Rising Madhya Pradesh through Eco-tourism

Mita Ashish Shah*

ABSTRACT

Tourism has emerged as the biggest industry of future. The importance of tourism has been well recognized worldwide. Now tourism has ushered into a new area of expansion and importance, it faces numerous emerging challenges and competition both from within and outside the country. In fact tourism has enormous potential of employment generation and poverty alleviation. India has shown potential to emerge as a leading player in the global tourism. The recent policy changes also envisage strategic planning, management and development of tourism in India. Eco tourism is one of the fastest growing trends in the worldwide tourism industry. Environment has an intrinsic value which outweighs its value as a tourism asset. Present paper highlights the scope of eco tourism in Madhya Pradesh.

Introduction

Eco tourism is one of the most popular alternative tourism forms. Its advocates believe that it engenders a sense of need for environmental protection among local population once the latter realize conservation does not mean loss of economic opportunity. Hopefully, eco tourism can provide the local community with jobs, enabling a shift away from unsustainable practices such as over grazing, mining or logging in environmentally sensitive ecosystems. Eco-tourism is responsible travel to natural areas which conserves the environment and improves the welfare of local people. In some countries eco-tourism has got important place in the economy and practices of sustainable development.

The heart State Madhya Pradesh houses a diversity of ecosystems including plateaus, ravines, ridges, valleys, riparian areas and flat plains. With four major forest types, nine National Parks and 25 Wildlife Sanctuaries, the Tiger State houses one of the richest floral diversity. With around 5000 plant species (Singh and Upadhyay, 2014), Home to six tribes with distinct customs, practices and diverse cultures, the biological diversity and Ecotourism sustains livelihoods and ensures food security to two-fifth of the state 73.34 million population. Tourism in Madhya Pradesh is centered on

^{*} Assistant Professor, Department of Commerce and Management, Mata Gujri Mahila Mahavidyalaya (Auto.) Jabalpur, Madhya Pradesh

nature and wildlife. It is in this context that "Eco-tourism" has gained its bearing in Madhya Pradesh. Eco-tourism also had potential to play an important role in creating environmental as well as cultural, conservation and support of life maintenance awareness amongst all the stakeholders, local communities, tourists, government and the private sector. In the present scenario the Eco-tourism is a grooming sector in developing nations. Nature tourism is the organized viewing of wildlife. Nature tourists pay a considerable amount of money to participate in viewing wildlife in their native countries and in foreign countries that promote nature viewing to attract the revenue of tourists (Moreno, 2005). Eco-tourism is a form of tourism that involves visiting natural areas in the remote wilderness or rural environments. According to the definition and principles of ecotourism established by The International Ecotourism Society (Ties) in 1990, ecotourism is "Responsible travel to natural areas that conserves the environment and improves the well-being of local people" (Ties, 1990).

Eco-tourism requires a multidisciplinary approach, careful planning and strict guidelines and regulations that will guarantee sustainable operation. Governments, the private enterprises, local communities and nongovernmental organizations all have an important role to play. Eco-tourism is a complex and multidisciplinary phenomenon. There are many facets that must be addressed. In the changed context parks are becoming more and more interested in eco-tourism. Not only are they receiving greater numbers of visitors but park managers are starting to see tourism as a new source of funding and employment. Eco-tourism is already producing concrete benefits in the fields of conservation and sustainable development. In many countries eco-tourism has become an effective way to raise standards of living of rural communities and conservation of nature. Fillion (1992) estimated that nature tourism is contributing more than \$223 billion to the national income of various countries.

The concept of tourism as a phenomenon involves the movement of people within their own country or accesses the national borders. Tourism involves basically three elements (Wahab, 1975), namely man (human element as the creator of the act of tourism), space (the physical element to be necessarily covered by the act itself), and time (the temporal element which is compared by the trip itself and the stay at the destination). Conceptually, tourism is defined as the sum of the phenomenon and relationships arising from the travel and stay of non-residents in so far as they do not lead to permanent residents and are not connected with an earning activity (Burkart & Medlik, 1984). Tourism has to be regarded as an industry although, strictly in accordance with the classical definition of the term, it is not industry, however, tourism would be regarded as an industry which contributes to its economic

