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Research Paper

Tourism

Eco Tourism : A Tool For Preservation Of Natural Resources

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ABSTRACT

Eco-tourism is sacred for preserving and sustaining the diversity of the world's natural and cultural environments. It expects environmentally responsible behavior and enjoyment of the beauty of the area so that mind of visitors remains receptive for the message of conservation and personal involvement towards it.

KEYWORDS: Eco-tourism, responsible behavior, conservation.

INTRODUCTION

Today tourism is the world's largest Industry..Tourism is good as industry but not as a craze, when it isolates the peace of the touristic areas and distorts the character of place it becomes positively harmful. Tourism development generates unique ecological problems. These are untouched countryside, coastal lines, lakes, rivers, islands, mountain regions, forests, wildlife areas, monuments, historical sites etc. these environmental resources exploited for tourism to attract tourist because of their exceptional beauty, recreational potential etc. The public is still ignorant about values of tourism and environment protection.

Till recently it has been felt that tourism will never adversely affect the environment. But the upsurge of tourism has altered the situation and caused alarm all over the world.

Adverse Effect of Tourism on Environment and Ecology:

One of the adverse effects of tourism on the environment is increased pressure on the carrying capacity of the ecosystem in each tourist locality.

1. Depletion of natural resources: tourism development can put pressure on natural resources when it increases consumption in areas where resources are already scarce.

a. Water resources: water, especially fresh water is one of the most critical natural resources. The tourism industry generally overuses water resources adversely affect these resources. for hotels, swimming pools and personal use of water by tourists. This can result in water shortages and degradation of water supplies as well as generating a greater capacity of waste water.

b. Land degradation: important land resources include minerals, fossil fuels, fertile soils, forests, wet land etc. increased construction of tourism and recreational facilities has increased the pressure on these resources and on scenic landscapes.

2. Pollution: Tourism can cause the same forms of pollution as any other industry. Air emission, noise, solid waste and littering releases sewage, even visual pollution.

a. Air pollution: transport emission from energy production and use are linked to acid rain, global warming and photochemical pollution. Air pollution from tourist transportation has impact on the global level especially from carbon dioxide (CO_2) emissions related to transportation energy use.

b. Noise pollution: airplanes, cars and buses as well as recreational vehicles causes' distress of wildlife especially in sensitive areas.

3. Solid waste and littering: in areas with high concentrations of tourist activities and alluring natural attractions, waste disposal is a serious problem and improper disposal can be a major despoiler of the natural environment.

4. Sewage: Construction of hotels, recreation and other facilities, often leads to increase sewage pollution. Wastewater has polluted seas and lakes surrounding tourist attraction, damaging the flora and fauna.

Deteriorating environment and loss of natural resources represent one of the main ways in which present generation is creating uncompensated future cost.

Hence the conservation of natural resources and the environment is crucial to achieving sustainable development.

What is Eco-Tourism?

Eco Tourism is responsible travel to natural areas which conserves the environment and sustains the well being of local people. In other words it is an environmentally responsible and socially and culturally sound tourism. Eco tourism expects environmentally responsible behavior and enjoyment of the beauty of the area so that mind of the visitor remains receptive for the message of conservation and personal involvement towards it.

Eco tourism is an offshoot of the wave of environmental awareness. The main idea behind this concept is to make use of tourism as a tool for the protection of natural eco-system. One of the important factors of eco-tourism is its potential for promoting alliance among environmental, conservation and development interests. Eco tourism recommends greater public participation in planning and decision making concerning living resources use and it proposes environmental education programmes and campaigns to build support for conservation.

The International Eco-tourism Society defines eco-tourism as "responsible travel to natural areas that conserves the environment and improves the well-being of local people." This means that those who implement and participate in Eco-tourism activities should follow the following principles:

- Minimize impact
- Build environmental and cultural awareness and respect
- Provide positive experiences for both visitors and hosts
- Provide direct financial benefits for conservation
- Provide financial benefits and empowerment for local people
- Raise sensitivity to host countries' political, environmental, and social climate
- It minimizes negative impacts upon the natural and socio cultural environment.
- It contains educational and interpretation features.
- Promotion of sustainable use of biodiversity.

Do's

- Carry back all non-degradable litter such as empty bottles, tins, plastic bags etc. These must not litter the environment or be buried. They must be disposed in municipal dustbins only.
- Observe the holiness of holy sites, temples and local cultures.
- Cut noise pollution. Do not blast aloud radios, tape recorders or other electronic entertainment equipment in nature resorts, sanctuaries and wildlife parks.
- In case temporary toilets are set-up near campsites, after defecation, cover with mud or sand. Make sure that the spot is at least 30 meters away from the water source.
- Respect people's privacy while taking photographs. Ask for prior permission before taking a photograph.

Don'ts

- Do not take away flora and fauna in the forms of cuttings, seeds or roots. It is illegal, especially in the Himalayas. The environment is really delicate in this region and the bio-diversity of the region has to be protected at all costs.
- Do not use pollutants such as detergent, in streams or springs while washing and bathing.

- Do not use wood as fuel to cook food at the campsite.
- Do not leave cigarettes butts or make open fires in the forests.
- Do not consume aerated drinks, alcohol, drugs or any other intoxicant and throw bottles in the wild.
- Do not tempt the locals, especially children by offering them foodstuff or sweets. Respect local traditions.

Polythene and plastics are non biodegradable and unhealthy for the environment and must not be used and littered

Eco-tourism is considered the fastest growing market in the tourism industry, according to the World Tourism Organization with an annual growth rate of 5% worldwide and representing 6% of the world gross domestic product, 11.4% of all consumer spending - not a market to betakenlightly.

Environmental Education

The legislation plays only a limited role in keeping our environment clean. What is most essential is man's correct attitude to nature and his surroundings.

The emphasis on environmental education should go a long way in encouraging all f us to preserve the gift of nature and to keep our surroundings clean. The environmental education should be planned in such a manner that it should involve schools, universities, social and voluntary organizations, rural organization and bodies including panchayats, industrial homes, scientific bodies and above all common man.

Role of Indian Ministry of Tourism

To encourage the Stakeholders to promote & practice Ecotourism practices, the Ministry of Tourism has included categories of awards "Best Eco friendly Hotel", 'Best Responsible Tourism Project", "Best Eco friendly Practices by Tour Operators" in the National Tourism Awards presented annually to various segments of travel, tourism & hospitality sector.

Major works

i) Installation of Biodigesters to treat sewage.
ii) Solar power equipment installation.
iii) Home stay arrangements.
iv) Nature trail development.
v) Training to local youth, Training program for guide .
vi) Signage development for creating nature awareness.

Conclusion

Realizing this fact there is need of protecting fragile environment for the future generation as makes it more lucrative for the present generation. Fundamentally, Eco Tourism means making as little environmental impact as possible and helping to sustain the indigenous populace, thereby encouraging the preservation of wildlife and habitats when visiting a place. This is respondent form of tourism and tourism development which encourages going back to natural products in every aspect of life.

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