CHAPTER - IV

INDIA TOURISM: TRENDS, IMPACTS AND PERSPECTIVE PLANNING
TOURISM TRENDS

There has been considerable growth in international tourist traffic over successive decades since then though the rate of growth has been in a reducing scale. The details are as given below:

WORLD TOURIST ARRIVALS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Tourist Arrivals (Million)</th>
<th>Annual Growth %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1950</td>
<td>25.28</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1960</td>
<td>69.32</td>
<td>10.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1970</td>
<td>165.79</td>
<td>9.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1980</td>
<td>287.77</td>
<td>5.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990</td>
<td>456.59</td>
<td>2.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1997</td>
<td>612.00</td>
<td>4.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In the case of India, the international tourist traffic to the country during 1951 was just 16,829. Over a period of 46 years since then, the arrivals became 2.37 million in 1997 registering an annual rate of growth of about 11.4%. The year 1998, however, registered a marginal decline of 0.7% and the arrivals remained at 2.36 million. While the decade from 1951 to 1960 recorded the highest rate of growth of 24.7% per year, the next decade up to 1970 registered moderate growth of 8.6%. The decade from 1970 to 1980 recorded again a higher growth of about 11% per annum and the total arrivals crossed the half million mark in 1976. It thus took 25 years for the international tourist arrivals to reach half a million. The

decade during 1980s registered wide fluctuations in the growth rate ranging from -5.5% to 29.1%. The total arrivals, however, doubled to cross the 1 million mark in 1986. The average growth during the decade was 4.8% per annum. Both the years 1990 and 1991 registered a decline of 1.7% continuously and it was followed by an increase of 11.3% in 1992. However, the tourist arrivals again declined in 1993 by about 5.5% due to various internal problems during that year. The excitement of crossing the 2 million mark in tourist arrivals was achieved on 19th December 1995 and the tourist arrivals went on increasing till 1997 to reach 2.37 million.1

Based on the analysis of tourist arrivals from all the major countries and regions since 1972 using exponential models, the international tourist arrivals by 2001 is projected to be 3.08 million. The forecasts made by the World Tourism Organisation (WTO) also tally with the above projection.

The main stay of Indian tourism is domestic tourism. It is in fact one of the most vibrant expressions of Indian heritage and its dimensions are astronomical. According to the figures available about 156 million domestic tourists were registered in the accommodation units during 1997. The year-wise figures of domestic tourist visits since 1991 are as given below :-


144
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>No. of Domestic Tourists</th>
<th>Percentage Change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1991</td>
<td>85864892</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1992</td>
<td>102465705</td>
<td>19.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1993</td>
<td>109237566</td>
<td>6.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1994</td>
<td>127116655</td>
<td>16.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1995</td>
<td>136643600</td>
<td>7.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1996</td>
<td>140119672</td>
<td>2.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1997</td>
<td>156222311</td>
<td>11.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The economic and social conditions prevailing in India today are precipitous for a revolutionary growth of domestic tourist visits and are expected to register an average rate of growth of 9.5 percent during Ninth Plan to reach the level of about 189 million by 2001.

**IMPACTS**

Tourism as an industry has enormous economic consequences. It has emerged as an important instrument for economic development and employment generation, particularly in remote and backward areas. It is the world’s largest export industry today. The estimated international tourism receipts during 1997 was about US$ 443 billion.\(^1\) It was equivalent to about 8 percent of the world exports of goods and 35 percent of total world exports of services.

In the case of India, tourism is presently the third largest export

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industry after readymade garments and gem and jewellery. The estimated foreign exchange earnings from tourism during the last ten years are as given below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Rs. Crores</th>
<th>US $ Million</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1988-89</td>
<td>2054</td>
<td>1418</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1989-90</td>
<td>2386</td>
<td>1433</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990-91</td>
<td>2612</td>
<td>1456</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1991-92</td>
<td>4892</td>
<td>1977</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1992-93</td>
<td>6060</td>
<td>2098</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1993-94</td>
<td>6970</td>
<td>2222</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1994-95</td>
<td>7424</td>
<td>2365</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1995-96</td>
<td>9150</td>
<td>2714</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1996-97</td>
<td>10418</td>
<td>3064</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1997-98</td>
<td>11264</td>
<td>3173</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The most significant feature of tourism industry is its capacity to generate large scale employment opportunities. The direct employment in the tourism sector during 1996-97 is estimated to be 9.1 million persons and it accounted for about 2.4 percent of the total labour force. A desirable feature of tourism in India is that it employs a large number of women, both educated and uneducated.