Tourism has been recognized as a major global industry today. The economic potential of tourism is most important since tourism creates jobs, brings in new money, relatively clean, and has minimum start up costs. Tourism also helps in conservation of national heritage, protecting the environment and contributing in improving in the quality of life and well being of local communication (Geoffrey Wall, 1997). Importantly, the impacts of tourism can be viewed as arising from the type or types of tourism involved the characteristics of the communities in which tourism is taking place and the nature of resident visitor encounters. Furthermore, investigations of tourism cycles suggest that impacts in a destination area are likely to change with time as the nature of tourists, the community and resident - visitor interactions also change (Butlar, 1980). Cumulative impact assessment is a challenging topic which is beginning to attract the attention of those changed with conducting and evaluating impact assessments, although, it has yet to receive much recognition in the tourism literature (Shoemaker, 1994). While environmental impact assessments for specific tourism developments such as resorts and marines have an important place. Thus, in addition to impact assessment, monitoring of change may be required and mitigation strategies may be required to reduce the magnitude of environmental consequences (Nelson et al., 1993).

Mexican architect Hector Ceballos-Lascurain, defined it as travelling to relatively undisturbed eco tourism as travelling to relatively undisturbed or uncontaminated natural areas with the specific objective of studying, admiring and enjoying the scenery and its wild animals and plants, as well as any existing cultural manifestations found in these areas. The term eco-tourism was coined by Hector Ceballos-Lascurain in 1983, and was initially used to

describe nature based travel to relatively undisturbed areas with an emphasis on education. The concept has, however, developed to a scientifically based approach to the planning, management and development of sustainable tourism products and activities. It is an enlightening, particularly travel experience to environments, both natural and cultural, that ensures the sustainable use, at an appropriate level, of environmental resources and, while producing viable economic opportunities for the tourism and host communities, makes the use of these through conservation beneficial to all tourism role players. Eco-tourism focuses on local cultures, wilderness adventures, volunteering, personal growth and learning new ways to live on our vulnerable planet.

Tourism is an economic activity has an inevitable effect on the environment, especially at the destination level. Environment is a core feature of the tourist product. Tourists are therefore, consumers of environment 'travelling to producers' locations, the tourist destination, in order to consume the product (Goodall, 1992). Again, tourism has been responsible for a great number of environmental problems. The major problems arise because the environment is a zero priced public good, and as with any zero priced good, is subject to excess demand and over utilization. This over utilization of the natural resources, especially during the peak periods of tourist activity as well as often ill planned tourism development, have provided a number of examples where tourism is in conflict with the environment (Mathieson, and Wall, 1982). Consequently, the natural of the tourism-environment relationship is quite difficult to analyse and the estimation of environmental impacts associated with tourism development is an extremely complex issue. Apart from the positive and negative environmental impacts, which are caused directly by the tourism industry, there are several impacts which can be indirectly attributed to tourism activity within a destination. These impacts result from the tourism supporting industries, which supply the destination with essential products to meet the tourist demand (Buhalis and Fletcher, 1995). Thus, tourism development is dependent on environment and therefore essential measures should be taken in order to maintain and even improve the quality of the natural resources. The General Secretary of the WTO suggests that there is a peaceful co-existence of tourism and the environment, which is illustrated by the following propositions (Savignac, 1992): (i) travel promotes environmental awareness; (ii) well managed tourism is a good friend of the environment; (iii) a successful tourism industry needs a high quality environment. Consequently, conservation and preservation of natural areas, archaeological sites and historic monuments have emerged as important spill over benefits of tourism. In turn, the promotion of these prime tourist resources enhances and perpetuates tourism by maintaining its very foundation (Mathieson and Wall, 1982). Tourism often stimulates the creation

of natural parks, sanctuaries, eco development, man-made attractions and marine conservation units. However, visual pollution may result from several sources (Inskeep, 1991). The rapid growth of tourism in the twentieth century has produced problems, as well as opportunities, on a vast scale for both developed and third world countries. The governments of these countries have come to realise that unrestrained and unplanned tourist development can easily aggravate these problems to a point where tourists will no longer with to visit the destination (Christopher, 2000). Social impacts of tourism may arise from at least four different situations (Brown, 2000): (i) As residents are faced with unaccustomed behaviour and demands from tourists; (ii) As residents become involved in changing patterns of employment created by the tourism economy; (iii) As visitors find themselves spatially distanced from their homes, in the midst of quite different ways of life; (iv) As residents and tourists interact, both within and outside the context of the tourism industry.

