

**ECO-TOURISM IN SOUTH ASIA: A STUDY  
OF CONVERGENCES AND DIVERGENCES**

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**MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY**

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**DECLARATION**

I declare that the dissertation entitled “Eco-tourism in South Asia: A Study of Convergences and Divergences” submitted by me for the award of the degree of Master of Philosophy of Jawaharlal Nehru University, is my own work. The dissertation has not been submitted for any other degree of this University or any other university.

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We recommend that this dissertation be placed before the examiners for evaluation.

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*July 2007*

*New-Delhi*

  
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## **Preface**

This dissertation entitled “*Ecotourism in South Asia: A Study of Convergences and Divergences*” is an outcome of various studies and analysis. Many times I came across tourism and conservation of nature in newspapers, Radio, T.V. and other mass media and I were quite curious to know it better. I wanted to expand my horizon of study and analysis in this field. So I took up this topic and fortunately my teacher also assigned me this task.

The whole account I recounted is an embodiment of various aspect binding together systematically and coherently. I picked up every minute point and analyzed it from different aspects. My analyses get eased at different stages due to the data which I had collected from different Government and semi-government organizations which concerned them. Without these secondary data my personal finding through survey might not work out.

I am again thankful to Dr. S.S. Deora for assigning me this task. Without his help I couldn't complete even a segment of this dissertation. I hope that my findings and analysis will be beneficial to those who strive to explore a better solution to environment and tourism related problems. For this specific purpose, I also endeavor hard to expose the pros and cons associated with eco-tourism in South Asia.

Last but not the least, I would like to express heartfelt thanks to my friends, teachers and seniors for their support and co-operation.

**Md.Ziour Rahaman**

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**CHAPTER 1**  
**INTRODUCTION**

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# CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION

Ecotourism is sustainable nature-based tourism that involves education and interpretation of the natural environment, and is one of the fastest growing sectors of tourism industry. The main idea behind ecotourism is to make use of tourism as a tool for the protection of natural eco-systems by giving them a socio-economic value in their original state. One value of eco-tourism is its potential for promoting alliance among environmental, conservation and development interests.

Over the last quarter century, both the supply and demand for eco-tourism have grown significantly. At the same time, eco-tourism has, as a particular form of tourism development, become increasingly recognized and legitimized as a means of achieving sustainable development in destination areas. Underpinning this widespread support for eco-tourism is the assumption that tourists themselves are demanding more reasonable, environmentally appropriate forms of ecotourism yet.

This work on ecotourism is divided into six chapters. The first chapter is introduction which portrays a generalized view of ecotourism, i.e., definition of eco-tourism and scope of ecotourism.

The second chapter of this dissertation studies the geographical components needed for eco-tourism. Here Robinson listed three main component, first, accessibility and location of the place. Second, scope and scenery, like landforms such as Mountains, Canyons, Cliffs, Coasts, Coral reefs, Volcanoes ; Water bodies like Lakes, Rivers, Geysers, Sea, and Waterfalls; Vegetation, Forests, Moors, Health, etc. and Wildlife. Third, Climate like sunshine, clouds, rain, snow, temperature condition etc. as the sub- part of this chapter, types of eco-tourism is being studied. Among them coastal eco-tourism is very important.



Tourists are mainly attracted towards the coast for two main reasons:

- a. The charm of the coastal scenery.
- b. Many avenues of recreation especially sunbath and water sports.

Mountain eco-tourism seems to be an excellent form of ecotourism because of their unique land architecture, climate, recreational flora and fauna, and for the doings of men.

The third chapter deals with eco-tourism and its role in the development of a region. Ecotourism has economic interface, ecological influence and socio-culture influence. The economic influence includes direct revenue from the foreign tourist. Ecological influence includes land development programmes which help the preservation and improvement of tourist sites. Tourist arrivals may influence local traditions either by preserving or destroying.

The fourth chapter deals with various management policies of ecotourism. This chapter highlights various agreements reflecting a lot on the future evolution of global regime for ecotourism. It includes various significant of resolutions over nature, natural resources and heritage of global significance. Biodiversity convention called CBD, its coastal and marine component called Jakarta Mandate and the convention on combating desertification is also studied.

The fifth chapter deals with the ecotourism demand in South Asia. Sri Lanka, India, Maldives & Nepal have significant benefit from the development of ecotourism. Coastal ecotourism in south coast of Sri Lanka, southern and eastern coast of India and Maldives are significant source of foreign exchange for these countries. Mountains ecotourism in Nepal, Bhutan and at Kandy (in Sri Lanka) are also worth to mention. The sixth chapter is conclusion where important findings are sum up.

## 1.1 DEFINITION OF ECOTOURISM

Ecotourism means ecological tourism, where ecological has both environmental and social connotations. It is also known as "Sustainable tourism". Generally speaking, ecotourism focuses on local customs, wilderness adventures, volunteering, personal growth and learning new ways to live on the planet. It is typically defined as travel to destinations where the flora, fauna, and cultural heritage are the primary attractions. Responsible ecotourism includes programmes that minimize the adverse effects of traditional tourism on the natural environment, and enhance cultural identity of the local people. Therefore, in evaluating environmental and cultural factors initiatives by hospitality providers to promote recycling, energy efficiency, water re-use, and the creation of economic opportunities for local communities are an integral part of ecotourism.

The main idea behind ecotourism is to make of tourism as a tool for protection of natural eco-systems by giving them a socio-economic value in their original state. One value of ecotourism is its potential for promoting alliance among environmental, conservation and development interests. Many global environment organizations and aid agencies followed ecotourism as a vehicle to sustainable development.

**True ecotourism should satisfy the following criteria.**

- (a) Conservation of biological diversity and cultural diversity, through ecosystems protection.
- (b) Promotion of sustainable use of biodiversity, by providing jobs to local populations.
- (c) Sharing of socio-economic benefits with local communities and indigenous people by having their informed consent and participation in the management of ecotourism enterprises.
- (d) Increase of environmental and cultural knowledge.
- (e) Minimization of tourism's own environmental impact.
- (f) Affordability and lack of waste in the form of luxury.

For many countries, ecotourism is not so new seen as a marginal activity intended to finance protection of the environment than as a major sector of national economy and as a means of attracting tourist. For example, in countries such as Costa Rica, Sri Lanka, Nepal and Kenya ecotourism represents a significant portion of the gross domestic product.

Ecotourism, according to U.N. and W.T.O. is "*Travel to enjoy and appreciate a nature* "

Ecotourism is widely misunderstood and is often simply used as a marketing tool to promote tourism that is related to nature. Critics claim that ecotourism as practiced and abused often consists of placing a hotel in a splendid landscape, to the detriment of the ecosystem. According to them, ecotourism must above all sensitize people with the beauty and the fragility of nature. They condemn some operators as "green-washing" their operations – that is, using the label of "ecotourism" and "green-friendly" While behaving in environmentally irresponsible ways.

Some estimation show that more than five million ecotourists coming from Europe, Canada and Australia. Currently there are various moves to create natural and international ecotourism certification programmes, although the process is causing is controversy. One example of ecotourism certificates has been point into place at Costa Rica.

One problem of ecotourism is that some of the destination visited by ecotourism are extremely sensitive to environmental impact from human use (e.g. Antarctica, Amazonian Rain forest, bird breeding colonies) and can be damaged even by careful travelers.

## **1.2 HISTORICAL ANTECEDENTS OF ECO-TOURISM.**

The term eco-tourism was coined by Hektor Ceballos-Lascurian in 1983, and was initially used to describe nature-based travel to relatively undistributed 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.

Around 1990's sustainability became a catch cry of people in west. This tendency urges to well define sustainability (not merely defining it as a balance or wise use of natural resources). This movement leads to explain explicit linkages between tourism and the physical environment, the creation of natural parks.

Eco-tourism comes to focuses on local cultures, wilderness adventures, volunteering, personal growth and learning new ways to live on our vulnerable planet. It is typically flora, fauna, and cultural heritage are the primary attractions. Responsible eco-tourism includes programmes that minimize the adverse effect of traditional tourism on the natural environment, and enhance the cultural integrity of local people. Therefore, in addition to evaluating environmental and cultural factors, initiatives by hospitality provide to promote recycling, energy efficiency, water re-use, and the creation of economic opportunities for local communities are an integral part of eco-tourism.

## **1.3 SCOPE OF ECOTOURISM.**

Eco-tourism provides enormous scope for economic development of particular areas. In India, temple towns, historical movements, sea-beaches were traditionally sought out as tourist's attractions. But now the fabric of tourism is changing rapidly as nature, heritage, and recreational destinations are

gaining more importance. In this background eco-tourism has of late become a top attraction for the tourists.

Today 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. It represents 6% of the world's gross domestic product and 11.4% of all consumer spending not a market to be taken highly.

Of the 625 million world tourist's arrivals in 2000, India received a paltry 2.36 million or 0.38% of the world tourist's receipts. Compared to other countries in South Asia, it is beyond doubt that the performance of our country is rather poor. When the government has been hit by a severe resource crunch and the employment scenario has become very grim the tourism sector offers considerable promise to allay the problem to a significant extent at least on economy and to provide a means for survival to the large army of unemployment pool of youth. With the rate of unemployment rising alarmingly, the need to harness the tourism sector becomes all the more necessary.

To materialize the mission, a number of initiatives may be dawning up to tackle the problem in planning the tourism sector. For example, the sector requires a minimum level of professionalism which it does not have. Moreover; there are other severe problems like unhygienic conditions, poor and inadequate infrastructure, and lack of easily accessible information lack of safety, poor visitor experience, restrictive air transport policy, inadequate facilitation services multiplicity of taxes and the low priority accorded to tourism. However despite its tiny share of the world tourist arrivals, tourism in India has emerged as the second largest foreign exchange earner for the country even though the mainstay of the tourism industry in India continues to be domestic tourism. But in spite of having a huge potential, domestic tourism in India is found to be languishing. For example, there is a tremendous scope for the development of

eco-tourism in various spots. But not much has been done in this relation.

The global importance of eco-tourism, its benefits as well as its impact was widely recognized with the launching of the year 2002 as the International Year of Eco-Tourism (IYE) by the United Nations General Assembly. The IYE offers an opportunity to review eco-tourism experiences worldwide, in order to consolidate the tools and institutional frameworks that ensure its sustainable development in the future. This means measuring the economic, environmental and social benefits from eco-tourism, while avoiding its shortcomings and negative impact. The scope of spreading the opportunity of eco-tourism is enormous in India. But till now nothing much has been happening on this score and the present challenge is to take proper action plans in this regard, considering the enormous scope. We have in our country.

*“Ecotourism is responsible travel to natural areas that conserves the environment and sustains the well-being of local people.”* The four days of deliberations under guidelines provided by TIES and UNEP, which were followed, came up with some interesting outcomes. The focal event of IYE will be the World Ecotourism Summit (WES) to be held in Quebec, Canada, in May, 2002. There are four major objectives for the regional conferences:

1. Provide a forum to local communities and ecotourism practitioners who otherwise may not have a voice at the WES and other related international events.
2. Elaborate a strategic analysis, i.e. a comprehensive review and critical evaluation of ecotourism as it is currently practiced in the region.
3. Based on this, identify regional needs for action to be presented at the Quebec Summit and as a basis for further activities (during IYE and beyond) at both the national and international policy levels.

4. Create or reinforce active networks of regional stakeholders involved with ecotourism.

## **RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

1. Does geographical feature influence eco- tourism?
2. Is eco-tourism an effective means of sustainable development in South Asia?
3. Are the environment rules and regulations passed by many government and NGO's effective in promoting ecotourism in South Asia?
4. Can ecotourism be implemented effectively for conservation of eco system in South Asia?

## **1.4 OBJECTIVES**

The main objectives behind this dissertation are to analyze and find out the relationship and a fine balance between environment conservation and tourism.

1. To study the tourism carrying capacity, levels of acceptable change and environmental impact Assessment for the development of eco-tourism.
2. To adopt conservational strategies and scientific techniques for land management and equality of environment.
3. Ecotourism planning and product development: the sustainability challenge.
4. Monitoring and regulation of ecotourism: evaluating progress towards sustainability.
5. Marketing and promotion of ecotourism: reaching sustainable consumers.
6. Costs and benefits of ecotourism: a sustainable distribution among all stakeholders.
7. Socio-cultural, environmental and economic dimensions of ecotourism.

8. Informed participation of local communities.

## **1.5 SOURCES**

1. Relevant concerned books.
2. Journals, articles and reports.
3. Several magazines and newspapers.

## **1.6 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

The study will be based on descriptive and analytical methods. It will be supplemented by primary as well as secondary sources of data. The primary sources include the official books and government documents. The secondary sources include books, articles of relevance from various newspapers, journals, magazines website, publish and unpublished books etc.

The use of statistical model such as correlation and regression models make more visualized the analysis. Statistical Package For Social Science (SPSS) will use for calculating the collect data and for drawing the bar graph block graph, line graph, pie etc. The use of statistical model such as correlation and regression models make more visual the analysis.

## **1.7 CHARACTERIZATION SCHEME.**

This work is divided into well defined chapters and the links between environment conservation and tourism has been established. The first chapter is Introduction which includes definitions, historical antecedents Scope, objective, source & Research Methodology.

The second chapter is about Geographical components of eco-tourism and includes various types of eco-tourism.

The third chapter deals with the relationship of eco-tourism and development and how ecotourism affect employment rural



The third chapter deals with the relationship of eco-tourism and development and how ecotourism affect employment rural development and International trade of the concerned country. It also highlights all the consequences of ecotourism.

The fourth chapter is about eco-tourism and management policies and also includes environment rules and regulations for eco-tourism and WTTC environmental guidelines.

The fifth chapter is concerned with ecotourism demand in South Asia region and includes administrative division eco-tourist destinations of South Asia, eco-tourist arrivals and eco-tourist receipts.

The last chapter is conclusion. This chapter sums up all the above analysis in short.

**CHAPTER 2**  
**GEOGRAPHICAL COMPONENTS**  
**OF ECOTOURISM**

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## CHAPTER 2

# GEOGRAPHICAL COMPONENTS OF ECOTOURISM

Every person has his own likes and dislikes. The same holds good in the case of the ecotourists. Tourist “x” may like natural scenery while tourist “y” may be interested in historical monuments or archeological sites, and so on. The discriminating eye of the tourist sorts out areas of his interest and plans tour accordingly. Whatever may be the case a tourist can not afford to ignore the geographical settings of the objects of his liking. Be it the Niagara waterfall or Taj Mahal or Pyramids or the lands of the midnight sun, their geographical location cannot be overlooked by the visitor. It is the geographical stage upon which different types of human drama are enacted. In fact geographical factors have been the basic motivation of eco-tourism.

Prof. Robertson listed the geographical components of eco-tourism as under:-

1. Accessibility and location.
2. Landscape and scenery.
  - a. Landforms such as mountains, canyons, cliffs, coast, coral reefs, volcanoes etc.
  - b. Water bodies-river, lakes, geysers, sea waterfalls.
  - c. Vegetarian forest, grassland, moors, heaths etc. and wild life.
3. Climate. Sunshine, clouds, rain, snow, temperature conditions etc.

## **1. Accessibility and Location**

A place or object of tourist interest must be conveniently approachable, easily visible and amply enjoyable. A place, whatever its significance, located in the interior part of a difficult terrain is sure to remain neglected by the casual visitors. Tourist attractions of any kind would be of little value if their locations were inaccessible by normal means of transport. Physical isolation and inadequate transport facilities prove great handicaps to tourism. But as soon as transport facilities developed the number of tourists increased manifold. Lack of good and easy means of transport discourage the holiday makers from visiting even otherwise attractive areas. But physical isolation can be broken by good means of transport. In fact, efficient and comfortable means of transport prove tourism boosters.

The arrival of aircraft, big and small among the various means of transport has been an important turning point in the fields of tourism. Inaccessible areas and remote corners of the world have been made accessible by air services. Although air services is highly criticized in ecotourism.

## **2. Landscape and Scenery**

It was the unparalleled scenic beauty of Kashmir which inspired the poet to declare "If there is heaven on the face of the earth, it is here, and it is here". Natural scenery occupies a very important place among the elements of tourist attraction. Beautiful natural scenery acts as a powerful magnet towards which the ecotourist is just pulled. The call of the majestic mountains cannot but be responded by the ecotourist. The splendour of mountain scenery is one single factor responsible for the influx of thousands of eco-tourists into the Alpine region. To the onlooker of the snow cloud peaks, the forestry hill slopes, the meandering running stream the far valley etc. are at great sources of enhancement.