The gross value of receipts of tourism industry during 1983-84 was Rs. 6725.8 crores with a contribution of Rs. 1225 crores by the foreign tourists. By 1989-90, the estimated value of receipts went up to Rs. 14353.4
are 2.412 and 2.358 respectively. The tax revenue accruing to the Government also gets almost doubled. The increased income and employment induce further demand on various sectors of the economy and the total impact including the induced demand is very high in the case of tourism. The output multiplier becomes 7.116 and relative income and employment multipliers become 9.570 and 10.613 respectively. Tourism earnings thus, have a larger impact on the economy both in terms of additional income and employment.

An important aspect of tourism industry which is of particular significance to India is its contribution to national integration and the environment of social and cultural lives of people. Over 156 million domestic tourists visiting different parts of the country return with a better understanding of the people living in the different regions of the country and the cultural diversity of India. Tourism also encourages preservation of monuments and heritage properties and helps the survival of art forms, crafts and culture. It is also important target impact on the economy both in terms of additional income and employment.

An important aspect of tourism industry which is of particular so note that tourism has become an instrument for sustainable human development including poverty alleviation, environmental regeneration, job creation and advancement of women and other disadvantaged groups.
TOURISM POLICY AND PLANNING

Tourism planning in India is highly decentralised and involves a multiplicity of agencies. Since most of the delivery systems are with the State Governments, the development planning for tourism is primarily with the State/Union Territory Governments. Further tourism is a composite industry and different Departments/agencies are responsible for different segments of the industry. Thus, several agencies are involved in tourism development and planning.

At the national level, Ministry of Tourism is the nodal agency for the formulation of national policies and programmes and for the coordination of activities of various Central Government agencies, State Governments and the private sector for the development of tourism in the country. Presently, the Ministry is headed by a Cabinet Minister and is assisted by a Minister of State. The Secretary (Tourism) provides executive directions for the implementation of various policies and programmes. There is an attached office of the Directorate General which has a field formation of 18 offices abroad and 21 offices within the country. The Ministry has a Public Sector Undertaking and a few autonomous institutions under its administrative control. These are :

- The India Tourism Development Corporation (ITDC)
- Indian Institute of Tourism and Travel Management (IITTM)
- National Council for Hotel Management and Catering Technology (NCHMCT)
Indian Institute of Skiing and Mountaineering (IISM)
National Institute of Water Sports (NIWS)
The Ministry is primarily responsible for:
Policy formulation and planning,
Co-ordination and regulation,
Infrastructure and product development
Human Resource Development
Publicity, marketing and facilitation
Research, analysis, monitoring and evaluation
International Co-operation and external assistance
Public sector undertakings and autonomous bodies
Legislation and parliament work
Establishment, welfare and vigilance.

The India Tourism Development Corporation (ITDC) was established in 1966 as a follow-up of the recommendations of Jha Committee set up in 1962. Its functions are:

