Chapter 6

6.1 Analysis of Various Tourism Plans Prepared by Government and Non-government Agencies on The Sunderbans.

6.2 Potential Strategic Marketing Solutions for the Ecotourism Industry In The Sunderbans
Chapter 6.1
Assessment of various Tourism Plans
Prepared by Government and Non-Government Agencies on The Sunderbans

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Assessment of various Tourism Plans
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6.1.1 Introduction

Tourism potentiality of The Sunderbans is widely unexploited. Despite its wilderness and uniqueness, it fails to attract national and international tourist groups at large and mostly confined to local tourists for couple of months during a year. As a result, government is losing revenue due to maltourism, local inhabitants are also deprived by enjoying the fruits of tourism development. For long, the situation remained stagnant. After the declaration as Global Biosphere Reserve in 1989, tourism in The Sunderbans is considered as one of the important factors of development. In 1990’s and early period of 21st century, initiatives are taken by the governmental and private agencies towards tourism development of the region. Government of West Bengal, through its authorized corporation (West Bengal Tourism Development Corporation) is the major stakeholder of the tourism here. After the implementation of liberalization policy in late 1990’s, the private sectors are gradually invited in order to take part in tourism development initiatives. In recent times, we find with government agencies (WBTDC, Sunderbans Development Board, Zilla Parishad and few gram panchayats) number of private players are trying to set up tourism infrastructure and launching tourism venture in The Sunderbans. The reflections of the efforts can be found from various tourism development plans and project proposals prepared at different times by consultant groups on behalf of their clients, both Government and Private entrepreneurs. Some of the proposals, which are initiated by the government, are holistic in nature, considering the tourism scenario of entire Sunderbans. Tourism plans prepared for the private entrepreneurs are segmented, focused on specific area development or emphasized on particular type of tourism. In some of these plans, projected profitability analysis with cost estimation of the project is also done. These plans highlight a futuristic view of tourism in Sunderbans though they have their own limitations.
These plans act as an important indicator of tourism development initiative of the region, though the recommendations made by the consultant groups are neither accepted fully nor are these fully proved. Still these proposals have a historical value and may be used as a baseline for preparation of a sustainable eco-tourism master plan for the economic development of the region.

In this chapter, four most important tourism development plans are being considered for discussion. Two of these are prepared for consideration by the Government of West Bengal and remaining two are prepared by the private organizations who have initiated tourism development in their individual capacity. Government of West Bengal department of tourism asked two different consultant groups to prepare tourism development plans on Sunderbans. Both of them submitted their report in 1998. On the other hand, Sahara India Parivar - a Lucknow based finance company sends a proposal to develop ecotourism in 5 islands of Sunderbans with a projected investment of Rs.500 Crores. Modular Consultant Private Limited prepared a tourism plan for them. One more private player, Express Advisory Services, displays proposals for introducing different types of tourism with rural development and community services. All these plans have different dimensions. These are being discussed below: -

PLAN – 1

Name of the plan: Tourism Development Plan Sunderbans
Prepared by: West Bengal Consultancy Organisation Limited Calcutta [WEBCON]
Prepared for: Tourism Department, Government of West Bengal
Date of Submission: September 1998

Objectives of the Plan
Clear cut objectives have not been mentioned. After going through the contents, following objectives are found:
1. Locating profitable tourism circuits that may fulfill the requirement of target tourists along with the infrastructural development of possible circuit linkages.
2. Suggesting optimum tour package for different types of tourists which may fit in the projected tourist circuits.
3. Formulating development plan for developing the projected tourism circuits and estimating its projected cost.

Contents of the Plan

The plan has started with the geographical description of the region highlighting its physical nature and demography followed by the brief introspection of the major tourist spots. A brief outline of existing circuit linkages, accommodation capacities, entry points, current tourist profile etc, are also overviewed.

The plan has proposed for a new entry point to enter Sunderbans. This is from the extreme west. The name of the place is Harwood point (lot No. 8). At present, this place is used as a gateway to enter Sagar Island. Harwood point (90 kilometers from Kolkata by road) is located on the bank of river Muriganga, 8 Kilometres away from Kakdwip town towards west of the Diamond Harbour - Kakdwip road. On the basis of this entry point, the plan has suggested a new tourism circuit, which according to the consultants will enable to attract target tourists. The proposed circuit is Calcutta pick-up from selected locations by AC Luxury Bus to Harwood point by AC Luxury Bus (about 2.5 hours journey) - to L PLOT by Luxury Catamaran (about 5 hours journey) - night stay facilities at L Plot nature resort - Bhagabatpur Crocodile project - Kalas island - Mayadwip (Olive Riddley Turtles) - Netidhopani Tiger Project - Pirkhali Nature Trail and Picnic spot - Sajnekhali / Sudhanyakhali Tiger Project and Bird Sanctuary - Dhanchi Tiger Rescue Centre - Return to Kakdwip (all by luxury launch and bubble boat) - Return to Calcutta by AC Luxury bus.

It will take 3 nights / 4 days to cover the circuit. In order to run the circuit successfully, a detailed infrastructural development plan has been worked out which includes improvement of transport facilities at different points, introduction of AC railway coach, catamaran and bubble boat, construction of jetty and approach road at L plot, construction of tourist lodge at Harwood point, construction of holiday and nature resort at L plot and Sagar island, setting up a day centre at Namkhana jetty point and establishing tiger rescue centre cum sanctuary at Dhanchi etc. Subsequent development options like establishing tourist village or providing helicopter services are also proposed. Finally, a summary of investment plan along with project wise investment also has been prepared in order to implement the projected circuit tourism.
Limitations of the Plan

1) The plan is not organized, in terms of sequencing of the topics appearing to be related to one another. For example, proposed tourism circuits are described in the beginning pages (page 7) while existing tourist spots and tourist profile are given later on.

2) The plan has not proposed any other type of tourism except the conventional jungle safari.

3) Only one tourism circuit has been proposed.

4) Proposed cost of the proposed tourism package has been given but projected profitability analysis report has not been prepared.

5) The plan has concentrated on higher and middle income group of tourists as target tourists. It has not given any idea how to manage the problem of mass tourism in The Sunderbans during the tourist season.

6) The development plan is worked out only on the proposed tourist circuit. No holistic approach is made.

7) The plan is a sketchy one. It does not indicate any probable solution to the question of sustainable development of the people of Sunderbans through the means of tourism. The ecotourism concept is also not considered. Hence, for welfare state like West Bengal, this plan will help little to economic development of the region.

PLAN – 2

Name of the plan: Tourism Development Plan for Sunderbans

Prepared by: Tata Consultancy Services Calcutta (TCS)

Prepared for: Department of Tourism, Government of West Bengal

Date of submission: January 1998

Objectives of the Plan

The objective of the assignment is to undertake a feasibility study and explore the tourism potential in the Sunderbans region.

Scope of the Study

The scope of the study consisted of a compilation of detailed background and geographical information on the Sunderbans region, assessment of tourism potential
of the region, preparation of a tourism development plan and assessment of the techno-economic feasibility of the suggested projects.

Contents of the Plan

The plan is well organized in comparison to plan 1. The entire plan is divided into 7 chapters and 3 Appendix. In the first two chapters and first part of chapter 3, the existing resource and tourism scenario are discussed and analysed. Physical attributes including terrain, climate, soil, river system, flora, fauna etc, and socio-cultural aspects like agriculture, fishing, forest related activities, education, social infrastructure are discussed in detail. The tourism infrastructure prevailing, the common tourist spots, accommodation facilities and tourist profile are accounted for. In second part of chapter 3, tourism forecast in terms of tourist arrival and additional bed requirements till 2010 has been done along with pictorial representation of tourism development focus. Multipoint development scheme has been proposed. Taking into account each and every entry point and tourist spot, proposals in regards to infrastructure development, further beautification, enhancement of tourist facilities, road development and security measures are made. The plan has suggested reconstruction of six entry points to Sunderbans in a tourist friendly manner. It has also proposed development measures about seventeen tourist spots in and around Sunderbans. Increase of tourist carrying capacities of the lodges and vessels, introducing varied types of boats, launches and vessels, encouraging private sector investments in tourism industry of Sunderbans, formulation of clear-cut guidelines for issuing permits to domestic and foreign tourists etc. are some of the proposed recommendations made by the plan. This has also proposed four different types of tours, based on tourist mentality and financial capabilities.

In chapter 4, a detailed framework of architectural plans has been worked out for the proposed developmental projects. Location map of the site architectural design of the construction proposed, landscaping area statement, materials and methods of construction along with budgetary estimate are drawn in a systematic and scientific manner. At the end of the chapter summary of proposed investment is made.

In chapter 5, profitability analysis of the proposed projects is made. Project wise costs and investments are calculated based on certain assumptions and three year’s profitability analysis has been made showing surplus in each year with increasing trends. A manpower assessment has also been made.
In chapter 6, the plan has emphasized the need for marketing Sunderbans and has formulated certain marketing strategies. This also includes distribution strategies as well as strategies for the people. At the end, it has suggested for co-operative marketing for better results.

In the last chapter, highlighting the unique features of environment found in The Sunderbans, the plan has advised for conducting Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA), environmental audits and quality assessment and pertaining appropriate education and training to the local people for better management of the socio-economic and environmental problems.

Analysis of the Study

The plan is well structured and organized. An in-depth study has been made about the environmental attributes and tourism potentialities of the region. The architectural plan and marketing strategies add adequate strength to the recommendations. Moreover, it enables a holistic effort of tourism development of the region.

Limitations of the Study

1. It does not emphasize on the application of relatively modern 'Eco-tourism' concept which is relevant to this type of ecosystem.

