

# ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT OF TOURISM

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## ABSTRACT

*Tourism is one of the biggest and fastest growing sectors in the global economy and has significant impact on environment, culture, society and also on economy both positively and negatively. The unfavourable impact that tourism can have on the environment both undermines the basic resource for tourism can have in coastal areas and heavily affects other non-tourist economic activities. There is a need to minimise the various impacts which badly affects tourism sectors by proper tourism planning, managing and undertaking in a way that is environmentally sustainable, socially beneficial and economically feasible. Focus should be given more on Ecotourism and proper planning on balanced use of resources. The negative impact of tourism development can gradually destroy environmental resources on which it depends. The objective is to see the impact of tourism both positively and negatively on the environment and to find out the direct impact of tourist activities in the respective tourism areas. Tourism has the potential to create beneficial effects on the environment by causal to environment protection and conservation. The relationship of tourism with the environment is complex. It involves many activities that can have unpleasant environmental effects. The main purpose of the paper is to review various environmental impacts of tourism and the effects of tourism on various natural resources, environmental pollution and on physical environment.*

Keywords : *Tourism, Environmental Impacts, Ecotourism*

## INTRODUCTION

Theobald (1994) suggested that etymologically, the word "tour" is derived from the Latin 'tornare' and the Greek 'tornos,' meaning 'a lathe or circle; the movement around a central point or axis.'

In 1976, the Tourism Society Of England's definition was "Tourism is the temporary, short-term movement of people to destination outside the places where they normally work and live and their activities during the stay at each destination. It includes movements of all purposes." There is continued growth and diversification of tourism has been experienced over the decades and it has become one of the fastest growing economic sectors in the world. Tourism has become a thriving global industry with the power to shape developing countries in both positive and negative ways. No doubt it has become the fourth largest industry in the global economy. Similarly, in developing countries like India, Brazil and China tourism has become one of the major sectors of the economy, contributing to a large proportion to the National Income and also able to generate huge opportunities in creation of employment. It has become the fastest growing service industry in the country with huge potentiality for the expansion and diversification. There is a need to discuss the positive and negative environmental impacts of tourism.

## REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The latest trend in the tourism industry is called "ecotourism", which refers to travel that combines preserving the natural world and sustaining the well-being of the human cultures that inhabit it. (Mowforth and Munt, 2003) In general, ecotourism differs from traditional tourism in two main respects: first, ecotourism openly promotes environmentally friendly travel and seeks to ensure that visitors do not disturb the natural environment of flora and fauna, nor do they leave behind rubbish and hazardous materials, which can disrupt the delicate

ecosystem. A second aspect of ecotourism is that it seeks to promote “sustainable” tourism. Tourism that destroys the natural environment, or that leads to the disappearances of local human cultures and values is not compatible with ecotourism. An early example of ecotourism occurred in Kenya in the 1970s when the Kenya Government began to collect fees for tourists to support conservation and park maintenance in the wildlife reserves.

### OBJECTIVES

1. To study environmental impact of tourism.
2. To analyse both the aspects of environmental impacts.
3. To discuss various preventive measures for negative environmental impact of tourism.
4. To discuss positive sides of tourism on environment.

### METHODOLOGY

The complete information is collected through secondary data, including reference book, magazines, newspapers and websites.

### ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT OF TOURISM

Environmental impact of tourism can be discussed in two ways as :

- ❖ Positive environmental impact of tourism
- ❖ Negative environmental impact of tourism

### POSITIVE ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS OF TOURISM

#### • Direct financial contribution

The conservation of sensitive areas and habitat can be contributed directly by tourism. Revenue from park-entrance fees and similar sources can be allocated specifically to pay for the protection and management of environmentally sensitive areas. Special fees for park conservation and operation can be collected from tourists or may be from tour operators.

#### • Contribution to Government Revenues

Like Indian government who collects money in more far-reaching and indirect ways that are not linked to specific parks or conservation areas. The funds collected through User fees, income taxes, taxes on sales or rental of recreation equipment, and license fees for activities such as rafting and fishing helps immensely to the Indian government to manage natural resources. The funds which are collected from various taxes can be used for the betterment of the environment by implementation of different conservation programs and other associated activities like for the maintenance of the park and paying salaries to park ranger.

#### • Improved Environmental Management and Planning

For better environmental management of tourism there is a need of providing better hotel facilities which will increase the benefits to natural environment. Advance planning can bring tourism development, destructive and costly mistakes can be avoided, preventing the gradual deterioration of environmental assets significant to tourism. The development of tourism has encouraged the government of India towards this direction leading to improved and quality environmental management.

#### • Raising Environmental Awareness

Tourism has immense potentiality to increase public appreciation of the environment and also spreading awareness for various environmental problems when it brings people into closer contact with nature and the environment. This interaction definitely will heighten awareness of the value and importance of nature among the community and lead to environmentally conscious behaviour and will force them to involve in various activities to preserve the environment.

- **Protection and Preservation of Environment**

Tourism can play a significant role in contributing for the protection of environment, conserving and restoring different biological diversity and sustainable use of natural resources. Due to presence of attractiveness, pristine sites and natural areas are identified as valuable and the need to keep the attraction alive can motivate in creation of national parks and wildlife parks. For example, in India, new laws and regulations have been enacted to preserve the forest and to protect native species. The coral reefs which are around the coastal areas and the marine life that depend on them for survival are also have been protected by the government of India.

