Chapter 2

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Eco-tourism aims at promoting tourism without causing damage to ecological resources. It is one of the recent developments in the field of tourism. A large number of studies have been conducted in the field of tourism, but very little is being done in the field of Eco-tourism. The available literature are the published books, articles, periodicals and magazines, Booklets and brochures published by the Government, Government reports, seminar papers etc.

For the purpose of presentation of available literature, the relevant studies conducted in the area are classified into two:

1. Foreign Literature.

2. Indian Literature.

Foreign Literature:

Defining the purpose of protected areas is not a simple task. Most would agree that parks should protect ecological integrity while at the same time offer opportunities for people to experience the “spiritual, aesthetic, and challenging attributes of the wild, natural setting” (Dearden and Rollins, 2002). This combination of human use and preservation, however, is not easy to maintain considering that one of the greatest threats to ecological integrity is from visitor activity within parks (Dearden and Rollins, 2002).

There are many definition for ecological integrity, but in the context of protected areas it “implies that ecosystem structures and functions are unimpaired by human-caused stresses and that native species are present at viable population levels” (Woodley,
Managers are therefore challenged with measuring ecological integrity and ensuring that it is maintained while at the same time providing for human use.

Related to the concept of ecological integrity, ecological carrying capacity is a notion often used to understand better and manage for issues of human impacts within parks. Ecological carrying capacity refers to “the capability of the natural environment to withstand human use”, or its “maximum persistently supportable load” (Payne and Nilsen, 2002).

According to Payne & Nilsen, Visitor-2002 “determining ecological carrying capacity is not a simple matter, and involves answering three complex questions. If there is a causal relationship between human use and ecological impact, the first question can be answered by scientific research. The second question requires knowledge of the state of the ecosystem before it was disturbed by human beings and the third question is a matter of values. Ecological carrying capacity has not been seriously applied in parks and protected areas because of an inability to answer questions two and three. This exemplifies the difficulty in evaluating the ecological impact of human use and determining when it has reached an unacceptable level. Still, if a park agency is to follow its mandate and policy, some method of measuring the health of the ecosystem must be followed.

There are several alternatives for using the concept of carrying capacity to human use. One example is the Limits of Acceptable change (LAC) planning system which involves identifying desired social and resource conditions and “orienting management toward maintaining or restoring those conditions” (McCool, 1990). The example of LAC
shows that knowledge of the natural sciences as well as social sciences is important in managing visitor impacts in a park.

The social science of visitor management looks to understand “such factors as visitor expectations, behaviour, impacts of recreational behaviour, and the relationships among these variables” (McCool, 1990). This knowledge enables the park managers to better influence or regulates the behaviour of park visitors. It may be necessary to control the behaviour of visitors for any one of three reasons:

1. If there are confliction activities within a park (such as snowmobile and cross-country skiing),

2. If crowding is resulting in a negative experience, or

3. If visitors are causing unacceptable impacts to the ecosystem.

Once it has been determined that there is a conflict between human use and ecosystem preservation, managers must act to mitigate damage. Even if a cause and effect relationship has not yet been scientifically proven, it is strongly suspected than the irreversible damage to the ecosystem is occurring; steps should be taken to prevent further harm (Francis, 1996).

This is the precautionary principle, which has been described in many ways, one which is based on the concept of “preventative anticipation” described by O’Riordan and Cameron (1994) as “a willingness to take action in advance of scientific proof of evidence of the need for the proposed action on the grounds that further delay will prove ultimately most costly to society and nature, and in the longer term, selfish and unfair to future generations”.

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Ecotourism can minimize negative human impacts on wildlife and provide an incentive to preserve natural areas. Isaacs.J.C, (2000) observed “The potential of ecotourism as a wildlife conservation strategy is limited by its inability to insure the long-term protection of environmental assets and by its tendency to contribute directly to environmental degradation. Ecotourism is a proxy market designed to align consumer’s preferences for recreation with the protection of environmental assets. Because it does not necessarily address the direct protection of those assets, it is prone to market failure. Pressures on governments and firms involved in providing ecotourism services will impair their ability to minimize detrimental effects of human economic behaviour. Ethical appeals to minimize harmful practices face serious obstacles. Promoting ecotourism may actually distract from more appropriate means of environmental protection.”