- Construct, manage and market, hotels, restaurants, travellers lodges, etc. in places of tourist interest,
- Provide tourist transport facilities,
- Produce and distribute tourist publicity literature,
- Create and operate tourist entertainment facilities like shows, music concert, etc.
- Provide shopping facilities to tourists and
- Provide consultancy and management services to State Governments and private sector.
ITDC has been, thus, playing a crucial role in the development of tourism infrastructure in the country since its establishments. Though, there is a prominent view expressed by the proponents of privatisation that the Govt. should not get into the business of hoteliering, the ITDC has to play a major role in the creation of tourism infrastructural facilities in the remote areas of the country in the coming years. Since the Government has the responsibility of ensuring the overall welfare of the society, it can not ignore any possible instrument for achieving the same. Though, the institution of ITDC has to exist for the development of tourism in the country, it is equally important to improve its service efficiency and find resources for its future expansion. The new economic policy of the Govt. also encourages privatisation of the public sector undertakings and improvement of their financial performances. Private Sector Undertakings including ITDC are, therefore, not being given any budgetary provisions and they have to resort to institutional borrowing in addition to the generation of internal resources. Since, ITDC has to act as a nodal agency for providing a concerted thrust to the task of tourism development, there is a suggestion that it can be structured as a National Tourism Development Corporation as recommended by the National Committee on Tourism. To have the advantages of a co-ordinated strategy, the National Tourism Development Corporation (NTDC) would have a 50 percent joint venture interest in all State Tourism Development Corporations. Thus, the catalytic role of NTDC would be paramount. It is however, a fact that the joint venture between ITDC and the Govts. of Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Orissa,

Assam and Arunachal Pradesh have not performed very well, though the felt need for the hotels in these areas is very much there.

The recognition of tourism an instrument for economic growth came late in India. As a result, the sector was not accorded the required priority in the development plans of the country till Sixth Plan. In fact tourism did not find a place in the Constitution of India and no allocation was made for its development during first Five Year Plan. Tourism became a constituent of development planning only during second Five Year Plan with a small allocation of about Rs. 3.36 crores both in the Central and State Sector taken together.

The first ever National Tourism Policy was formulated in 1982 and it spelt out the endeavour of the Government as “conversion of the vast tourism potential of India into a reality through well planned, well defined and fully integrated national programmes”. The objective of tourism development was also specified as to preserve, retain and enrich our world view and life style, our cultural expressions and heritage in all its manifestations. The policy envisaged a selective approach based on a travel circuit concept in the development of tourism.

A list of 61 travel circuits consisting of 441 centres was, thus, drawn up by the Central Government in consultation with State/Union Territory Governments. At the first instance, the number of circuits and centres selected were too large to achieve any significant results with the
resources available. As a result, there was very little impact on the development of tourism infrastructure in any specific destination as resources were spread very thinly over a large area. As a corrective measure, a concept of development ‘Special Tourism Areas’ was proposed to be taken up during Eighth Plan period (1992-97). The development was to take place according to specific master plans and would be coordinated by “Special Tourism Area Development Authorities” set up for the purpose. The strategy was to provide the required basic infrastructure and support facilities like airports, railway lines, roads, water supply, electricity, sewerage, communication facilities, etc. by the Government and encourage the private sector including foreign investors to invest heavily on tourism infrastructure.

Tourism consists of several goods and services consumed by the tourists at their places of visit. These are provided by a multitude of establishments and agencies functioning of various levels. International tourists also have to come in contact with various Government agencies like embassies/missions, immigration authorities, etc. to obtain visa and to complete entry and exist formalities. The development of tourism, therefore, implies the coordinated efforts of a number of agencies and institutions whose organisational objectives are generally not the same. In realisation of this fact, the tourism policy stipulated that the development of tourism must be a common endeavour of all the agencies vitally concerned with its development at Central and State levels, public sector undertakings and the private sector.

1. Dr. G. Raveendran; Tourism Planning and Measurement Methods, 1993.
The Union Ministry of Tourism basically provides the required co-ordination, direction and some amount of financial assistance to the State/UT Governments for tourism developments. The Plan activities of the Ministry include the following :-

Infrastructure Development
Product Development
Human Resource Development
Promotion and Marketing
Market Research and Computerisation
Monitoring and Evaluation and
Strengthening of Organisation