2. Throughout the plan, it has not mentioned whether the proposed construction and development will be within the framework of environmental legislation or will be on eco-friendly measures to the problem.

3. The plan has just mentioned about the need of diversification of existing tourism scenario but it has not recommended any other form of tourism except the conventional mode of tourism which already exists there.

4. It has not given any idea how the proposed tourism development plan will cause a significant change in the socio-economic development of the local people.

PLAN- 3

Name of the Plan: A dream ... a reality called Sunderban Ecoworld.

Prepared by: Express Advisory Services Private Limited

Prepared for: The tourism project to be launched by the Company.

Year of Publication: 2006
The Company
Express Advisory Services Private Limited (EASPL) is a project management company situated in the eastern part of the country with its corporate head office at Kolkata. In order to prepare and implement tourism project in Sunderbans (the project namely Sunderban Ecoworld) a group company namely Express Eco-tourism Private Limited (EETPL) has been formed, along with a project committee, comprises of expert in Eco-tourism, agriculturists, engineers, financial experts, business managers etc. Express advisory, being the mother concern is providing technical as well as financial support to EETPL.

The Project
In the mission statement, the company proclaims to implement sustainable development of a segmental part of the Sunderbans region through imparting education amongst the locals, introducing multi-tier healthcare systems, involving in organic farming and scientific fishing and poultry farming by establishing weather forecasting units, research centers and conserving the cultural heritage of the region. In order to do so, they have adopted the mode of tourism development. They are proposing to start tourism and tourism related activities within the profit-centre fold so that the surplus revenue generated may be utilized for sustainable development in the above mentioned ways. Blending these two goals, the company has set the project objectives as follows:

Project Objectives

• Development of Tourism
• Destination Development
• Increase of self-dependency among villagers
• Conservation of Ecology.

Project Proposals
The company emphasis on sustainable Tourism which according to it " A tourism activity that sustains or enhances the geographical character of a place, its environment, culture, aesthetics, heritage and the well-being of its residents by means of a sustainable eco-friendly livelihood (Pg.15 of the brochure)."
In the light of this definition, the company is likely to propose the project idea (Known as Sunderban Eco world) as a PPP (Private - Public – Partnership) model. For this, it is seeking partnership from various players like Government, International Institutions, Hotel Chains and Airlines, tour operators, corporate houses, NGOs etc. (Pg – 22)

**Proposed Tourism Activities**

The company has projected the following tourism activities to be started phase wise:

- Eco village at two locations (encompassing the entire Sunderbans within the limit / proximity of different tourist group)
- Water sports
- Adventure Tourism
- Transportation (water based different river cruises)

**Initial Phase - Construction of Eco-villages**

The Company has not focused on entire Sunderbans, but in isolated locations - initially to start with resorts along with economy lodging with an array of activities and facilities. The company has planned to erect eco-villages at Bagna village or Shamsher Nagar (Dist North 24 Parganas) and at a Kishorimohanpur in South 24 Parganas. A separate eco-lodge may be constructed at Jharkhali in 50 acres land. Each village requires 200 acres of land. The company has given pictorial view of the projected eco villages which will be equipped with solar power, rain water harvested water supply management system, seamless communication facilities, open air theatre, craft house, children’s park, convention and conference facilities, wellness clinic etc. It has depicted an ideal eco-village with organic vegetation, less population and more nature based.

**Subsequent Phases**

After constructing the eco-villages, the company proposes to diverse its tourism activities to river cruises, water sports, adventure tourism etc., centering the eco – villages.

**Adventure Tourism**

In an approach to adventure tourism the company will erect a watch tower and an approach jetty near Burirdabri, within the Sunderban Tiger Reserve buffer zone.
Small accommodation will be built inside the watchtower area subject to the permission of the forest department for the adventure tourists.

Hot water ballooning for tourists is also conceptualized. Controlled hot water ballooning from water over small islands in the Sunderban Tiger Reserve (Buffer Zone) will be arranged from two locations each adjacent to the eco-villages.

**Water Sports**

Water Safaris for nature watching through rivers and narrow creeks in upper Sunderban, bird watching in the wide sea fronts of river *Matla, Bidya and Thakrun*, static water accommodation likely at *Netidhopani* and *Gokhaltoli* are proposed. Water based adventure sports like Kayaking, fishing, canoeing shall be the additional attractions of the eco-village tourism.

In terms of these proposed tourism activities the company declares to provide environment friendly water vessels and to engage local people in non technical and semi technical operations. At the end, the company makes a declaration on sustainable tourism criteria fulfillment (Pg. 23 – 25).

**Comments**

The company has projected and ideal eco-tourism plan within the concept of sustainable tourism development of the area. Though it is segmental and not focused on the entire part of Sunderbans it can be treated as a model plan for small and medium entrepreneurs developing eco-tourism in the area. In absence of projected cost structure, sources of finance, projected segment reporting and profitability analysis, it is difficult to comment about the scope of the plan if implemented.

**PLAN – 4**

**Name of the Plan:** Integrated Sahara Tourism Circuit Project Report for ISTC at Sunderbans

**Prepared by:** Modular Consultants Private Limited

15B, Hindusthan Park Kolkata – 700 029

**Prepared for:** SAHARA INDIA PARIWAR

**About the Company and other promoters**

- The company started in 1978
- At present with asset base of over Rs.50,000 crores
- 9 – 10 Lac workers ; 1707 establishments
Involved in the business of Finance, Infrastructure and housing, Tourism and hospitality, media and entertainment, aviation, consumer products, manufacturing, services and trading.

[Source: http://www.saharaindiapariwar.org, last visited 13.03.07]

_Sahara India Pariwar_, along with the Ministry of Tourism Government of West Bengal represented by West Bengal Tourism Development Corporation have decided to form a joint stock company, Sahara India Tourism Development Corporation Limited (SITDCL) as special project vehicle (SPV) to promote the integrated Sahara Tourism Circuit at Sunderbans. The formalities of the formation of the Joint Stock Company have been completed and it is already incorporated on 4th July 2003. [Pg.10 of the project report]. The following group of companies of _Sahara India Pariwar_ will also be the other subscribers of the joint stock company:

a) Sahara India Commercial Corporation Limited  
b) Gora Projects Limited  
c) Sahara India Investment Corporation Limited

**About the project**

The project report prepared of 234 pages and divided into 18 chapters. Each chapter is sub-divided into number of topics and most of the chapters are enriched with site plans, construction maps, statistical analysis, graphs and pictorial representations. The project plan is well structured and elaborate. The plan is prepared based on certain selected projected sites and as per the declaration the project is based on combining eco-tourism with heritage, wild life, entertainment, adventure, craft culture, pilgrimage, education and sports associated with overall sustainable development like infrastructure, socio-economic regulated tourism activities and environment with emphasis on maintenance of respecting for ecological balance.

**The Project Developers**

1. **Gora Projects Ltd.**

A group Company of _Sahara India Pariwar_, specialists in various housing and tourism projects, presently developed the Amby Valley Sahara Lake City near Mumbai covering total land area 7,500 Acres with 91% green and open area – 100% pollution free environment and certified to ISO 4001 and OHSAS 8001.
2. Modular Consultants Pvt. Ltd.
The Concept Provider and Prime Consultants.

Goal and objective of the Project:
The project was envisaged for two basic objectives:
i) Economic Improvement and sustainable development of the area.
ii) Focus the attention of the world communities on a unique habitat for gaining knowledge and information on estuarine mangrove habitat.

The Project Sites:
The Eco-tourism facilities are being created in the following sites in Sunderbans area:
1. ‘Sagar Island’ under Sagar Police Station
2. ‘Frazergunj’ (Lakshmipur Abad) under Namkhana Police Station.
3. ‘L-Plot’ (Sridharnagar) under Patharpratima Police Station
4. ‘Kaikhali’ under Kultali Police Station
5. ‘Jharkhali’ (Wild life access centre to be developed jointly with state Forest Department) under Basanti Police Station.

These sites have been identified to develop into a combination of eco-adventure, ecotel and eco-tourism destinations. The project will be developed with a unique concept of 75% accommodation on water around 250 sq. kms of floating city and 25% facility on non-forest land. The project involves the construction of ecotourism complex (cottages, chalets, tent age, lodges, bay resorts etc.) in islands and floating city. The prime theme of the development will be a unique floating city to match with the Sunderban’s ambience of natural attributes, the unique selling price (USP) for the ISTC project [Chapter 9, Page – 93]

Concept of Floating City [Chapter -9]
- Most of the accommodations, activity centers, policing, ambulance, fire service etc., and everything that is required in a city will be on boats, floatels, launches, pontoons, and on floating platforms.
- The area of floating city will be 60 km long and 2 – 6 km wide, having 250 sq. km water surface. They are not affected by strong waves.
- Floating city will comprise of two access stations i.e.,
a) North eastern floating hub near Kaikhali
b) South Western floating hub near Kankramari. The floating hubs will be built out of specially designed steel pontoons with modular designs. These floating hubs shall function as reception centers and will have all major tourist facilities.

- There will be 12 floating platforms built of steel pontoons and will be located at the identified sites. These floating platforms will accommodate various activity centers like auditoriums, library, crafts, dancing club, sports complex etc along with accommodation facilities.

