INTRODUCTION

The development of history of human race is essentially a transition from nomadic pastoral life to services through settled agriculture and industrial development. The development options presently available to the people and nations thus range from agriculture and industry to services and trade. Tourism is one of the major segments in the services sector. There are several countries in the world at present which derive a major part of their income from tourism. Nepal and Maldives are two examples of this phenomenon in the neighbourhood of India.

Tourism has gained importance because it has become a major activity contributing to economic development. It originated as a social phenomenon in the post World War scenario and soon it gained importance as an instrument for economic development and employment generation with numerous forward and backward linkages within the national and global economies.

A desirable and welcome feature of the tourism industry is that it employs a large number of women, both educated and uneducated. It has a natural affinity to the nature of women, as hospitality is an industry in which women have been participating for centuries. In fact, women are in large numbers in hotels, airline services, travel agencies, handicrafts making, cultural activities and other tourism related activities. Since, most tourism products are in the rural and interior hinterlands, tourism can provide the impetus for economic development of these areas leading to employment for people in the traditional and services sector.
In a large country like China which has recently opened its doors to international travellers, the inflow of tourists to that country during 1995 were 23.4 million and registered a phenomenal growth over a short period of time. Similarly, Thailand received 6 million tourists registering a growth of 12.7%. Indonesia received over 4 million tourists during 1994 registering a growth of over 17.7%. Maldives and Nepal received 2.8 lakhs and 3.27 lakhs tourists respectively during 1994 registering 16.2% and 11.2% growths respectively over the previous year.

Though tourism has become important both from social and economic considerations, deep concerns are now being expressed on the sustainability of its development in terms of environment, ecology and culture. A lot of work has been going on in the studies of sustainable development not only in the context of tourism but in the context of large and small scale industries, setting up of large infrastructural projects and commercial complexes and organisations in most countries. The definition of sustainable development itself is being hotly debated with varying views.

In the present study some Asian Cases will be taken up e.g. Maldives, South Korea, China, Thailand, Indonesia and India.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Though, the concept of sustainable development of tourism is relatively of recent origin, considerable work has been done on the subject by various international agencies and individual countries. One of the

earliest publications on the subject is volume 15 of the publications of the United Nations Environment Programme - Industry and Environment Programme Activity Centre (UNDP/IE/PAC), published in December, 1992. According to the lead-paper in the publication, “the potential environmental impacts of tourism activities are numerous and varied. In the Caribbien, tourist demand for seafood is considered the prime cause of the increasing pressure on lobster and conch populations. Tourism development also puts pressure on all local resources: tourists consume energy, water and basic resources. Tourist infrastructure, lodging and transport facilities often damage landscape and nature. Tourists produce sewage and solid waste. They also often leave litter. Planes, buses and cars make noise and pollute the air. For local people, tourism also means disturbance to ways of life and social structures and increased costs to build and maintain facilities such as sewage treatment plants or road to cater for peak numbers of tourists”.

Another paper titled “Tourism World Heritage and Sustainable Development” in the same publication focussed pertinently on: The explosive growth of tourism industry, often regarded as a “passport to development” for countries with few resources apart from sun and sand, has now become a major concern for many people including the managers of World Heritage Sites. Far from being a model for sustainable development, intercontinental tourism may distract scarce capital resources from more important priorities in countries which must now struggle with managing tourism's immediate benefits without forgetting its long term costs. Considerable investment will be needed to achieve a better balance
between the protection of World Heritage Sites and the development of such sites for the benefit of everybody, notably local residents.

Another important publication on the sustainable development of tourism is the “Guidelines: Development of National Parks and Protected Areas for Tourism” brought out jointly by the World Tourism Organisation and United Nations Environment Programme in 1992. The publication reviews the costs and benefits of tourism in National Parks and provides a set of guidelines and a model “Tourism Bill of Rights and Tourist Code”.

OBJECTIVES AND HYPOTHESES OF THE STUDY

Though it is well recognised that tourism can lead to economic development, particularly, in underdeveloped regions with intrinsic tourist attractions, it is still a subject of investigation whether tourism can lead to sustainable development.

The concept of sustainability itself is often allied to various aspects including the development process, the environment and the socio-cultural milieu. The basic objective of the study is to examine the impact of tourism as a developmental activity with special reference to sustainability in the social, economic and environmental context.

In detail the study examines the hypothesis that tourism can be a major contributor to sustainable economic development with positive impact on society, as it leads to protection and preservation of the
environment and heritage. Conversely, the sustainable development of tourism in any region or country would lead to a positive economic and social development in the long run. Further, it would be interesting to arrive at the basic formulation that the tourism as a phenomena is highly location specific and time-bound activity and as such the sustainability of tourism is always on test, and the universality of any development model is a myth.

There are several models of tourism development now being pursued by different countries in the world. These models are based on the existing economic, social and political situation and the level of development of tourism in each country. It is, more or less, true that no specific model could be applicable to all the countries in the world. Nevertheless, a significant objective of the study, certain patterns could be identified and relative merits of each pattern could be studied to evolve a suitable model for the development of tourism in India.

METHODOLOGY

A multi-dimensional approach to understand holistically the problems and issues pertaining to sustainable development and tourism is planned. The field study of tourism development and the models of some of the countries, comparison of various case studies available and analysis of the policies and guidelines being pursued by different countries is a necessary part of the study. The specific components of the study are:
(i) a comparison of sustainable development approaches followed by different countries in specific locations;

(ii) field visits and study of tourism development modes in selected countries;

(iii) a critical review of tourism development in India so far and present practices in ensuring sustainability of tourism development;

(iv) a qualitative and quantitative analysis of principles and practices followed in selected countries as compared to India; and

(v) developing a set of guidelines for sustainable development of tourism in India.

LAYOUT AND STRUCTURE

The thesis has six chapters and a set of appendices and annexures including a select list of bibliography:

Introduction

Chapter I Emerging Tourism Development Pattern : Asian Region

Chapter II Sustainable Development : Application and Relevance to Tourism Development

Chapter III Tourism in Asian Lands

Chapter IV India Tourism : Trends, Impacts and Perspective Planning

Chapter V India’s Specific Destinations : Issues and Prospects

Chapter VI Conclusion : Observation and Suggestions.