The peculiarity of such natural phenomena a flora borealis, volcanic eruptions, tidal waves etc. call the tourist to come hither. Even the vast expanses of desert wavy sandy landscape, oasis, palm groves, camel-caravans have their own attractions. Water bodies like oceans, gulf, lagoon, lakes, rivers, geysers etc. offer innumerable opportunities to the eco-tourism to derive pleasure and mental satisfaction. Thus, the enormous variety of natural scenery throws open so many options to keen ecotourist that he cannot complaint of any scenic poverty in the world.

The term "landscape" is taken to refer to the assemblage of vegetation, wildlife and landscape at some place on the earth's surface at some point of time. The prefix "Eco-tourism" is applied to that landscape whose primary function can be defined as serving the tourism needs with nature sustainability.

The landscape that may be referred to as tourism landscapes develop in a number of ways and show different characteristics over the course of their existence. A descriptive model of the process of development of ecotourism landscape will be utilized by ecotourism and changed to a landscape which is more attractive and appropriate to eco-tourism over time as numbers of visitors increase and specialized services are developed. Three major factors are proposed as being of critical significant in this process: Environmental, Socio-economic and Technological. The environmental category comprises of such elements as location, climate and resources including water, shoreline, vegetation and physiographic. It is these elements which provide the basic initial attraction of these destinations for tourists. The socio-economic category includes elements such as attitudes, policies, entrepreneurial sprit and level of economic development of the host population, and attitudes, desires and characteristics of the eco-tourists. The third category is technological, which includes transportation modes, facilities and infrastructure, communications etc.

## **2.1 TYPES OF ECO-TOURISM**

### **A. Coastal Eco-Tourism.**

The coast, the boundary between land and sea, has been a focus for human settlement and activity for thousand of years. The evolution of eco-tourism has been intimately associated with sea coast. It was the lure of coast, which motivate early tourists in Britain. They wanted to escape the brudgery of daily life and enjoy one of the great wonders of nature of coast.

The tourist is generally attracted towards coast for two main reasons

- (a) The charm of the coastal scenery and
- (b) Many avenues of recreation especially sunbath and water sports.

The sea has a special fascination for the people who live away from the sea coast. They are fascinated by the pulsating moods of the seawaters. The rhythm of the waves, the coastline scenery with varied landforms, fauna and flora all combine to enthrall the visitor. Seacoast is not the same everywhere. There are rocky and indented shorelines as well as vast sand beaches. Thick Chester of palm trees linking the tropical coast greatly adds to the beauty of the coastal scenery. The fjords of Scandinavia and Dalmatian coast of Aegean Sea attract thousand of tourists to enjoy. The peculiarities of the coast and long fine weaker.

The coast forms the zone of contact between land and sea and it gives ample opportunity to look and enjoy both ways. In some area the coast is perfectly straight for many miles while in other case the land meet the sea in an abrupt fashion where cliffs plungs into the sea almost vertically and sometimes the sea and land meet imperceptibly. In any case the ecotourism potential of coasts can not be overemphasized. Coastal areas always appear in the countries of the world having sea coasts.

## **B. Mountain Eco-Tourism**

Mountains of the world seem to be predestined for eco-tourism for tourism for all their excellent land architecture climatism, recreational flora and fauna, and for the doings of man. Man has sought these unique environments for different motivations, inspiration, scientific inquiry, adventure and spiritualism; people of the west, by and large, found in them a spirit challenge and resource for wanderlust, whereas men of the orient sought them most religiously. Poets, Painters, Essayists and Novelists have all tried to interpret mountains for us. These interpretations, however, are seen through the prism of each individual's eye and culturally conditioned mind. In the western image, mountains were viewed with fear and loathings.

The fetish for visiting mountains is not without a scientific claim. In biometeorology it is known that mountains and sea shores have a high proper including a feeling of well-being in humans dwelling there. Eco-tourism in the mountains is encouraged for economic reasons, as it promises cash-flows into remote mountain region having little economic opportunity, creates local employment, holds back the process of depopulation in the marginal areas, and finally corrects regional unbalance. Stand geographic terrain characterized by inaccessibility, protected these rare ecospheres from visitors influx. But as the roads found their way to these ecosystems of tender ecologies, tourism appeared a threat. Tourism poses problem in mountains when too many visitors gather making it difficult to sustain the activity wholesomely, resulting in some injury to the fragile environment. Therefore, it is felt these unique areas should remain roadless and resortless with minimum number of eco-tourists who have respect for this "Gift of Nature".

This chapter deals the geographical components like topography, attitudes, location and green vegetation which directly or indirectly influence ecotourism. A place having

favourable natural elements for ecotourism attract tourist from along distance. Further, I have analysed different types of ecotourism and their peculiarities. Different people have different choices according to their likings. So, people who are fond of mountain perform mountain ecotourism. Nepal is famous for mountain ecotourism where as India, Sri-Lanka and Maldives are famous for coastal tourism.



## **CHAPTER-3**

# **ECOTOURISM AND DEVELOPMENT IN SOUTH ASIA**

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# CHAPTER-3

## ECOTOURISM AND DEVELOPMENT IN SOUTH ASIA

Evaluating the impact of eco-tourism on development provides information necessary for the formulation of eco-tourism development policies. These policies determine the type of infrastructure and superstructure a country needs to invest in to encourage the most appropriate kind of tourism production. However, because of problems of definitions and because of the relative inaccuracy of tourism statistics, it is difficult to evaluate the impacts of tourism.

Ecotourism came into prominence in the eighties as a strategy for reconciling conservation with development in ecologically rich areas. Ecotourism could generate economic benefits at local and national levels and thus create incentives for action to conserve the resources on which it depends. Furthermore, ecotourism was a tool to build public support for conservation, and encourage private sector conservation efforts. Clearly, at a time when traditional conservation through enforced protection of natural areas was being questioned for its effectiveness and social impacts, strategies such as ecotourism offered considerable potential for integrating conservation with development.

Within a decade ecotourism captured the imagination of both the conservation community and the tourism industry. Major ecotourism initiatives took place in the developing world notably in Latin America, Asia, and Africa. Ecotourism continues to have potential to make positive contributions to conservation and development, and in a country where this promise has still to be fulfilled, this short discussion paper is designed to encourage wider dissemination and discussion of ideas that will lead to action. This section is taken from *Ecotourism: Ideas and Actions*

(2002) – a publication produced by the LBS Academy of Administration, Wildlife Institute of India, and The Mountain Institute Since the time the term was introduced, ecotourism has become a buzzword in the lexicon of practitioners, academics, industry, and the consumer. However, the term ecotourism has different nuances and interpretations depending on the purpose and the user. Thus under the banner of ecotourism one can find enterprises that are small scale locally owned and managed initiatives to large segments of the tourism industry that just focus on visits to areas of natural and cultural heritage. Community based tourism, rural tourism, village tourism, cultural tours and responsible tourism are some of the other terms that can confound the uninitiated.

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Ecotourism is part of the general growth in tourism and reflects increased environmental awareness and the desire for more authentic natural and cultural experiences. With the advent of better transport, facilities and communication people are traveling further and taking more risks in the choices for a holiday from staying with local people in developing countries to adventure sports in some of the world's most remote, wilderness areas. Not surprisingly, various sections of the tourism industry in the region have responded with customized itineraries and eco-friendly accommodation supporting local development efforts. Although the ecotourism market appears to be financially attractive, ecotourism products are characterized by high risk owing to marked seasonality, high staff to client ratios and need for specialized marketing.

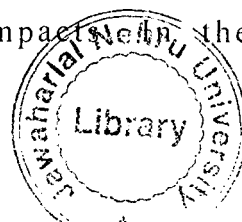
There is concern that unplanned and unregulated tourism growth in natural areas can lead to pronounced negative environmental and cultural impacts. Critics argue that visitation to environmentally fragile areas, often during sensitive periods, can affect key processes such as breeding and regeneration. Areas and sites opened for ecotourism may eventually lead to mass tourism and a range of negative impacts in the absence of

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adequate participation in planning and management. local communities often bear the costs of tourism development and protected area management, gaining little or nothing in the way of income generation opportunities and suffering from restricted access to resources. Nonetheless, there is considerable potential for ecotourism to provide positive contributions to conservation and economic development at a variety of scales. It can generate revenues for national governments that can be reinvested in conservation, and at the same time provide income-generating opportunities to traditionally remote and marginal communities. The challenge is in developing strategies that help create enabling policy frameworks, support and link the various scales and types of operation that are necessary for successful ecotourism and create broad-based support for ecotourism objectives and principles.

Nevertheless, the analysis of the influences eco-tourism is quite necessary. They are analyses as follow: -

#### **A. Ecotourism Influence: -**

The economic benefits of ecotourism include the direct revenue from the generation of foreign exchange and economic incentives through establishment and protection of natural areas. Protected areas and National Parks from entrance fees or donations, Generally speaking, economic influence of ecotourism is regarded as positive as it broadens and diversifies the economic base.

For many countries, production, consumption and employment resulting from international tourism are important contributions to their economic development.

However, development is not just associated with increase in production. Social, human and environmental aspects must also be taken into account. The growth of international eco-tourism and its effects are often criticized and sometimes the industry is

rejected when it reaches the tolerance threshold of the local population.

For this reason, it is damaging to follow eco-tourism policies with the sole objectives of increasing foreign reserves. Unfortunately, this situation is all too often the case. Internal and domestic ecotourism in every country should be based on an overall policy which links tourism development plans with social and economic development plans.

#### **B. Ecological Influence:-**

There are damages to the natural environment, notably by urbanization of natural sites, this development of access infrastructures (roads, motorways) and the contamination of rivers and beaches. However international Ecotourism also finances land development program, which help to combine visits by tourists with the preservation and even improvement of tourist sites and attractions. The challenge is to preserve the environment of the site while still allowing a certain number of eco-tourists.

However, many sites considered tourism a threat to wildlife and vegetation many sites considered that their infrastructure was insufficient to control the damage caused by eco-tourism. Ecotourism development policies concerning the environment are becoming increasingly important and WTO is launching many environmental programmes.

#### **C. Socio-Cultural Influence:-**

The socio-cultural effects resulting from certain forms of international tourism can upset the social and cultural equilibrium of the visited countries. It can disrupt cultural traditions. However, there can also be positive effects which reinforce local culture and contribute to revising ancient traditions. Tourism in the United States has re4veved ancient

crafts such as jewellery and ceramic making by Indians in Arizona and New Mexico in the region of Santa Fe and Taos.

### **3.1 ECO-TOURISM AND EMPLOYMENT**

The growth of tourism in both industrialized and developing countries has created many jobs. Because of the numerous industries directly linked to ecotourism, it is very difficult to evaluate all its effects on employment. Furthermore, ecotourism is also indirectly supplied by several other industries such as construction, agriculture, manufacturing and processing.

The impact of ecotourism on employment can be considerable for many small countries which then became dependent on the industry and receipt that it brings. In some countries in the Caribbean, 50% of the work population is employed in the tourism sectors in related industry. In contrast, in the largest tourism countries which are also industrialized countries with high populations the eco-tourism industry employs only 5% of the working population. It should be noted, however, that more employment is created by the tourism sector than by any other growing industry. This is particularly true in the developing countries where employment created in export industries is inferior to employment created by eco-tourism.

The effect of eco-tourism on employment must be analyzed not only from the quantitative angle by appraising job skills.

#### **The characteristics of employment in ecotourism;-**

Employment in eco-tourism, which is a services industry, is dependent on the particular needs of tourists. The ILO (International Labour Office) has identified a number of general characteristics of employment in the Hotel Industry.

1. A low level of technical expertise: - Many jobs in the hotel and catering industry do not require technical knowledge, kitchen

porters, kitchen assistants, luggage attendants and porters, lift attendant security guards, cleaners and laundry attendants.

2. A high labour mobility: - even if the work is not of a seasonal nature, there are often peaks and troughs of activity and the tendency is to call on additional staff for a few days or even for just an evening.

3. Unsociable work periods and unsociable hours: - the unsociable hours that people in the industry are required to work and the fact that they must take their own holiday's outside the tourist season further adds to the difficulty in recruiting personnel, especially young staff.

4. The length of the working day: -operating a hotel requires the organization of teams of workers at well-defined periods during the day and at night. Second because of the enforced break in the afternoon, chains are increasingly similar to those in other economic sectors but, there is often no shift system and they have to work throughout the whole period, which can become a strain on family life.

5. Physical Fatigue: - the majority of jobs in the kitchen and associated with cooking are very tiring and physically uncomfortable. The atmosphere is sweaty, there are heavy loads to carry, most of the work is done standing and there is intense activity during peak periods, which causes nervous tension.

## 3.2 ECOTOURISM AND INTERNATIONAL TRADE.

Like the exchange of commodities, international ecotourism exchanges are part of foreign trade policies. Services connected with international tourism have the same or even greater impact on international payments as export and imports. For example, when a foreign tourist buy a meal in a restaurant, it is equivalent to the export of alimentary products plus the added value of catering services, including depreciation coasts of equipment and superstructures.

International ecotourism is quite often the generator of international trade flows. For many countries, the construction of tourism superstructures and some requirements of tourism consumption necessitate importing goods and services that cannot be provided by the country.

On the other hand, countries, which have acquired a reputation for expertise in tourism, export tourism equipment, goods and services. The share of receipts generated by international eco-tourism is a percent of total world export; although this percentage can be quite different from one country or sector to another. The distribution of international eco-tourism exports and receipts is very similar to the distribution of total world exports and receipts. The share of developing countries is small, particularly for the export of services.

International eco-tourism plays a vital role in establishing the balance of payments of many countries. It has always been very difficult to account for ecotourism expenditure and receipts in balance of payments. These have never been enough information, since many countries could not collect the necessary statistic. However, the WTO (world trade organization) has eased accounting procedures in international ecotourism, mainly by expanding the concept of tourism receipts.



The balance of payments records monetary flows, which generally represent the real flow of goods and services.

Eco-tourism exchanges between a country and the rest of the world are receipts (expenditure by foreign country) and expenditure (expenditure by nationals abroad), to which should be added the proceeds of transporting tourists internationally and the sale proceeds of tourism equipment and engineering.

### **3.3 ECOTOURISM AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT**

Nature based travel, now generally called ecotourism, and began to take off in the 1980s and has since become one of the fastest-growing segments of the global tourist industry. Ecotourism represents a response to phenomena occurring in both center and periphery, deriving from the dominant global economic paradigm based on continuous growth. In the center, industrials and urban development caused destruction of natural ecosystems and degradation of the environment in general. At the same time increasing influence led to growing demand for natural areas for recreation and travel. Affluent people from developed countries increasingly sought out exotic wild place in Latin America, Africa and Asia, where less space had been fully integrated into the global economy.

Environmentalists have promoted eco-tourism as a non-consumptive use of nature and a win-win development strategy for the underdeveloped rural areas. In an influential World Wildlife Fund publication on ecotourism states: -

*One alternative proposed as a means to link economic incentives with natural resources preservation are the promotion of nature based tourism. With increased tourism to parks and reserves, which are often located in rural areas, the populations surrounding the protected areas can find employment through small-scale tourism enterprises. Greater levels of nature tourism*

*can also have a substantial economic multiplier effect for the rest of the country. Therefore, tourism to protect areas demonstrates the value of natural resources to tourists, rural populations, park managers, government officials and tour operators.*

In case of ecotourism, the elimination of competing land user is usually required. Farming, forestry, mining and sometimes hunting is excluded from most protected wild lands income from these activities must be replaced by tourist-generated income. It high proportion of the tourist's dollar goes to outsiders such as hotels and tour operator's airlines and foreign travel agents. As a result of this economic leakage, natural resources that once provided. Livelihoods for local people now generated profits for outsiders, either in the principal cities of the destination country or in the source country of the tourists. Only a relatively small proportion of the tourist dollar remains in the actual destination, largely in the form of wages to employees in tourist services.

Furthermore, while the benefits of ecotourism accrue to affluent national and foreign entrepreneurs, its costs may be borne disproportionately by the rural poor. Not only do local people lose their resource base for farming, lumbering or mining, but they may also lose the subsidy from nature upon which their livelihood was based. In other words, they may loose access to forest that provided them with fuel, construction materials, wild food and medicines at little cost other than labour and time. They may also lose access to beaches where they fished, will feel the most sustained impact of the congestion and pollution generated by tourist facilities.