**Target Tourists, Tour Packages and Marketing Strategies**

In one of the chapters, [Chapter 7] of the project report, a survey has been conducted by Mott Mac Donald Ltd. U.K., Locum, U.K. and Mott Mac Donald India (P) Ltd. jointly with the prime consultant on categories of tourists intend to visit Sunderbans, their spending capacity and projected numbers. Ten years projected inflow of tourists in number starting from the year 2006 has also been made. The survey highlighted four categories of target tourists. Those are:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>High end Foreign Tourists (spending capacity $ 350 / day )</td>
<td>12,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foreign economy / outbound Indian Tourists(spending capacity $250/day)</td>
<td>30,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local Top-end Tourists(Spending Capacity $ 200/day)</td>
<td>62,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local economy Tourists (spending capacity $ 75 day)</td>
<td>1,68,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For them, following tour packages are proposed to be offered:

a) Packages FLX - for high and foreign tourists – 3 nights / 4 days
b) LLX - for economy foreign and outbound domestic tourists - 2 nights / 3 days.
c) LLX – T Local top end tourists - 1 night 2 days

The cost of packages may vary from Rs.10, 000 to Rs.50, 000 inclusive of air fare.

The tourism package will include:

- Tiger watch
- River cruises
- Pilgrimages
- Interpretation centre for flora and fauna

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• Water sports
• Entertainment hubs
• Floating business, seminar, conference and leisure packages
• Honeymooners’ packages

Marketing strategies
The marketing of The Sunderbans circuit will be undertaken by the marketing division of Sahara India Pariwar, who will in turn appoint various marketing agents, tour operators etc. on commission or revenue sharing basis. For this, it is proposed to form a marketing division of the special Purpose Vehicle (SPV) jointly formed by Sahara India Pariwar and Government of West Bengal [Chapter 7 Pg 46]

The Eco-environmental measures
The following terms of reference shall be considered for eco environment friendly development and operation of tourism facilities under Sunderban Region.

• Strict adherence to all the Coastal Regulation Zone (CRZ) norms, the Forest and Wildlife Conservation norms, Ecology / Environment norms.
• Density of vessels, boats and floating platforms not to exceed 6 – 8 per sq. km.
• All boats and motors vessels shall have inboard engines and silent generators to avoid noise pollution.
• The lighting system on vessels, boats and floating activity centers will be diffused type and window blinds will be used in night time for minimum disturbance to forest and wild life.
• Built up area proposed on land is only 2% of the total Project land area.
• The main desk of all the boats and floating platforms will be kept at same level to ease of embarkation and disembarkation.
• Supply sources for fresh water, fuel and provisions will comprise of both mobile and anchored (fixed) for better flexibility and logistic control and with suitable filling gears.
• The boats to anchor alongside the floating platforms at night
• Loudspeakers shall not be used.
• Effluent and Solid waste disposal shall be treated and processed for “Zero” residual pollution.
• All disposable, carry bags and containers will be made out of organic material like clay, leaf, jute etc.
- The noise pollution will be kept to minimum by tourists/service personnel through awareness creation, through briefings, info kiosks, circulation of guidelines etc., strict monitoring and implementation of proper management plan.
- Eco-friendly power and energy source through silent generators, solar photovoltaic, solar thermal, wind turbo generators and chargeable batteries.

**Environmental impact assessment and disaster Management Plan**

In chapter fourteen of the plan, environmental impact assessment for the project has been done. Taking into consideration six environmental components, environmental impact matrix has been formulated. The assessment made by the consultants has shown a positive impact in order to implement the projects. In the same chapter, disaster management plan has been outlined indicating the establishments of rescue centers for floating hubs and land based locations, emergency transport system, communication and medical facilities.

**The Socio-economic package**

In Chapter 15, socio-economic profile of The Sunderbans region and its relevance to the project has been depicted. To what extent the project helps to enhance sustainable development in the region and to qualitatively enrich the society at large - is the main objective of study here. The study consists of three parts –

1. Socio economic study of the region - indicating the level of poverty, literacy rate, population density, geographical location, climate etc.
2. Exploring the need and importance of ecotourism project for overall development of the region.
3. Concluding observation

In this respect a socio-economic development package has been outlaid in relation to the investments and revenues earned from the project. Some of the important ingredients of the package are given below:

- Generating growth impulse in the region
- Providing readily assured market of local produce and services
- Creating facilities and opportunities for socio-economic and cultural upliftment.
- Making accessible modern facilities at distant sites.
• Supporting cyber café (based on IT hub at site) for local youth.
• Providing boost to cottage industries (e.g. pottery, weaving, furniture making, paper making etc.,) handicrafts and other artifacts.

Benefits to the Society at Large
Approximately 2% of the cost of project and 5% of the revenue is earmarked for socio-economic packages like - Healthcare, Education, Promotion of local art and craft, other vocational training and encouraging the locals to participate in various tourism activities.

On implementation of the project in full, the proposed direct investment of Rs.540 crores in the four project sites would generate huge development either through directly associated components of the project or through its ancillary activities.

The Package Components
• Overall Infrastructural Development of the area
• Development of Transportation facilities
• Development of Communication facilities
• Improvement of Healthcare Facilities
• Functioning of Craft Villages
• Adequate Water Treatment and Waste Treatment facilities
• Improvement of the Service Sector and employment opportunities
• Ready Market for Local Produce
• Involvement with Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) in package implementation.

Financial Analysis
In the last chapter [Chapter 16] the project viability has been analysed financially. The financial analysis is based on certain financial parameters i.e., cost of land development and construction cost has been calculated on the basis of year 2003 price or contingency for unforeseen items of cost has been kept @ 5% of the project cost etc. [Pg 190 - 191]

The cost of the project is ascertained as Rs.540 crores supported by the sources of financing from long term debt, private placement equity, grant in aid [Pg 192] Ten years profitability statement has been prepared showing profit from the fourth year of
operation with a gradual enhancement till tenth year. Other financial analysis statements like projected cash flow, balance sheets, internal rate of return, debt service, coverage ratio etc. for 10 year period (2006 - 2015) are prepared. Item wise cost breakup for each project site is also given. Working capital requirement schedule along with contingencies plan are made. Graphical, pictorial and flowchart presentation are made at the end of the chapter.

Analysis of the Plan
It is well structured, elaborate and comprehensive plan for the given project. It is obvious that a mega project on eco-tourism consisting of investment criteria of Rs.540 Crores requires master plan like this. It has made an in-depth study of all socio-economic and financial parameters which are required to formulate a comprehensive and effective plan.

In terms of limitations / reservations two points may be noted:

a) The projections made in terms of tourist inflow, profitability, social commitment and environmental parameters are based on certain assumptions which are vulnerable subject to socio-economic and political changes. The effects of global warming, changing various environmental parameters / factors of Sunderbans very fast. Apprehension of environmental disaster is prominent enough for standing long term project viability with huge investments.

b) This project is proposed for implementation in limited sites of the entire Sunderbans. It is segmental in terms of entire eco tourism landscape of Sunderbans. The project is conspicuously profit oriented rather than intending to be beneficial to the entire area and community. The challenge for the mega company is to find ways and means to balance social commitments and preservation of environmental quality with economic profit seeking.

6.1.2 Overall Comment
The four plans discussed above have different orientations. It is noteworthy that these plans are prepared at different time frames with different objectives. Interestingly, the plans developed later are qualitatively superior in that they are (i) more detailed, (ii) better organized/structured and (iii) technically sophisticated. For examples, in plan 3, ecotourism concept becomes the bottom line, in plan 4 EIA has been made for the project which was just proposed in plan 2. Till date, none of the plans have been
implemented in practice. So, there is no scope of comparison between the projections and the actual. At present the government of West Bengal has given another agency / source have different orientations.

Table: 6.1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PLAN NO.</th>
<th>NAME OF THE PLAN</th>
<th>MADE BY / MADE FOR</th>
<th>YEAR OF PLAN</th>
<th>OBJECTIVES OF THE PLAN</th>
<th>LIMITATIONS OF THE PLANS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 01       | Tourism Development Plan Sunderbans | West Bengal Consultancy Organisation Limited, Calcutta / Tourism Department, Govt. of West Bengal | 1998 | • Locating profitable tourism circuits for the target tourists.  
• Formulating development plan for projected tourism circuits | • The plan is not organised in terms of sequencing of the topics.  
• Only one tourism circuit has been proposed. |
| 02       | Tourism Development Plan for Sunderbans | Tata Consultancy Services (TCS) / Tourism Department, Govt. of West Bengal | 1998 | To undertake a feasibility study and explore the tourism potential in the Sunderbans region. | • Does not emphasise on the application of ecotourism concept which is relevant to this type of ecosystem.  
• Has not given any idea how the proposed tourism development plan will cause a significant change in the socio-economic development of the people. |
| 03       | A dream...a Reality called Sunderban Eco-world | Express Advisory Services Private Limited / The company itself | 2006 | • Development of Tourism  
• Destination Development  
• Conservation of Ecology. | • Confined to a single profit oriented project.  
• Has no vision of sustainable development of the region. |
| 04       | Integrated Sahara Tourism Circuit Project Report for ISTC at Sunderban | Modular Consultants Private Limited / Sahara India Pariwar | 2004 | • Development of five islands as floating tourist destinations.  
• Highlighting Sunderbans as international tourism centre through success-Full implementation of Rs 500 crores mega project. | • The proposed project is confined to development of five islands only, a holistic plan to develop tourism scenario is absent.  
• The project proposal has faced strong representations from locals and environmentalists. |
Chapter 6.2
Potential Strategic Marketing Solutions for the Ecotourism Industry in The Sunderbans

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6.2.3 Towards Strategic Marketing Management Solutions
6.2.4 Formulating Effective Marketing Strategies-For Whom?
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6.2.6 Optimum Solution-Private-Public Strategic Partnership Model
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Chapter 6.2
Potential Strategic Marketing Solutions for the Ecotourism Industry in The Sunderbans

6.2.1 Need for Sustainable Marketing of The Sunderbans
The potentiality of tourism development in The Sunderbans region is enormous but it is largely unexploited due to lack of proper planning and narrow-mindedness of the policy makers about future prospects. Lack of proper tourism marketing strategies has isolated The Sunderbans from the mainstream of international and domestic tourist traffic in the country. Only an average of about 45,000 tourists (see chapter 3 for statistical details) visit the region annually with very insignificant foreign tourist inflow which is the sharp contrast to the heavy flow of tourists in the wildlife parks and safaris of Kajiranga, Kanha or Gir forests of other parts of India. In comparison with other wildlife sanctuaries, The Sunderbans is no less endowed with tourism resources. A world heritage site with global biosphere reserve status, The Sunderbans is famous as the hinterland of the Royal Bengal tiger. The region, being a part of the world’s biggest delta, forms the largest continuous tracts of mangrove forests. Apart from its fascinating diversity of flora and fauna it offers visitors intriguing insight into the peculiarities of a river economy and simple rustic life. Unfortunately, the existing tourism policies, system and operational mechanism do not justify this diversified unique tourism opportunities of the place.

