Chapter 6

CONCLUSION
AND
FUTURE STRATEGIES
Conclusion & Strategies for future

The preceding chapters discussed and analysed the growth of mass tourism in hilly regions of India with special focus on Himachal Pradesh. The study traced out tourism through history, discussed the development of tourism through planning process with allocation of funds for its growth under India’s Five Year Plans, identified the hilly regions and discussed the tourism potential of them, analysed the growth of mass tourism in Himachal Pradesh, picking out the problems and issues requiring special focus for making Himachal Pradesh a distinctive, attractive and nature friendly tourist place on the map of Indian tourism. The present chapter summarizes the conclusions drawn on the basis of this study. The chapter also offers suggestions as well as solutions for the problems emanating from the conclusions of the present study.

The survey conducted under the study reveals-

That most of the people except foreigners are not aware about the ecotourism campaign run by the Himachal Pradesh Government. It confirms the first hypotheses.

That most of the people are aware about the prosperity (economical aspect of tourism) that tourism brings. It confirms the second hypotheses.

That Pollution and water scarcity are the major problems arising from the mass tourism during the tourist season. It confirms the third hypotheses.

That Air pollution and over construction are the major components of environmental degradation arising from the mass tourism. It confirms the fourth hypotheses.

That most of the people are of the view that hotel development should takes place in an environment friendly way. It confirms the fifth hypotheses.

That most of the people are in support of introduction of tourism education from the school level that makes the future generation to behave in a responsible way. It confirms the sixth hypotheses.

That most of the people are not satisfied with the sanitary condition of the area they reside/stay. It confirms the seventh hypotheses.

That locals and domestic tourists are responsible for the environmental degradation. It confirms the eighth hypotheses.

That promotion of the nature friendly tourism and creating awareness at mass level are the best measures to be taken by the Himachal Pradesh Government to protect the
natural environment from Mass tourism in Himachal Pradesh. It confirms the ninth hypotheses.

Himachal is a highly eco-sensitive region and environmental factors have to be taken into special account to avoid doing permanent or long-lasting damage to the very elements that bring tourists to the region. Capacity building in this regard has much to do with developing tourism viably at different organisational levels. A wide array of actions such as organisational reforms, institutional strengthening and networking among these is essential. Imparting training and education, from the worker at the bottom level to the managers at the top of different organisations, can be a major progressive step in increasing capacity building of tourism sector. Trained and educated manpower is a valuable tool for utilising the research finding and designing programmes in accordance with the ground realities so that all types of environmental problems discussed could be resolved satisfactorily. Tourism then would become sustainable but also ecologically viable, economically beneficial, socially acceptable and aesthetically appealing.

The environmental and geographic suitability of Himachal State for tourism has undoubtedly provided endless opportunities to the development of this sector in the region. But success of eco tourism primarily depends on a balance between the number of tourists and the available infrastructures otherwise negative impacts on our environment are bound to follow. People are the ultimate loser or gainer of any activity performed in any part of the earth. Therefore human beings must exercise some rationality while exploiting the resources of the planet. There is a need to recognize mass ecotourism in the state as an alternative to mass tourism. By just formulating the policies nothing could be achieved unless and until the real actions has to be taken seriously.
• Programmes of sensitizing the youths, kids and local people about the ecology of their area will help in great deal to overcome many environmental problems of the state. It should include interactive sessions on uses of trees and forests, herbarium preparation, plant identification besides solid waste management, planting trees within their area, creating awareness about the flora and fauna of their neighborhood, and of course prepare them as nature guides for prospective tourists should be the main objectives.

• Beautification of the Entry Points. The first tourist experience for a visitor happens at the entry point. Hence, it is very important to beautify the entry points – be it the road routes or the railway station or airports. For each of these beautification plans be worked out around a central theme. The décor, the trivia, the plants, facades and the overall ambience should be in line with the theme. There should be proper signage as per a standard format; proper lighting and also clean hygienic conveniences.

• To better manage the road traffic at the State entrances, the location of toll tax barriers should be shifted away, say about 500 meters, from the border.

• Implement area-wide traffic management schemes at critical junctions and crossings for smooth flow of traffic.

• Strengthen co-ordination between maintenance agencies and traffic police to avoid traffic chaos.

• Improve traffic regulations and management. The Himachal Government should regularly undertake traffic management awareness drives.

Construction standards and Improved Technology for roads: It is possible to introduce cost-effectiveness and bring down the overall life-cycle cost of roads, through improved designs, improved material specifications, and new/improved technologies. Effective mechanisms should be developed to identify various technological advancements made in the developed and developing countries. These mechanisms should, however, be converted and tailored into locally usable manuals and guidelines.
Traffic Management: Strengthen the technical capability of traffic systems. It is essential to build reliability in the system, especially in terms of time and convenience.

Air Connectivity: State-of-the-art airports play a vital role in enhancing tourism. Hence, endeavours should be made to develop the airports on par with international standards.

- A comprehensive **heli-connectivity** should go a long way to support the impending boom in business and tourist traffic.

- An **international airport**, providing connectivity to Central Asia and North West China, is imperative to facilitate the flow of foreign tourists to the State.

- As a potential alternative to the Chandigarh airport, the **Pinjore** airbase must be upgraded as a civil airport, with the provision of an airstrip for small aircraft.

- Areas should be identified for private sector participation and a conducive environment must be created for this exercise. It will help bridge the gap in resources as also bring in greater efficiency in the management of the airport.