Ecotourism can provide an alternative economic base, but it does not happen automatically, or without social and environmental impacts. If it is to be sustainable. Local populations must be allowed to capture a significant amount of the economic multipliers generates by tourism.

Successful reduction of multiplier leakage requires local participation in development planning and outside assistance with the provision of necessary infrastructure, training and credit. Community participation is also essential for identifying negative impact on people who live in areas undergoing ecotourism development. Yet there are powerful internal and external obstacles to local participation, from factionalism within communities to state policies that promote centralized planning and accumulation of capital among large tourism enterprises.

In this chapter, the relationship of ecotourism and development is highlighted. Ecotourism has many economic benefits, like generation of revenue, employment and trade. This sector of economy also helps in rural development but the success of ecotourism also depends on infrastructure like road, electricity, water-supply and hotel accommodations. There are some complications such as degradation of natural eco system due to negligence of ecotourist.

**CHAPTER-4**  
**ECOTOURISM MANAGEMENT POLICIES**  
**IN SOUTH ASIA**

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## CHAPTER 4

# ECOTOURISM MANAGEMENT POLICIES IN SOUTH ASIA

One of the major objectives of the ecotourism approach is to support efforts at environmental conservation and the sustainable development of local communities. The use of local guides was the most common technique that the tour companies employed to support the local economy. In North American companies the use of local guides provide an added element of authenticity. In addition about two in three tour companies provided educational programmes for local guides (65 percent) and a pre- arrival information packet to tour participants. Many operators contributed to the local environment and communities in other ways as well. As reassuring as these percentages are, the fact that many ecotourist companies do not practice some of the management techniques is cause for concern. Much more could be done in training local guides and educating tour group members.

In this regard, North America ecotourist companies are more aware of, and involved in, the ecotourism discussion and debate. They are therefore, better able to use the concept and ideas of ecotourism, and because they are more directly participating in creating its definition through organizations, success the Ecotourism society that are based in North America.

Ecotourism planning in protected areas, local communities, private sector involvement in planning ecotourism planning at the national level, ecotourism related policies & programmes are main concerned of this chapter. The following five themes relate to real planning, management or policy situations on the local, national or international level addressing basically one group of

stakeholders or a forum of stakeholders (e.g. protected area councils, national ecotourism committees).

1. Ecotourism management in protected/sensitive natural areas incl. buffer zones
2. Community involvement and community-based ecotourism (local/regional level)
3. Ecotourism as a business activity (all levels)
4. Ecotourism planning and policies at the national level
5. Ecotourism policies at the international level

Regulation of ecotourism impacts in protected areas, regulation of ecotourism impacts in local community, selfregulation, certification/ accreditation/ labeling, regulation at the national level, International ecotourism norms, regulation & guidelines are very important for making this sector sustainable.

Product development & marketing of protected areas, product development & marketing of community-based ecotourism, sustainable product development & segment- specific marketing, destination development & marketing at the national level, international consumer education are very important for regulating ecotourism. Monitoring, costs & benefits of ecotourism for conservation, monitoring, costs & benefits of ecotourism for local community, business plans, return on investment monitoring, costs & benefits of ecotourism at national level, costs & benefits of ecotourism for international conservation & development programmes should be conducted at regular interval.

## **A. ECOTOURISM MANAGEMENT POLICIES IN SOME PROTECTED AND NATURAL AREAS:-**

It was found that there are conflicting policies and regulations with little or no community participation in planning. In fact, the recognition and value of ecotourism is non-existent. In light of this, there are few policy initiatives and hence this leads to uncoordinated and arbitrary decision making. In the use of protected areas, there is a huge centrally-controlled policy that leads to tremendous process delays. Furthermore, decision-making and role diffusion is prevalent more as the rule than an exception. Consultation of the stakeholders is absent. Protected areas are also characterized by complex rules for visitors as well as for communities – more by way of choking off visitation. There is also no mechanism for recycling revenues into conservation.

It was found that there is a general lack of successful models of ecotourism in Protected Areas. Even if they have been undertaken, community participation is really not seen. Further, there is a general lack of venturing or wanting to take risks in this area as conservation rules are too strict. Interpretation has been found to be an area of weakness. Moreover, there is little or no data available for planning. This is also marked by an absence of a long-term vision for planning for Protected Areas. Some of the innovative efforts of government to this endeavor can be seen from the following:

### **(a) Corbett-Binsar-Nainital Ecotourism Initiative, India**

The Initiative represents an innovative effort to plan and implement ecotourism on a landscape level. The region includes protected areas, reserve forests, townships, agricultural land and villages. A highly consultative planning process with a standardized methodology has been used to develop an ecotourism framework, rather than a project, for the area. Stakeholders including villagers, tour operators, small-scale tourism entrepreneurs, government, trade associations and so on, can use

this framework to guide their activities, investment options and strategic plans, and to identify partners for collaborative work in ecotourism.

**(b) Ranweli Resorts, Sri Lanka**

Located near the capital of Colombo, the strength of this enterprise is the development and marketing of an experience rather than a destination (Sri Lanka has not been an easy destination to sell given past internal conflicts). The Resort uses local architecture values in its design, and offers activities, such as walking and birdwatching in nearby mangrove swamps for its visitors. The operators have made efforts to include local communities in their operations through employment, purchase of handicrafts and visits to their villages by tourists. However, as the operators noted, community participation is challenging and a slow process. Casino Group, India A commitment to Kerala heritage and a quality experience for the visitor is a key feature of the Casino Group of Hotels from South India. Almost all the hotels feature local architectural styles helping to revive and maintain local skills, and also practice energy and water conservation. However, bureaucratic processes and excessive government interference have hampered innovation in this sector. Instead of being a facilitator of the development process, government entities compete unfairly with the private sector with monopolies over access to natural and cultural attractions, and unprofitable operations that are able to continue. Clearer and more facilitative roles for the government must be defined.

**(c) Periyar Tiger Trails, India**

A very innovative, yet potentially replicable ecotourism product that focuses on collaboration, community benefits and conservation in Periyar Tiger Reserve. A partnership of a community of ex-poachers, the Kerala State Forest Department and Tour India offer one- to three-day treks that also serve as a monitoring mechanism, and thus protection of the Tiger Reserve. This collaboration emerged from the India Ecodevelopment



project . Its success is due to two key factors: forest officials with a commitment to communities, and the unity of the ex-poachers and their desire to change their lives. Each trek is led by members of the ex-Vanaya (Cinnamon) bark collectors ecocodevelopment Committee (EDC), and supported by a Forest Guard and TourIndia staff. TourIndia will pay the EDC \$150,000 over three years to run the operations, with almost half going into a welfare fund for the 20+ EDC members.

**(d) Annapurna Conservation Area Project, Nepal**

A groundbreaking project from Nepal that has opened the doors for many to follow in its footsteps. Key highlights of the project that seeks to link conservation and development of Nepal's most popular trekking destination are: new policies that introduced a protected area designation that supports, allows and values human habitation as a cultural landscape, and its management by a local NGO; and a commitment to community participation in local economic development, especially tourism and in conservation through local committees. Annapurna Conservative Area Project is in the process of developing plans that would further strengthen community management of the conservation area and ensure financial sustainability of the approach through an endowment fund (supported by entry fees).

**(e) Baghmara Community Forest and Tourism, Nepal**

Another innovative project from Nepal, this time, is from the more tropical Terai region. Building upon Nepal's Community Forestry legislation, the Baghmara and Kumrose communities residing on the edge of Chitwan National Park have developed ecotourism activities in their community forests. The communities have accessed entry fees paid by tourists to the park and other funding to establish simple accommodation for visitors and to aid efforts to restore the degraded forests adjacent to the Park. As the forests have recovered, there have been increased sightings of wildlife in community forests adding to the visitor experience. However, further efforts need to be made to improve

marketing of ecotourism activities to a wider client base, especially with the commercial private sector.

**(f) Sirubari Village Tourism and the Nepal Tourism Board, Nepal**

Winner of a Pacific Asia Travel Association (PATA) award, Sirubari Village in Nepal is a private sector-community partnership that is promoting village-based tourism. The development of the partnership originated as a request from the village to the government for assistance in developing tourism. A consultant with the government responded to the request and established a company to promote and develop village-based tourism. A contract between Sirubari Village Tourism Development Committee and Nepal Village Resorts governs responsibilities and distribution of benefits amongst the two entities. Mechanisms have been developed by the Committee to distribute benefits to others than those who have homesteads that are the major tourism product. A key challenge has been differing perceptions on tourism attractions – a 400-year-old house was taken down by the owner much to the dismay of the tour operator who highlighted it as a major attraction. New clauses in the contract now cover how such issues are handled.

Ensuring that ecotourism is understood and supported by international funding agencies is a key objective of TIES(The International Ecotourism Society). As an international organisation, TIES supports a variety of activities that also address consumer education about tourism, and increase general understanding about ecotourism among the general public such as Guidelines for Operators, Codes, publications, etc.

**B. ECOTOURISM POLICIES AT LOCAL LEVELS:-**

There was unanimity in the need for a vision when planning and framing policy that needed to be thought of in the context of national and region. There was consensus also that there was an urgent requirement to build awareness amongst policy makers. These mechanisms needed to be established to bring about

cooperation in planning and regulation at the sub-regional and geographical contiguity context. Keeping the long-term interests of communities in view it was suggested to promote capacity building on all fronts. New channels for visitor education and partnerships also needed to be drawn out.

Government can frame policies but must be kept out of business as monitoring and regulation would otherwise be difficult. The intra-regional movement of visitors and development of long-term accreditation systems were definitely a priority. This would enhance the overall ecotourism product. Local structures and capacity in this area needed to be explored.

### **C. ECOTOURISM POLICIES AT INTERNATIONAL LEVELS:-**

It was clear that focus should also be given to encourage international funding to support innovation in this area. Today there is little or no focus of international bodies on ecotourism and there is an urgent need to do this, and one way out was to link it to the international pro-poor and biodiversity agenda. This is one area where it was felt that the International Year of Ecotourism could provide the necessary boost. There is also an urgent need to define indicators that will provide the necessary benchmarking data. Hence, the starting point is to begin research in this area, which can generate data both nationally, regionally, and in geographical contiguity – e.g. the Hindukush Himalaya belt.

## **4.1 COUNTRY REPORTS ON ECOTOURISM POLICIES**

### **Policies Governing Ecotourism in Nepal**

Tourism as key sector for economic development and will be expanded into the villages. Other relevant plans and strategies - Tourism Sector Master plan. National Conservation Strategy 1988, NEPP 1993. Nepal Tourism Board Act 1997 – Features

conservation and protection of natural and cultural heritage and establishment of a Board to support tourism development.

Ministry of Home Affairs develops and implement regulations and guidelines that affect access by visitors to areas in the country. National Park and Wildlife Conservation Act 1973 and 1993 Amendment – Buffer zone regulations that establish Buffer zone Committees and access to protected area entry fees (30%-50%).

Forest Act 1964 and its Amendments 1993 -Community forestry regulations and its subsequent improvement of 2000. Establishing committee represented by different local stakeholders. Local level institution for resource planning and management at the local level under the authority of DNPWC Act 1973 and improved regulation 2000.

### **Nepal - Recommendations**

1. Support Government in reviewing and conflicting policies vis a vis Local Government Act.
2. Support intra- Ministerial and Departmental collaboration for promoting Ecotourism.
3. Assist to incorporate the successful lesson learned from the National Policy.
4. Develop guidelines for site specific planning.
5. Incorporate the existing and successful ecotourism base knowledge in other countries and in the region.
6. Facilitate strengthening NTB in policy planning of ecotourism at local, national and sub regional level.
7. Encourage funding for innovation ecotourism practices carried in countries and in specific local areas be supported by international organization.
8. Promote use of friendly bureaucracy.
9. Assist pressing need to update payment plan and produce supporting ecotourism plans.
10. Improve enforce ecotourism related regulations.

11. Build intra country confidence for promoting ecotourism by reviewing and simplifying the existing regulatory mechanism (including international tourists).
12. Research Accreditation schemes and develop appropriate pilot models.
13. Develop an ecotourism strategy for the Nepal (National Planning Commission/Nepal Tourism Board).
14. Promote private enterprise participation in ecotourism project development at all stages.
15. Support private and public institutions for developing ecotourism related techniques and skills.
16. Develop effective monitoring and evaluation systems in ecotourism strategies, plans and programs.

### **Policies Governing Ecotourism in Sri Lanka**

“Sri” Means “Fortunate” and “Lanka’ is an Island – or it is called internationally ‘The pearl of the Indian Ocean’. Sri Lanka covers 25000 km<sup>2</sup> (Bhutan – 18,000 m<sup>2</sup>; Maldives – 115 km<sup>2</sup>) and has a population of 19 million. The distance between Sri Lanka and India is 35 km.

Organized tourism was introduced to Sri Lanka in late 1960s as a “Sand-sea and sand destination” and even today the policy remains the same. Since Sri Lanka has an “Open Economy” there are no restrictions on tourists arriving the island.

Tourism is the 4th major foreign exchange earner in Sri Lanka in 2001, Sri Lanka earned some 300 million US\$ as foreign exchange out of 450,000 international arrivals. The economic leakage is very high, approximately 70% or more. The main traditional markets for tourism in Sri Lanka are – UK, Germany, France, Italy, Scandinavian and Benilux countries.

Sri Lanka Tourism Board, at present working on a ‘Medium Term Strategic Marketing Plan (MTSMP) with a view to expand the market possibilities the countries in Eastern Europe, China, India, Singapore, Thailand, Taiwan and Korea.

At the moment there is no national Ecotourism Policy present in Sri Lanka. Sri Lanka Ecotourism Foundation (SLEF) proposed to establish a 'National Secretariat' to guide ecotourism in Sri Lanka, representing all stakeholders with broad representation.

However, still no important policy change in mass tourism, but the mass tour operators in Sri Lanka (around 6 to 7 companies) have taken the responsibility of operating Ecotours sometimes by just adding the 'eco' prefix into their mass tourism packages.

### **Sri Lanka - Recommendations**

Low recognition value given to Ecotourism that need to be altered by:

1. Creating awareness through print and electronic media by Sri Lanka Tourism Board, Ecotourism and Environment NGOs.
2. Creating awareness through activities and inclusion in the environmental curriculum in the school system other institutes of higher education by The Department of Education, University Authorities.
3. Creating awareness through Seminars, workshops, poster competitions etc. by Sri Lanka Tourism Board, Ecotourism and Environmental NGOs.

Need for site specific planning and interaction of the small-scale ecotourism operation and the community with the support and assistance of the ecotourism NGOs and/or Sri Lanka Tourism Board.

Policies that do not support community or business. Request the Ministries of Tourism, Forestry and Environment to emphasize the importance of ecotourism as a conservation tool and the benefits to the community in their Master Plans by Ecotourism NGOs and the Sri Lanka Tourism Board.

Lack of Awareness of green business planning in banks. Request the Ministry of Tourism to recommend the granting of "Green Loan" to SMES for Ecotourism Business Promotion (Facility + Activities) to the lending agencies by Ecotourism NGOs.

Need for a vision for ecotourism planning and developing policies. Originate dialogue between Ministries of Tourism, Forestry and Environment, Ecotourism NGOs and Environmental Organizations by the Sri Lanka Tourist Board and the Ecotourism NGOs.

Developing regulatory mechanism to re-cycle tourism revenues into conservation. Lobby with the Government of Sri Lanka to convince and emphasize the importance of ploughing back in the internet of conservation and improving the quality of the park, which will enable the government to increase the fees. This has been proved a success in many countries e.g. Kenya. This by Sri Lanka Tourism Board and the Ecotourism NGOs.

How to facilitate intra-regional movement of visitor (domestic and international). Relax visa procedures and currency and foreign exchange regulations, and reduction of airline fares to promote Ecotourism by the Government of Sri Lanka and regional counterparts.

Lack of Interpretation. Lobby the Ministry of Tourism to urgently introduce Ecotourism interpretation programs in universities and the hotel schools by the Sri Lanka Tourism Board and the Ecotourism NGOs. International Funding, Spending, Research Center. Seek international funding from SAAS and International donor agencies By A regional committee represented by Ecotourism NGOs and NTO of the South Asian Region, supported by TIES and UNEP:

1. Such as UNEP, WTO (World Tourism Organization) UNESCO and other donors to establish regional Research Center for Research and Education on Ecotourism.
2. To establish a regional data base on Ecotourism.