6.2.2 The Problems with the Existing Tourism System
The main reason of low inflow of tourists is marketing failure. In spite of the availability of various marketing and promotional strategies, the tourism potentiality has not been projected effectively to the national and international tourists. The existing tourism system fails to create demand and interest amongst the tourists about the unique region. Tourists, who have visited the place once, mostly expressed that their level of satisfaction has not reached at a desired level. In this perspective, it is important to highlight the grim scenario of tourism that persists now and the problems related to the current tourism system. In a nutshell, the problems can be summarized as –

• Inadequate tourism infrastructure
• Absence of an integrated tourism marketing action plan for the region resulting tourist dissatisfaction and negative image of the place.
• Inadequate provisions to match different tourism needs with different tourism products.
• Lack of co-ordination between private and government tourist organizations.

They are elaborated below:

a) Sunderbans is being visited by mostly Calcuttans and people from adjacent districts during winter seasons. Number of tourists visiting from outside state or country is negligible.

b) There are very few people coming outside the state only to visit Sunderbans. Sunderbans is a part of the trip to West Bengal. Therefore, The Sunderbans itself fails to create attraction towards the tourist communities.

c) Majority of the tourists comes with an expectation to see tigers. Sighting tigers is a rare experience. As a result, many tourists return home disheartened blaming the place and tour operators, as a failed tour. If all tourists were exposed to a short orientation programme either conducted by the tour operators or centrally conducted by the forest department, they might be able to develop the right customer expectations and understand that the actual purpose of the park is to protect a vital national heritage (which indeed belongs to the tourists) rather than to expose the endangered tigers to demanding tourists.

d) Another major problem is the inadequacy of infrastructure (refer to chapter 3). The basic standards of infrastructure facilities are not up to the mark here. The conditions of the jetties, motor launches, accommodation facilities and hospitality are not satisfactory.

e) Tourism in Sunderbans has come to be associated only with jungle safari in few selected routes. A repeater tourist will be taken to the same places of visit with little variation. There is a dire need to diversify tourism here in a situation where the same guidelines, facilities, infrastructure are available for mass tourist, ecotourist, researcher, students and other segments of tourists.

f) Tourism in Sunderbans is largely controlled by the government. West Bengal Tourism Development Corporation is the major stakeholder here. Like in other states and countries, the government organization suffers from lack of vision, bureaucratic jeopardy and stagnation resulting in poor development in tourism.
Due to these deficiencies, revenue earning from tourism is very low and has little significance for the local economy. On the other hand, certain environmental and social problems could have been solved through adopting sustainable ecotourism policy, which is absent here. As a result, the tourism scenario has remained stagnant since the last two decades.

6.2.3 Towards Strategic Marketing Management Solutions

Effectiveness of any strategic management exercise depends upon appropriate formulation, implementation and monitoring of strategies. It is also important to control four traditional marketing variables i.e. four Ps (Laws Eric, 1991, pg 76)- product, price, place and promotion in a useful manner. Moreover, ‘Marketing of tourism is more difficult than that of concrete goods. One reason is that tourism is about services that are bought before experiencing them’ (Singh 2004, pg 79). It is equally difficult to frame effective marketing policies for an ecotourism site because there is less control on quality.

6.2.4 Formulating Effective Marketing Strategies - For Whom?

While formulating a comprehensive marketing plan for promoting The Sunderbans as an attractive tourist spot, it has to be kept in mind that who are becoming the potential customers of the plan - mass tourists, ecotourists or a blend of two? Ecotourists have been considered to be a market segment in the West, but in the developing countries like India there are fewer ecotourists than in the developed countries such as United States where there can be many market sub segments with differences in personality profiles, values, attitudes and lifestyles. On the other hand, there is no doubt that the market place is becoming greener or more environmentally sensitive. People are more aware of their responsibility towards conserving the environment. Consumers are now working with environmental advocates as well as business. Businesses, at present are highly conscious of their role in protecting the environment. Therefore, the current trend of mass tourist inflow into Sunderbans may be considerably changed to gross intake of ecotourists in near future. The promotional strategies should cover both types of tourists in future.

6.2.5 Formulation by Whom?

Considering the people (potential tourists and local inhabitants) the place (a unique biodiversity site) and the problems (tremendous population pressure, complex socio-economic structure and tendency to politicise every environmental and economic
issue) it is important to determine who will be the principal policy makers to promote Sunderbans sustainably. Will the government bear the sole responsibility for framing strategic marketing plan to develop tourism here? Or will it devolve the responsibility to the private/corporate sector? Or as a third alternative there should be private-public partnership of strategic planning under a powerful monitoring agency? Next question is who will be the implementing agency of the plan? The government itself, private sectors or both? These questions are pertinent because formulation and implementation of incorrect promotional strategies might result in unstable development of the region followed by disastrous environmental degradation. Choice of players and their role (government or private sectors) is also important for proper marketing and tourism promotion of the place. The grim tourism scenario of the present is the outcome of lack of effective promotional policies and imprudent management of the tourism issue. Till the end of last century, tourism of The Sunderbans was almost exclusively controlled by the government. Despite having absolute control over the region and with economic and political power to develop tourism here, the government failed to promote tourism in an effective manner due to lack of foresight and bureaucratic stagnation. As a result, tourism was confined to jungle safari in limited spheres. In the new millennium the government of West Bengal developed a realization that it is not their duties to run hotels or factories or tourist circuits. As an outcome of this realization, it has started inviting the private sector to develop industries, services, and infrastructure set-ups in various fields including tourism. The government tried to shift financial burden to private players following the trends of global economy and new economic policy of the country. In response to this policy change, number of multinational companies, big business houses and private organizations including non-government organizations showed interest in the tourism sector of the state of West Bengal.
Sahara India Pariwar (refer to chapter 6.1 for detailed description of the company) - an Indian company has placed an Rs.500 crores mega project to develop Sunderban’s tourism scenario (details of the project are given to Chapter 6.1). They have planned for a floating city amongst selected islands of Sunderbans with modern infrastructure and amenities for global tourists. The state government has given approval to start the project but representations came from the environmentalist group that it will create disaster to the environment in future and will cause permanent damage to this unique ecosystem. On the other hand, the local people and the political parties have demonstrated strong resistance on the apprehension that the people will loose their land holdings and traditional jobs due to the encroachment made by the company, it will create chaos in social system due to invasion of outsiders and the simplicity and uniqueness of the place will be no more. Moreover, they did not believe the intension and integrity of the company’s activities and image. The absence of government’s stake-holdings in that project was also created feeling of insecurity in the mind of the people who believed that instead of making fruitful development of the people and the place through tourism, it will concentrate on profiteering only at the cost of destroying the environment. Finally the project did not materialize due to various reasons but these factors also played intimate role.

Apart from the mega project proposal, in recent years, many private entrepreneurs have started developing tourism infrastructures and new tourist spots around
Sunderbans. Unfortunately, these efforts are mostly resulting multiplication of hotels in a confined area (In Pakhiralaya village opposite Sajnekhali tourist entry point, more than 7 hotels and resorts have been constructed, others are in waiting) disturbing the scenic beauty of the place and polluting the virgin nature. The researcher has shown (in Religious tourism chapter) that the development made by the private sector in Bakkhali tourist resort have created almost no employment opportunities for local people. Therefore, it will not be prudent to allow the private players alone in the sphere of policy formulation and implementation of tourism projects in Sunderbans. It can be said without doubt that, the profit motive is the main source of inspiration to run a private organization than to fulfill social and environmental commitments. Mostly, their focus is anthropocentric than to ecocentric, which is reflected in their policies and activities. Giving free access to the private sector to operate might be a serious threat to this vulnerable ecosystem.

6.2.6 Optimum Solution-Private-Public Strategic Partnership Model

In the given scenario, the probable best solution may be an effective private - public strategic partnership of sustainable tourism development policy formation and its implementation. The Sunderbans with its entire natural attributes, is the property of this nation rather this universe. It is the collective responsibility of the Central Government, State Government, UNESCO, and global bodies, NGOs, Private organisations and local inhabitants to protect The Sunderbans from all odds. Everyone’s efforts and initiatives are necessary to develop this place as a world heritage site maintaining its ecological balance along with the economic development of local people in a sustainable manner. This sense of belongingness by everyone and spirit of collective responsibility should be an ideal reflections of initiatives of sustainable tourism development of Sunderbans which can be successfully materialized through joint efforts by governmental agencies and private players. People and organizations having interest in Sunderbans should have their representations in the development initiatives obviously through a structured set-up. The government being the representative of the people and the main protector of the region should take the major initiative for framing sustainable marketing strategies for tourism development.
6.2.6.1 Involving Consultant Groups
As the government (Central or State) itself generally lacks expertise to frame effective promotional strategies, it can employ one or more internationally renowned consultants or consultant groups for framing specific sustainable tourism policies for Sunderbans with strategic effective promotional plans which will maximize people's welfare while restoring the natural and social environment. This consultancy plan/plans should have access to all and should be accepted through a brainstorming process which considering the proposals, recommendations, reservations from different interest groups. The main proposals may be modified according to the need.