TOURISM INFRASTRUCTURE

Besides meeting infrastructural linkages, the major components of tourism just right Infrastructure Development Product Development Human Resource Development Promotion and Marketing Market Research and Computerisation Monitoring and Evaluation and Stren infrastructure include accommodation, restaurants, shopping complexes, entertainment facilities, conference and convention facilities, tourist reception and information centres. Accommodation is one of the critical segments of tourism infrastructure requiring substantial investment. The development of accommodation infrastructure in the country has always lagged behind the targets creating severe constraints in the expansion of tourist traffic in almost all the major cities. It is particularly so in the tourist season from October to March.
It is the primary responsibility of the Government to provide low priced accommodation facilities to domestic tourists in the centres of pilgrimage and other tourist attractions. They also need wayside amenities and clean toilets while travelling long distances by road. It is, therefore necessary to create facilities like tourist complexes, tourist lodges, motels, youth hostels, yatrikas, yatri niwases, etc. at the places of tourist interest. Similarly, wayside amenities, toilets, etc. have to be provided along the road in combination with fuel stations, telephone booths, etc. in the major tourist routes.

PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT

Though India is mainly conceived as a cultural tourist destination, it has diverse tourist attractions which need to be developed. A conscious policy, has, therefore, been adopted for the diversification and improvement of tourism product of India including cultural tourist attractions. The scheme includes the promotion of fairs and festivals, rural craft melas, refurbishment of monuments/landscaping and environmental planning, floodlighting/sound and Light shows, development of pilgrim centres, development of adventure sports facilities, special tourism areas and development of specific circuits through external aid.

The development of these diverse forms of tourism requires not only the creation of infrastructure but also the maintenance of the specific attractions and improvement of their environment and tourist appeal. The mountains, forests, wildlife and landscapes offer enormous potential for
the development of eco-tourism. However, the exploitation of these natural resources for tourism purposes should not be allowed without adequate controls and monitoring mechanisms to maintain the ecology and environment of the areas. Since, there is a great concentration of tourists in some of the established parks like Corbett and Kanha, new areas need to be explored so that tourists can be evenly distributed over time and space. Facilities in National Parks should be created on a selective basis where value for money is provided. In bigger parks a number of small complexes could be set up in different pockets to ensure better dispersal of tourists.

India has enormous potential for the development of adventure tourism based on mountain, snow, river and other water based sports. Some of the important adventure sports activities which can be easily promoted are trekking, mountaineering, rock climbing, winter sports, river rafting, water sports, etc. However, the development of this segment of tourism requires an integrated approach. As a first step, nodal points need to be established for various activities. Delhi and Bombay could perhaps become the nodal points. The areas identified for adventure tourism should also have a specific entry point with in-built services. Himalayas, one of the biggest assets of nature, can indeed help the country to conveniently promote adventure, trekking, mountaineering and other leisure related tourism activities. However, there is need to contain ecological damage to the Himalayas due to absence of proper sanitation facilities and garbage disposal system etc.
Travel for the purposes of pilgrimage and learning has been an integral part of Indian society since ancient times. As a result, several centres of pilgrimage and spiritual enlightenment came up in all parts of the country. These centres are being visited by over 150 million domestic tourists every year. Some of them have also become popular with international tourists. A Committee on Pilgrim Tourism identified 19 pilgrim centres in 12 States and 2 circuits in the State of Uttar Pradesh for development including construction of low priced accommodation units like yatrikas, pilgrim sheds, etc.

In line with the policy of selective approach for tourism development and to achieve intensive development of selected centres 5 areas were identified for development as Special Tourism Areas or Mega Tourism Areas. The concept of Mega resorts involves the development and marketing of large areas of land in different locations as integrally planned tourist destinations. The land so developed will be offered on lease to foreign and domestic investors for setting up resorts or other tourist facilities. The project development will be based on a Master Plan that designates specific uses for the land, keeping in mind the delicate balance required for conservation of the ecology, beauty and natural resources. The Master Plan will guide the development of hotels, marinas, shopping centres including art and craft emporia, amusement parks, residential zones and all the necessary services and support facilities. As a result, each project will be able to employ more than 50,000 people in various activities.
The specific locations for Mega resorts are selected on the basis of the intrinsic attractions of the area, its established image, extent of habitat, proximity to airports, basic infrastructure and other factors capable of guaranteeing its continued development. The place tentatively identifies for the mega projects are Bekal in Kerala, Diu, Puri-Konark in Orissa, Mamallapuram-Muttukadu in Tamil Nadu and Sindhu Durg in Maharashtra. Each project will be financed by the Central Government and financial institutions. The Area Development authority constituted specifically for the project will raise the balance amount from financial institutions like Tourism Finance Corporation, IDBI, etc. The project authority will have representatives of the investors, Central Government and the State Government concerned in its governing body, and it will be autonomous. It will be responsibility of the State Governments to ensure land acquisition, provision of basic amenities and extend all the incentives to the investors. India has a very strict Coastal Regulation Zone Regulation which ensures that resort can not come up within 500 meters of the high tide line.

**HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT**

Human Resource Development to meet the needs of tourism industries is a major responsibility of the Central Government. It is achieved by creating the necessary institutional infrastructure for training in the country. The existing facilities include the following:

20 Hotel Management and Catering Technology Institutes and 13 Food Craft Institutes under the National Council for Hotel Management and Catering Technology.
promotion is critical for increased tourist arrivals. Also as India is striving to attract a better class of foreign tourists, expenditure on overseas promotion is naturally bound to increase in a larger proportion. However, at the same time a proper ‘management information system’ is proposed to be implemented so that there is increased monitoring of the activities of the overseas offices.

The print, film and publicity material production programme of the Ministry of Tourism has had a tremendous promotional impact over the past few years. For the Ninth Five Year Plan period, while the basic contours of the production programme will remain, there will be some reorientation.

India has derived substantial benefits through the programme of inviting media persons and it is proposed to be continued during the Ninth Plan period. The overseas offices of the Ministry of Tourism identify the opinion moulders and decision makers and send proposals to the Headquarters. It is also proposed to increasingly take the help of the State Governments, hotel chains and tour operators in the management of this programme. Also the emergence of many new private airlines in the domestic sector and the fact that there are now a large number of other international airlines flying to India implies that the Ministry could use some of these airlines as well in the future for flying in its guests.

Linked with the Hospitality programme is the issue of public relations as the underlying aim of the programme is to give a better image
structure and the performance expected from it. Specifically there is no marketing division with qualified marketing experts at the headquarters of Tourism Ministry to lay down marketing objectives and formulate strategies.

MARKET RESEARCH AND MONITORING

The Ministry has specific role for promotion and marketing through market research and computerisation and monitoring and evaluation. The details of the monitoring mechanism are as given below :-

- Central financial assistance to any project approved only after assessing its feasibility and desirability.
- The details of each project approved for assistance including the dates of sanction, releases already made, physical progress, etc. are stored in the computer and they are reviewed in depth with each individual state every year at the time of discussions for the prioritisation of project.
- The releases of each instalments of funds in respect of sanctioned projects are based on the actual utilisation of funds already released.
- The Regional offices of Ministry of Tourism make field inspections of the projects in their respective jurisdictions.

A major drawback in the system is that it has not been possible to make site inspections in the case of proposed projects before approval. It
has also not been possible to make any cost-benefit analysis of the project due to paucity of staff. It is, therefore, necessary to strengthen monitoring and evaluation by providing adequate staff for the same.

NEW TOURISM POLICY

In view of its economic and social significance, and the changing economic scenario of the country the Ministry of Tourism has evolved a draft National Tourism Policy. The policy gives emphasis on creation of tourism awareness, involvement of grass root level institutions in the development of tourism, larger private sector participation, diversification of tourism product, better facilitation services, human resource development, etc. The major differences between the 1982 policy and the draft policy of 1999 are the following:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S.No.</th>
<th>1982 POLICY</th>
<th>NEW POLICY</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>The policy was formulated in an environment of closed economy with strict licencing procedures. The policy therefore did not emphasise on the role of private sector and foreign investment was not anticipated.</td>
<td>It attempts to be in tune with the economic liberalisation policies and the Swadeshi approach and thus give specific focus on role of the private sector and foreign investment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>It did not give any focus on the development of backward regions like the North East.</td>
<td>The policy focuses on the development of North East, the Himalayan region, J&amp;K, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>The policy did not give any attention to creating awareness about tourism and the need for controlling harassment of tourists through public campaigns.</td>
<td>This has been incorporated in the new policy.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4. The policy assigned the responsibility for the development of domestic tourism to the State Governments and that of the international tourism to the Central Government.

