stakeholders, including guests, suppliers, and the local community.

Impact of TQM on Ecotourism Resorts

Implementing TQM in ecotourism resorts can lead to several positive outcomes:

- **Enhanced Service Quality**: By focusing on continuous improvement and customer satisfaction, resorts can provide high-quality services that meet or exceed guest expectations.

- **Increased Customer Satisfaction and Loyalty**: Satisfied guests are more likely to return and recommend the resort to others, leading to increased bookings and revenue.
- **Operational Efficiency**: Streamlining processes and eliminating inefficiencies can reduce costs and improve resource utilization.
- **Sustainability**: TQM encourages the adoption of sustainable practices, such as reducing waste and conserving energy, which align with the principles of ecotourism.
- **Employee Satisfaction**: Involving employees in decision-making and improvement initiatives can lead to higher job satisfaction and retention.

Best Practices for Implementing TQM in Ecotourism Resorts

To effectively implement TQM, ecotourism resorts can adopt the following best practices:

- **Staff Training and Development**: Providing regular training to employees on quality standards, customer service, and sustainability practices.
- **Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs)**: Developing and maintaining clear SOPs to ensure consistency and quality in service delivery.
- **Customer Feedback Mechanisms**: Implementing systems to collect and analyze guest feedback, using it to drive improvements.
- **Sustainability Initiatives**: Integrating sustainable practices into daily operations, such as waste management, energy conservation, and supporting local communities.
- **Performance Monitoring and Evaluation**: Regularly assessing performance against quality standards and making necessary adjustments to improve outcomes.

Challenges in Implementing TQM in Ecotourism Resorts

Despite its benefits, implementing TQM in ecotourism resorts can present challenges:

- **Resistance to Change**: Employees and management may be resistant to adopting new practices and processes.
- **Resource Constraints**: Limited financial and human resources can hinder the implementation of quality initiatives.
- **Balancing Quality and Sustainability**: Striking a balance between providing high-quality services and adhering to sustainable practices can be challenging.
- **Maintaining Consistency**: Ensuring consistent service quality across all areas of the resort can be difficult, especially in larger establishments.

Case Study: TQM Implementation in an Ecotourism Resort

A study conducted on a luxury resort in Greece examined the impact of leadership, organizational culture, customer-oriented strategy, and human resource empowerment on innovation and TQM. The findings indicated that these factors positively influenced innovation, which in turn enhanced TQM and contributed to the resort's sustainability and effectiveness. This case underscores the importance of a holistic approach to quality management in the hospitality

11.11. Terminal Questions

1. Discuss the significance of the Western Ghats as an ecotourism destination.
2. Describe the major ecotourism circuits in the Western Ghats and their key attractions.
3. Analyze the socio-economic and environmental impacts of ecotourism in the Western Ghats.
4. Propose strategies for promoting sustainable ecotourism in the Western Ghats.
5. Discuss the significance of Uttarakhand as an ecotourism destination.
6. Describe the major ecotourism circuits in Uttarakhand and their key attractions.
7. Analyze the socio-economic and environmental impacts of ecotourism in Uttarakhand.
8. Propose strategies for promoting sustainable ecotourism in Uttarakhand.
9. Discuss the significance of mangrove ecosystems in Goa's ecotourism sector.
10. Analyze the role of indigenous communities in promoting sustainable tourism in the Andaman and Nicobar Islands.
11. Compare and contrast the ecotourism strategies implemented in Goa and the Andaman and Nicobar Islands.
12. Propose measures to mitigate the challenges faced by coastal regions in maintaining sustainable ecotourism.
13. Define coastal ecotourism and discuss its significance in sustainable development.
14. Identify and describe key coastal ecotourism destinations in India.
15. Analyze the socio-economic impacts of coastal ecotourism on local communities.
16. Discuss the environmental challenges associated with coastal ecotourism.
17. Explore sustainable practices and community involvement in coastal ecotourism.
18. Evaluate the role of government agencies in promoting coastal ecotourism.
19. Propose strategies to mitigate the negative impacts of coastal ecotourism.