6.2.6.2 Formulation of Strategies
It may be the state government who takes the initiation to formulate the strategy under the guidance of the central government. The central government may give financial and technical support to the state and may give directions through the Environmental Protection Act, Biodiversity Laws, Forest Act, Coastal Regulation Zone Act etc. to the extent of development work possible in that region. The government can also do central monitoring of the overall activities.

6.2.6.3 Selection of Players
After finalizing the strategy and the master plan, the state government can involve the private sector organizations (both at small scale and large scale) to develop diversified tourism projects. While selecting companies or organizations for implementing the projects, emphasis should be given to those companies having past experiences of doing similar projects in other places, being undergone eco certification programmes and rated by reputed eco certification agencies (like Ecotourism Australia) or having eco labeled products or services to be offered. These companies will surely provide best technical advices, expertise and talented skills, which is not generally available to a government to supply. Small-scale tourism projects (like creating rural tourism or setting up cultural tourist spots) may be given to non-governmental organizations with local people's participation, which have basic infrastructure, experiences and finances to do so. In case of large projects, financing may be made by the government through Tourism Finance Corporation, Asian Development Bank, NABARD, World Bank or private players are allowed to invest in respective projects which are to be ploughed back by them through long term or medium term lease agreements with the government. It is advised not to involve one or two mega companies in implementing all the tourism projects of Sunderbans. It may cause problems in future and may
develop a monopolistic attitude of these players towards the government. Strategic infrastructure development along with site development may be done through private–public partnership process.

6.2.6.4 Involvement of the Government

It is important to note that government should be involved someway or other to all these projects as a stakeholder, which are developed, operated or managed by the private players. The government directly or through its agencies should govern and exercise control over each project either by holding major shares (in case of government funded or by appointing influential projects) representative in the board of directors of the companies (which individually run a project) in order to monitor the activities of the concern. This is important to prevent any fraudulent or manipulative activities performed by the concern against the interest of the environment and the people. Moreover, for the presence of government stake holdings in these projects will enable social acceptance by the local people as a psychological role playing will cause an effect in the mind of local inhabitants that government will not allow any harmful activities to be done by others. It will be a smooth process even by a private concern to acquire lands, engaging locals to various labor jobs or to combat political and local pressure if there is government participation.

6.2.6.5 Monitoring Agency

On the whole, a three tire advisory and monitoring agency should operate in order to review the development of the process. The three tires are of local levels, state levels and of central level. Close monitoring of the activities have to be made at the local level involving local panchayats, peoples representatives, NGOs, environmentalist groups, clubs and other local stakeholders. They should be properly trained to judge the viability, merits and demerits of the concerned development activities. Their representations, reservations and suggestions should be thoroughly reviewed by the state level agency, which may be constituted by the experts of various fields and representative of the policy-making bodies. This agency should act on behalf of the state government and should have the power to stop or hold certain projects under process. Even after completion of the project and during operation, if any irregularities or manipulation is detected, this agency should have the authority to intervene. This agency should report to the central agency, which will have the supreme monitoring power to control the overall policy formulation and
implementation. Central agency should act as a liaison between the Central
government and state-monitoring agency, or between UNESCO, World Bank, World
Tourism Organisation etc. and the Central government. If the entire system runs
effectively and being time bound, the probability of successful implementation of
sustainable tourism development programme will be very high.

6.2.7 Strategic Marketing Management at the Operational Level
Based on the conceptual policy framework proposals, some suggestions may be
incorporated for the development of sustainable tourism applying strategic marketing
and promotional plans at operational level.
The assessment of current and potential tourism resources of Sunderbans and its
development need emphasizes to adopt a sustainable marketing strategy, which will
promote tourism in the region without affecting its unique natural environment. The
strategy formulation should be segregated into following major thrust areas:

- Meeting the criteria of sustainable tourism development through marketing
  research and applying effective and modern marketing techniques.
- Image creation and positioning the region.
- Destination planning and development of specialized products for specific
groups.
- Environmental Impact Assessment for sustainable tourism development of
  the region (already done by this researcher in Chapter 5.2).
- An estimate of the tourist carrying capacity of the region to be made in order
  to analyse the desired quality and quantity of tourists for the region.
- Consumer awareness and education for better management of tourism and
  environmental promotional.
- Promotional strategies, distribution channels, design and development of
  tourism products should be developed on the basis of principle of sustainable
tourism.
A. Application of Sustainable Tourism Development Factors through Marketing Research and Applying Effective and Modern Marketing Techniques. Conceptual framework of policy formulation

"Tourism policy is the identification of a series of objectives and goals which help an agency - usually a governmental one - in the process of planning the tourism industry" - Fennell (Singh 2004:85). In other words, policy comes before planning. In order to frame an ecotourism policy for a specific destination, it is important to keep the objectives of ecotourism uppermost in mind. These objectives will work as boundaries of activities under a plan or will act as broad spectrum of guidelines through which strategies may be formulated. These guidelines or objectives are, therefore, important to frame policies and gradually plan of action in order to implement certain project. In this respect we can consider Liu's (1994) 14-point guidelines² for implementation of ecotourism or 10 points guidelines³ proposed by World Travel and Tourism Council for sustainable Tourism.

Depending on these objectives, any sustainable tourism development plan along with effective marketing strategies may be structured in a fruitful manner. Many researchers and tourism organizations have suggested strategic sustainable marketing and promotional plan objectives in order to develop ecotourism products or destinations. These guidelines may be universally applied to any ecotourism spot or may be modified according to the need. For example, tourism experts Elizabeth Boo (1990) and Pamela Weight (1994) have proposed the following ecotourism marketing goals to be obtained by any policy maker:

a) Long term economic stability of the region.

b) Economic diversification, particularly in rural, peripheral and non-industrial regions.

c) The tendency for higher dollar expenditure and larger stays by ecotourists

d) Demand for local goods and services, benefiting local economics

e) Infrastructure development

f) An increase in foreign exchange earnings.

Finally, in course of preparing master plan for promotional strategies and marketing policies to sale The Sunderban's tourism profile, sustainable tourism indicators guided by World Tourism Organisation (WTO) to be taken into account. In keeping with its leadership role in the sustainable tourism field, the WTO has been involved with indicators since 1990s. In 1993, a task force was established to identify a set of
relevant sustainable tourism indicators that were subsequently tested through local pilot projects in Canada, Netherlands, Mexico, Argentina and the USA. These projects culminated in the publication of a guide suitable for destination managers. A new study of sustainable tourism indicators in 20 countries was begun in 2003.

Reconciling demands for both a large and minimal number of indicators, the WTO process identified 11 core indicators that would provide a basic framework for sustainable tourism management in any destination. All these WTO indicators are regarded as being ‘demand driven’ as they are specifically intended to be useful to managers for making practical decisions. WTO core indicators of sustainable tourism are given below:

**Figure 6.2**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicator</th>
<th>Specific measures</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Site Protection</td>
<td>Category of site protection according to IUCN index.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Stress</td>
<td>Tourist numbers visiting site (per annum / seats month)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Use intensity</td>
<td>Intensity of use in peak period (persons per hectare)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Social impact</td>
<td>Ratio of tourist to locals (peak period and overtime)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Development Control</td>
<td>Existence of environmental review procedure or formal control over development of site and use densities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Waste management</td>
<td>Percentage of sewage from site receiving treatment (also structural limits of other infrastructure capacity on site, such as water supply)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Consumer satisfaction</td>
<td>Level of satisfaction by visitors (questionnaire based)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Local satisfaction</td>
<td>Level of satisfaction by locals (questionnaire based)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Tourism contribution to local economy</td>
<td>Proportion of total economic activity generated by tourism only.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The WTO (Weaver 2006:31) has produced a simple scheme that assists local managers to select an appropriate set of site-specific indicators to place the core indicators in a given scenario. This consists of five criteria against which candidate indicators can be routed as high, medium or low in terms of their fulfillment of those criteria. These are:

a) Obtain ability - describes whether data are available.

b) Understandability and Credibility - describe whether the indicator is easy to understand and is supported by reliable information.

c) Temporality and Comparability - considers whether the indicator allows for the identification of trends both internal and external to the study area and over time.

d) The ‘predictive of sustainability’ criterion assesses the early warning capacity of the indicator or may be modified according to the need.

e) Threshold value—describes whether the latter is available for that variable.

An indicator that achieves a high ranking on all or most of the criteria is a strong candidate for selection.

In the process of formulating sustainable strategic marketing plane and promotional policies to highlight this region, the above mentioned broad and universal guidelines should have to be kept in mind.