## **Policies Governing Ecotourism in Bhutan**

The potential for tourism growth in Bhutan is considerable. However, economic gains are not always in the forefront. A balanced approach to such gains is considered vital in the development process of Bhutan. Bhutan's pride lies in its inherent policy of placing high priority on conserving the country's natural and cultural heritage. The government has therefore embarked on a very cautious approach to tourism development with the basic principle being the regulation of tourism growth with a vision of safeguarding the interests of the nation before the economic gains. Currently, the concept of "High Value Low Volume" tourism is in vogue in Bhutan

It is recognised that tourism in Bhutan today is basically a form of ecotourism, and therefore chosen to precede all other tourism plans with the preparation of an Ecotourism Strategy. The preparation of a long-term national tourism development Master Plan is proposed to be taken up in the coming 9th Five Year Plan period starting from July 2002.

The National Ecotourism Strategy has been prepared by the Department of Tourism (DoT) with support from the World Wildlife Fund (WWF) Bhutan Programme and technical inputs of the Tourism Resource Consultants, New Zealand and is final stages of publication. Some of the tourism products that the DoT is contemplating of improving and developing upon are listed below:

1. Identifying more festivals and enhance cultural tours.
2. Enhanced treks for long duration visits.
3. Black Necked Crane and Phobjikha Valley visits.
4. Bird Watching and other Special interest products.
5. Health centres, Traditional Medicine and hot springs.
6. River running, rock climbing and other adventure activities.
7. Fostering community participation through community visitor



centres and family lodges, nature clubs.

8. Visits to National Parks.

9. Handicrafts and Painting.

### **Bhutan – Recommendations**

Innumerable definitions for ecotourism exist, however, the fundamental essence of the term remains the same. Ecotourism in Bhutan is therefore a label for tourism that is sensitive to the needs to preserve and protect the natural environment so necessary for basic living and the well being of the people.

Bhutan's approach to tourism development has many of the characteristics of ecotourism, particularly in respect to the strong concern to conserve natural and cultural heritage, while at the same time amalgamating the economic prospects of growth. Therefore, almost all of our tourism activities can be said to be subsets of ecotourism.

Recognizing the fact that tourism in Bhutan today is basically a form of ecotourism, we have therefore chosen to precede all other tourism plans with the preparation of an Ecotourism Strategy. The preparation of a long-term national tourism development Master Plan are proposed to be taken up in the coming 9th Five Year Plan period starting from July 2002.

The National Ecotourism Strategy has been prepared by the Department of Tourism (DoT) with support from the World Wildlife Fund (WWF) Bhutan Programme and technical inputs of the Tourism Resource Consultants, New Zealand, now in the final stages of publication.

The National Ecotourism Strategy would function as a framework of policy to guide the orderly development of responsible tourism in Bhutan. An important objective is to also foster constructive deliberation on ecotourism in Bhutan leading to the preparation of Bhutan's future plans and to achieve a common understanding of tourism policy and tourism

development strategies. The document on the National Ecotourism Strategy outlines the broad definitions and context of ecotourism.

Policy makers are recognizing the fact that tourism in Bhutan has considerable future potential as a tool for development and a contributor to the national exchequer. As a result, tourism is being recognized as a major sector of the economy during the 9th Five Year plan. While this comes as a complement to the Tourism industry in Bhutan, the numerous challenges still lie ahead. While the comprehensive Tourism Development Master Plan proposed for the 9th Five Year plan period would address a wide range of issues, a major challenge is to aim for conserving nature and culture in the midst of further development and economic gains.

Constraints posed by the extreme seasonality and tour patterns and products, access to the country, travel time within the country and the infrastructure are just some of the hurdles that need to be overcome. The need to diversify and develop new products is of vital importance for the growth of the tourism industry. Ecotourism could therefore be catalytic in harnessing this potential.

### **Policies Governing Ecotourism in India**

Current policies that affect tourism are characterised in the following ways:

1. Centralised planning
2. Resource allocation model
3. Low level of private participation
4. Labour intensive/cottage based operations
5. Low-level international cooperation

In summary, tourism development has been a centralised, top-down approach. However, there are shifts in policy development through:

1. Gradual understanding of the need to shift to a sustainable development model
2. Focus on rural tourism
3. Focus on domestic tourism
4. Masterplanning at the State level
5. Privatisation
6. Development of Tourism Circuits
7. High spending tourism

In some ways, these shifts represent a move toward a regional and sustainable model. Some initiatives in the Ecotourism sector include:

1. Ministry of Environment and Forests Ecotourism Guidelines
2. State level – Uttranchal has some interesting ecotourism activities, Madhya Pradesh has developed ecotourism guidelines, and Kerala has a draft Ecotourism Policy.

#### **India - Recommendations**

1. Pursue ecotourism agenda in the National Tourism Policy Process and State Tourism/ Ecotourism Policies under preparation
2. Inter Ministerial coordination through coordination committees at Center and small level under Chairmanship of Cabinet Secretary/Chief Secretary respectively
3. Database, research plus monitoring through institutes which have a national mandate
4. Training plus awareness at the grassroots level and for officials from the government, PA managers, industry, institutions through development of modules plus materials:
5. Development of a National Ecotourism Strategy by 2003 and develop State plans.
6. Formation of an Apex body at National level on Ecotourism for promotion of ecotourism and awareness programs.

Ecotourism Planning, Regulation, Product Development and Monitoring at Local Communities. There is a need for site-specific planning. It was highlighted that in the present context there is very little Governmental support for communities and

their rights. Many communities are also not aware of their rights as well as how policies are going to affect them. Communities lack the suitable skills for planning and taking hold of opportunities that come their way. As far the businesses are concerned, they are not able to find the funds that can be channeled to ecotourism planning (i.e. green funds). Banks shy away from supporting this type of investment and ecotourism is not in their 'manual'. Governmental policies are significant by their absence and hence both businesses and communities do not have a clear agenda or policy framework to depend on. Hence it was found that traditional mechanisms that exist could be used more innovatively. Voluntary initiatives by NGOs can be balanced with regulation in schemes and defining the roles and regulatory framework for ecotourism to thrive is the need of the hour. Establishing regulation so that leakage can be checked is also an area of considerable concern.

Communities and even businesses do not generally possess skills to develop meaningful ecotourism products or establish environmentally responsible business enterprises. There is little or no access to funds for such ventures. There are no guarantees or incentives and this can make businesses shy away. There is also lack of focus for market research and those who have developed ecotourism products have done so on their own. Data for ecotourism product development is poor. In the absence of all this there is little appetite for anyone to take up risks in this business area. Hence, when a product is brought out it tends to be unregulated with little local participation leading to Government seeing these as threats and local communities finding it intrusive. In the area of monitoring, baseline data was found to be absent. There was concern on the equitable distribution of benefits to the local community and other stakeholders. There was also a need to understand cultural impacts and assessment of this was necessary if the long-term significant contribution of ecotourism as a way

forward for both enhancement of equity amongst stakeholders and conservation of natural areas is to effectively take place.

In this chapter important findings are associated with ethics of government of particular country. Different countries have different aspiration and ethics to preserve their natural environment. Some countries in South Asia take ecotourism seriously as means of boosting their economy. While others take as obligations just to bring sustainability. Nepal, Bhutan and Sri-Lanka strictly implemented many environmental rules and regulations to bring up ecotourism.

## **CHAPTER-5**

# **ECOTOURISM DEMAND IN SOUTH-ASIA REGION**

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## CHAPTER 5

### ECOTOURISM DEMAND IN SOUTH-ASIA REGION

The South Asia region includes Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, the Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka. The total population of the region is over one billion inhabitants. With a volume of 3.5 million income than half of which visited India, the region accounted for only 0.69 percent of the total world arrivals in 1993. Despite lagging behind the other region of the world, ecotourism demand, particularly from Europe, is growing by offering cultural tourism (India and Pakistan), beach ecotourism (Sri Lanka and the Maldives) and mountain ecotourism (Nepal).

Despite certain South Asian countries like the Maldives where ecotourism is the main economic activity are benefiting from the positive effect of international tourism. Sri Lanka has built on a ecotourism tradition and offers several products. Cultural and discovery eco-tourism in Kandy, Polonnaruwa, and beach ecotourism on south coast. However, the civil war, although mainly located on the north eastern side of the island, has had a considerable impact on international ecotourism arrivals which have progressed very slowly since 1983.

Despite a great tourism potential, international eco-tourism to Pakistan has fallen because of the conflict in Afghanistan which has damaging effects on the whole region. Nepal, on the other hand and more especially the Maldives have experienced strong eco-tourism growth, particularly in the income, they receive from eco-tourism.

Nepal has developed a tourism image based around mountain spots and the Maldives has created a product that is virtually unique in the world: ecotourism on atolls offering the formula "one hotel"-one island. This approach to beach eco-

tourism based on up market and exclusive products is in complete contrast to the traditional beach product which trends to create great concentrations of tourists and urbanization. Thanks to these policies, the Maldives arrivals growth rate has been double the world's growth rate and ecotourism receipts have also marked a much stronger growth than the world average.

Bangladesh has also recently introduced policies to stimulate eco-tourism development and one of the primary objectives is to increase the average receipt per tourist which is particularly weak at just US\$72.

## 5.1 ADMINISTRATIVE DIVISION

South Asia is usually called indo-Pakistan subcontinent. South-Asia is an important geographical region of Asia. According to L.D Stamp it is a "large area with all defined boundaries". The name SAARC is also associated with it. It consists of seven countries:-(I)India (ii)Pakistan (iii)Nepal (iv)Bhutan (v)Bangladesh (vi)Sri Lanka and (vii)Maldives.

**Table1:** Below provides a range of demographic data and no. of tourists visit

Country	Population Million	Area Sq. Km	GDP USD Billion	Visitors Million
India	1000	3287590	1700	2.000
Pakistan	145	803940	282	0.500
Bangladesh	126	144000	175.5	0.100
Nepal	24	140800	27.4	0.400
Bhutan	2	46620	1.9	0.007
Maldives	0.4	298	0.5	0.500
Sri Lanka	19	66000	48	0.700
	1316.4	4489248	2235.3	4.207

Source - Various Government statistics



Of all these countries India is by far the largest and has both the Himalayan as well as the marine tourism potential. It has a vast cultural significance too. Nepal and Bhutan are Himalayan Kingdoms while Sri Lanka and Maldives are island nations. Pakistan brings up the far west of South Asia and is the gateway to the Western Asia and Central Asia. Geographically South Asia has a huge coastline spanning the Bay of Bengal, Indian Ocean and the Arabian Sea. It also houses the entire Himalayan Hindukush mountain ranges and has a giant fresh water reserve which acts as the water resource for the entire South Asia. Imagine that Bangladesh is carved out of the deposits of silt brought down by the mighty Himalayan fed rivers of the Ganges and the Brahmaputra. These unique features of geography combined with its rich history of movement of people and cultures have today given expression to some of the most enduring of cultural heritages. This in itself is good enough to bring millions of visitors to this region annually. However, not to be lost out is the immense diversity of biological species. This then is the focus of not only studies but also of being endangered. In fact there is little to compare in terms of population and resources as most of the other countries are tiny when it comes to both geographical area and population. However, there is good comparison when it comes to attracting tourists.

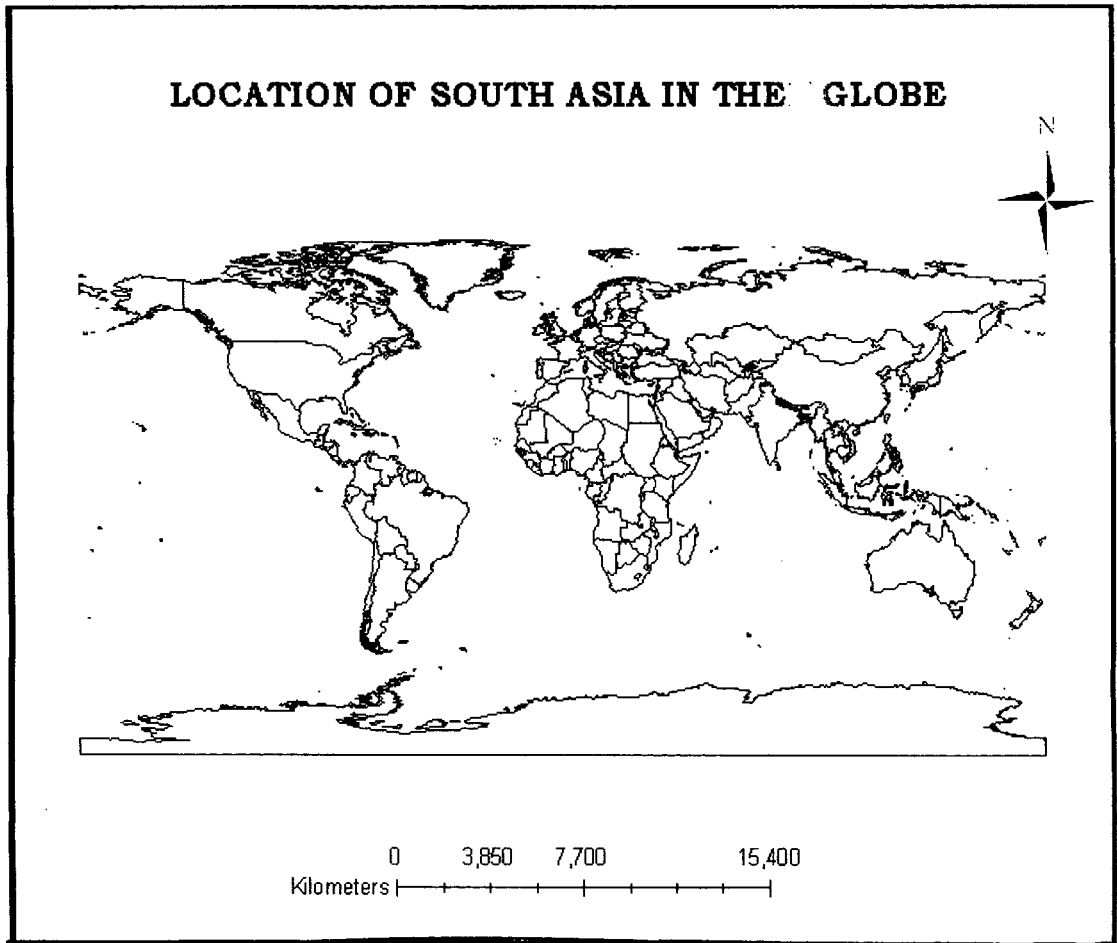
It is estimated that the entire South Asian region attracts about 5 million tourists, with India alone receiving about 2 million of them. No studies have been done to see whether the same tourist actually visits more than one South Asian country on a single visit – it is fairly logical to think that it must be so. Someone going to Bhutan for instance, needs more often than not to come via India. South Asia's diversity in offerings of tourism products is well known. However, due to indifferent policy initiatives, the real potential is not realized. Each country is trying to carve out a niche without really taking advantage of

contiguity and synergies that may arise. In terms of potential, Indian tourists also play an important role – many go to the neighbouring countries and constitute a major portion of the tourists that flow into these countries. In fact this is becoming more important from the point of view of the recent drop in tourist traffic from other western countries due to the global recession and the September 11th attack in New York.

India is a giant among the seven. It occupies about 73.2 percent of the total area of South Asia. It is four times of Pakistan which is second largest in South Asia and eleven thousand times of the Maldives.

#### **LOCATION:-**

The Bay of Bengal, the Arabian Sea and the Indian Ocean are the water bodies which are to its south. To its north is a mountainous wall-The Himalayan Mountains whose two syntaxes bend on their eastern and western ends separating Myanmar in the east end. Afghanistan in the west and Bhutan nestle in the high mountains in the North Pakistan is situated in its west and Bangladesh lies in the high mountains in the North. Pakistan is situated in its west and Bangladesh lies in its east. The riverine systems, continuity of plains, similarity in climate, soil racial structure, language etc. which provide an ideal unity to the region have been recaptured by narrow political considerations. The geographical unity has been disturbed by political centrifugal forces.



South Asia with Maldives in the deep south extends from nearly  $3^{\circ}$  N to about  $37^{\circ}$  N latitude and from  $61^{\circ}$  E to  $97^{\circ}25'$  E at the trijunction of China, India and Myanmar.

