



Tourism and Environmental Conservation – An Overview

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Introduction:

Tourism's relationship with the environment is complex. It involves many activities that can have adverse environmental effects. Many of these impacts are linked with the construction of general infrastructure such as roads and airports, resorts, hotels, restaurants, golf courses etc.. Tourism has the potential to create beneficial effects on environment by contributing the environmental protection and conservation.

The tourism industry can contribute to conservation through:

Financial contribution to Competent Authorities.

Tourism can contribute directly to the conservation of sensitive natural and habitat. Revenue from park-entrance fees and similar sources can be allocated specially to pay for the protection and management of environmentally sensitive areas. Special fees for park operations or conservation activities can be collected from tourists/tour operators.

Contributions to Government Revenues

Governments collect money in more far-reaching and indirect ways that are not linked to specific parks or conservation areas. User fees, income taxes, taxes on sales, rental of recreation equipment, and license fees for

activities such as fishing can provide governments with the funds needed to manage natural resources. Such funds can be used for overall conservation programs and activities, such as park ranger salaries and park maintenance.

Environmental Management and Planning:

Sound environmental management of tourism facilities and especially hotels can increase the benefits to natural areas. But this requires careful planning for controlled development, based on analysis of the environmental resources of the area. Planning helps to make choices between conflicting uses, or to find ways to make them compatible. By planning early for tourism development, damaging and expensive mistakes can be prevented, avoiding the gradual deterioration of environmental assets significant to tourism.

Cleaner production techniques can be important tools for planning and operating tourism facilities in a way that minimizes their environmental impacts. For example, green building (using energy-efficient and non-polluting construction materials, sewage systems and energy sources) is an increasingly important way for the tourism industry to decrease its impact on the environment. Prevention of pollution and waste minimization techniques are especially important for the tourism industry.

Environmental Awareness:

Tourism has the potential to increase public appreciation of the environment and to spread awareness of environmental problems when it brings people into closer contact with nature and the environment. This confrontation may heighten awareness of the value of nature and lead to environmentally conscious behaviour and activities to preserve the environment. Sustainable consumption includes building consumer demand for products that have been made using cleaner production techniques, and for services including tourism services that are provided in a way that minimizes environmental impacts. The tourism industry can play a key role in providing environmental information and raising awareness among tourists of the environmental consequences of their actions. Tourists and tourism related business consume an enormous quantity of goods and services; moving them toward using those that are produced and

provided in an environmentally sustainable way, from cradle to grave, could have an enormous positive impact on the planet's environment.

Protection and preservation of Environment:

Tourism can significantly contribute to environmental protection, conservation and restoration of biological diversity and sustainable use of natural resources. Because of their attractiveness, pristine sites and natural areas are identified as valuable and the need to keep the attraction alive can lead to creation of national parks and wildlife parks.

Tourism has a positive effect on wildlife preservation and protection efforts, Numerous animal and plant species have already become extinct or may become extinct soon. Many countries have therefore established wildlife reserves and enacted strict laws protecting the animals that draw nature-loving tourists. As a result of these measures, several endangered species have begun to thrive again.

Alternative employment opportunities.

Tourism provide employment opportunities to local people and others in hotels, restaurants, transport, parks and wild life sanctuaries maintenance, monuments, shops, marinas etc.

Regulatory measures:

Regulatory measures help offset negative impacts; for instance, controls on the number of tourist activities and movement of visitors within protected areas can limit impact on the ecosystem and help maintain the integrity and vitality of the site. Such limits can also reduce the negative impacts on resources. Limits should be established after an in depth analysis of the maximum sustainable visitor capacity.

Conclusion:

Tourism industry is considered as an important economic activity to generate income and employment to the local people. Tourism helps for cultural exchange, peace and social development. It is also capable to bring foreign exchange to the nation and so as to maintain the balance of payment.

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