B. Tourist Carrying Capacity - Concept and Utilization in The Sunderbans

Assessment of tourist carrying capacity is a strategic marketing tool as well as a sustainable development initiative in order to promote a tourist region. “It is the measurement of the threshold beyond which the negative impact of tourism begins to outweigh its positive impacts on the natural as well as the social and cultural environment. It asks the question: How much tourism is too much?” (Singh, 2004:61-62) Though it is difficult to prove the point of tourist saturation of an area, but even a rough estimation helps to determine what maximum number of visitors an area or destination can hold without leading to deterioration in the quality of the experience that tourists have. Apart from the physical component of carrying capacity concept for tourism there are biological or environmental, socio-cultural, psychological, economic and infrastructural capacities (ibid-pg68). Depending on the objectives of the study, these components help to select the target markets for future development and promotions. It even enables to earmark certain areas, which are to be demarked.
This concept is an important tool towards developing sustainable ecotourism projects as ‘studies of carrying capacity will have to make use of such techniques as market segmentation and employ concepts like demarcation of destinations (Laws Eric, pg 75). Organisations like World Tourism Organization (Singh, 2004:70) has initiated that the local authorities should develop detailed policies for carrying capacity assessment, which must be oriented to development planning and management techniques to achieve the optimum capacity without saturation. Therefore, estimating tourist carrying capacity in different existing and prospective tourist spots of The Sunderbans will help the policy makers to see target markets, to encourage or discourage future tourist intake to a particular zone, will help to decentralize tourist congestions during seasons (which is existing very much) and will help to implement sustainable development of the region. Apart from tourism perspective, it will help to protect the natural and social environment of Sunderbans in a way.

C. Market Segmentation

In order to formulate effective marketing strategies for Sunderbans, it is important to select market segments in terms of place and product, then to focus on target tourists, product objectives, promotional strategy, pricing strategies etc and other specific requirements. Taking into account all these factors, a comprehensive strategy may be planned. Some examples of strategy formulations may be illustrated below:

Market segments: River cruise in The Sunderbans

1. **Product Objective** – To provide an unusual form of leisure tourism
2. **Target visitors** – Leisure tourists belonging to the middle and higher income group.
3. **Product features** - Flooding and lodging in motor launch
                              Entertainment in the form of documentary shows, music, dinner parties.
                              Facility for hiring bubble boats for creek tour
                              Trip to different islands and beaches
4. **Special products** - Natural trail
                          Rural tour
                          Creek tours
Watchtowers  
Night halt in launches

5. **Positioning Strategy** -  
   Accessibility of the area (few hours drive from Kolkata)  
   Image of the Sunderbans as the only mangrove tiger land and more specifically, home of the Royal Bengal tiger  
   Unique experience of river tourism

6. **Promotional Strategy** -  
   Advertisements in newspapers  
   Television documentaries  
   Articles in travel page of popular magazine  
   Websites  
   Tie – ups with travel agents and tour operators in and outside the state

7. **Pricing Strategy** -  
   Off season discounts  
   Discount rates for large special interest groups like University students  
   Competitive package pricing for attracting seasonal visitors of other tourist spots.  
   Separate pricing for foreign tourists group.

D. **Image Creation and Brand Management Strategies**

Image creation and positioning refers to the process of creating a perception / image in the prospective customer’s mind. With increase in competition among tourism destinations, positioning assumes great importance in the total marketing plan.

Image of The Sunderbans as a tourism destination has a dual aspect. In one hand it already enjoys an image of being the home of the famous Royal Bengal tiger. It has been recognised as a heaven of biodiversity with the largest collection of mangrove habitats, a world heritage site and a global biosphere reserve. It is a positive image but needs to be extended to include the cultural, religious and historical appeal so that forms of tourism other than that of wildlife will be flourished. It will help to decentralize current tourism profile from mere jungle safari to diversified tourism sectors and will surely attract international tourists at large for this variation. It will also help to diffuse thick concentration of tourist during seasons, which will reduce
pressure on natural habitats for certain periods and spread the tourism seasons effectively.

On the other hand, Sunderbans suffers from a negative image associated with its underdeveloped socio-economic conditions, lack of tourism infrastructure and confined marginal tourist seasons. This image of Sunderbans needs to be recast. Otherwise the tourism scenario will be as same as of now. This is possible by developing tourism infrastructure in a planned and internationally accepted way, exploring new and attractive tourist spots, diversification of tourism products prices, and by continuous aggressive advertising in all forms of media and events exposed to national and international tourist communities. It may take time but once this repositioning is possible, the acceleration of tourism development will be at a pace resulting inflow of national and international tourist at a considerable figure. This repositioning of image is considered to be most important task involving all resources and people concerned; otherwise sustainable tourism justification is not possible to this unique global tourist attractions.

E. Consumer Awareness and Education for Promotion of Sustainable Tourism Development

Customers’ response is an imparting factor to any business. Again responses depend on level of satisfaction, awareness of the product and the interest engraphed in the mind of the consumer using the product. Tourism business is of no exception. It is a people’s business. Quality of services and attitude of the host community towards visitors have a strong impact on the success of any tourist destination area. In a tourist destination like Sunderbans with a vulnerable ecosystem and remotesness, it is difficult to provide satisfactory personal services to all categories of tourists. Already mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, mass tourists visit the place with the intention to see tiger and almost all of them return with a dissatisfaction of not seeing it. This is not a wrong intention as these tourists are not aware of the real situation that The Sunderbans safari is not a conducted tour of tiger watching. There is no proper system of educating the tourists about the natural attributes and importance of the place. There are many other things to see here apart from tigers, which cannot be seen in other parts of the country or is rare to see in other parts of the world. Most of the tour operators do not orient the tourists about the importance of the place as a world heritage site, global biosphere reserve or about its unique ecosystem rather try
to provoke tourist parties on the wrong foot by showing photographs of tigers on their brochures or describing The Sunderbans widely as the hinterland of Royal Bengal tigers - as if a tourist will easily see a tiger as he / she avails the tour. Thus, the dissatisfaction is obvious. This is a bad marketing strategy for tourism development of the place. This is one of the reasons the number of repeater tourists are very few here. In this perspective it is suggested as a policy matter that there should be compulsory effective tourist orientation programme to be conducted before any Safari or tour within and surrounding Sunderbans. This tourist awareness or education programme may be conducted at the gateways of Sunderbans either by the tour operator or by the trained guides of the tourism department. Non-government organizations may also participate. Tourism advertisements and brochures should not focus only tigers but give equal weight age about other attractions of the place. If this can be done scientifically, tourists’ desire will be channelised and satisfaction level will surely rise. This strategic marketing technique will enable to create potential tourists through the positive propaganda of the current tourists and number of repeater tourists will increase. Through this, an effort changing the image of Sunderbans tourism will be materialised.

The motto of the sustainable development of a particular region is genuine welfare of the local people. The end result of a sustainable tourism of The Sunderbans should benefit the local inhabitants otherwise objectivity cannot be fulfilled. Therefore, local people also bear the responsibility towards the tourist spots, infrastructure, visitors and government because the very nature of the tourism industry necessitates interaction between visitors and host communities. Therefore, awareness programme should be taken up to educate the local people of the possible consequences of tourism. Apart from making them aware of the economic benefits expected from increased level of tourism, they should also be prepared for the social impacts due to the differences in culture, social customs, habits, preferences etc, between themselves and potential visitors. Moreover, locals who are engaged in operation of visitor management system should be properly trained and educated in order to provide best services. Therefore, orientation on both sides will change the tourism atmosphere into a positive sphere of sustainable development in the region.
F. Promotional Strategies for Sustainable Tourism

How to Promote Tourism in The Sunderbans?
Any national tourism plan normally has two focuses; marketing and development. Objectives of marketing plans are to increase the number of foreign visitors, extend their length of stay and their spending, and extend the tourist season and regional development through tourism promotions. While formulating an effective tourism plan for The Sunderbans, these objectives are to be considered. It is earlier stated (in Chapter 3) that despite being a world heritage site, Sunderbans fails to attract the attention of international tourist communities. Foreign tourist arrival rate is negligible. Therefore, it is important to frame strategies in order to promote Sunderbans internationally. For this, the first step should be formation of a core group responsible for promotion of Sunderbans amongst the world tourist scenario. This group may consist of experts from marketing fields, hoteliers, transport operators, media personnel, management specialists, NGOs and government officials. This core group may appoint number of international advertising agencies and professional lobbies to attract the attention of international tourists towards The Sunderbans. It may set business tie-ups with international tour agencies and travel operators like Cox and Kings, Thomas Cook etc. For promoting tourism of The Sunderbans amongst national and regional tourists, the core group may resort to various marketing communication tools like informative and persuasive advertising\(^7\), creating own attractive websites, direct campaigning in national and regional events etc.

G. Distribution Strategies
Distribution is an important mechanism in the tourism system. Like manufacturing industry, tourism products cannot be physically packaged and delivered to the customer. The concept has to be sold through specialized service provider for which efficient distribution system is necessary. An effective tourism distribution system provides necessary information to the right people at the right time and in the right place to facilitate a purchase decision and creates opportunity towards the tourist to purchase tourism products and pay for them. On the other way, promotional strategies cannot be successful if distribution strategies do not support it effectively. Therefore, it is very important to fix up distribution channels, select distribution agencies and developing a feedback mechanism to judge the effectiveness of the distribution
system. For The Sunderbans, exclusive distribution should be taken up through media, websites, travel agents / operators, government and non-government event managers, international and national trade and travel fairs, world forums, Indian embassies in the foreign countries etc. A strong intermediary chain amongst these agencies should be developed to promote marketing of Sunderbans as a unique and attractive tourist destination area. For this a chain of command should be operative to control and to monitor distribution functions and proper incentives to be given to tourist distribution agencies of Sunderbans.

At present, these services related to the distribution of Sunderbans tourism like providing information, booking accommodation and arranging transport are highly localized to Kolkata. These systems have to be extended to other metropolitan cities, states and countries. Another channel of distribution should be established at different gateway points of Sunderbans where prospective tourists should be received in organised reception centers and after providing them necessary information and helping them to choose selected tours according to their specific interests, (i.e. adventure tourism, rural tourism, sports tourism, ecotourism, leisure tourism etc.) To be sent to the respective destination points. This mechanism will help to disperse tourists during peak seasons to different tourist spots, keep control on tourist movement, prevent rush on one particular spot and to distribute tourism products equitably. Overall management through this mechanism will be sustainable and effective.

