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Rural & Eco Tourism In India – Problems & Prospects “Environmental Impacts On Tourism”

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Abstract:

Radical economic restructuring and diversification rarely appears to have a positive, or a neutral environmental impact. In this article we are going to examine the impact of environment on the growth of tourism and what are the various means / sources through which Indian tourism is being significantly influenced. The rapid changes in that have taken place in the last few decades be it a change in the economic, political or any other issues, the infrastructure, the expansion of facilities to the domestic & international tourists & the government policies and procedures have paved way for a huge number of international tourists to get attracted to the archeological study of Indian monuments. The overall environmental impact on economic restructuring would have been relatively minor without this environmental challenge. In this article we have outlined the impact of environment on the tourism in India and across the globe and its contribution to environmental conservation.

Key words: *Environmental impact of tourism, environmental regulation, pollution, physical impacts etc*

1.Introduction

1.1.Tourism

Tourism is the act of persons traveling and staying in places outside their usual environment for leisure, business and other purposes not related to the exercise of an activity remunerated from within the place visited.

1.2.Tourism – An Economic And Social Phenomenon

Over the decades, tourism has experienced continued growth and deepening diversification to become one of the fastest growing economic sectors in the world. Modern tourism focuses on the development and identification of new destinations. Tourism has become one the best source of revenue generation for the country.

When we look into the business volume of tourism oil exports, food products or automobiles tourism has made its own place in international commerce representing one of the major source of revenue generation for most of the developing countries. Most of the countries are trying to expedite nook and corner of their country and make every place a place of visit for many tourists.

The tourism has expanded its wings across the globe and this expansion has brought ample opportunities for the unemployed in the form of employment as guides, render services like accommodation, travel, food and many other facilities that a tourist feels essential. If we have an insight into the evolution & growth of tourism which has slowly it has taken the shape of an industry

The concept of tourism has been given prime importance and has been developed across the various states in the country within a very short span. However, this global spread of tourism has produced economic and employment benefits in many related sectors - from construction to agriculture or telecommunications.

The contribution of tourism to economic well-being depends on the quality and the revenues of the tourism offer. UNWTO assists destinations in their sustainable positioning in ever more complex national and international markets. As the UN agency dedicated to tourism, UNWTO points out that particularly developing countries stand to benefit from sustainable tourism and acts to help make this a reality.

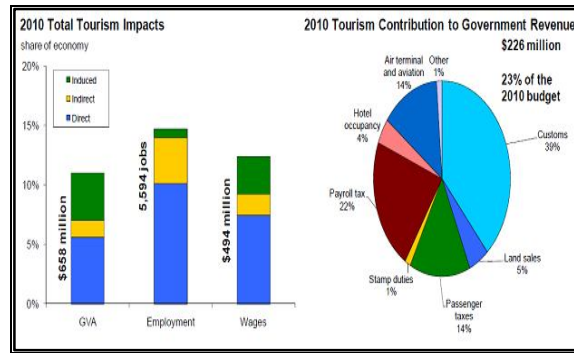


Figure 1

2.Types of Tourisms in India – Review of Literature

We all knew very well about tourism but at the same time how many of us really can differentiate among the types of tourism that we have. Here is the segregation of tourism for our information.

Tourism can be classified into different types. The different types of tourism are:

- Sustainable tourism
- Ecotourism
- Recession tourism
- Medical tourism
- Educational tourism
- Creative tourism
- Dark tourism
- Doom tourism
- Sports tourism