The ecotourism policy of Madhya Pradesh subscribes to the definition as laid out by the TIES. The policy indicates community involvement in terms of livelihood generation in its objectives and use of resources, where communities in consultation with them traditionally use them. However, there is no mention of the role of the community in conservation as well as in tourism development activities. In the section, which talks about policy implementation, the Policy highlights the concept of PPPP (Public-People-Private-Partnerships). There is however, no specific mention of what the role of each of the stakeholders will be. In the Madhya Pradesh Forest Policy (2004), there is a section on Ecotourism, which focuses on developing infrastructure and capacities of staff to be involved in ecotourism activities but does not spell out what the role of the community should be. The only mention is of local educated villagers who could be trained to work in the Interpretation Centres. The Ecotourism Policy (Draft, 2010) clearly states that all ecotourism activities will be conducted in accordance to the Wildlife (Protection) Act, the Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980 and other directives and guidelines as announced by the Government. There however is no mention of The Scheduled Tribes and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Rights) Act, 2006 and the adherence to this very important Act which establishes the rights of indigenous communities to protect and conserve forest and wildlife as well as grant land rights to land that they have been cultivating. Both the Ecotourism Policy of Madhya Pradesh (Draft) as well as the Madhya Pradesh Forest Policy (2004) have conceptualised the role and engagement of communities in a restricted manner and with no directions of how to achieve even this minimum agenda.

The creation of Protected Areas has increased the wildlife population causing increase in people-animal conflict (Sheksaria, 2009). Yet communities

cannot take any measures to protect themselves against this conflict since that would necessitate confronting the forest department, which more often than not would translate into physical harm of the communities and its resources. The sale of land to tourism projects is not a sustainable option for communities since these monies dry up rather fast and leave no other source of income in their hands. Until now the only livelihood option that has been opened up for communities is their employment in the campuses of the establishments in the tourism industry, which translates to the fact that communities who were once land owners and practitioners of agriculture, with diverse cultural and social histories have become homogenous cheap labour in the tourism industry. Though the carrying capacity of the 2 parks have been established at 300-400 and 700-900 guests respectively for Kanha and Bandhavgarh, the tourism facilities are increasing ref. This indicates that the limits of acceptable change have not been taken into account, further pointing towards unplanned tourism development in these 2 very important wildlife reserves. The nature of ecotourism development in these National Parks do not in any way involve or even demonstrate community concern. In fact, apart from one or two private players all the others only employ members of the community since it is an economical option. Satpura National Park, Bori Wildlife Sanctuary and Pachmarhi Sanctuary form the Pachmarhi Biosphere Reserve. Ashoka Trust for Research in Ecology and the Environment (ATREE) in their 'Social Assessment Report for the Satpura Landscape', have found that the role of the communities has been low in the decision making process vis-à-vis the management of natural resources, where they have been used merely in the implementation of government schemes. Further, displacement has been highlighted as a major issue in the existing conservation framework of the Satpura National Park. Apart from relocation of villages, an important case in point is the non-renewal of fishing license of the Tawa Matsya Sangh by the Madhya Pradesh Matsya Mahasangh and the subsequent declaration of the Satpura National Park as a Tiger Reserve, which caused another round of displacement in the region. This chequered history of the Biosphere Reserve shows that the Forest Department has not taken into confidence the community and that the eco development activities lack transparency and accountability to the people living in this region. The Sanctuary is located in Raisen district and has been proposed as a Tiger Reserve and is expected to be declared as one in the next 6-8 months. In the centre of this Sanctuary is Delabadi, where there is the forest guest house as well as the Delabadi Jungle Camp, an establishment of the MPTDC. On the way to Delabadi are several villages, none of which are part of the tourism activities in the region.