In many ways, park management is the management of people, or more specifically, those people who visit parks. There are several ways in which people can be managed so as to avoid conflicts with each other and with the ecosystem. These can be classified into two categories: direct and indirect management. Direct management techniques are aimed at regulating behaviour and may include such things as zoning of confliction uses, enforcement of regulations, limiting use levels and restricting certain types of activities. Indirect management techniques are aimed at influencing behaviour and may include such things as site hardening, charging fees, and providing visitor information and education (Payne & Nilsen, 2002).
Rob Davidson (1989), found that there is close interlinking between tourism and environment. Tourism and environment exists together in harmony, the environment benefits from tourism, and vice versa.

A newsletter of the Pacific Business Centre at the University of Hawaii Says, “If tourism in fragile environment isn’t conducted with conscientious to conservation principles and managed properly, it can destroy the very qualities and resources that originally attracted visitors.”

In the Concept of the Tourist Area cycle of Evolution and implication of Management, (RW Bulter, 1980) says “Unless specific steps are taken, tourist destination areas and resources will inevitably become over used, unattractive, and eventually experience declining use”.

Nature-based tourism, increasingly called ‘ecotourism’ is one of the fastest growing sectors of tourism worldwide, is fast gaining the attention of developed and developing countries as a potential means to conserve natural resources and support sustainable economic progress. (Science and technology issues in coastal eco-tourism, 1992).

In an article in Biodiversity and Conservation, named in Pursuit of ecotourism, Goodwin found that “Nature tourism encompasses all forms of tourism -mass tourism, adventure tourism, and low-impact tourism ecotourism-which use natural resources in a wild or under developed form-including species, habitat, landscape, scenery and salt and fresh water features. Nature tourism is a travel for the purpose of enjoying underdeveloped natural areas or wildlife”. Ecotourism is a low impact nature tourism which contributes to the maintenance of species and habits either directly through a
contribution to conservation or indirectly by providing revenue to the local community sufficient for local people to value, and therefore protect their wildlife heritage areas as a source of income.

Laarman and Durst, (1987) have identified four dimensions of ecotourism. Accordingly hard-dedicated, hard-difficult, soft-casual and soft-easy are the four identified dimensions of ecotourism.

Apart from the different approaches in the work of Goodwin, some of the key variables or principles that separate ecotourism from its more broad based nature counterpart include an educative component and a sustainability component. Blamey RK (1995), Kutay K.,(1989), Wight, Hawkes and Williams (1993) and Wallance and Pierce(1996).

In the article, The Pattern and impact of Tourism on the environment in the Caribbean Holder (1987) found that no other economic activity lends itself to the approach of sustainable development than tourism.

It is common knowledge that tourism is popular. The tourists are capable of looking after their affairs. However, there is no agency to take the responsibility. (Hardin).

Ecotourism is becoming popular and developing in developing nations. A study of Margot O’Neill (1991) revealed that in developing nations, nature travel accounts for more than 20 % of the total tourism.
It is not true that all tourists are unscrupulous in destroying flora and fauna. Some people consider the nature resources devotionally. Singh Tejvir (1992) found that men of the orient considered flora and fauna more religiously.

Krippendort (1987) found that people are becoming more determined to derive satisfaction from all spheres of life, and travel must provide something extra. Special interest tourism led to market segmentation. There is increased trend towards action, adventure, nostalgia, fantasy, and exotic experience (Helber LE (1988).

Ding wall and Cess ford (1996) provide principles of ecotourism management. Table 2.1 summaries these principles.

**Table 2.1: Principles of Ecotourism**

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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Ecotourism should lead to nature conservation and local economic benefit.</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>Both public and private eco tour businesses should have an environmental strategy and an environmental officer. Well-educated staff is essential</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>Tour operators and tourists should demand high environmental standards from their associates, hotels, transportation providers and destinations.</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>Culturally and economically sensitive community development is necessary.</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>Ecotourism should be designed to benefit local communities, socially, economically and ecologically.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>High-quality information and service delivery are essential. Well-educated guides are essential.</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>Planning and management capabilities are essential for long-term success.</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>Environmental protection is based upon fiscal viability of management, both public and private.</td>
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<td>9</td>
<td>Ecotourism and environmental protection require the development of management structures to handle the use of sensitive environments.</td>
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According to Read SE (1980), REAL quality of travel is Rewarding, Enriching, Adventuresome, and a Learning experience.

Benchin et al. (1991) admonished “…conservationists must work to preserve the right of self-determination (of indigenous people), rather than some romantic ideal of primitivism-people with quaint grass shacks and the like.”