**H. Development of Tourism Products**

One of the important strategic marketing policies to promote sustainable tourism in The Sunderbans may be development of tourism products. Tourism products like accommodation, tourism services, infrastructure etc. may be upgraded to international standards and sustainable by establishing codes of practice, industry guidelines and standards, ecolabelling and by introducing environmental management systems. These measures will create a standard of efficiency within the tourism sector of the region and will be awarded by external recognition for the sustainability practices and accomplishments. If the quality of tourism products is ensured, it will be relatively easy to invite international and conscious tourists towards the region.
I. Destination Planning and Development of Specialized Products for Specific Tourist Groups.

According to Toffer [Toffer, 1990, Pg. 167 in Tourism management, Pg. 63] human beings are becoming a more diverse society. ‘The old smokestack economy serviced a mass society. The new economy serves a demassified society. Everything from life styles and products to technologies and the media is growing more heterogeneous. This view is equally true for present day customers for travel and most forms of tourism products, which are becoming more diversified, sophisticated and more environmentally aware. From a marketing standpoint, the success of launching tourism products lies in more systematic segmentation and upgrading of products in order to meet the tourists’ diversified and changing needs. The increasing segmentation of tour operators’ brochures is a sure sign that this is happening already, and it looks certain to increase. Therefore, while framing strategies for sustainable tourism development in The Sunderbans, it is important to break the barrier of conventional tourism arena and to enter into relatively new spheres of tourism. These spheres would not only create new dimensions of tourist attractions but also would help to reduce tourist concentration on one destination and product, which often makes the tourism unsustainable. The present day wild life tourism of The Sunderbans should be effectively distributed to other types of tourism like rural tourism, recreational tourism, special interest tourism, eco-tourism etc. Destination and product planning should be done accordingly. For this the entire region of Sunderbans should be segregated into different tourism zones concentrating on the specific nature of the place. For example, archeological sites of The Sunderbans may be earmarked for developing historical tourism. One thing should be kept in mind that no violation should be made of any existing act (like Biodiversity act, Costal regulation zone act or Forest act etc.) in order to develop or expand tourist activities. Specific recommendations are given for the proposed diversification of tourism activities are as follows: -

6.2.7.1 Improving the Existing Wildlife Tourism

Current scenario of The Sunderbans tourism is mostly confined to jungle Safari in motor launches through specific routes (detailed description given in Chapter 3) Repeater tourists see the same things time and again with minimum variations of
tourist attractions. There is very little scope to move out of the launches and for hard-core ecotourists or for adventure tourists it is impossible to make a trip inside the jungle. Most of the tourists feel boredom after the preliminary excitement of jungle watch is over. Moreover, as most of the motor launches have low quality silencers, the noise of the boat causes inconveniences in the minds of the tourists and disturbs their mental patience. In order to come out of this situation and to develop existing scenario of wildlife tourism in Sunderbans, the proposals are:

a) Introduce environmentally low impact boats with good silencers. Regular check should be made before allowing the boat to enter Sajnekhali sanctuary.

b) Separate creek tours may be conducted for adventure tourists by providing special type of glass made bubble boats and proper security. This should be made under the direct supervision of the forest department so that smooth control and monitoring is possible.

c) Watch towers at different places within the jungle are not accessible to general tourist at night. These watchtowers may be made available to hardcore ecotourists for wildlife photography, wild call recording, observing animal feeding at moonlit nights etc. Sophisticated night vision goggles, infrared telescope should be provided. The tourist group may be selected through proper interviews and depending on the carrying capacity of the watchtowers. A special price should be charged. It should be ensured that these tourists should not disturb the calmness of the jungle by any means.

d) As Indian part of Sunderbans is adjacent to Bay of Bengal, adventure tourism activities like canoeing, rafting, scuba diving, shooting, short sea voyage expedition etc. may be conducted for specific tourists.

These efforts will surely improve the existing tourism quality of the region.

Development of ecotourism: Detailed discussion is made in chapter 5.1. Moreover, the present ecotourism spots may be improved by introducing audio - visual systems in the mangrove interpretation centers. More general information about mangroves, ecosystem, disaster management, and joint forest management system applied in the region etc. to be provided to the tourists so that they have a better impression of the place.
6.2.7.2 Introduction of Health tourism, Religious tourism, Cultural tourism and Historical tourism.
Specific recommendations regarding destination planning and product development have been made in Chapter 4. These various tourism avenues will surely add colourful feathers to the cap of The Sunderbans.

6.2.7.3 Restructuring Rural tourism
Number of non-government organizations and private entrepreneurs has started promoting rural tourism in The Sunderbans (for example Help Tourism). These organizations keep the tourists in villages adjacent to Sajnekhali. Tourists see the village life and interact with the villagers and enjoy village food. The concept needs to be spread out in other parts of The Sunderbans. The tourists should be given the opportunity to have a close look at the local fisherman’s activities and lifestyles, the honey collectors or the wood cutters experiences should be shared with the tourists. The tourists may be educated with the social custom, traditions and cultures of the rural people of Sunderbans. This will create a link between the locals and the people of the outer worlds. Even local people may host the tourists either community wise or single. This would create regular revenue earnings to the locals. It is obvious that for this, there is every possibility of social unrest in the locality, the inhabitants may lose their identity and cultural traditions and may be infected by outside vices. But the way the urban civilization is approaching towards the remote areas throughout the world, it is very difficult to be segregated from the rest of the world. Moreover, expansion of rural tourism in Sunderbans may help to educate the poor local inhabitants to fight poverty through the knowledge and revenues earned by them from the tourists, funds may be generated out of tourism in order to establish cultural centers, museums etc. to maintain and uplift local cultures and originalities. The forest development committees and the local gram panchayat make take active role collaboration with the NGOs and Government in order to restructure rural tourism effectively in Sunderbans.

6.2.7.4 Creating Adequate Facilities for Leisure and Recreational Tourism
It has been found that out of the total tourist visit in The Sunderbans are mostly local tourists. People from Kolkata, adjacent districts and people from South and North 24
Parganas often visit Sunderbans during season for a day tour or stay for a night. During the weekend and the holidays throughout the year, people from Kolkata visit Bakkhali, Sagar Island, Sajenkhali, Diamondharbour and other places in and around Sunderbans. It proves that people have accepted certain places of Sunderbans for spending weekends and leisure. Therefore, it is suggested to develop some more plots in the rural base of The Sunderbans (outside the Sanctuary, buffer and core area) as recreational and leisure tourist spots. The priorities to be given to those spots where communication is good, electricity and other facilities like fishing, swimming, boating, children parks, auditoriums, play grounds etc are available. Already Henry's island has been developed as a leisure tourist spot which is situated near Bakkhali (details given in Chapter 4.2) some other selected islands like G plot, L plot, Jammu islands, etc. may be chosen for developing this type of tourism. It will create low impact on the environment and mangrove ecosystem of Sunderbans as these spots are well be situated in the outskirts of Sunderbans. Most important is it will reduce the pressure from The Sunderbans sanctuary and inner tourist spots. Because, local tourists who have visited Sunderbans one should find new picnic and recreation spots which they would have tried before inside the sanctuary. This effort will create a balance between local tourists and outsiders and help the tourism scenario to grow in a sustainable manner.

6.2.7.5 Encouraging Educational Tourism and Special Interest Tourism

The existence of The Sunderbans is at stake due to global warming and environmental factors. The entire Sunderbans may be submerged into seawater within fifty years. It is the responsibility of the stakeholders of this region to take necessary actions to protect this unique, vulnerable and fragile ecosystem from extinction. For this, all-round effort to be taken. The local people should be made conscious about the fragility, threats, opportunities and uniqueness of the place. Arrangements should be made to bring the school children of The Sunderbans region and adjacent districts to this people in order to show them the ecosystem and aware them the importance of the place and the need to protect them. Workshops, Seminars, educational and awareness programme should be conducted at regular interval with the participation of local educational institutions. Students of other parts of the state or the country may be encouraged to visit here in order to have an exposure to the place. A proper and
effective education tourism policy should be framed where provisions of subsidies and funding are available for bearing the expenditure of this entire programme. This will not only create awareness amongst the young generation but will enable them to act as a workforce in future to protect this heritage land.

Large volume of researches has already done on various aspects of The Sunderban’s natural attributes. Modern researches are going on with the help of scientific tools and mechanisms; satellite images of The Sunderbans have been prepared. The findings should be shared with the local people, government and other stakeholders by inviting experts of various fields of studies who are working on Sunderbans. Special interest tourism may be conducted for renowned experts like scientists, geologists, historians, archaeologists, etc. where representative of the local groups may participate in order to gather knowledge for them. Special seminars or meet the people programme may be conducted at the end of the tour. Free interactions may enrich both the experts and local people through knowledge sharing. The domain of knowledge will spread from a confined group of researches to the common people through tourism, which benefit the mankind at large.

6.2.8 Conclusion

‘The future for ecotourism world wide is bright. The validity of developing countries as quality tourist destinations may largely depend upon the extent to which these destinations are able to implement sustainable development practices and attract a share of the international ecotourism market. If all of the players understand and accept their responsibilities and are environmentally motivated, policies should eventually emerge that reflect the needs and interests of all concerned’ [Niraj Tiwari and A.P. Tiwari - Ecotourism Pp.35 in Tourism Management, The Socio-economic and ecological perspective]

In this perspective, it can be stated that the ecotourism of The Sunderbans will be successful phenomenon if the policymakers effectively follow sustainable development strategies and practices. In terms of whatever suggestions given in this chapter for ecotourism development of the region may be implemented by:

- Establishing Sunderbans Tourism Development Board where policy formulations, funding of tourism projects, implementation and monitoring would take place in a scientific and systematic manner by public-private-partnership model.