## 5.2 CONVERGENCES AND DIVERGENCES IN SOUTH ASIA

There are distinct types of tourism flows to the region. The countries of South Asia fall into three categories:-

a) Bangladesh and Bhutan receive very few or no tourists at all because of military conflicts or internal policies.

b) The Maldives, Nepal and Sri Lanka are committed to tourism development policies which play an essential role in their general development strategies;

c) India and Pakistan receive close to two-thirds of the region's tourists yet their tourism has still not been exploited to its fullest potential.

India is the main tourism country in the region with 53 percent of arrivals and 68 percent of total receipts.

**COUNTRYWISE POTENTIAL OF ECOTOURISM IN SOUTH-ASIA CAN BE SEEN AS UNDER:-**

**ECO-TOURISM IN BANGLADESH**

Map-2



Bangladesh a country filled with natural wonders and untouched reserves, home to a variety of unique and magnificent creatures, with hills, valleys, forests, beaches, lakes and rivers,. Ecotourism in Bangladesh is ideal. Although is still a relatively new form of tourism in Bangladesh.

Bangladesh a country filled with natural wonders and untouched reserves, home to a variety of unique and magnificent creatures, with hills, valleys, forests, beaches, lakes and rivers,. Ecotourism in Bangladesh is ideal. Although is still a relatively

new form of tourism in Bangladesh is on the rise and extensive efforts are being made to promote it in the country. Aside from exploring the vast natural territories, ecotourism in Bangladesh also affords visitors the Bangladesh boasts to having the world's biggest mangrove, forest ecosystem, expansive pristine beach, impressive hilly districts (Khagrachri, Rangamati and Bandarban), a massive marine world and the largest lake built by man. Certainly with these vital ecosystems contribute greatly to Bangladesh's ecotourism potential.

Bangladesh putting in order measures to integrate ecotourism resources: It is important that when ecotourism is being promoted in the country, the environment does not become over exploited or damaged, thus sustainable development needs to be followed. It may be necessary to control the number of tourists permitted in a particular area.

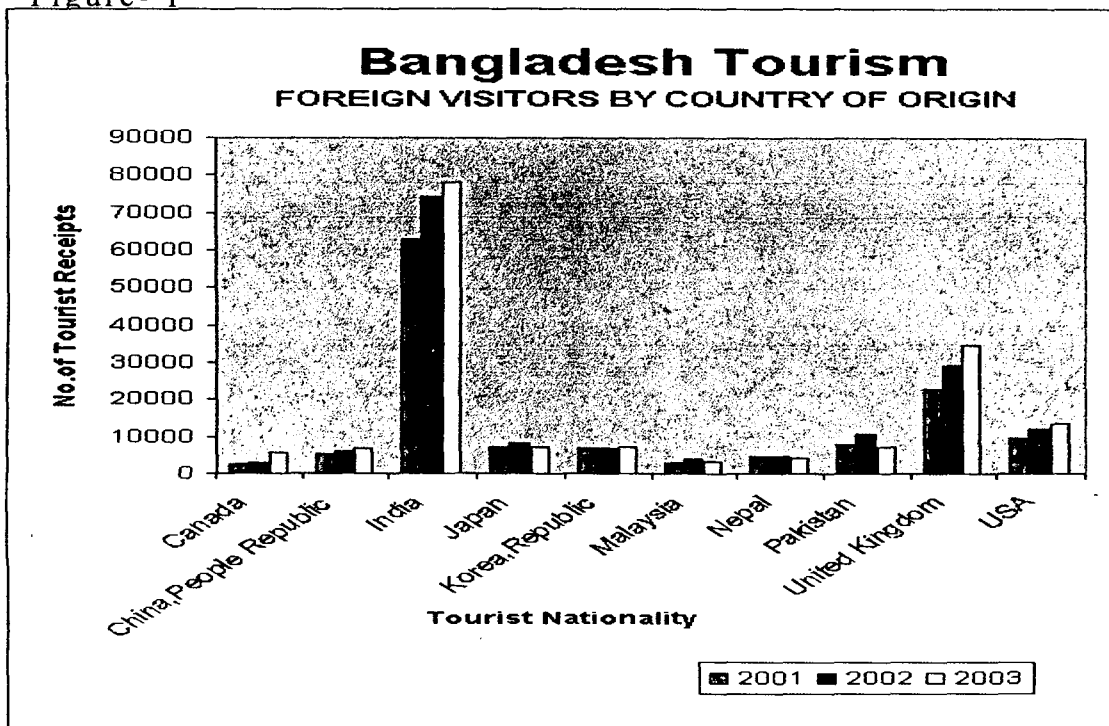
Variety of ecotourism activities are on offer in Bangladesh hike through the countryside as you search for ancient temples on the Bay's off shore islands. Hop aboard a boat and drift along on a glistening lake or river. Trek through thick forest where you may come across mere villages. Stand a chance of viewing Bangladesh's amazing tigers. Many tourism companies offer a variety of itineraries and personalized ecotours along with guides who will add to your amazing experience to become acquainted with tribal villagers.

Table- 2 Tourist Arrivals In Bangladesh

Country	2001	2002	2003
Canada	2461	2733	5484
China, People Republic	5208	5901	6867
India	62935	74268	78090
Japan	7055	8006	7090
Korea, Republic	6599	6746	6896
Malaysia	2890	3827	3204
Nepal	4733	4481	4280
Pakistan	7894	10637	7010
United Kingdom	22510	29106	34087
USA	9557	11924	13394
Total(including others)	172781	199211	207199

Source: World Tourism Organization, *Yearbook of Tourism Statistics*.

Figure- 1



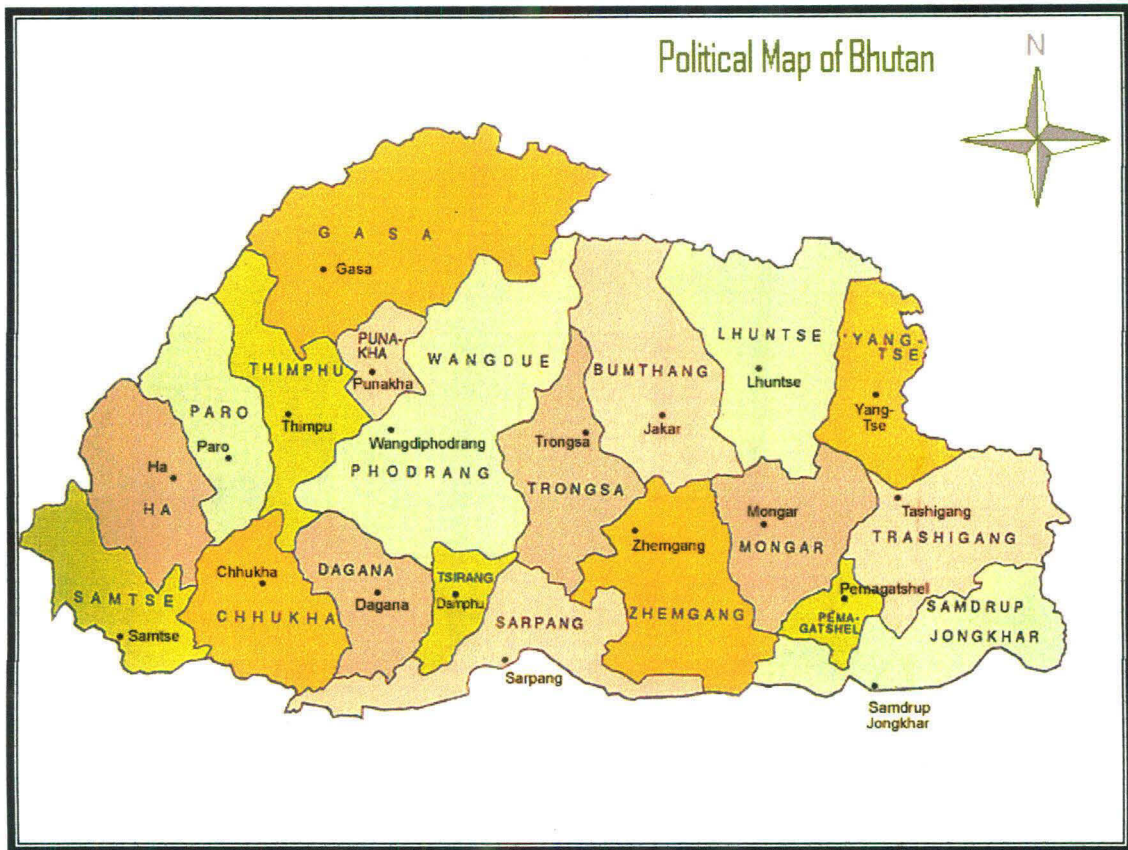
One of the most popular spot for ecotourism in Bangladesh are in Sunderbans. This group of islands is home to the world's largest mangrove forest. Residing in these verdant forests are Royal Bengal tigers. There is little doubt that this is an ecotourism experience not to be missed. Recently designated a world heritage site, the Sunder bans attract nature lovers from around the world.

Bangladesh emerged as an independent country on 16 December 1971. Its official name is the 'People's Republic of Bangladesh'. Dhaka is the capital of the Republic and Bangla is the state language. The Independence and National Day of Bangladesh is 26 March. The population of the country currently stands at around 126 million. About 80 percent of the people live in rural areas Bangladesh has primarily an agrarian economy. Agriculture is the single largest sector in the economy producing about 30% of the country's GDP and employing around 60% of the total labour force. The country has a considerable number of large, medium and small-sized industries in both the public and private sectors based on both indigenous and imported raw materials. Among them are jute, cotton, textiles, fertilizer, engineering, shipbuilding, steel, oil-refinery, paper, newsprint, sugar, chemicals, cement and leather. Tourism is seen as a good foreign exchange earner. However, infrastructure and other bottlenecks continue to dog this nation from attracting higher income foreign tourists. Cultural and nature tourism is being given emphasis. Some private tour operators are offering ecotourism packages.



## ECO-TOURISM IN BHUTAN

Map no 3



With some 72% of the country still covered by virgin and having an ecosystem hosting 770 species of rhododendron and an astonishing variety of orchids and other plants, Bhutan has the potential to become one to the world's greatest ecotourism destinations.

Conscious of the value and fragility of outstanding natural environment, the Royal Government of Bhutan has adopted a policy of low volume, high value tourism. This policy has been particularly successful in protecting the country's spectacular cultural and natural heritage while promoting community participation in ecotourism development and equal benefit sharing among stakeholders.

Established in 1937, the Royal society for the protection of Nature (RSPN) has worked with the world wildlife fund, The US Mac Arthur foundation and the Bhutan Trust fund for

Environmental Conservation, implementing environment education, awareness and conservation programmes brought out Bhutan. It enjoys the patronage of HRH the crown prince of Bhutan.

The aim of the UNESCO/RSPN Project is to develop an integrated conservation development programme in Bhutan's phobjikha valley, which is home to the endangered black-necked crane and to other wetland species. Phobjikha has a population of 5,000 people, mostly farmers living in the valley's 37 villages, and is a prime site for the development of culturally and environmentally responsible cultural and ecotourism.

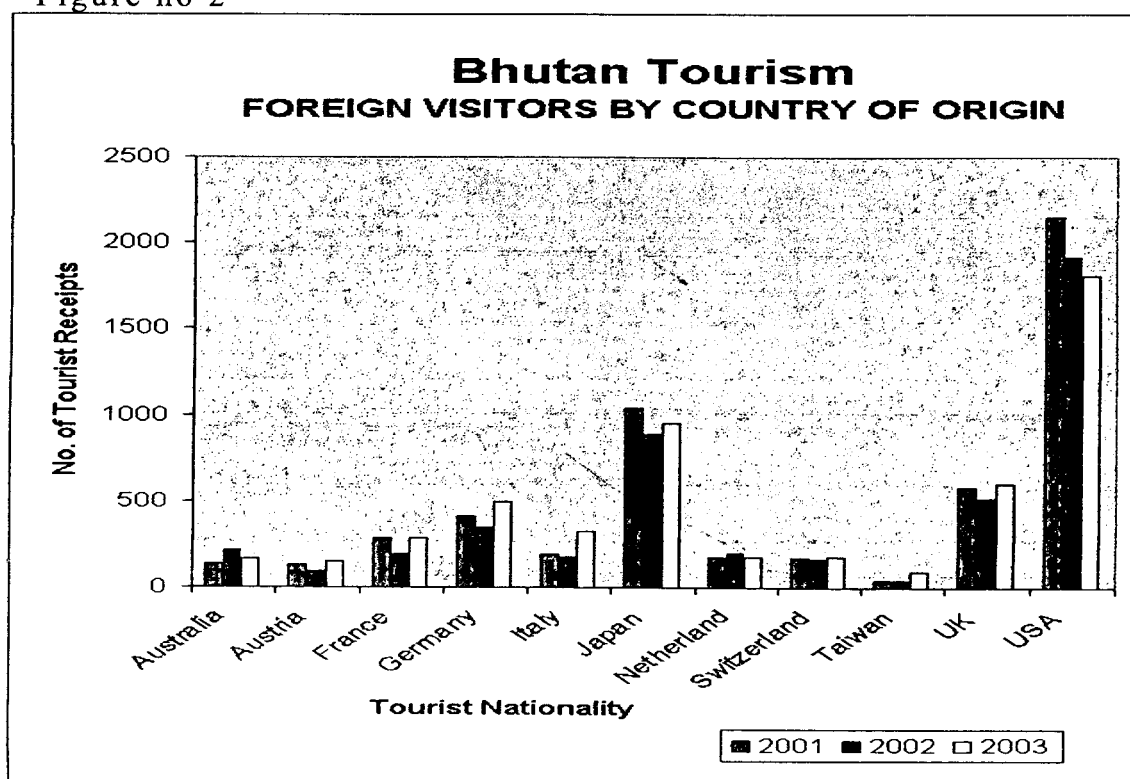
It also helps to maintain to maintain the area's trekking and nature trails, develop tourist products for the phobjikha valley and set up model community lodges and composite. Thus members of the local community are involved in ecotourism development, learning skills and reaping economic benefits.

**Table-3 Tourist Arrivals In Bhutan**

Country	2001	2002	2003
Australia	138	214	165
Austria	128	92	152
France	287	192	288
Germany	414	346	496
Italy	192	177	331
Japan	1038	892	952
Netherland	180	197	176
Switzerland	170	164	177
Taiwan	44	40	90
UK	581	519	605
USA	2149	1913	1806
Total(incl.others)	6374	5594	6261

Source: World Tourism Organization, *Yearbook of Tourism Statistics*

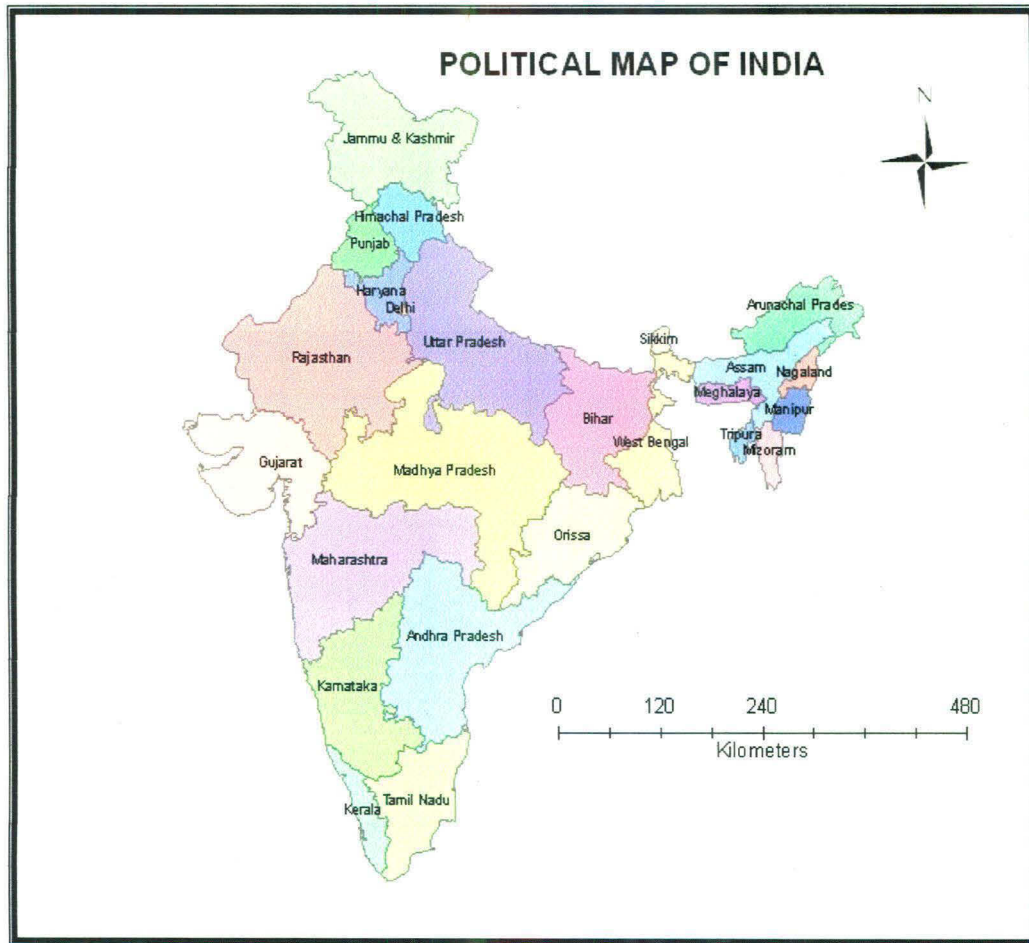
Figure no 2



Bhutan is an extraordinary place hardly touched by the hands of time. Nestled in the heart of the great Himalaya, it remained in self-imposed isolation for centuries, aloof from the rest of the world. Since its doors were cautiously opened in 1974, visitors have been mesmerised: the environment is pristine, the scenery and architecture are awesome, the people are hospitable and charming, and the culture unique in its purity. Despite the huge potential of its natural resources, Bhutan emerged as one of Asia's poorest countries, shunning the 'profit at all costs' mentality of the rest of the world. With one foot in the past and one in the future, it strolls confidently towards modernisation, on its own terms, fiercely protecting its ancient culture, its natural resources and its deeply Buddhist way of life. According to official statements, this Himalayan mountain country is bent on getting tourists who can spend. So the numbers of visitors are few but it is very expensive to visit Bhutan. Tourism is not viewed as very important even though the country's second highest foreign exchange earner is the tourism industry. It does not have any policy related to ecotourism.