3.Tourist Attractions

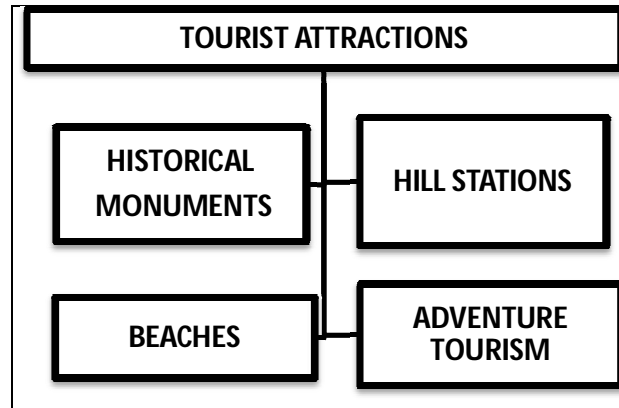


Figure 2

4.Growth Of Tourism

The World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) forecasts that international tourism will continue growing at the average annual rate of 4%. Tourism products and services have been made available through intermediaries but then few small scale operators sell their services directly

Rank	Country	Number in '000 of Foreign visitors
1	 France	70,000
2	 United States	47,127
3	 Spain	47,743
4	 Italy	34,829
5	 United Kingdom	25,475
6	 Mexico	19,300
7	 Canada	18,659
8	 China	24,000
9	 Poland	18,820
10	 Austria	17,282

Figure 3

It is pathetic to know that India being a very renowned place for historical monuments , ranked 65th position.

Share of top 10 states/Union Territory's of India			
Rank	State/Union Territory	Number	Share in %
1	Uttar Pradesh	155,430,364	18.3
2	Andhra Pradesh	153,119,816	18.0
3	Tamil Nadu	137,512,991	16.2
4	Karnataka	84,107,390	9.9
5	Maharashtra	55,333,467	6.5
6	Madhya Pradesh	44,119,820	5.2
7	Rajasthan	27,137,323	3.2
8	Uttarakhand	25,946,254	3.0
9	West Bengal	22,256,968	2.6
10	Gujarat	21,017,478	2.5
	Total of top 10 states	725,981,871	85.3
	Others	124,874,769	14.7
	Total	850,856,640	100

Table 1: Statistics Of Tourism By State

Share of top 10 states/UT's of India in number of foreign tourist visits in 2011 (provisional)			
Rank	State/Union Territory	Number	Share in %
1	Maharashtra	4,815,421	24.7
2	Tamil Nadu	3,373,870	17.3
3	Delhi	2,159,925	11.1
4	Uttar Pradesh	1,887,095	9.7
5	Rajasthan	1,351,974	6.9
6	West Bengal	1,213,270	6.2
7	Bihar	972,487	5.0
8	Kerala	732,985	3.8
9	Karnataka	574,005	2.9
10	Himachal Pradesh	484,518	2.5
	Total of top 10 states	17,565,550	90.1
	Others	1,929,329	9.9
	Total	19,494,879	100

Table 2

There has been a limited amount of orbital space tourism, wherein only the Russian Space Agency is providing transport to date. A 2010 report into space tourism anticipated that it could become a billion dollar market by 2030.

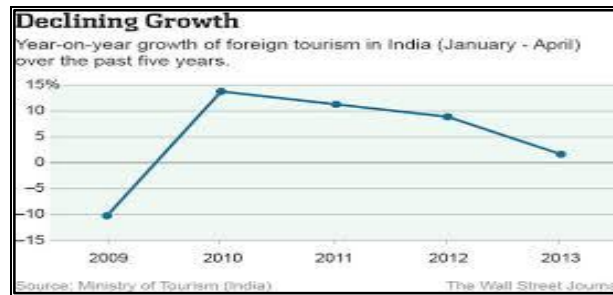


Figure 4

5. Impact of Tourism

Just like a coin tourism is experiencing both positive and negative outcomes. The positive being the economic outcomes and the negative being the way in which the activities are managed. If managed well, tourism can play a significant & positive role in the development of socio, cultural, economical, environmental and political aspects of the destination and provides significant development opportunity for many countries and communities.

The three factors that have an impact on tourism are:

- Environmental Impact
- Socio-cultural impacts
- Economic impacts

5.1. Environmental Impact

The quality of environment involves many activities that has adverse effects on environment. These are linked with the construction of general infrastructure viz. roads & airports and facilities which include resorts, hotels, restaurants, golf courses etc.