11.12. Summary

The Western Ghats offer diverse and rich ecotourism experiences that contribute to conservation and community development. By adopting sustainable practices and ensuring active community participation, these ecotourism circuits can thrive while preserving the unique biodiversity of the region. The eco-circuits of the Western Ghats offer a transformative way to experience nature, blending conservation with cultural immersion and local empowerment. As India moves toward a more sustainable tourism model, the Western Ghats stand as a beacon of how nature and people can thrive together when tourism is designed with empathy, knowledge, and care. Uttarakhand's ecotourism circuits offer diverse and rich experiences that contribute to conservation and community development. By adopting sustainable practices and ensuring active community participation, these circuits can thrive while preserving the unique biodiversity of the region.

Silent Valley National Park exemplifies the potential of ecotourism as a tool for conservation and community development. Through well-managed ecotourism initiatives, the park not only preserves its rich biodiversity but also provides sustainable livelihoods for local communities. As global interest in nature-based tourism grows, Silent Valley offers valuable lessons in balancing ecological preservation with economic development. Coastal areas in India, particularly Goa and the Andaman and Nicobar Islands, offer unique ecotourism opportunities that contribute to environmental conservation and community development. By adopting sustainable practices and involving local communities, these regions can ensure the long-term viability of their ecotourism sectors. It is essential to balance tourism growth with conservation efforts to preserve the rich biodiversity and cultural heritage of these coastal areas.

National parks like Corbett and Kanha play a crucial role in promoting ecotourism and conservation. While they offer economic benefits and opportunities for cultural exchange, challenges such as over tourism and equitable benefit distribution need to be addressed. Sustainable practices and community involvement are essential for the long-term success

of ecotourism in these regions. Wildlife sanctuaries like Bharatpur Bird Sanctuary and Satpura Tiger Reserve play a crucial role in promoting ecotourism and conservation. While they offer economic benefits and opportunities for cultural exchange, challenges such as over tourism and equitable benefit distribution need to be addressed. Sustainable practices and community involvement are essential for the long-term success of ecotourism in these regions. Biosphere reserves like the Nilgiri and Nanda Devi play a crucial role in promoting ecotourism and conservation. While they offer economic benefits and opportunities for cultural exchange, challenges such as uncontrolled tourism and conflicts with management need to be addressed. Sustainable practices and community involvement are essential for the long-term success of ecotourism in these regions.

Village rural ecotourism offers a pathway for sustainable development in rural areas, balancing conservation objectives with the enhancement of local livelihoods. Through community participation, capacity building, and sustainable practices, rural communities can harness the benefits of ecotourism while preserving their cultural and natural heritage. Addressing the challenges and implementing effective strategies are crucial for the long-term success of rural ecotourism initiatives. Implementing Total Quality Management in ecotourism resorts is essential for enhancing service quality, customer satisfaction, and sustainability. By adhering to TQM principles and adopting best practices, resorts can achieve operational excellence and contribute to the broader goals of sustainable tourism. Overcoming challenges such as resistance to change and resource constraints requires commitment from leadership, continuous training, and a focus on continuous improvement.

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UNIT 12: DESIGNING ECO-TOURISM PRODUCTS

Unit Structure

12.0 Learning Objectives

12.1 Introduction

12.2 What is a tourism product?

12.3 Use of traditional Knowledge and technology

12.4 Case studies

12.0 Learning Objectives

After completing this unit, you shall be able to:

- Understand the Eco-tourism products

- Understand the attributes of Eco-tourism products.

- Understand the role of traditional knowledge and technology in Eco-tourism.

- Discuss the case studies of eco-tourism in India.

12.1 Introduction

The resources offered by nature, such as mountains, deserts, forests, climate, visual beauty, landforms, flora and fauna, beaches, and marine areas, are all considered natural tourist resources. The purpose of developing these natural resources is to turn them into tourism-related goods. For example, a location with stunning scenery and natural beauty is useless for tourism if it lacks the essential infrastructure, such as roads, transit, electricity, water, lodging, and dining options. on order to offer them as tourism products on the market, the natural resources are developed and managed. When discussing the development of a natural resource into a tourism product, accessibility becomes important. If a location is difficult to get to, it is useless. A tourist would require a means of transportation in order to get to a location or an attraction. A automobile, coach, taxi, aeroplane, ship or train could be this kind of transportation. If a tourist location is situated in an area without appropriate transportation or where no transportation is available, it is of low value. Additionally, a location rich in natural resources must have quality lodging options in order for the resources to be used for tourism. A visitor must have a place to stay when he arrives at his location. A place to stay is essential to a tourist attraction and plays a significant role. It has frequently