Ecotourism is a grooming sector in developing nations. However, its impact on wildlife and indigenous people has become a controversial issue

(Singh and Upadhyay, 2011). The migratory birds were clearly unaccustomed to the humans and fled at the mere site of humans and cars. A tourism industry needs to be supported by building suitable infrastructure. The construction of roads, buildings and introduction of electricity can result in fragmentation of wildlife and habitat destruction. The use of vehicles for transportation can disturb wildlife directly through noise and overuse of critical areas such as nesting areas, feeding grounds and water holes. Indirect effects can result in habitat degradation through pollution and alteration through trail cutting (Groom et al., 2000). Conservation efforts to protect valuable wildlife and their forest habitats may conflict with the interests of local communities. Therefore, intentions of conservation can be misunderstood by the local communities (Crouch and Scott, 2003). Such conflicts can result in a lack of trust and cooperation between local communities and conservationists. The development of ecotourism can create an unequal distribution of income contributing to socio- economic problems, affect wildlife and indigenous people and conflict with conservation efforts (Singh and Upadhyay, 2011). The review of literature simply demonstrates that there is paucity of literature, empirical data and research findings in the field of eco tourism in India and particularly in Madhya Pradesh. Thus, the proposed study will be of paramount importance in policy formulation and operational view point.

The World Conservation Union (IUCN) defines ecotourism as environmentally responsible travel and visitation to relatively undisturbed natural areas, in order to enjoy and appreciate nature that promotes conservation, has low negative visitor impact, and provides for beneficially active socio-economic involvement of local populations (IUCN, Tourism, Ecotourism and Protected Areas, Ceballos-Lascurain, 1996). The travel industry defines ecotourism as purposeful travel that creates an understanding of cultural and natural history, while safeguarding the integrity of the ecosystem and producing economic benefits that encourage conservation. The long-term survival of this special type of travel is inextricably linked to the existence of the natural resources that support it (Bandy, 1996 quoting: Ryel and Grasse 1991). The International Ecotourism Society (TIES) defines ecotourism as responsible travel to natural areas that conserves the environment and improves the welfare of local people. According to the World Tourism Organisation [UNWTO] tourism that involves travelling to relatively undisturbed natural areas with the specified objective of studying, admiring and enjoying the scenery and its wild plants and animals, as well as any existing cultural aspects found in these areas is defined as ecotourism. An optimum number of environment friendly visitor activities, which do not have any serious impact on the ecosystem and the local community and the positive involvement of the local community in

maintaining the ecological balance are some of its key elements (UNWTO, 2002). The descriptions of ecotourism development presented above, span from total community ownership to involvement to mere employment being generated for some members of the community. Yet, some positive impacts, which are visible, are

- Greater control over forest and other resources by the community;
- A sense of pride about the historical and cultural heritage of the community;
- Enhanced levels of conservation of natural resources;
- Direct economic benefit to the communities and the mechanism of benefit sharing decided by the community;
- Extent of involvement in tourism activities are decided upon by the community;
- The nature, form and pace of tourism has been decided upon by the community.

India is one of the 12-mega bio-diverse countries of the world and has a rich cultural heritage too. It has a vast potential for ecotourism that needs to be tapped for healthy conservation and preservation of nature and bringing about economic benefits to the local communities. Ecotourism in India has developed recently, though the concept itself is a relatively new one. India has spectacularly attractive natural and cultural tourist attractions. India offers enormous diversity in topography, natural resources and climate. There are land-locked mountainous regions, lush valleys and plains, white sandy beaches and islands. Central India has numerous wildlife sanctuaries with countless varieties of flora and fauna. The most significant feature of the ecotourism industry in India is its capacity to generate large-scale employment opportunities, particularly in remote and underdeveloped area. It offers enormous potential for utilizing natural resources like landscapes, mountains, bio-diversity areas, rivers etc for the benefit of people. Ecotourism focuses on Indian local cultures, wilderness, adventures, and environmental protection. In India the movement is gathering momentum with more travel and travel related organizations for addressing the needs of the eco tourists and promoting ecotourism in the country. Madhya Pradesh has around 30 percent of Geographical area as Forest land. It is part of central plateau having Satpura, Vindhya and ravines of Chambal. River like Narmda, Tapti, Chambal and Betwa flows in the state. State is also known is Tiger State with Kanha and Bandhavgarh are being prominent Tiger reserve. Awareness generation, Conservation and education also enhanced in various Joint Forest Management Committees. Eco-tourism is an opportunity for conservation and livelihood.