## NEGATIVE ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS OF TOURISM

- **Depletion of Natural Resources:** Development of tourism can put pressure on natural resources when it increases consumption in areas where resources are already scarce.

1. **Water resources:** One of the most critical natural resources is water and especially fresh water. In tourism industry generally we can see overuse of water in hotels, swimming pools, golf courses and personal use of water by tourists. This leads to water shortages and degradation of water supplies, as well as creation of a greater volume of waste water. In different dryer states like Rajasthan, Gujarat and in Maharashtra the issue of water scarcity is of particular concern.
2. **Local resources:** Great pressure can be created by tourism on local resources like food, energy and other raw materials that may already be in short supply. Greater extraction and transport of these resources exacerbates the physical impacts associated with their exploitation. Due to the seasonal character of the industry, many destinations have ten times more inhabitants in the high season as in the low season. During peak seasons often high demand is placed upon these resources to meet the high expectations tourists often have (proper heating, hot water, etc.).
3. **Land degradation:** Important land resources include minerals, fossil fuels, fertile soil, forests, wetland and wildlife. Due to increase of tourism and its allied activities at the tourist destinations the recreational facilities has increased the pressure on these resources and on scenic landscapes. There can be seen of tourism impact directly on natural resources, both renewable and non-renewable, in the provision of tourist facilities is caused by the use of land for accommodation and other infrastructure provision, and the worst sufferer is Forest resource in the form of deforestation caused by fuel wood collection and land clearing e.g. the trekking in the Himalayan region, Sikkim and Assam.

- **Pollution**

Tourism can cause the same forms of pollution as any other industry: air emissions, noise, solid waste and littering, releases of sewage, oil and chemicals, even architectural/visual pollution.

1. **Air and Noise Pollution:** Transport by air, road, and rail is continuously increasing in response to the rising number of tourist activities in India. Due to increased emissions of GHG from energy production and use are linked to acid rain, global warming and photochemical pollution. The impacts on the global level can be seen especially from air pollution created by tourist lead to increase of carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) emissions related to transportation energy use. And it can contribute to severe local air pollution. Some of these impacts are quite specific to tourist activities where the sites are in remote areas like Ajanta and Ellora caves. For example, tour buses often leave their motors running for hours while the tourists go out for an excursion because they want to return to a comfortably air-conditioned bus. Noise pollution from airplanes, cars, and buses, as well as recreational vehicles is an ever-growing problem of modern life. In addition to causing annoyance, stress, and even hearing loss for humans, it causes distress to wildlife, especially in sensitive areas.

2. **Solid waste and littering:** In areas with high concentrations of tourist activities and appealing natural attractions, waste disposal is a serious problem and improper disposal can be a major despoiler of the natural environment - rivers, scenic areas, and roadsides. IN mountain areas of the Himalayas and Darjeeling, trekking tourists generate a great deal of waste. Tourists on expedition leave behind their garbage, oxygen cylinders and even camping equipment. Such practices degrade the environment particularly in remote areas because they have very few garbage collection or disposal facilities.
3. **Sewage:**Due to construction of hotels, recreation and other facilities often leads to increased sewage pollution. Wastewater generated through tourism activities has polluted already various seas and lakes surrounding tourist attractions, damaged heavily the flora and fauna. Sewage runoff causes serious damage to coral reefs because it stimulates the growth of algae, which cover the filter-feeding corals, hindering their ability to survive. Changes in salinity and siltation can have wide-ranging impacts on coastal environments. These wage pollution can threaten the health of humans as well as animals. Examples of such pollution can be seen in the coastal states of Goa, Karnataka, Kerala, Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu, etc. In India.

- **Destruction and Alteration of Ecosystem**

An ecosystem is a geographic area including all the living organisms (people, plants, animals, and micro-organisms), their physical surroundings (such as soil, water, and air), and the natural cycles that sustain them. Attractive landscape sites, such as sandy beaches which are present in the states like Goa, Maharashtra, Kerala, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu etc. lakes, riversides, and mountain tops and slopes, are often transitional zones, characterized by species-rich ecosystems. A place called Krushedei Island near to Rameswaram which was once remembered as paradise for different marine biologists has been abandoned completely due to massive destruction of coral as well as other marine life. Because of tourism leisure activities more and more habitat has been degraded. For example, wildlife viewing can bring about stress for the animals and alter their natural behaviour when tourists come too close. Safaris and wildlife watching activities have a degrading effect on habitat as they often are accompanied by the noise and commotion created by tourists.

## CONCLUSION

There is vast potentiality of tourism industry in various parts of the world because it is one of the fastest growing industry when it is compared with other industries which are generating employment and earning large amount of foreign exchange besides giving a fillip to the country's overall economic and social development. But there is a need of lot more to be done. More emphasis should be given on the concept Eco-tourism. Eco-tourism needed to be implemented in different parts of the world and if it would happen then it would help immensely in conserving, preserving and sustaining world's natural and cultural environments. Tourism need to be developed in such a way that it accommodates and entertains visitors in a way that is minimally intrusive or destructive to the environment and sustains & supports the native cultures in the locations it is operating in. Moreover, since tourism is a multi-dimensional activity, and basically a service industry, there is utmost importance for both Central and state government as well as those are in private sectors and also actively involved involuntary work required to become active partners in the endeavour to attain sustainable growth in tourism industry.

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