# ECO-TOURISM IN INDIA

Mapno.4



It may be remembered that India is one of the seven bio-diverse countries of the world and has a rich cultural heritage. It has vast potential for ecotourism needs to be harnessed for the economic benefits of our nation as well as the healthy conservation and preservation of nature. India has a considerable network of sanctuaries, national parks-covering around 4.6% of net geographical area. For example, the Sunderbans, already declared by the UNESCO as a World Heritage Site, offers one of the largest delta reserves. Forests in the world and can easily be an excellent spot for ecotourism. The bane of the Sunderbans is the object poverty of the villages dotting the forest area. This has

been the biggest threat to forest protection. Unless poverty-eradication measures are undertaken successfully, rich biodiversity of the Sunderbans would be endangered. There are certain pre-requisites of eco-tourism which the Sunderbans is capable of fulfilling some of these are: a well preserved ecotourists, culture and adventure activities, active involvement of the locals who are able to provide authentic information about nature, culture and their ethnic tradition to the visitors and tourists, and finally empowering the local populace to manage eco-tourism so that they can ensure conservation through the opportunity of alternative livelihood. The Sunderbans has all these virtues. But what need at the moment is to initiate some concrete and effective measures.

The Sunderbans constitutes only one example of a possible location for ecotourism. There are many such locations around our country like the entire North-East, the Himalayas and the Sub-Himalayan region and a vast stretch of the southern part of to find that although the entire North-East could be developed as a tourists heaven by virtue of its scenic topographical advantages, diverse cultures and its pristine areas unspoilt by pollution, the development of the tourism sector which has a big potential for not only the development of the region but also in combating joblessness by way of providing income generating scope for the youth, has not been undertaken for some strange reason. Therefore new vision for the expansion of tourism sector in India is the need of the hour.

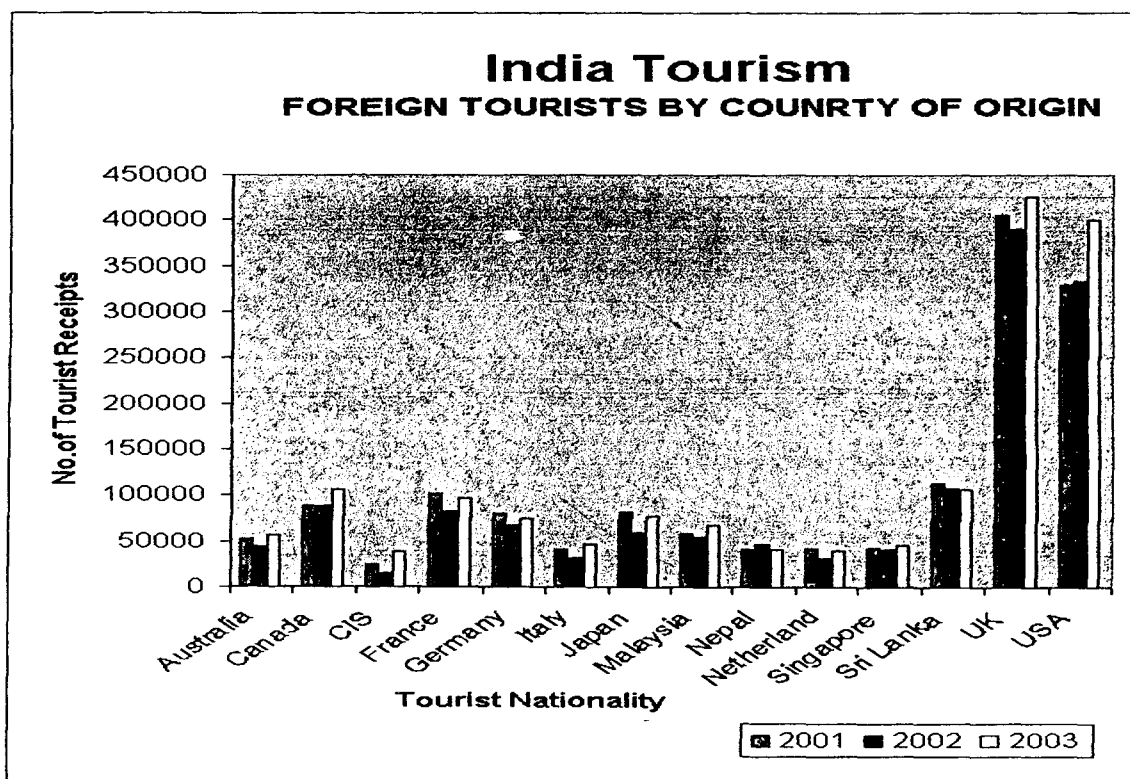
Tourism should be made a national strategic priority for employment-generation. More impetus should be given to ecotourism and rural tourism by linking village development with the restoration of the heritage properties. Creation of public awareness about the economic and social benefits of tourism should also be taken up in all seriousness.

Table no 4 Tourist Arrivals in India

Country	2001	2002	2003
Australia	52691	44456	56083
Canada	88600	87440	106554
CIS	24831	15164	38443
France	102434	82044	96848
Germany	80011	67125	74518
Italy	41351	32042	46238
Japan	80634	58721	76411
Malaysia	57869	54943	67440
Nepal	41135	46227	41152
Netherland	42368	32055	40047
Singapore	42824	41918	44785
Sri Lanka	112813	107729	106364
UK	405472	390762	427235
USA	329147	333382	400113
Total(incl.others)	2053208	1899608	2750290

Source: World Tourism Organization, *Yearbook of Tourism Statistics*.

Figure no 3



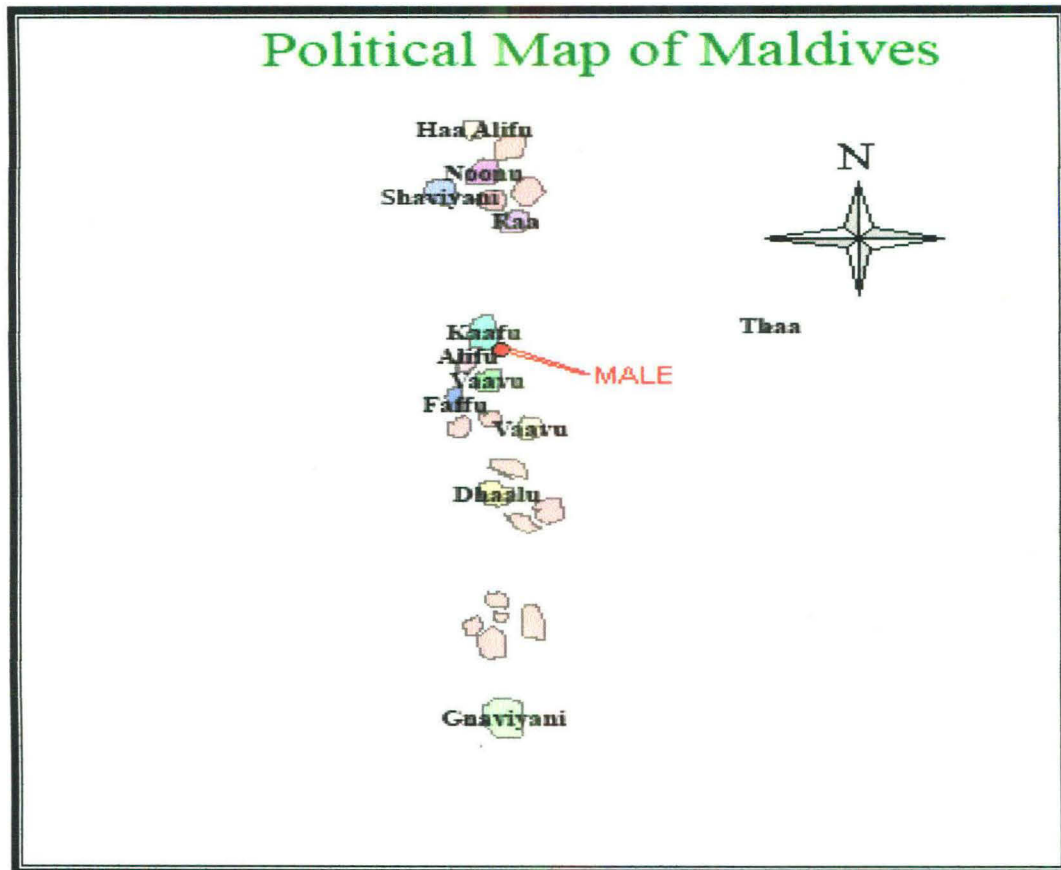
The roots of Indian civilization stretch back in time to pre-recorded history. The earliest human activity in the Indian subcontinent can be traced back to the Early, Middle and Late Stone Ages. India gained independence from the British on 15 August 1947. The freedom struggle was led by Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi, also known as The Mahatma, who is revered as the Father of the Nation. India has one of the world's most diverse populations, with most of the major races represented. Today, India has over one billion people. There are fifteen languages recognized by the Indian Constitution and these are spoken in 1600 dialects. Hindi, the fourth most widely spoken language in the world, is the language of 30% of the population and the official language of India.

India ranks among the top ten industrial nations of the world and has an increasingly powerful middle class. The Indian economy is potentially very strong with its large industrial output, technological knowledge and extensive reservoir of skilled manpower. Major exports include cotton goods, iron, raw jute and jute products, coffee, electrical goods, leather, handicrafts, diamonds, chemicals and software. The major imports are machinery, petroleum, chemicals, cereals, copper, and zinc. Tourism is an important industry in the country. The country has 90 million domestic tourists and 2 million foreign tourists who earned for India US\$ 2,300 million last year alone. Tourism has been put on the fast track and a new national tourism policy has been announced. Ecotourism is finding place in this document thanks to the initiatives being taken in the States of Sikkim and Kerala.



## ECOTOURISM IN MALDIVES

Map no. 5



The civilization of Maldives as far as can be estimated, dates back more than 2000 years. Archeological findings from many ancient sites in Maldives show ruins of old Buddhist structures, some dating back to 3rd and 4th centuries. The evidence shows that at the time of conversion to Islam in 1153 A.D. the population of Maldives was mainly Buddhist. Throughout its history, Maldives has remained independent, although the Portuguese occupied the country for 15 years in the 16th century. From 1887, Maldives was a British protectorate until it became fully independent on 26 July 1965.

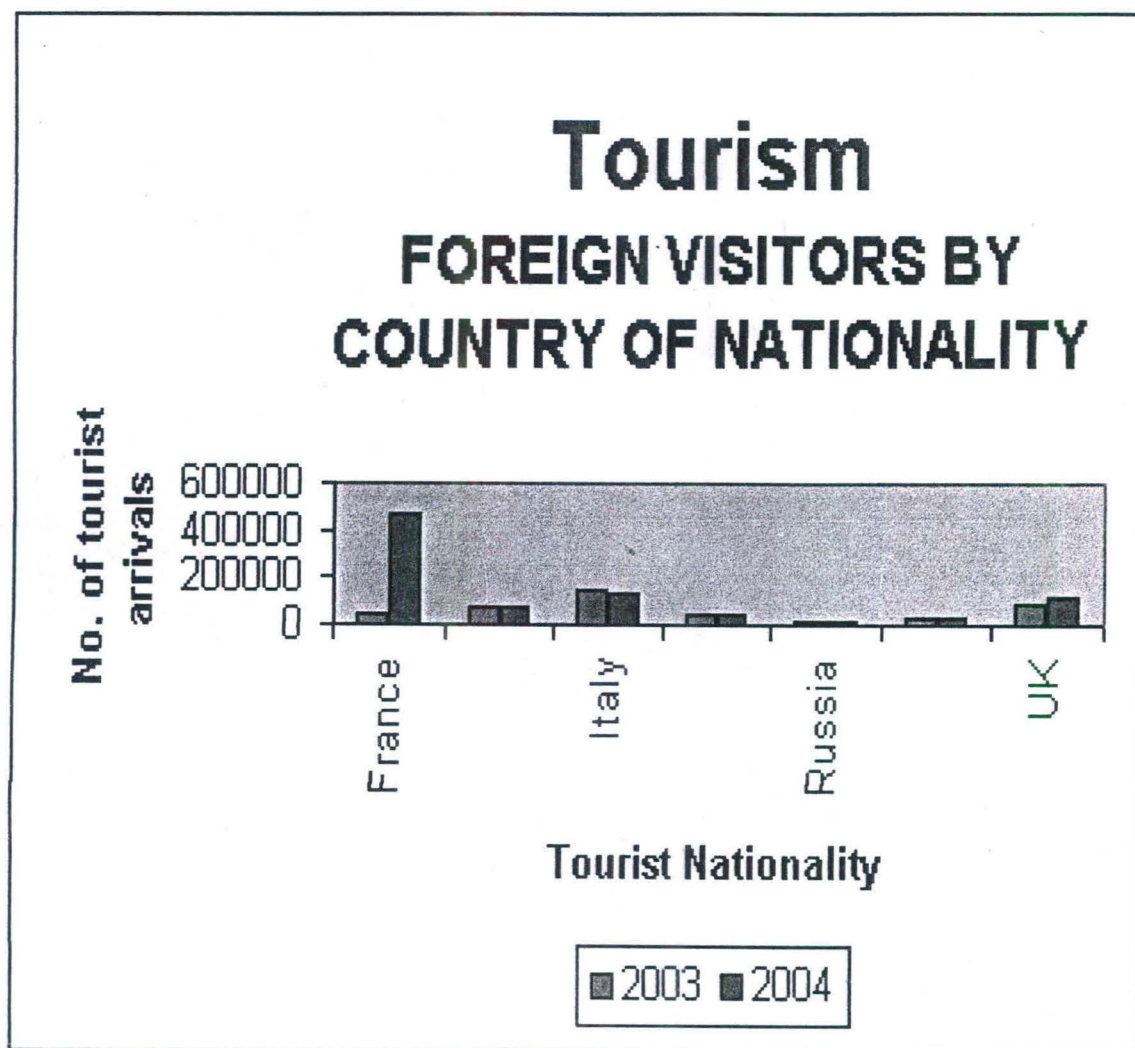
The archipelago of the Republic of Maldives is made up of a chain of 1190 small and low-lying islands, stretching over 800 kms from north to south. Out of this number, only 198 islands are inhabited. The population of Maldives is 270,101 (2000 census).