been observed that without lodging infrastructure, it becomes challenging to market a region rich in natural resources as a tourism offering. Depending on their price and the amenities provided, tourists can choose from a variety of lodging options. Hotels, resorts, youth hostels, guest houses, tents, dak bungalows, home stays, and dharamshalas are a few types of lodging. In the process of turning a natural resource into a tourism product, amenities and activities are equally crucial. All additional things that we need when travelling, like food, water, energy, telecommunication, and medical facilities, are considered amenities. Activities are all the things that a tourist site does to keep visitors happy. These pursuits could include dining, shopping, sailing, and nature walks, among other things.

12.2 What is a tourism product?

Anything that is presented to the market with the potential to meet a need or desire is considered a product. Products can be broadly classified into two categories: tangible (like computers) and intangible (like services like internet access).

Both material (like food) and immaterial (like a guided stroll in a protected area) elements make up a tourism offering. Every element is presented separately, but when combined, they also give the traveler a cohesive, one-of-a-kind experience.
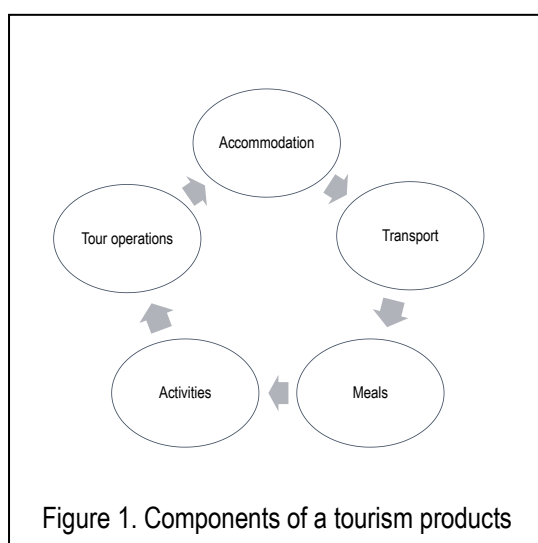

Figure 1. Components of a tourism products

When evaluating the value of a tourism product, it's helpful to distinguish between the tangible and intangible goods and services that consumers buy (such as tours, lodging, meals, guided walks, and transportation) and the value that the experience provides,

both during the actual delivery of the product (such as a one-week vacation) and long after it has ended (such as memories of the one-week vacation).

It's also crucial to remember that in the tourism industry, consumers buy the goods before they get it. This characteristic will affect the product's positioning, packaging, and marketing to potential buyers.

Attributes of Eco-tourism products

The attributes of ecotourism products which includes wildlife, naturalness, landscape, cultural heritage, and community as important ecotourism criteria. The impact exerted by multiple dimensions which include cultural, economic, social and environmental dimension to strengthen the tourism (Abdurahman et al., 2016).

12.3 Use of traditional Knowledge and technology

In the travel industry, sustainable smart ecotourism is becoming more and more popular (Del Vecchio et al., 2021). It is imperative to create procedures that reduce detrimental impacts on natural and cultural ecosystems, given the increasing global tourist population and the substantial economic impact of tourism (Guo and Gu, 2022). This is what ecotourism, a subset of nature tourism, seeks to accomplish by encouraging environmental preservation, education, and the preservation of natural regions. This assertion, however, is not well supported by the available data (Guo and Gu, 2022). The statement would be strengthened by looking into and offering concrete instances of sustainable smart ecotourism projects that have been effective.

Beyond minimising damage, sustainable ecotourism aims to strike a balance between the requirements of current and future generations. Its main objectives are to maximise the use of resources, promote local economic growth, and guarantee the fair allocation of both social and financial resources (Stanciu et al., 2022). This entails establishing long-term job possibilities, offering residents public facilities, and putting policies in place to lessen resource scarcity (Buhalis and Amaranggana, 2015). More thought must be given to the effects on the ecosystem, though, and there must be proof that sustainable ecotourism can accomplish these objectives.

