This chapter of thesis brings to a conclusion the analysis of the peoples’ participation in the conservation of the Great Himalayan National Park, India. Certain recommendations are also suggested in order to strengthen the relationship between People and the Park.

While making any conclusions from this study, it would be essential to take into account the fact that the study was limited by time and the available resources. The study would have been conducted over a much longer period of time in order to get a more informed view of the current scenario. However, some of the main problems have been highlighted, alongside areas for potential resolution and in doing so it has provided some insightful ideas for the future possibilities for community-based conservation as a tool for the sustainable development of PAs.

10.1 Conclusions

The conclusions of the work which had been carried in the Great Himalayan National Park have been divided into following subparts based on the aims and objectives of the thesis. Results and conclusions listed in Table 10.1.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S.No.</th>
<th>Results</th>
<th>Conclusions</th>
</tr>
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</table>
| 1.    | CBET    | • Ecotourism-related activities were getting momentum in region.  
       |         | • CBET had become a source of livelihood for many people.  
       |         | • Many ecotourism projects did not adhere to all of the principles set forth in commonly agreed-upon definitions. |
| 2.    | EDP     | • Biodiversity conservation and poverty reduction could not only go hand in hand, but would be mutually reinforcing. The study conducted on |
GHNP has highlighted that EDP was not a success story.

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<td>3.</td>
<td>Women</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• WSCGs were very active in the region.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Women’s Savings Credit Groups generate income through NTFP (Non-Timber Forest Products) given in Fig. 9.18.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• In GHNP, women were working well to protect forests and PAs by involving themselves in WSCGs and other alternative income-generating activities.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• WSCGs provided an opportunity to the rural poor women to control decision-making through village level micro-plans.</td>
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<td>4.</td>
<td>Park Vs People</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Undoubtedly, the formation of PAs had saved many species, habitats and forests from local peoples’ intrusion and destruction but simultaneously it caused severe adversity to local communities living near by the PA, whose livelihood was based on forest resources. Communities living in and around the PAs have been regarded as a management problem, and there is little attempt made to involve them in the management of the PA.</td>
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10.2 Suggestions and Recommendations

Based on my review of the literature on ecotourism, field visits and my analysis of the case studies, I propose the following recommendations for the relevant implementation.

10.2.1 Community Based Ecotourism/ Ecotourism

• Ecotourism activities must offer environmental education and awareness programmes for local communities. Though the Park management is doing well but it was providing awareness to only those who were
involved. Local communities have not been fully consulted about the effects that ecotourism activities can have on their environments. Though they are aware of conservation but environmental education and awareness programmes will allow for an increased understanding by communities of what they should expect from ecotourism projects, so that they can plan accordingly.

- Opportunities for community-based ecotourism in National Parks should be increased by policy-makers. As the Park has been surrounded by three ranges but in certain ranges the local communities in areas in and around the National Park areas are not often included in tourism activities. Conflicts between local communities and conservation of natural resources can be reduced if communities living within and around National Parks are given increased opportunities to contribute in multiple aspects of ecotourism activities.

- Though there are very few environmental impacts in the study area but still negative environmental impacts associated with travel should be mitigated by tourists, tourism operators and travel providers. Since, many ecotourism activities take place in the developing countries and are visited by those in developed countries, travel to engage in ecotourism causes major environmental degradation. Schemes should be promoted that aim to balance the release of carbon through air travel and other pollution caused from vehicle travel to remote areas (i.e., carbon trading, research into fuel-saving technologies, etc.).

- Ecotourism certification programs should be developed and implemented by the international ecotourism community with the consultation of local Park administration. Certification programs can permit for external bodies to reward programmes that have been functioning efficiently, to alert tourists and tour operators about best practices, and to help to ensure ecotourism projects are being successful in relation to their initial goals.

- Park Administration should set up ecotourism monitoring and accountability programs to ensure that local communities receive
appropriate amounts of revenue. Adequate financial benefits from ecotourism activities are often not given to local communities.

- Besides village heads and NGO heads, there should be involvement of local communities in the planning and implementation of projects. Locals should be given opportunities at all levels of management and operation of ecotourism projects.

- State, district and Park Administration should recommend ecotourism as a supplementary option for sustainable development. The benefits from ecotourism projects are unevenly distributed based on location, educational status, gender and age. Moreover, tourism is a seasonal sector, with often unpredictable returns. As a result, ecotourism cannot be relied upon as a viable livelihood substitution for other activities. Therefore, ecotourism programmes should be supplemented with other methods of sustainable development. If these recommendations are considered, along with the many factors that go into ecotourism development, then ecotourism can become an improved means of achieving conservation for sustainable development.