- The Northern Region offers many profitable routes like Delhi-Kullu, Shimla-Delhi etc. The State Government should emphasize on increasing the number of direct flights on various routes.

- The low cost carriers must be identified and Himachal Government should participate in revenue-sharing scheme for various routes in the Northern Region. This will help widen their coverage.

Despite all the efforts, the ecotourism specific development policies have never really been formulated and thus state of Himachal Pradesh has not fully realized its potential as a true model of ecotourism destination.

Fragile hilly regions should be open only to a very limited number of high spending tourists with proper regulatory control. We must not look after the foreign exchange
earning aspect of tourism but far sighted enough to consider the hidden cost of tourism to the environment by strictly controlling the number and movement of tourists in the hilly regions.

In fact tourism development must be integrated with the overall development of the region and the local people should be invited to participate in tourism right from the planning stage. It is also necessary to ensure some incentives to the locals from tourism. Environmental considerations must be integral in development of tourism in the state. Care should also be taken to conserve the local culture which is also a great asset.

By planning and promoting a healthy, sustainable tourism industry in the state the Government will have fulfilled its share of responsibility but in the end, it may not be the number of tourists but their sensitivity towards the local culture and environment that will determine the complexion of tourism and the future of this unique heritage.

Development in mountain areas should always be fundamentally based upon ecological sensitivity and environmental conservation. This principle has been specifically mentioned in various international agreements and conventions, such as the Agenda 21 declaration of the Rio Earth Summit in 1992 and the Conventions on Climate Change, Biological Diversity, Combating of Desertification, and so on. Widespread economic prosperity in the Himalayan region relies upon a mountain-specific concept of natural resource use that stresses a livelihood-based conservation policy. The standard agricultural model of the plains is inadequate for mountain areas. In Himachal Pradesh, for example, there is only 10.5% land area under agricultural cultivation against 85% in Punjab. Meanwhile, HP has 67% forest area as against 8% in Punjab. It is evident from the above statistics that without using the forest land for sustainable livelihoods, it is just not possible for any government or society as a whole to sustain the human population of the Himalayan region in a dignified manner. Therefore, we need livelihood-based forestry. In this model, local communities depend on the region's unique endowment of non-timber forest produce (NTFPs—such as fruit, fodder, fiber, fertilizer, fuel, and medicinal plants) to provide sustainable livelihoods based on annual production, without felling trees for incomes. By linking economic prosperity with a healthy, productive environment, this model will naturally ensure the maximum possible involvement of communities in conservation.
Construction technologies must minimize Green cover depletion and landslides. Himachal Pradesh needs higher allocation of funds based on a combination of Geographical and population criteria. Primary education in the state should include natural resources management issues as a part of the standard curriculum. Given the vital role that natural resources play in the state life, this subject is a crucial element in creating informed and responsible citizens. From early on, students of the state must learn about the natural system in which they live, the importance of those systems, and sustainable management of those systems.

There must be a concerted effort to preserve the traditional knowledge, cultural practices and biodiversity of the Himachal Pradesh. Data bank should be created to catalogue such knowledge and intellectual property protection should be sought. A balance must be struck such that modernization of the state economy does not eradicate traditional culture and biodiversity.

Government of Himachal Pradesh must support any type of tourism that directly promotes sustainability and long-term sufficiency. This includes combating poverty, changing consumption patterns, conserving environment allocating land use for its greatest sustainable benefits and strengthening local groups such as cooperative societies etc.

State Government and the tourist industry must take responsibility to reduce leakage and involve local population with decision-making and participation.

In order for tourism to be sustainable, it needs to recognize the importance of using its profits to fund other areas of sustainable development such as planting trees, recycling waste and creating ecological awareness.

A certain amount of earning from tourism can be used to fund research into developing renewable energy sources such as solar panels and small scale hydro turbines, which would provide power for alternative methods of heating during the winter and reduce the need for firewood. In this way, tourism can help communities be self-determined, self-sufficient and sustainable.
Under a National Hill Policy, policies in all development sectors must be designed with due consideration to mountain-specific concerns. Policy interventions for sustainable development of the Himalayas in the national interest have to take place both at the national and state levels, according to the jurisdiction of these two.

In order to achieve the objectives of mountain-specific development in the national interest, a great degree of people's participation in natural resource management and other sectors is highly essential. It is widely accepted that local self-governance is the key to mobilizing the masses to take on this responsibility of sustainable development. Thus there is a need to specifically empower the local self-governance structure in the Himalayan region. As a preliminary step, the provisions outlined in the Bhuria Committee's recommendations for 5th schedule areas should be applied to all Himalayan states.

The initiatives proposed in the Planning Commission by S.Z. Qasim's Expert Group should be revived and expanded. In the light of those recommendations and developing the concepts to their logical conclusions, the following policy changes may be considered:

a. Set up permanent cells in the Planning Commission and National Development Council that focus on mountain development.

b. Create a National Himalayan Environment and Development Fund to compensate and support upstream areas for ecological and economic services being rendered to the downstream areas. The chief component of this fund should consist of a certain percentage that each Union ministry must dedicate specifically to Hill areas as part of its overall annual development expenditure.

c. All the programs of the Government of India for development of the Himalayan region should be modified according to the mountain-specific National Hill Policy.

d. All the developmental programs of the Himalayan state governments should also be structured and modified according to the national Hill Policy.