Conclusion

Madhya Pradesh is the heart of India and is endowed with rich and diverse forest resources. One third of the State is forest and offers an exciting panorama of wildlife. The varied blessings of nature surely need exposure and ecotourism can be a triple benefit approach offering conservation, employment and exposure. Thus, making travel responsible and improving the well being of rural people. Ecotourism can be promoted as a mode of economic development of Madhya Pradesh.

References

- Akare, D.S. and Singh, B.P. (2015), Rising Tamia, in the field of Eco-tourism, *Int. J. Curr. Microbiol. App. Sci.* 4(2): 706-712.
- Archer, Z. & Fletcher, J. (1990), Tourism: Its Economic Importance in Handbook of Tourism By (Ed.) Miles Quest, McMillion Press, London.
- Bhattachariya, A. K., and Banerjee, Suchitra (2003), Relevance of carrying capacity and eco-developmental linkage for sustainable Ecotourism, The Indian Forester 129(3).
- Bhattachariya, A.K., Saxena, Vandana and Banerjee, Suchitra (2006), Environmental auditing in ecotourism: A study on visitor s management in Vanvihar National Park, Bhopal. The Indian forester 132 (2).
- Borrie, W. *et al.* (1999), Protected Area Planning Principles and Strategies in Eco-Tourism: A Guide for Planners And Managers By (Ed.) K. Lindberg *et al.*, Natraj Pub., Dehradoon.
- Brown, Frances (2000), Tourism Reassessed: Bright or Blessings? Butterworth, New Delhi.
- Bryden, J. M. (1973), Tourism and Development, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.
- Buhalis, D., and Fletcher, J. (1975), Environmental Impacts on Tourist Destinations: An Economic Analysis, In Sustainable Tourism Development by Coccossis and Nijikamp (Ed.), Avanbury Astgate Pub. Ltd., London.
- Burkart & Medlik, S. (1974), Tourism Past, Present And Future, Heinemann, London.
- Butler, R.W. (1996), The Concept of Carrying Capacity for Tourism Destinations: Deal or Merely Buried Progress, *Tourism and Hospitality Research*, Vol. 2.
- Christopher, H. (2000), The Business of Tourism, Longman, London.
- Christopher, J. & Holloway (1998), The Business of Tourism, Longman, London.
- Cleverdon, R. (1979), The Economic and Social Impact of International Tourism in Developing Countries, The Economic Intelligence Unit Ltd., London.
- Filion, F.L. *et al.* (1992), The Economics of Global Eco-Tourism, Unpublished Report, Canadian Wildlife Service, *Environment*, Canada.
- Frederic, S. Lee, (2008), "Heterodox economics," The new Palgrave dictionary of economics, 2nd Ed., V. 4.

- Gary, S. Becker (1974), "A Theory of Social Interactions," *Journal of Political Economy*, 82(6).
- Gary, S. Becker and Kevin M. Murphy (2001), Social Economics: Market Behaviour in a Social Environment. Description and table of contents Harvard University Press.
- Getz, D. (1983), Capacity to Absorb Tourism: Concept and Applications for Strategic Planning, *Annals of Tourism & Research*, Vol. 10, No. 2.
- Godfrey, K. & Clarke, J. (2000), Tourism Development Handbook, Casell, New York.
- Godfrey, K. & Jackie Clarke (2000), Tourism Development Casell, London.
- Goodall, B. (1992), Environmental Auditing for Tourism, in Cooper, C. and Lackwood, A. (Ed.) Progress in Tourism, Recreation and Hospitality Management, Vol. 4 (London).
- Gupta, S.P., et al. (2002), Cultural Tourism in India, D.K. Print well (P) Ltd., Delhi.
- Inskeep, E. (1991), Tourism Planning: An Integrated and Sustainable Development Approaches, Van Nostrand, New York.
- Jess, Benhabib, Alberto Bisin, and Matthew Jackson, ed., (2011), Handbook of Social Economics, Elsevier: Vol. 1A: Part 1.
- John, B. Davis and Wilfred Dolfsma, (2008), "Social economics: an introduction and a view of the field," in John B. Davis and Wilfred Dolfsma, ed., The Elgar Companion to Social Economics.
- John, Eatwell, Murray Milgate and Peter Newman (1987), Social Economics: The New Palgrave, p. xii. Topic- preview links.
- Johnsingh, A.J.T. (1993), Prospects of Eco-Tourism in National Parks, DWRE, FRI, Dehradoon.
- Kamauro, O. (1996), Ecotourism: Suicide or Development? Voices from Africa 6: Sustainable Development, UN Non- Governmental Liaison Service. United Nations News Service.
- Kamra, K. K. (2001), Managing Tourist Destiantion, Kanishka Pub. Delhi.
- Krippendrof, J. (1987), The Holiday Makers: Understanding the Impact of Leisure and Travel, Heinemann, London.
- Kumar, S. Wildlife Tourism in India: Need to Treat with Care (M), Wildlife Institute of India, Dehradoon.
- Lanquer, R. (1990), Integration of the Environment in Tourism Planning for the Meditererrarian Coast, Tourism Reports, Vol. 2.
- Lascurian, H. C. (1996), Tourism, Eco-Tourism and Protected Areas, IUCN.
- Lundberg, D. E. (1972), The Tourist Business, Kahner, Pub. Com. Chicago.
- Martin, B.S. and U.M. (1960), An Examination of Relationships Between Carrying Capacity and Tourism Life Cycle Management and Policy Implications, *Journal of Environmental Management*, Vol. 31, No. 4.
- Mathieson, A & Wall, G. (1982), Tourism: Economic, Physical and Social Impacts, Longman, London.