Since such a division of responsibilities between the Central and State Government is not possible due to common delivery systems and tourist attractions, the proposed policy emphasis on joint responsibility with the Central Government playing the role of a co-ordinator and facilitator.

5. The policy did not differentiate specifically the roles of the Government and the private sector.

The proposed policy clearly differentiates the roles and functions of the Government and the private sector. In fact it aims at facilitating the development of a dynamic private sector in tourism.

6. The policy did not mention about the linkages and synergies to be achieved in tourism development with other Ministries.

This has been now incorporated. In fact a Group of Ministers has already been constituted for this purpose.

7. The policy did not envisage the need for people’s participation in tourism development through Panchayati Raj Institutions, local bodies, etc.

The proposed policy gives a major thrust on this area.

8. The policy did not talk about the levels of development.

The proposed policy lays emphasis and carrying capacity and sustainability.

9. The policy did not give the directions of public and private sector partnership.

The proposed policy emphasis on partnership based on mutual trust and appreciation.

10. The policy did not consider technological advances in the tourism sector.

The proposed policy gives emphasis on this aspect.

11. The policy adopted a travel c249. The policy did not give the directions of public and private sector partnership. The proposed policy emphasis on circuit approach for development.

The proposed policy stipulates a spread approach with the participation of local community.

12. The policy did not contain any specific action plan.

The new policy includes specific action plans covering all the eight important areas of tourism development.
ECOTOURISM : POLICY AND GUIDELINES

One of the most significant steps which the Government of India has taken is to set up the Himalayan Tourism Advisory Board comprising all the Himalayan States of Jammu & Kashmir, Uttar Pradesh, Himachal Pradesh, Sikkim, West Bengal and Arunachal Pradesh to meet every year to discuss important issues of Himalayan Tourism and its consequences. The Himtab has deliberated on these issues intensively and consulted a number of environmental experts, the travel and trade industry, people involved in eco-tourism and adventure tourism and the local residents of the Himalayan States in order to formulate an eco-tourism policy and guidelines. As a consequence of all these deliberations, the Ministry of Tourism announced the Eco-Tourism Policy and Guidelines in 1998.

According to the World Tourism Organisation (WTO), “tourism that involves travelling to relatively undisturbed natural areas with the specified object of studying, admiring and enjoying the scenery and its wild plants and animals, as well as any existing cultural aspects (both of the past or the present) found in these areas” is defined as ecotourism. Nature tourism (ecotourism) is distinguished from mass tourism or resort tourism by having a lower impact on the environment and by requiring less infrastructure development.

The key elements of ecotourism include a natural environment as the prime attraction, an optimum number of environment friendly visitors, activities which do not have any serious impact on the eco-system and the positive involvement of the local community in maintaining the ecological balance.

Ecotourism can take many forms and magnitudes. For example, forget oneself in a beautiful natural forest or landscape; watching of animals, birds and trees in a forest or corals and marine life in a sea; engaging in trekking, boating, or rafting; wandering in sand dunes, etc., are some of the common forms of ecotourism. Though the concept has gained importance only recently, India has been experiencing various forms of ecotourism all through the ages.

The Geographical diversity of India has given a wealth of eco-systems which are well protected and preserved. These eco-systems have become the major resources for ecotourism in India. These consist of:

Biosphere Reserves
Mangroves
Corals and Coral Reefs
Deserts
Mountains and Forests
Flora and Fauna and
Sea, Lake, River and other water bodies.