With the environmental pollution there are several areas which are being influenced. Few to some extent and few others to a greater extent. These include natural resources, pollution, and physical impacts. Apart from these, other impacts such as environmental impact across the globe and the impact of other industries.

5.2. Tourism's Three Main Impact Areas

Negative impacts from tourism occur when the level of visitor use is greater than the environment's ability to cope with this use within the acceptable limits of change. Uncontrolled conventional tourism poses potential threats to many natural areas around the world. It can put severe stress on an area and lead to adverse impacts such as erosion of the soil, increased pollution, discharge of wastes into the sea, increased pressure on endangered species and increased vulnerability to forest fires. It often puts a strain on water resources, and it can force local populations to compete for the use of critical resources.

5.3. Depletion Of Natural Resources

Tourism development can put pressure on natural resources when it increases consumption in areas where resources are already scarce.

- Water resources
- Local resources
- Land degradation

5.4. Pollution

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

- Air pollution and noise
- Solid waste and littering
- Aesthetic Pollution

Physical Impacts

5.5. Physical Impacts Due To Tourism Development

- Construction and infrastructure developmental activities.
- Deforestation
- Marina development

5.6. Physical Impacts On Tourism Due To Tourist Activities

- Trampling
- Marine activities such as Anchoring etc.

5.7.Environmental Impacts Of Tourism - Global Level

5.7.1.Biological Diversity

Biological diversity is the term given to the variety of life on Earth and the natural patterns it forms.

5.7.2.The Effects Of Loss Of Biodiversity

Threatens our food supplies, opportunities, sources of wood, medicines and energy, Interferes with essential ecological functions, reduces the productivity of ecosystems, destabilizes ecosystems and weakens their ability to deal with natural disasters. .

Tourism, especially nature tourism, is closely linked to biodiversity and the attractions created by a rich and varied environment. It can also cause loss of biodiversity when land and resources are strained by excessive use, on vegetation, wildlife, mountain, marine & coastal environments and when water resources exceed the carrying capacity.

This loss of biodiversity in fact means loss of tourism potential

5.8.Effects Of Other Industries On Tourism

Impacts from other industries often have a more dramatic effect on the environment and can seriously affect tourism.

- Oil spills, can cause severe short-term damage to tourist attractions. Unique local marine and land species and the tourism potential of the area were badly affected.
- Agricultural runoff or industrial discharges can cause water pollution and may cause algae blooms
- Destructive practices such as blast fishing, fishing with poisonous chemicals directly destroy corals. They can also destroy a major draw for tourists.

5.9.Tourism And Environmental Conservation

Unlike the two sides of a coin the tourism industry can contribute to conservation in the form of :

- Financial contributions
 - Direct financial contributions
 - Contributions to government revenues
- Improved environmental management and planning
- Raising Environmental awareness
- Protection and preservation
- Regulatory measures

6.Conclusion

The tourism industry is dependent entirely on environmental quality and the natural resources that are still in a relatively pristine state and so environmental concerns are few.

There are a number of reasons for this positive conclusion.

- First, environmentally unsound practices associated with solid waste disposal and sewage releases have been stopped, with developers now being required to recycle water and incinerate solid waste. Developers are also required to present plans for new resorts that meet strict environmental design guidelines that stipulate how many buildings can be constructed, and what they should look like.
- Second reason why tourism appears to be relatively environmentally benign is due to the close relationships between regulating agencies. The Ministry of Housing, Home Affairs and Environment, the Ministry of Tourism should directly involve in environmental regulation through its own laws.
- Finally, the physical geography and cultural aspects has to be taken care of.

The success of tourism in India also depends on an industry-wide recognition that tourism in India is due to the quality of the natural environment and the commitment of resort developers to preserve the natural environment.

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