Smart ecotourism has grown quickly as a result of the introduction of smart technologies including smartphones, artificial intelligence (AI), the cloud, and the

Internet of Things (IoT). Smartness in ecotourism is the use of information and communication technology (ICT) to encourage sustainable practices, improve destination management, and improve the visitor experience (Sarkar et al., 2019). The goal of smart ecotourism is to preserve natural resources, help local communities, and offer visitors first-rate services. Nevertheless, there are no particular advantages that smart technology offers, nor are there any possible difficulties or disadvantages related to their application (Car et al., 2019). It would also be advantageous to investigate any studies on the sustainability and efficacy of smart technologies in ecotourism.

Figure 2. Integration of traditional knowledge and Smart Technologies in Eco-tourism.
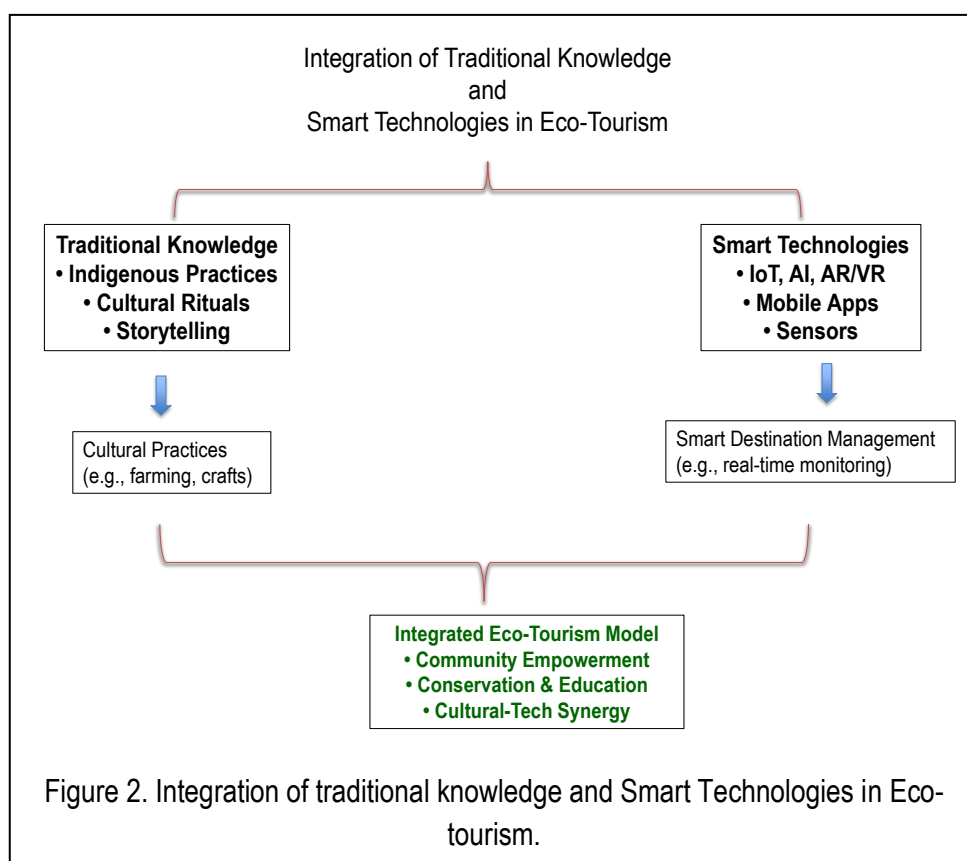
Furthermore, the tourism sector has undergone a full transformation as a result of the integration of intelligent technologies like AI, IoT, and data analytics. These technologies make it easier to monitor environmental indicators, efficiently manage tourist flows, and give visitors immersive, customised experiences. While AI-driven systems can optimise energy use in eco-lodges, minimising ecological disruption, smart sensors may be used to monitor animal habitats. Rather from being a fad, the desire for sustainable smart ecotourism signifies a fundamental shift in the global tourism business. More and more tourists are looking for authentic experiences that fit

with their values of cultural appreciation and environmental responsibility. The long-term advantages of adopting sustainable practices are also seen by destinations, such as increased climate change resistance, resource preservation, and economic diversification (Zhang and Deng, 2024).

Check your Progress

Q1. Discuss the essential components required to transform a natural tourist resource into a viable tourism product. Why is infrastructure so critical in this process?

Q.2 How does smart ecotourism contribute to sustainable tourism development?