- Tourists should educate themselves about the areas that they are visiting before engaging in ecotourism activities. Tourists can often harm local cultures and environments in the destinations that they are visiting. Preparation to understand the cultural, environmental and economic situations of the areas to be visited can allow for appropriate and respectful interactions to take place between visitors and locals. Information on destinations should be provided by tourism operators, travel agents, local and national governments.

- Park Administration should follow norms of successful ecotourism-related activities conducted in the other Parks of the country.

- CBET could enhance the socio-economic development of the region so state level participation of authorities should be essentially.

- Visitation in GHNP as compared to the rest of the state is low, but there are good chances of rise in tourism. Government should take concrete steps to enhance it by putting GHNP hoardings all the way from Mandi district to Manali.
• Prominent Indian website called www.ecotourismindia.com has not mentioned GHNP. Websites should mention the names upcoming ecotourism destination in country.

• Economic analysis of community-based ecotourism is necessary but not adequate for understanding the in-depth impact of ecotourism on people, forests, conservation and livelihood. When ecotourism is participatory, that is, when local hosts are involved as decisions-makers as well as employees, ecotourism can be a transforming experience rather than simply an economic incentive.

• Beyond employment opportunities, representatives of local communities should also be part of the management and decision-making in the community-based ecotourism ventures. Empowering local communities in these ways not only increases their support for conservation initiatives, but also adds the advantage of building support against destructive projects such as mining near PAs.

• Only a few families were running ecolodges. There should be involvement of a large number of families in the ecolodge business, which would not only uplift the region’s economy, but also reduce the peoples’ dependency on forest resources.

10.2.2 EDP

In future, government should involve local people while planning such large scale projects. There should be proper advertisement of such projects.

10.2.3 Women

More research on the gendered impacts of nature conservation is needed. Some of the previous studies have suggested that conservation shows us to be more effective and the results more sustainable if gender issues are taken into account in the planning and management of PAs. In decision-making, women are less active than men. Since the Park management has not paid any special attention to this, women’s voices and their interests have not been heard as much as those of the men in Park-related meetings. The gender perspective has to be taken into account in PA management to assure that the voices of those who are in a weaker position in their
communities, often women, will also be heard and that their position will not be weakened by the conservation activities. When women’s knowledge about natural resources is not considered, much valuable information is lost. On a wider scale, more research on the gendered impacts of nature conservation is urgently needed.

GHNP needs to adopt and promote policies and incentives to encourage effective involvement of women in decision-making and the management of existing PAs with senior authorities of the Park.

To conserve forests for the future generation, the region needs a mass movement like ecofeminism. Rebellious movements of women are extremely necessary to conserve resources for the coming generations. Besides livelihood approach, if women think at all about ecofeminism, then surely it would lead to a grand success and a huge leap in conservation history.

10.2.4 Park Management Vs People

Communities living in the ecozone area would like to claim the right to use the forests, forests products and lands within the Park. The main motive of the people would be to fulfill their daily needs from the Park. The Park authorities are also working on it to collaborate with the people to build up harmony and their economy. In future, Park management authority should include localities in policy and decision-making. Local conservation knowledge and the global objectives of Park management and biodiversity conservation could not be harmonized because of the lack of proper channel of information and agreement concerning the Park between local people and government authorities. General policies that outlined general needs and goals, and how to achieve them should be set up. The power of decision-making should be handed over to the people. This did not, however, mean that the decisions that they took would always be ethical. An ethical grassroot system of political power need not necessarily be the panchayati system or other forms of local government (Ghosh, 1998).

Every PA faces the dilemma of Hardin’s notion as it gives us two options. If we apply the theory of “Tragedy of the Commons” then it gives an autocratic appeal and would widen the gap between people and common natural resources. In case we do not apply the concept, people would demolish and damage the natural resource. It would be better to follow the middle path by involving the community in decision- and policy-making. However, this is only possible if it workable.
10.3 Perspectives for Future Research

This study has not exhausted all the three ranges of GHNP who constantly cry that their rights have been taken away after Park formation. Further, the study could be continued to include women’s role in conservation, PA management and policy-making. This area is a grey area for research that still needs to be addressed.

Further, this study has been among the few studies tailored towards learning about the relation between People and the Park. More of these studies are needed to build a comprehensive base on which policies and legislation on the PAs and community can be derived upon.