Maldivians comprise a mixed race, unified through sharing a common history, language and religion. Dhivehi is the official language. Islam is the strength and backbone of the country, permeating the entire fabric of the Maldivian culture, polity and civil society. The Maldives' political system is a unique blend of its history, traditions, Islamic faith and modern democratic principles.

Table no. 5 Tourist Arrivals in Maldives

Country	2003	2004
France	41005	461156
Germany	70762	72967
Italy	140304	131044
Japan	42081	46939
Russia	12108	18075
Switzerland	30787	29252
UK	93989	113991
Total(incl.other)	563593	661716

Source: World Tourism Organization, *Yearbook of Tourism Statistics*.



The mainstay of the Maldives economy today comprises fisheries and tourism. Nearly 19% of the labour force is engaged in the fisheries sector, which accounts for over 6% of the GDP. Tourism, which became a major industry since the mid-eighties accounts for 33% of the GDP. Industrial activity consists of both traditional and modern sectors. The traditional sector consists of boat building, mat-weaving, rope making, blacksmithing, handicrafts and other cottage industries. The activities in the modern sector include fish canning, manufacture of garments construction of fiberglass boats, production of cleaning fluids, and bottling of aerated water. It has evolved over a period of many years, the first written constitution having been proclaimed in 1932, though unwritten constitutional principles had been in existence long before then. A republican form of government in 1968 replaced the constitutional monarchy, with an Executive President as the Head of State. A new Constitution, that is more comprehensive and in tune with the country's democratic principles was adopted by the country on 1 January 1998.

## ECO-TOURISM IN NEPAL

Map- 6



Ecotourism is a form of tourism that operates on the principle that environmental damage should be minimized, while economic benefits are maximized. The main benefit of ecotourism is that it has the potential to provide needed capital for the local and national economies without exceeding ecological or cultural carrying capacities. This study focuses on economic and environmental impacts of ecotourism with a primary focus on the consumption of fuel wood by trekking tourism. Fuel wood consumption is an important issue because the forest supplies most of the energy needs in Nepal.

Nepal is home to eight of the highest mountains in the world, including Mount Everest, making it a primary destination for mountain trekkers. Trekking now accounts for a quarter of Nepal's tourism, this has increased from 50,000 in 1970 to 300,000 in 1993.

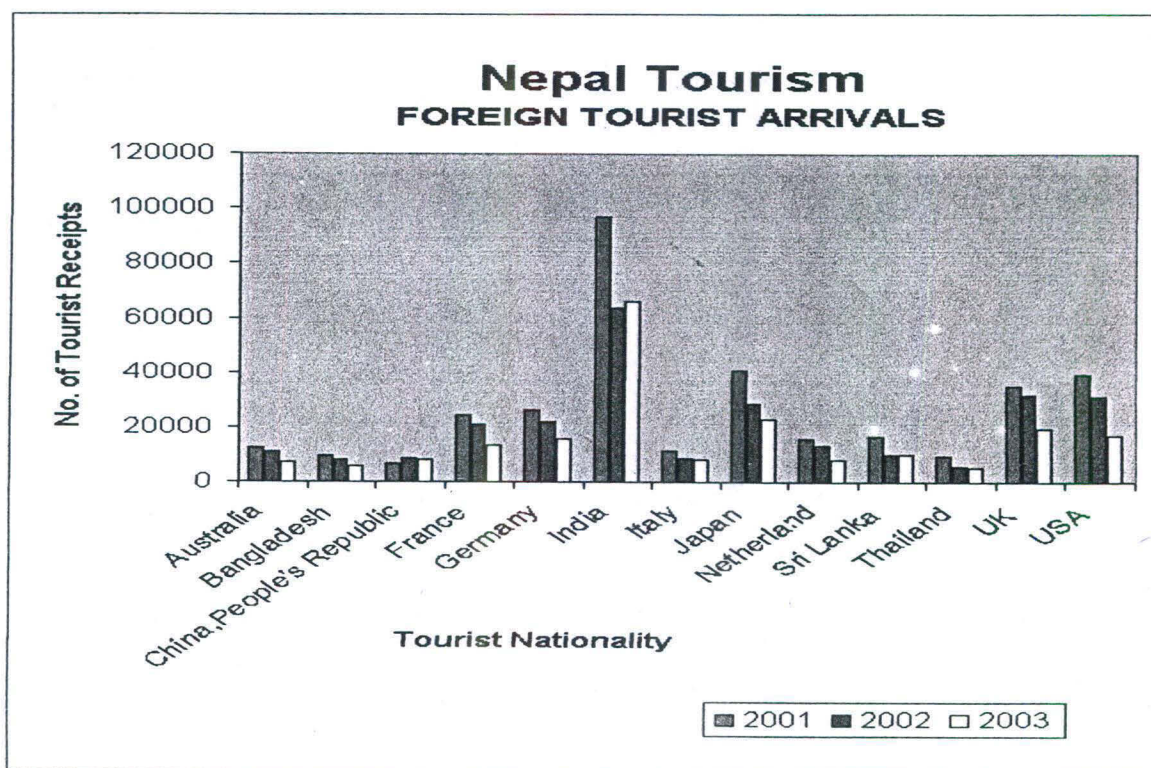
Nepal attracts tourists by promoting its mountains and its people. It is one of the most exciting places and many come back for more. However, in recent times it has been falling back in this regard due to the world economic slowdown, as well as its internal strife and Maoist movement which has put this small Himalayan Kingdom in the watch list of most visitors. Spanning approximately a third of the Himalayan belt, the Kingdom of Nepal is a land of pristine scenery, historic temples, and some of the best walking trails on earth. It's a poor country, but it is rich in scenic splendour and cultural treasures. The kingdom has long exerted a pull on tourists who come mainly from India and the Western world. There is great appreciation of its natural and cultural complexity. It also houses the important secretariat of the South Asia Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC). In fact some of the major initiatives come from the tourism committee of the SAARC. Nepal is a developing country with an agricultural economy. In recent years, the country's efforts to expand into manufacturing industries and other technological sectors have achieved much progress. Farming is the main economic activity followed by manufacturing, trade and tourism. The chief sources of foreign currency earnings are merchandise export, services, tourism and Gurkha remittances. The Nepal Tourism Board is the driving force as far as giving a positive image and building of tourism products for Nepal. It is relying on changing the way tourism is developed to make it more focused on eco-tourism and cultural exchange.

Table-6 Tourist Arrivals in Nepal

Country	2001	2002	2003
Australia	12139	10711	7179
Bangladesh	9355	8108	5756
China, People's Republic	6627	8564	8026
France	24028	20788	13135
Germany	25907	21809	15570
India	96995	63722	65743
Italy	11384	8503	8002
Japan	40841	28554	22941
Netherland	15878	13049	8049
Sri Lanka	16628	9874	9756
Thailand	9587	5768	5166
UK	35080	31897	19679
USA	39377	31440	17076
Total (incl. other)	463646	361237	275468

Source: World Tourism Organization, *Yearbook of Tourism Statistics*

Figure no 5



Sagarmatha National Park (the region around Mount Everest) and the ACAP (Annapurna Conservation Area Project) are the most popular trekking regions in Nepal. The ACAP, which receives roughly 60 percent of all trekkers in the country, can be divided into three major management areas:

- 1) The Upper Mustang Conservation and Development Area, which was added in July 1992;
- 2) The Annapurna Conservation Area, which comprised the original boundary of the ACAP; and
- 3) The Annapurna Sanctuary, which is a sacred valley within the Annapurna Conservation Area.

The ACAP was created in order to alleviate environmental degradation linked to trekking tourism by stressing conservation and development. The goals of the ACAP are to involve locals in the management of the reserve, to provide fees paid by trekkers directly to local inhabitants for the management of the reserve, to provide economic benefits to locals, and to preserve the environment in Nepal's Annapurna Conservation Area Project.

## ECOTOURISM IN PAKISTAN

Map-7



Pakistan is a country with as much diversity as India though smaller, but it contains some of Asia's most unique landscapes, extraordinary trekking, a multitude of cultures and a long tradition of hospitality. It's the site of some of the earliest human settlements, home to an ancient civilisation rivalling those of Egypt and Mesopotamia, and the crucible of two of the world's major religions, Hinduism and Buddhism. The Islamic Republic of Pakistan appeared on the world map on 14 August 1947 under the leadership of Muhammad Ali Jinnah, Quaid-e-Azam (the Great Leader), who is revered as the Father of the Nation. Pakistan is divided into four provinces: Sindh, Baluchistan, Punjab and the North-West Frontier Province. Islamabad is the capital of the country. Pakistan has a federal structure.



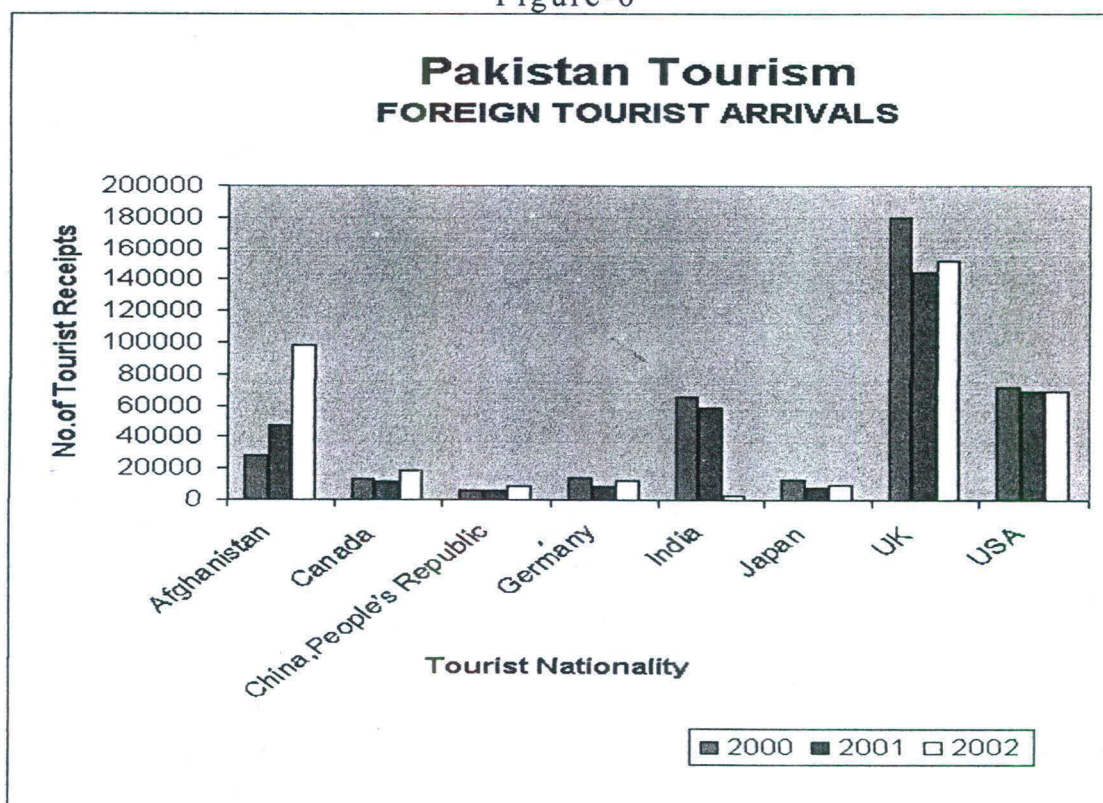
The Parliament consists of the Lower House (National Assembly) and the Upper House (Senate). The new administration consists of the President, who continues in office, the National Security Council headed by the Chief Executive, and the Cabinet. Governors have been appointed in all the four Provinces.

Table no. 7 Tourist Arrivals In Pakistan

Country	2000	2001	2002
Afghanistan	27912	46994	98498
Canada	12956	11813	18150
China, People's Republic	6191	5704	8896
Germany	14121	9047	12243
India	66061	58378	2618
Japan	12794	7580	9975
UK	179759	144408	151341
USA	71518	69067	69030
Total(incl.others)	556805	499719	498059

Source: World Tourism Organization, *Yearbook of Tourism Statistics*

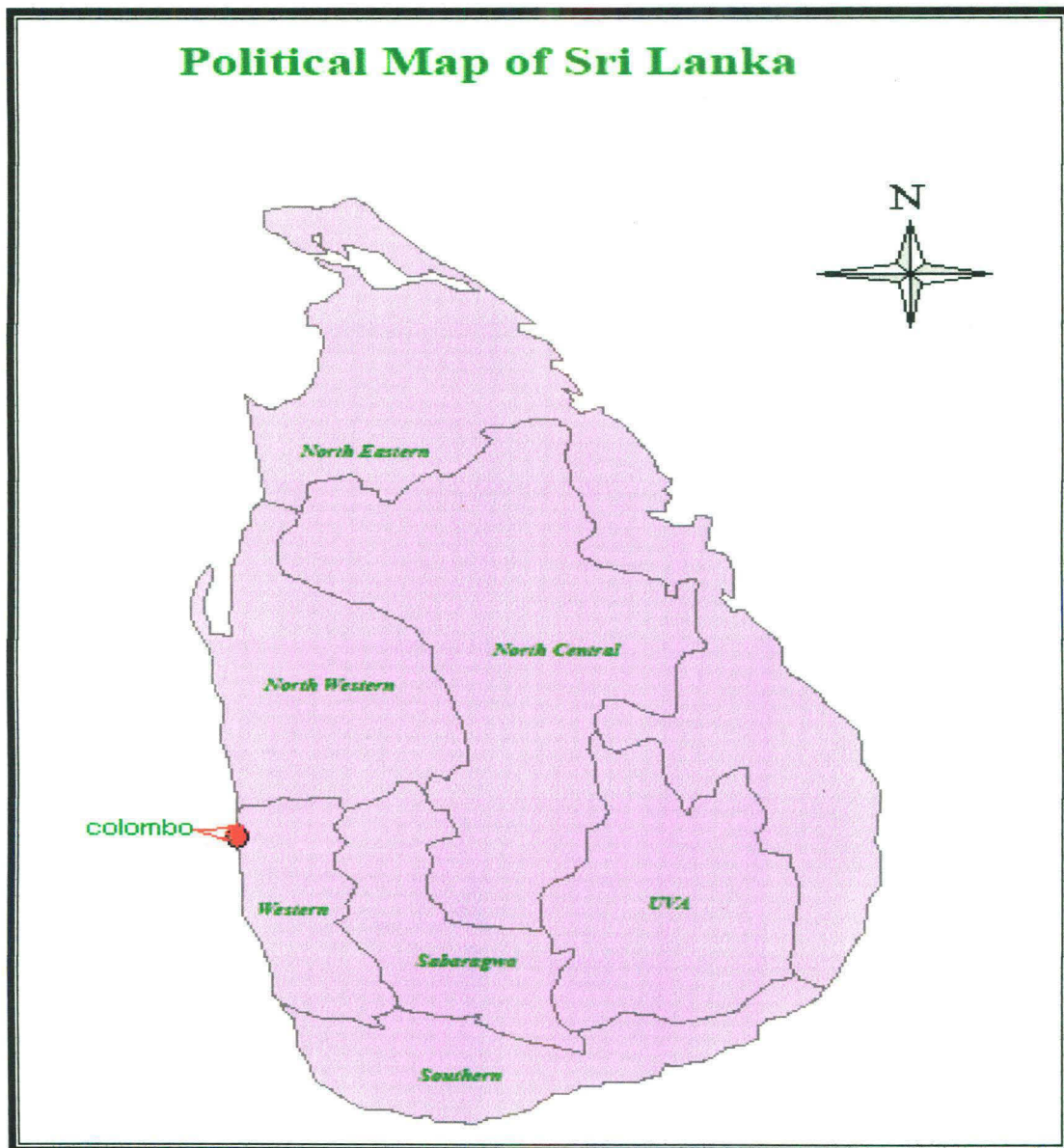
Figure-6



Agriculture and related activities engage 46.1 percent of the workforce and provide 25 percent of GDP. The main exports include cotton textiles, cotton yarn and thread, clothing, raw cotton, rice, carpets and rugs, leather, fish and petroleum products. The main imports include machinery, electrical equipment, petroleum products, transportation equipment, metal and metal products, fertilizer and foodstuffs. Pakistan receives about 0.5 million tourists annually though in recent times due to the war in Afghanistan its tourism industry has been severely hit.