Q.3 Explain with reference to technologies such as AI, IoT, and data analytics.

Q.4 In what ways can traditional knowledge and technology contribute to the development of sustainable ecotourism? Illustrate with examples.

Q.5 Evaluate the balance between economic development and environmental conservation in ecotourism. How can smart technologies help achieve this balance?

Q.6 What are two examples of tangible and intangible components of a tourism product?

Q.7 Why is accessibility considered an important factor in developing natural resources into tourism products?

12.4 Case studies

1.   Kerala: Ecological Sustainable Tourism (https://egyankosh.ac.in/bitstream/123456789/65767/1/Unit-9.pdf)

Kerala, also referred to as "God's own country," is one of India's most well-known ecotourism attractions. Numerous locations are renowned for their breathtaking scenery and unspoiled beauty. There are twelve wildlife sanctuaries and two national parks in Kerala's Western Ghats region. These parks and sanctuaries are popular ecotourism destinations. Due to its beauty and abundance of woods and wildlife, Kerala's Western Ghats enjoy a natural edge. Kerala's main ecotourism destinations can be broadly categorised as wildlife sanctuaries, beaches, hill stations, and backwaters. Kerala's abundance of evergreen forests and biological diversity are two

other factors that contribute to the growth of ecotourism. Water bodies have developed inside the forest as a result of dam construction and other associated initiatives. Recreational facilities are being built out of these. The Keralan government is launching a number of activities as part of a marketing push, including trekking, mountaineering, bird viewing, and more. Kerala offers a variety of ecotourism locations.

1.1 Aralam Wildlife Sanctuary

Aralam covers 55 km^2 of woodland in the Western Ghats, is Kannur's only wildlife sanctuary. There are enjoyable trekking possibilities in the forest. The migration of butterflies is a breathtaking natural phenomenon that is observed in the Aralam. Similar to Parambikulam, Aralam's ecotourism initiatives are centred on the local population. In Aralam, regular nature camps are organised with a focus on children. Natural resource conservation is prioritized because it is what the next generation will inherit.

1.2 Thenmala (India's First Planned Eco tourism destination)

India's first planned ecotourism destination is Thenmala, which is situated in Kerala in the foothills of the Western Ghats. This charming community, which is only 72 kilometres from Thiruvananthapuram, gets its name from the native terms "Then," which means honey, and "Mala," which means hillock; these two words together represent "honey hills." The region is well known for its premium honey, which is enhanced with therapeutic qualities by the distinctive plants found in its woodlands. The Shenduruney Wildlife Sanctuary, which covers an area of almost 100 square kilometres, is a major attraction in Thenmala. Named for the rare Chenkuruny tree (*Gluta travancorica*), it was designated a sanctuary in 1984 and is a biodiversity hotspot. The Deer Rehabilitation Centre, which offers a sanctuary to deer that stray from the forest, is another point of interest. This centre, which offers visitors a combination of environmental education and amusement in a tranquil natural setting, is located by the Kallada river and includes tree huts and a small children's park.

1.3 Parambikulam Tiger Reserve

The terms "parambu" (reeds) and "kulam" (waterhole) are the roots of the word "Parambikulam." There is a scientifically managed teak plantation within this reserve.

The magnificent Kannimara tree in this plantation is a testament to the passing of time. Tribal people venerate this tree, which is thought to be the oldest and largest of its kind. They see it as a representation of the gods, and the sheer size and reach of this tree only serve to highlight its magnificence. With alluring travel packages including eco meditation, elephant song trial, bear route trail, camps, tree top hut, island hut, trekking, full moon census, bamboo rafting, and more, Parambikulam Tiger Reserve is one of the nation's newest ecotourism destinations. Local tribal communities actively involved in organizing all of these events. Handicrafts made from bamboo, bee wax balm, carry-paper bags, honey processing, and other souvenirs are some significant sources of revenue. To eliminate plastic from the area, the residents make eco-friendly souvenirs. The communities maintained their resources and owned ecotourism businesses (Vinodan and Manalel, 2011).