- Mill, R. C. and Morrison, A. M. (1985), The Tourism Ssytem, PHI, New Jersy.
- Nigam, Devesh (2002), Tourism Environment and Development of Garhwal Himayala, Mittal Pub. Delhi.
- 'O' Reilly, A.M. (1986), Tourism Carrying Capacity, Tourism Management, Vol. 7, No. 4.
- Pandey, B. W. (2002), Geo-Environmental Hazards in Himalaya, Mittal Publications, Delhi.
- Pandey, B.W. *et al.* (1998), 'Population' Urbanization and Tourism in Kullu District in R.B. Singh (Ed.), Sustainable Development of Mountain Environment in India and Canada, Oxford University Press, New Delhi.
- Rawat, R.B.S. and Sharma, Jogmohan (2003), Developing stakeholder based ecotourism in Uttranchal. India. *The Indian forester* 129(3).
- Reingold, L. (1993), Identifying the Elusive Eco-Tourist Going Green, A Supplement to Tour & Travel News, Oct. 25.
- Robinson, H. A. (1976), A Geography of Tourism, Macdonald and Evans, London.
- Rodgers, W.A. and Panwar, H.S. (2000), Planning A Wild Life Protected Area Network In India: A Review, WII, Dehradoon.
- Sadry, B.N. (2009), "Fundamentals of Geotourism: with a special emphasis on Iran", Samt Organization publishers, Tehran.
- Sawarnkar, W. (1999), Conserving Biodiversity in Protected Areas and Forested Landscape (M), LBSN Ltd., Mussorrie.
- Sharma, B. and Singh A.K. (2004), Tourism Industry in India, New Royal Book Company, Lucknow.
- Sheksaria, P. (2009), Ecotourism on the Periphery of Bandhavgarh and Kanha Tiger Reserves: An Approach Paper in Publication Nature, Market, Tourism, Equations.
- Shullai, G.F. (1980), A Case Study of Wild Life Tourism in National Parks, DWRE, FRI & C, Derhandoon.
- Singh, A.K. & Abdul Majeed (2010), Management of Tourism in India, Madhav Books, Gurgaon.
- Singh, Balendra P. and Upadhyay Ravi. (2011), Ecotourism and its effects on wildlife of Pachmarhi biosphere reserve; *Afr. J. of Env. Sci. and Tech.* 5(9).
- Singh, T.V. et al. (1986), Studies in Himalayan Ecology, Himalayan Books, New Delhi.
- Tewari, S.P. (1984), Tourism Dimensions, Atma Ram & Sons, Delhi.
- Tony Lawson, (2006), The Nature of Heterodox Economics. Cambridge Journal of Economics, 30(4).
- Tuohino, A. and Hynonen, A. (2001), Ecotourism imagery and reality. Reflections on concepts and practices in Finnish rural tourism. Nordia Geographical Publications 30(4).
- Vania, Rustam (2002), Eco-Tourism, Down To Earth, July 31, 2002.
- Wahab, S. (1975), Tourism Management, Tourism International Press, London.