## ECO-TOURISM IN SRI LANKA

Map - 8



The island of paradise- Sri Lanka is well known to tourists for its coastal tropical beach fascinating ecotourism attractions of nature parks, rain forests, vast lakes, reservoirs, practical wildlife the greenish hill country with its waterfall, tea estates and year round cool weather attracting more tourists to Sri Lanka.

Sri Lanka is a country blessed by nature. Though it is a island, a mere dot on the world map, it is filled wide variety of beautiful and ecologically important natural habitants. Sri Lanka harbors a vast amount far larger in proportion on her size,

because of its environment and its tropical conditions. Elephants, Deer and wild boar are some of the main attractions of wildlife enthusiasts. Bird life is a major part of Lanka's wildlife.

The abundance of Sri Lanka of Sri Lanka's bird life makes it an ornithologist's paradise. To the botanist this is indeed a land of trees, tropical temperature to flourish. The luxuriant undergrowth and tall majestic trees of the wet zone tropical temperature to flourish. The luxuriant undergrowth and tall majestic trees of the wet zone tropical forest with the arid scrubland and galipot palms of the dry northern and eastern regions of the island.

Sri Lanka is a paradise for animal lovers who enjoy animal or bird watching. There are many national sanctuaries in Sri Lanka that offer you an opportunity to observe 'real' wildlife. The animals roam the natural parks and sanctuaries are many in variety.

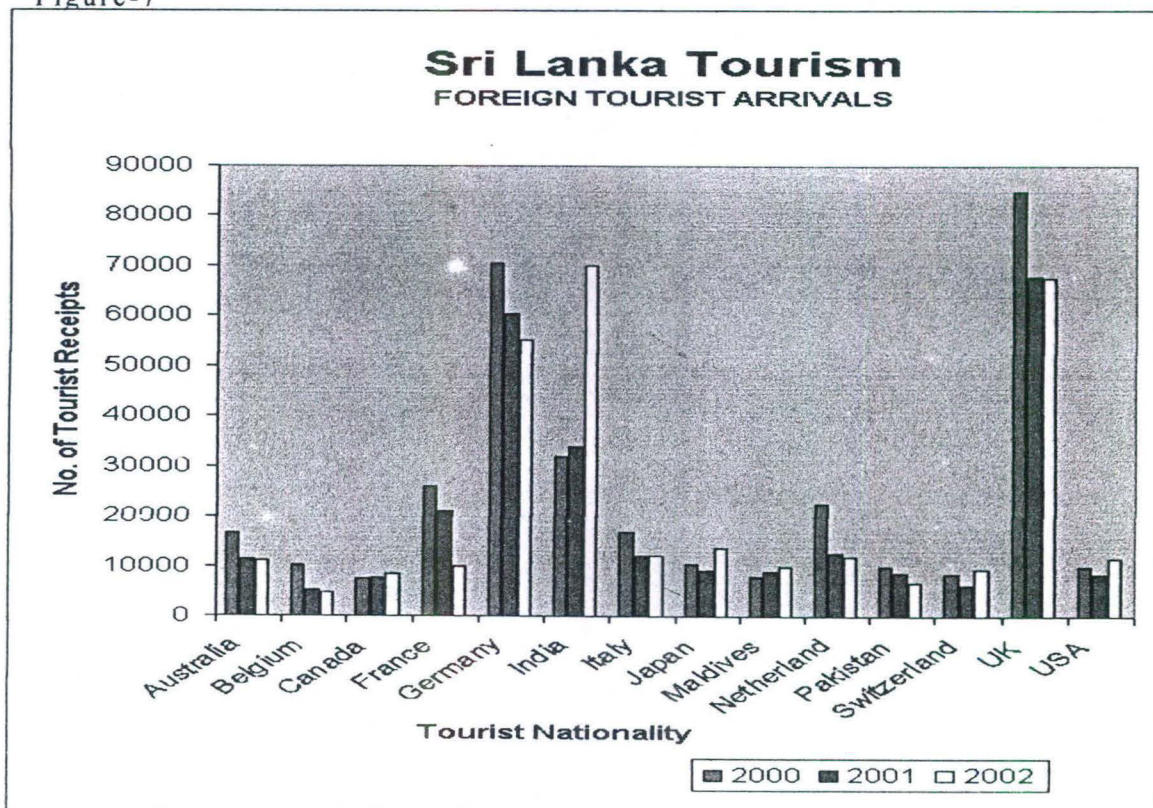
Example of animals though see in a national park such as Yala National park are elephants, leopards, sloth beers, deer and buffalos, wild boars, porcupines, ant-eaters, civet cats, jackals, mongooses, Loris(unique to Sri Lanka varieties of lizard's, squirrels, reptiles and amphibians.

Table no. 8 Tourist Arrivals in Sri Lanka

Country	2000	2001	2002
Australia	16443	11457	11217
Belgium	10224	5250	4767
Canada	7503	7609	8301
France	25992	20949	9989
Germany	70584	60405	55170
India	31860	33924	69960
Italy	16883	12074	12177
Japan	10266	9237	13602
Maldives	7935	9019	9861
Netherland	22618	12569	11748
Pakistan	10005	8562	6756
Switzerland	8490	6228	9375
UK	84693	67830	67533
USA	9816	8374	11565
Total(incl.others)	400414	336794	393171

Source: World Tourism Organization, *Yearbook of Tourism Statistics*.

Figure-7



Today Sri Lanka preserves 12 National parks, 51 Sanctuaries, and 3 strict Natural Reserves.

There are 628 vertebrates(84 mammals,379 birds,133 reptile amphibians),a myriad of invertebrates and about 900 species of fish. Out of these, 10 mammals,2 reptiles,15 amphibians and 17 fishes are endemic, i.e. found only in Sri Lanka. Out of the 242 butterflies in the island, only 6 kinds live above 4000 feet elevation. There are more than 3000 plants, about five times the number in the United Kingdom. Of these about 25% of the flowering are endemic

Sri Lanka means "resplendent" (from the Pali "*alankara*"). Stone-age implements found on the island date back at least ten millennia, while evidence is available that the domestication of plants may have taken place around 15,000 B.C. Given Sri Lanka's central location on the trade routes of the ancient world and the attraction then of her "products", pearls, timber, gems and ivory, and later spices, the island had become a center of East-West commerce well before the Christian era. The direct influence of European maritime powers was felt beginning from the 16th century with the arrival of the Portuguese, Dutch and later British. Sri Lanka gained independence from the British on 4 February 1948. The population of Sri Lanka (1998 estimate) is 18.77 million. The country is a multiethnic nation. The Sinhalese, of Indo-Aryan origin, comprise 74 percent of the population; the Sri Lankan Tamils, of Dravidian origin, who migrated to the island thereafter: 12.6 percent; the Indian Tamils, descendants of migrant workers from South India recruited in the last century by the British: 5.5 percent; the Moors, descendants from Arab traders who arrived in the island from about the 12th century AD: 7.1 percent; and others, who include Burghers, descendants of the Dutch and Portuguese: 0.8 percent. Sinhalese and Tamil are official languages while English is the national language. Four major religions are freely practiced in Sri Lanka. Buddhists

account for 69.3 percent of the population, Hindus for 15.5 percent, Christians for 7.6 percent and Muslims for 7.5 percent.

At the time of independence, Sri Lanka adopted a Westminster system of Parliamentary government with a House of Representatives, a Senate and a Cabinet headed by a Prime Minister. The British monarch was retained as constitutional head of state, and was represented in the Island by a Governor-General. In 1972, a Republican Constitution was adopted with a single legislature (the National State Assembly) and a constitutional President thus formally severing links with the British Crown. Following the amendment of Constitution in 1978, an Executive Presidential system of government prevails. The President of Sri Lanka is both the Head of State and Head of Government. The President is directly elected by the people for a term of six years. The supreme legislative body is a unicameral parliament consisting of 225 members elected by a system of proportional representation. A multi-party system prevails and many smaller parties are allied to either the government or the opposition group. The leader of the majority party in the parliament is elected as the Prime Minister.

Ninety percent of the economy of the country at independence depended on the export of the three plantation crops of tea, rubber and coconut. Since the late 1970s, the economy has been progressively liberalized. Industrial policy has shifted from import substitution to export-oriented production. The service center now accounts for 52% in the sectoral composition of the GDP; the manufacturing sector for 16.5%; agriculture for 21.1%; construction for 7.6%; and mining for 1.9%. Colombo is the largest Tea Auction Centre in the world since London auctions ceased to function in June 1998. Other exports include textiles and garments, coconut products, spices, cocoa, coffee, essential oils, gems, fishery products, rubber, machinery, footwear and leather products and petroleum by-products. Major imports include rice, wheat and sugar, fertilizer,

crude oil and investment goods such as raw materials, building materials, transport equipment and machinery.

Maldives, Nepal, Sri-Lanka and Bhutan are trying hard to extract benefits from ecotourism not simply as to preserve the ecotourism but to build up their countries economy. Pakistan and Bangladesh although having huge potential cannot derived benefit because of unstability and social unrest. Nepal has developed an international image of mountain ecotourism while Maldives, Sri-Lanka and India for coastal ecotourism.



**CHAPTER- 6**  
**CONCLUSION**

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## **CHAPTER- 6**

### **CONCLUSION**

Ecotourism is sustainable nature based tourism that involves education and interpretation of the national environment, and is one of the fastest growing sectors of the tourism industry. Ecotourism, according to U.N. and W.T.O, is to enjoy and appreciate nature. The global importance of ecotourism, its benefits as well as its impact was widely recognized with the launching of the year 2002 as the international year of eco tourism (IYE) by the United Nations General Assembly. The IYE offers an opportunity to review ecotourism experiences worldwide, in order to consolidate the tools and institutional frameworks that ensure its sustainability in future. This means ensuring the economic, environmental and social benefits from ecotourism, while avoiding its shortcomings and negative impacts. The scope of spreading ecotourism and the opportunity of ecotourism is enormous in India.

For many countries, ecotourism is not so much seen as a marginal activity intended to finance protection of the environment than as a major sector of national economy and as a means of attracting tourists. But ecotourism in the present scenario is facing problems like

1. Conflicting policies and regulations
2. Lack of community participation in planning
3. Low recognition and value given to ecotourism
4. Uncoordinated and arbitrary decision-making
5. Centrally controlled policies
6. Government department roles not specified or clear

7. Lack of consultation of communities in decision-making processes.

Greater attention needs to be paid to the role of local communities in planning and benefiting from ecotourism activities. Communities are key custodians of natural resources and can play an active and critical role in conserving valuable biodiversity, and at the same time derive economic and social benefits from Ecotourism, if they are included in the planning process.

In some countries such as Nepal, there are innovative policies such as the sharing of protected area entry fees that support communities in Ecotourism. Other countries such as India, Sri Lanka and Bhutan are also taking important steps to include people who live in protected and natural areas. Other key findings include:

1. Developing financial lending policies that encourage environmentally responsible enterprises.
2. The need to increase awareness among policy of the potential role of ecotourism in conservation and economic development.
3. Supporting regional planning initiatives for ecotourism, e.g. a focus on the Himalaya (including Nepal, Bhutan, Pakistan and relevant states of India), or Coastal Areas (Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Maldives and relevant states of India)
4. Better coordination between the government, private sector and other stakeholders in the planning and inclusion of ecotourism in tourism and other policies at the national and state levels.

Several success stories from the region highlighted the innovation that is taking place – Tour India working with poachers that have become guides. Nepal Village Resorts working with villages to provide a unique cultural experience, Ranweli

Holidays in Sri Lanka that is working with communities in mangrove areas. Although the region has tremendous natural and cultural assets from mountains to oceans, deserts to forests and a rich variety of cultures and cultural attractions, there is a great deal that can be done to develop and promote ecotourism products even further. Amongst a variety of issues the following are worth to mention:-

1. The need to educate domestic and international visitors before they arrive at destinations, as well as providing good interpretation during their visit. At the heart of ecotourism is a unique and quality experience and this must be enhanced through better publicity materials, guide services, visitor centers, pre-departure information, etc.
2. Better access to credit and loans that encourage entrepreneurs to risk developing ecotourism enterprises especially at the community level and small and medium scale operations.
3. Better market research to help develop the right products that will be profitable, generate benefits for conservation and host communities, and provide visitor satisfaction. As a region and within countries, there is a great variability in the quantity and quality of data collection that could help in product development. Government, entrepreneurs and research institutions should be working together to generate relevant and useful information for product development.
4. Recognize domestic and regional visitors as an important market in ecotourism.
5. Build capacity for ecotourism development at all levels.
6. Internationally, it was found that there is very little recognition and hence all must work toward bringing greater focus to ecotourism. One way out was to link it to international pro-poor and biodiversity agendas. International funding and finding mechanisms for diverting donor funds was also a key area of interest. Participants

recognized the important roles of regulation and monitoring in ecotourism as critical to ensuring the success of ecotourism. Generally, these are areas that have not received sufficient attention. Amongst a range of issues participants discussed the following:

*“Ecotourism is responsible travel to natural areas that conserves the environment and sustains the well-being of local people.”* Ecotourism activities have been expanding rapidly world-wide over the past two decades and further growth is expected in the future. There are increasing efforts to use ecotourism’s potential to support nature conservation and benefit local people, especially in developing countries. This rapid growth, however, has also given rise to concerns about negative (environmental, socio cultural) impacts. Recognizing its growing global importance, the United Nations designated the year 2002 as the International Year of Ecotourism (IYE), and its Commission on Sustainable Development requested international agencies, governments and the private sector to undertake supportive activities. Along with the United Nations Environment Program (UNEP) and the World Tourism Organization (WTO), who have been officially designated as the coordinating organizations for IYE, the International Ecotourism Society (TIES) has been given the mandate to hold six regional conferences in different parts of the world. Ecotourism goes hand in hand with conservation and preservation of culture, while contributing to economic development.

In the quest for bringing some focus to South Asia’s experience onto a common table the conference was welcomed. The outcome would go into key policy decisions of South Asian countries. It would also see that there is some form of benchmarking of the levels attained by different countries in the region. Over the past two decades, tourism in SAARC countries has been and will likely continue to be a major area of growth.

These countries offer a great range of destinations from marine to freshwater systems, hot desert to cool desert, and from tropical to alpine climates. All forms of adventure and nature tourism can be found in the region. Throughout the countries of South Asia, there are examples of ecotourism, but as a concept and strategy for linking conservation and development, ecotourism has received little attention. As a result, policies and planning at various operational levels lack clear guiding principles. There are success stories, but these have not been used to support ecotourism development nor in bringing out best practices into a wider arena from which others could learn and benefit. The purpose of my research is to give a "voice to South Asia" that can be heard in the wider global forum of discussion in the International Year of Ecotourism as well as beyond 2002.

My research is assigned to initiate a meaningful process of regional discussion, strategic analysis and formulation of recommendations. There were also opportunities for those participating to learn from each other and to share experiences. Policy makers are recognizing the fact that eco-tourism in South Asia has considerable future potential as a tool for development and a contributor to the national exchequer. As a result, tourism is being recognized as a major sector of the economy during Five Year plans. While this comes as a complement to the Tourism industry in Bhutan, the numerous challenges still lie ahead. While the comprehensive Tourism Development Master Plan proposed for the 9th Five Year plan period would address a wide range of issues, a major challenge is to aim for conserving nature and culture in the midst of further development and economic gains. Constraints posed by the extreme seasonality and tour patterns and products, access to the country, travel time within the country and the infrastructure are just some of the hurdles that need to be overcome.

The need to diversify and develop new products is of vital importance for the growth of the eco-tourism industry.

Ecotourism could therefore be catalytic in harnessing this potential. Need for site specific planning and interaction of the small-scale ecotourism operation and the community with the support and assistance of the ecotourism NGOs and/or Sri Lanka Tourism Board.

Pursue ecotourism agenda in the National Tourism Policy Process and State Tourism/ Ecotourism Policies under preparation are good initiatives in case of India. Inter Ministerial coordination through coordination committees at Center and small level under Chairmanship of Cabinet Secretary/Chief Secretary respectively is quite necessary. Database, research plus monitoring through institutes which have a national mandate is a worth endeavor. Training plus awareness at the grassroots level and for officials from the government, PA managers, industry, institutions through development of modules plus materials is also necessary. Development of a National Ecotourism Strategy and formation of an Apex body at National level on Ecotourism for promotion of ecotourism and awareness programmes are great strategy for ecotourism development.

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