2. Nagaland: Community Participation (https://egyankosh.ac.in/bitstream/123456789/65767/1/Unit-9.pdf)

The majority of Naga society is centred on communities. Important choices pertaining to farming, forest conservation, and other significant socioeconomic issues are taken collaboratively in the majority of Naga villages. To ensure the success of ecotourism in Nagaland, it is imperative to strategically engage local participation. Through community involvement in issues related to the management of local public utilities, public services, and state government operations related to education, water supply, roads, forests, power, sanitation, health, and other welfare and development programs, the Nagaland Communitization of Public Institutions and Service Act 2002 (Act No. 2 of 2002) "provides for empowerment of the community and delegations of the powers and function of the state government to the local authorities."

Although the State Tourism Department encourages community involvement in ecotourism and sustainable tourism development, it does not have enough facilities to handle the influx of both domestic and foreign visitors. As a result, the villages have begun to set up "homestays," which are also known as paid guest accommodations. Since shifting farming does not provide as much revenue for the state as tourism does, the administration is also interested in encouraging tourism in Nagaland in order to wean people away from it.

2.1 Ecotourism in Khonoma Village

Khonoma village's ecotourism projects are a huge success. Given that hunting and logging were causing environmental damage, the local council outlawed these practices. Therefore, the first action that was taken was to recognise the necessity for environmental protection. Since community members took the lead in organising and carrying out ecotourism projects, the village's ecotourism is still recognised as a community initiative even though it was started and sponsored by a government program. Because the people, not the government, are the only ones who own the land, there is a strong sense of ownership in the community (Kinny and Lanusosang 1996).

2.2 Amur Falcon Conservation

Many Amur Falcons from Siberia make an annual stopover in the state of Nagaland on their way to Africa (Kinny and Lanusosang 1996). It is regarded as one of the world's largest falcon roosts. The Nagaland Forest Department, three village councils in the Wokha district, and the local NGO Natural Naga, Nagaland Wildlife and Biodiversity Conservation Trust are primarily responsible for carrying out the conservation program for the migratory bird Amur Falcon. The Wokha district's village councils ruled hunting and shooting Amur Falcons unlawful and penalised. Together with the assistance of the rural population, this ban contributed to the preservation of Nagaland's migratory birds. Hundreds of visitors and interested scientists have begun to visit it as well.

2.3 Wildlife and Bird Sanctuaries

The state of Nagaland is home to numerous wildlife and bird sanctuaries that are dispersed around the region. The three main ones are the Ghosu Bird Sanctuary in Zunheboto district, the Fakim Wildlife Sanctuary in Tuensang district, and Intanki National Park in Peren district. Despite the state's enormous potential for sustainable tourism, a number of factors have surfaced as barriers to the intended growth. For any type of development, peace and security are critical components. There are insurgent issues throughout India's northeast. The situation in Nagaland has somewhat improved since the ceasefire agreement was signed in 1997 and the Peace Accord in 2015. Nonetheless, tourists continue to feel anxious and uneasy. Numerous limitations exist in the state, including inadequate communication facilities, inadequate infrastructure, and entry requirements such as restricted area permits and inner line permits.

Currently, the state's development of ecotourism endeavours is entirely dependent on government assistance. The future of tourism in this area depends on ongoing peace and stability.

3. Gujarat: Development of Ecotourism Circuit
(https://egyankosh.ac.in/bitstream/123456789/65767/1/Unit-9.pdf)

Gujarat is regarded as the perfect destination for a wildlife vacation due to its abundance of wildlife (GOG 2017). The Asiatic lion, Indian wild ass, endangered antelopes, and various deer are among the many species of wildlife that may be seen in Gujarat. Because it has numerous rare and endangered species of migratory bird wildlife sanctuaries, it is also one of India's most significant birdwatching destinations. The first marine national park in India is located there as well. For nature lovers, the forest department provides a number of ecotourism destinations tucked away in the thick forests. Due to its ancient dinosaur nesting sites in Balasinore, the remnants of the Indus Valley Civilisation in Dholavira and Lothal, and its historical and cultural monuments and artefacts, the state enjoys a unique position among eco-tourists. Gujarat is unique since it is the only place where animals like Asiatic Lions and Wild Ass can still be found (https://www.ecotourismgujarat.com).

3.1 The Gir Forest National Park and Wildlife Sanctuary

Gujarat's wildlife sanctuary was created in 1965. It is regarded as one of Asia's most significant protected areas and is the only habitat for pure Asiatic Lions (*Panthera leo persica*). Gir's ecology is made up of a variety of plants and animals.