**Indian Literature:**

In “Commercial viability of the Tourist Infrastructure of the Tamil Nadu Tourism Development Corporation”, Soundara Raja (1993) found that “Tourism is an activity generating a number of socio-economic benefits. It promotes national integration and international understanding; created employment opportunities and augments foreign exchange earnings. Tourism also gives support to local handicrafts and cultural activities. Expenditure by a tourist has a multiple effect. The economic benefits of
tourism are achieved with a relatively low level of investment. Its vast potential, should, thus be fully exploited for economic development of the country”.

In the Sustainable Development of ecotourism in Kerala, B. Vijayakumar (1993), observed that the demand for clear environment, quest for authenticity, experience and enjoyment led the Moderns towards all over the world to embrace ecotourism. Further, ecotourism has the financial potential to provide a viable economic alternative of the environment.

Anand MM (1976) identified various types of travellers and studied the framework of tourism in which his primary concern was to relate the output with the input. He also threw light on the consequences and impact of international tourism in India and suggests short term and long-term strategy development.

Negi, Jagmohan (1987) conducted the study of financial and cost control techniques in hotel and catering industry.

The main issues discussed are as follows:

1. Determination of room rates and price structure of various products may be considered in two different settings; existing hotel and hotel yet to be opened.

2. There is no relationship between the price levels of a hotel room, or food and beverage operation and its volume of sales, although the volume of sale will, in the majority of sales, fluctuate from one day to another and often shows a seasonal trend.

3. The volume of sale in respects or longer period will generally be higher when the price level of establishment is lower and vice-versa.
Ram Acharya (1978) in his work on civil Aviation administration and Tourism provides a deep insight in the organization and administration of civil aviation Administration in India and its contribution to national economy and tourism development. He points out the lack of co-ordination between aviation administration and the tourist authorities in the country. He regrets the loss of revenue caused by over flying tourists and suggests ways and means to present such wastage of huge revenue by tapping those tourists who occasionally peep into the country as transit passengers.

Dixit (1989) wants to reap decadent benefits of tourism just like their neighbours in the Mount Everest “Do policy makers in Kathmandu have rights to deny them their wish?”

AK Bhatia (1978) made an effort to highlight the state of tourism in India. Sonmath Chib (1983) explains briefly the major areas of the tourism and pin-points the need for developing ethnic tourism beach tourism, Buddhist tourism etc.

Jain N Mehta (2003), in his study on the ‘Problems and Prospects of ecotourism in Nepal’ found that there is no certainty that a particular country can always maintain its share of international tourism. “Factors like political instability, spread of epidemic diseases, change in values and taste of potential tourists over the time, economic recession, terrorism, and other socio-cultural problems affect the flow of tourism in a particular region or country. As such, contemplation of tourism as an alternative to employment-generation activities may be a shaky proposition in the long-term. Therefore tourism should only be promoted with other employment - generation activities and economic programs, not as a sole bread provider”.
Santhosh P Thampi (2003) has conducted a study on Ecotourism marketing in Kerala. He observed, “Almost all districts of Kerala have a number of potential ecotourism destinations. Significant percentage of tourists visiting Kerala is interested in ecotourism and about 18 percent of them are definite eco-tourists and 14 percent of them are probable eco-tourists. This is a positive indication of the fact that Kerala’s ecotourism market potential is sufficiently high. But the stumbling block, in the development and marketing of Kerala ecotourism is the lack of sufficient knowledge about ecotourism markets and the preferences of genuine eco-tourists.”

In his study, “Tourism management in India” KM Menon (1999) observed that ‘Populism and overstay on rigid ideology by the ruling coalition have always become an anathema for managerial efficiency. Resistance to privatization and over confidence on the public sector is motivated by populist politics aiming to capture votes. In turn, this strategy proves to be very harmful for sound management”.

The review of tourism literature points out finally the striking gap in the field of studies in ecotourism in Kerala and Tamil Nadu. Barring a few, the research contributions cannot be directly linked to ecotourism in Kerala or Tamil Nadu. Due to the lack of research base, the present study had to depend upon the opinion of the tourists and the informed persons to arrive at a conclusion. Researchers conducted in other countries have been carefully observed and taken into consideration for the study.
References:


6. Waterloo: Tourism and Research Education Centre, University of Waterloo).


37. Bhatia AK (1978) Tourism in India-History and Development New Delhi, Sterling Publishers) made an effort to highlight the state of tourism in India.