**Biosphere reserves**

Bio-sphere reserves are multi-purpose protected areas to preserve the genetic diversity and integrity of plants, animals and micro organisms in representive eco-systems. There are seven such reserves in India at present. These are:

1) Nilgiri
2) Nanda Devi
3) Nokrek
4) Great Nicobar
iii) Lakshadweep Islands and
iv) Gulf of Kutch.

Deserts

The Great and Little deserts in the North Western Region of the country are distinct eco-systems which have attracted the fascination of several tourists from all over the world.

Mountains and Forests

The great Himalayas, Western Ghats and other mountain ranges in the country along with their forests, rivers and snow have also become great attractions for eco-friendly tourists. The country has an area of about 752.3 lakh hectares notified as forests and of this about 406.1 lakh hectares are classified as Reserve forests and 215.1 lakh hectares as Protected forests.

Flora and Fauna

India is floristically very rich. There are about 45,000 species of plants including shrubs. The country has a great variety of fauna numbering a little over 65,000 known species including 1228 birds, 428 reptiles, 372 mammals, 204 amphibians and 2546 fishes.

In order to protect and preserve these genetic constituents, India has created 75 National Parks and 421 Wildlife Santuaries in different parts of the country. Some of these which have already become popular with the tourists are Kaziranga and Manas in Assam; Jim Corbett Park in Uttar Pradesh; Bharatpur, Ranthambore and Sariska in Rajasthan; Kanha and Bandhavgarh in Madhya Pradesh; Bandipur in Karnataka; Simlipal in Orissa, etc.
compatible with the environment and socio-cultural characteristics of the local community and

iv) It should be planned as a part of the overall area development strategy, guided by an integrated land use plan and associated with commensurate expansion of public services.

The biospheres, mangroves, coral reefs, deserts, mountains, etc; which form the core resources for ecotourism; are fragile eco-systems. Hence decisions for the development of tourism in such areas have to be based on a thorough understanding of local resources, social and economic factors and other characteristics.

The objectives of tourism development in any specific area as well as the intended beneficiaries, dependancy and scales also have to be decided on the basis of these factors and discussions and negotiations with those most directly concerned.

The development of physical infrastructure for tourism should be preceded by the preparation of an inventory of resources and a zoning/management plan to ensure preservation and public use of valuable natural sites.

Wherever destruction or serious alteration of areas of high primary productivity like wetland, seagrass beds, coral reefs, rainforests, is contemplated, benefits and costs should be carefully assessed before planning tourism development activities.
The development of physical infrastructure for tourism should be preceded by the preparation of an inventory of resources and a zoning/management plan to ensure preservation and public use of valuable natural sites as a component part of an integrated, comprehensive resource management plan founded on sound ecological principles.

The Tourism Management Plan should also establish standards for resort development, covering among others, the style and locations of structures, treatment of sewage and control of litter, preservation of open spaces and public use of fragile areas. It should further lay down procedures to ensure that sewage is not directed to the beach or the ground water and solid waste like litter, garbage, trash etc. are systematically collected and disposed suitably. Adequate precautionary measures should also be taken to avoid noise pollution. It should also specify methods and materials for construction activities and minimise any possible adverse impact on local materials.

Physical planning and design should integrate community services including availability of potable water, transportation and tourism. Transportation and access should also be integrated with other purposes such as industry and trade as communities are the termini for air, land and water access. Physical planning for all travel modes, especially modern tour buses also needs to be integrated between outside and inside the area of attraction.

The key players in the ecotourism business are the Government
including the State Governments and local authorities, the developers and operators, the visitors and the local community. Each one of them has to be sensitive to the environment and local traditions and follow a set of guidelines for the successful development of tourism. In addition Non Governmental Organisations and Scientific/Research Institutions also have to play a key role in the development of ecotourism.

The Government

- The Management plan for each area should be prepared through professional landscape architects and urban planners and in consultation with the local community as well as others directly concerned.

- Integrated planning should be adopted to avoid intersectoral and cross sectoral conflicts.