3.2 Great Rann of Kutch

The Rann's natural history is distinctive and important for global conservation. There are fossils from the Pre-Jurassic, Jurassic, and Cretaceous periods. A fossil park is in charge of a region that is abundant in wood and marine fossils. The fossils of large trees are of interest to the visitors. During the winter, the migratory birds can be seen swarming different bodies of water.

3.3 Ecotourism in Dang

In Gujarat's far south sits the tribally dominated district of Dang. It features thick forests and mountain ranges. Some of the main tribes in the Dang district are the Bhil, Konkani, Varli, Kotwaliya, Kathodi, and Gamit. The state has designated the Dang district as an ecotourism destination. Rich forests, including big and little waterfalls, stunning scenery, and a distinctive tribal culture characterise the territory. Known as the "abode of serpents," Saputara in the southern Dang region provides ecotourists with a wealth of animals. Interesting facts concerning the topography and anthropology of the Dangs can be found at the Saputara Museum (Vnasiya and Mahida 2012).

4. Assam: Potentials and Challenges (https://egyankosh.ac.in/bitstream/123456789/65767/1/Unit-9.pdf)

Assam is a popular tourist destination because of natural scenic surroundings and ideal climate. The state is well-known for its diverse flora and wildlife, historical sites, pilgrimage sites, tea gardens, and vibrant cultural events, all of which are regarded as tourist attractions. Assam has a number of national parks, biosphere reserves, and sanctuaries for wildlife and birds that could be useful for tourism.

i) Kaziranga National Park: Due to numerious steep terrains, marshes, plains, and water bodies in the Kaziranga National Park, it is home to variety of rare plant and animal species. In addition to being a sight to behold, the Great Indian One-horned Rhinoceros and little turtles offer an exciting adventure sports experience.

ii) Manas National Park: Manas National Park, a significant Indian tiger reserve and a World Heritage Site, is situated on the banks of the Manas River. It is characterized by tropical semi evergreens, moist deciduous trees, and highland savanna. Additionally, the park is home to unique and endangered plants and animals. Additionally, the presence of uncommon species draws both domestic and foreign tourists.

iii) Nameri National Park: Nameri National Park is situated in the eastern Himalayan foothills. Angling (fishing) on the Jiabharali (river), trekking, and bird watching are among the park's primary activities. It should be mentioned that Nameri has been known for their golden mahseer fishing since the colonial era. Anglers from all over the world come to the Jiabharali each year. On the premise of "catch, record, and release," regulated fishing is allowed.

iv) Majuli: It is located in Brahmaputra River of Assam, the once-largest river island in the world is now listed as endangered due to significant erosion. Ahoms, Kacharis, Brahmins, Koch Rajbongshi, Bonais, Koibartas, Nepalis, and other ethnic groups are all mixed together in Majuli. Because of the Satras (monasteries), which have served as the centre of learning for the previous five hundred years, it is regarded as the cultural capital and the birthplace of Assamese civilisation. The pottery produced at Majuli bears similarities to that produced in the Harrappan Civilisation of antiquity. Driftwood-fired kilns are used to burn beaten clay to create pottery (Devi, 2012).

For ecotourism endeavours, it is important to preserve the distinctive cultures of the several ethnic communities who call Majuli island home. The best boats are part of the island's activities, as is the art of mask-making. Majuli, a wetland, is a haven for wildlife and plants, home to numerous rare and endangered species, including migratory birds that come here in the winter. Among the main attractions that promote ecotourism are the vibrant cultures, migratory birds, Ali-ai-ligang festival, pottery making, mask making, Paal Naam and Raas Leela festival, and mask-making. Haflong, Maibang, Umrangso, Panimoor, Chandubi Lake, Rani Reserved Forest, Hajo, Darranga, Mayong, and Bardowa, are other Assamese locations with enormous potential for ecotourism endeavours (Devi 2012). When it comes to ecotourism endeavours, the state of Assam has enormous potential.

Check your Progress

Q.8 Which state is known as God's own country?

Q.9 Naga society is mostly community based". State whether the statement is true or false.

Q.10 Which national park in Assam is a part of the World Heritage Sites?

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Answers

Q.8. Kerala; Q.9. True; Q.10. Manas National Park