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• Conducting environmental audit at regular intervals for better management of tourism and environmental activities of the region.

• On a futuristic note, cross border tourism plan with Bangladesh part of Sunderbans may be framed so that the tourist world may have the access of entire Sunderbans through an integrated tourism circuits and unified management system. The cooperation between the two countries will open new avenues of tourism collaboration in Sunderbans, which will be a unique instance of friendship to the mankind.

End Notes and References

1 Concept of anthropocentrism and ecocentrism
According to Merrian –Webster’s online dictionary, anthropocentrism considers human beings as the most significant entity of the universe and according to the concept it interprets the world in terms of human values and experiences. The theory of anthropocentrism says that the world exists for humanity. Believers in this philosophy would say that humans can rightfully try to benefit as much as possible from the environment.

Ecocentrism is a term used in ecological political philosophy to denote a nature-centred, as opposed to human-centred, system of values. The justification for ecocentrism usually consists in an ontological belief and subsequent ethical claim. The ontological belief denies that there are any existential divisions between human and non-human nature sufficient to claim that humans are either (a) the sole bearers of intrinsic value or (b) possess greater intrinsic value than non-human nature. Thus the subsequent ethical claim is for an equality of intrinsic value across human and non-human nature, or ‘biospherical egalitarianism’. Ecocentrism takes the view that humans are both part of, and a partner with, nature - and environmental concerns should take precedence over the needs and rights of human beings considered in isolation.

2 Policy implementation framework
Liu (1994) has developed a 14-point public sector guide for implementation of ecotourism. These points should be considered for the purpose of implementing appropriate ecotourism policy.
Development Objectives

Establish ecological, economic socio-cultural objectives in consultation with local communities designate specific areas for ecotourism development.

Inventories

Survey and analyse the region's ecology, history, culture, economy, resources, land use, and tenure; inventory and evaluate existing and potential tourism attractions, activities, accommodation, facilities, and transport; construct or consolidate development policies and plans, especially tourism master plans.

Infrastructure and facilities

Provide appropriate infrastructure and facilities, avoiding a reliance on foreign capital; establish means to assist the private sector in developing ecotourism enterprises in line with ecological and cultural standards.

Market

Analyze present and future domestic and international ecotourism markets and establish marketing goals; know and understand the market in achieving those goals; assist the private sector in its development of marketing strategies.

Carrying capacity

Strive to understand the social and ecological limits of use of an area through appropriate management and research; establish social and ecological indicators of use and impact; implement and appropriate pre-formed planning and management framework.

Development

Establish a development policy giving consideration to balance ecological, economic, and social factors; form a development plan; assist developers to plan and build ecologically.

Economics

Consider ways to enhance economic benefits; conduct current and future economic analyses; ensure that profits are made, the local benefit, and public revenues are self-sustaining.

Environment

Consistently evaluate the impact of ecotourism on the resource base; link ecotourism with other conservation measures such as parks.

Culture

Evaluate the social-cultural impact of ecotourism, prevent negative impacts, and reinforce positive outcomes; empower local people to become decision makers; conduct a social audit of social impacts.

Standards

Apply development and design standards to facilities and accommodation; facilitate adherence to standards by providing financial and tax incentives.

Human resources

Promote job creation and entrepreneurship; establish community awareness programmes; provide adequate education and training (such as for becoming guides) to local people.
Organizations

Establish a working relationship between public, private and not-for-profit organizations.

Regulations and monitoring

Establish legislation or regulation to promote ecotourism development through support for tourism organizations, tour operators, and accommodation.

Data system and implementation

Establish an integrated ecotourism data system for continuous operation that provides research and marketing information; identify ecotourism implementation techniques; and collaborate with private industry and educational institutions in implementation.

Source: Sagar Singh (2004) pg 87-89

3 A Guideline for Sustainable Tourism

1. Identify and minimize product and operational environmental problems, paying particular attention to new projects.
2. Pay due regard to environmental concerns in design, planning construction and implementation.
3. Be sensitive to the conservation of environmentally protected or threatened areas, species or scenic aesthetics, achieving landscape enhancement where possible.
4. Practice energy conservation, reduce and recycle waste, practice fresh water management and control sewage disposal.
5. Control and diminish air emissions and pollutants.
6. Monitor, control and reduce noise levels.
7. Control, reduce and eliminate environmentally unfriendly products, such as asbestos, CFCs, pesticides and toxic, corrosive, infectious, explosive or flammable material.
8. Respect and support historic or religious objects and sites.
9. Exercise due regard for the interests of local populations, including their history, traditions and culture, and future development.
10. Consider environmental issues as a key factor in the overall development of travel and tourism destination.

Source: Niraj Tiwari and A P Tiwari, Ecotourism in Tourism Management (2004), pg 53
The concept of demarketing was introduced in the early 1970s by Kotler and Levy (1971), who defined it as that aspect of marketing that deals with discouraging customers in general or a certain class of customers in particular on a temporary or permanent basis. Demarketing can be regarded as the opposite of target marketing. Indirect demarketing strategies include reductions in overall promotion, price increases and the elimination of products that attract the undesirable market.

A simplified model of sustainable tourism  Fig 6.3

Source: Shades of Green: Ecotourism for Sustainability, Sagar Singh, Pg. 74
This chart establishes that tourist carrying capacity is an ingredient of the sustainable tourism mechanism.

Market segmentation The technique of market segmentation has been defined as "the process of dividing a potential market into distinct subsets of consumers and selecting one or more segments as a target to be reached with a distinct marketing mix." [Wilkie, 1987, in Tourism Marketing by Eric Laws, PG 83]. It has been suggested that market segmentation must have three characteristics—it must be measurable, easy to reach through advertising and distribution systems and it should offer a sustainable flow of business for long enough to repay the costs of developing it. [Woodside and Sherrell, 1977, in Eric Laws, pg 83]
Advertising

‘Advertising is one of the major tools of marketing communication and is always a central feature in the marketing mix for any organization’ - Eric Laws [Tourism marketing, Pg – 65] It helps to create awareness of a company and its products, arousing interest and desire for their amongst a selected group of people - Its major purpose is to stimulate the action of purchasing. Advertisement has been classified between informative and persuasive advertising. According to Eric Laws, informative advertising supplies consumer with detailed information about alternative choices so that they can choose the price range, quality and type of experience from those on offer which most appeals to them. As it improves consumer knowledge of a particular category of services, informative advertising contributes to the effective operation of competitive markets by enhancing competition and improving the allocation of resources throughout society.

On the other hand, persuasive advertising tries to influence consumer’s tastes towards some preference of the advertiser. It acts by developing an image of a product or producer rather than by building substantive knowledge as a base for decisions at the customer level and allegedly it may be considered wasteful or inaccurate. In reality, most advertising is a mix of these two traditional types. Advertisement as a tool of marketing communication process is shown by the AIDA model. [Awareness, interest, desire and Action]
Fig 6.4
Marketing communications for tourism

Source: Eric Laws, Tourism Marketing, pg 66

8 Codes of practice:
A code is a set of expectations, behaviours or rules written by industry members, government or non-government organizations. [Holder, 2000 in Wildlife Tourism, PG 162] Codes of practice for tourism industry normally influence the behaviour of tourists or the industry itself. They may be developed for operators or visitors. These codes help to establish and maintain professionalism within the industry. There are number of examples of codes found in practice. Guidelines for tour operators and tourists have been in place for a number of years for wildlife tourism in the Antarctic. [Wildlife Tourism: Pg 163] Pacific Asia Tourism Association’s code for environmentally responsible tourism (PATA, 1991) encourages member and their
industry partners to use resources sustainably, conserve wildlife habitat, recognize community aspirations and values in planning, comply with environmental law and policy, address the environmental impacts of tourism, regularly audit their practices and provide education and information [ibid pg. 162]

9 Ecolabelling

Ecolabelling is defined as ‘Methods to standardize the promotion of environmental claims by following compliance to set criteria, generally based on third party impartial verification.’ [Font 2001 in Sustainable Tourism, PG 115] It falls into two main categories - environmental quality labels for tourism destination and environmental performances labels for tourism providers. [Buckley, 2001 in Wildlife Tourism, PG 162] Ecolabelling is a type of marketing tool, which in principle helps to improve codes of conduct by providing concise and accurate information indicating that the management and operation of the ecolabelled products is compatible with the principles of environmentally sustainable tourism. The eco labeled concern is seeking formal recognition of their good environmental performance. It fetches a competitive advantage over other similar concerns that have not achieved ecolabel status. In course of awarding a concern as ecolabelled, both certificate and accreditation is the processes. Ecotourism Australia's Ecocertification programme is famous for recognizing industries, companies, and tour operators as ecolabelled. By 2003, over 400 ecotourism products had been assessed as part of their ecolabelling process [wildlife tourism, pg 165]

10 Environmental management systems

Environmental management systems (EMS) appeared in the 1990s in the mining and manufacturing sectors to assist in implementing environmental policy. They are described as the organizational structure, responsibilities, practices, procedures, processes and resources for determining and implementing environmental policy. Today the most widely recognised environmental management system is the International standard ISO 14001.

To date EMS has not been widely used by the tourism industry; however practitioner believes they could be. Green Globe 21 requires an EMS as part of certification of a tourism company’s operations. EMS is also beginning to be considered as part of managing protected areas, for example for forest recreation in the United Kingdom. Most recently, the NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service (Australia) has developed, with its industry and non-profit partners, and EMS for the perished Range Alpine Resorts. [Extract from Wildlife tourism, Pg – 165 – 166]