- The architectural programme for ecotourism centres should include controlled access points and cabins, roads, self-guided nature trails, transportation options, interpretive centres, signs, observation towers and blinds, adequate but unpretentious lodging and dining facilities, docks, garbage disposal facility, etc. as per requirement. If needed, living quarters and facilities for project personnel also have to be provided.

- Structures creating visual pollution, unaesthetic values and non-compatible architecture should be controlled and temporary structures using local building materials befitting the local environment should be encouraged.
leading to the development of environmental improvement programmes.

• Be sensitive to conservation of environmentally protected or threatened areas, species and scenic aesthetics, achieving landscape enhancement where possible.

• Ensure that all structures are unobtrusive and do not interfere with the natural ecosystem to the maximum extent.

• Recognise the optimal environmental capacity and sociological use limits of the site in creating tourist facilities. They should also take into account safety and convenience of tourists.

• Buildings should be designed strictly on functional and environmental considerations and avoid over construction.

• Local materials and designs should be used in all constructions to the extend possible.

• Physical planning, architectural design and construction of tourist facilities should employ ecotechniques like solar energy, capture and re-utilisation of rain water, recycling of garbage, natural cross ventilation instead of airconditioning, a high level of self-sufficiency in food generation through orchards, ecological farms, acquaculture, etc.

• Energy and water saving practices should be employed to the extent possible. Also practice fresh water management and control sewage disposal.
• Control and diminish air emissions, pollutants and noise levels.

• Control and reduce environmentally un-friendly products such as asbestos, CFCs, pesticides and toxic, corrosive, infectious, explosive or flammable materials.

• Respect and support historic or religious objects and sites.

• Provide information and interpretive services to visitors especially on attractions and facilities, safety and security, local customs and traditions, prohibitive rules and regulations, self-conduct and behaviour, etc.

• Ensure adequate opportunities to visitors for communion with nature and native cultures.

• In marketing ecotourism products, customers should be given correct information as the visitors who appreciate ecotourism products are also environmentally aware target groups.

• Training and research programmes of the company should include environmental issues.

• Prepare tourists to minimise possible negative impacts while visiting sensitive environments and cultures before departing to the site.

• Ensure safety and security of visitors and inform them about precautions to be taken.

• Exercise due regard for the interests of local population, including
their history, tradition and culture and future economic development.

- Involve the local community to the extend possible in various activities and vocations.

**The Visitors**

- Contribute to the conservation of any habitat of flora and fauna and of any site whether natural or cultural, which may be affected by tourism.

- Make no open fires and discourage others from doing so. If water has to be heated with scarce firewood, use as little as possible. Where possible, use kerosene or fuel efficient wood stoves.

- Remove litter, burn or bury paper and carry back all non-degradable litter.

- Keep local water clean and avoid using pollutants such as detergents in streams or springs. If no toilet facilities are available, try to comfort yourself at least 30 meters away from water sources and bury or cover the waste.

- Plants should be left to flourish in their natural environment and resist from taking away cuttings, seeds and roots.

- Leave the camp sites clean after use. Remember that another party will be using the same camp site after your departure.

- Help the guides and porters to follow conservation measures. Do not allow the cooks or porters to throw garbage in streams or rivers.
• Be friendly with the visitors and help them to practice ecotourism codes.

Non-Governmental Organisation/Scientific and Research Institutions

• Create awareness amongst all concerned about the importance of sound ecopractices in tourism development.

• Motivate the local community to increase their involvement in sustainable tourism activities.

• Organise training programmes to prepare the local people for taking up various vocations relating to ecotourism.

CO-ORDINATION

Tourism is a multi-sectoral activity requiring co-ordination and linkages with other Ministries/Departments/Agencies and Private sector. With a view to institutionalise the process, the Government has set up a Co-ordination Committee of a Group of Ministers to take up issues pertaining to tourism policy, a Steering Committee headed by the Cabinet Secretary to ensure adequate coordination to tourism activities. It has also been decided to set up a National Tourism Advisory Council to advise the Government on policy issues. The Government has announced the year 1999-2000 as the Visit India Year and therefore such co-ordination activities become all the more important.