CHAPTER VII

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This Chapter presents the summary of discussion and findings of the study. This study investigates the impact of tourism on the environment of Ooty town and how tourism affects the quality of life of the residents in the hill town.

Throughout the World, tourism has emerged as a major sociological and economical factor. The turnover figures are indeed tremendous. It is not an exaggeration to say that tourism has become one of the largest industries in the world. Environment is one of the major elements, which forms the foundation of the tourism industry. As the environment is an integral component of tourism industry, it is expected that special care needs to be taken to ensure the preservation of environment. But, such an ideal situation is very rare, since the impact of tourism and tourists on both man-made and natural environments are not only far from beneficial but quite harmful. In order to have a comprehensive knowledge about different dimensions of tourism and its impact on local community and environment, the present study has been taken up in Ooty town, a hill station of Tamil Nadu an important tourist centre.
The hill station by its very nature has ecologically fragile zone. The incursions of tourism here have hastened the process of environmental decay. Tourism makes the area into industrialization and urbanization cause irreparable harm to the environment. The relentless pressure of tourism erases the resource base, specifically the natural environment in the case of hill tourism. The negative impacts of tourism arise owing to the construction and operation of tourist facilities and from the activities of tourists themselves. The peak season (especially summer season) causes overloading of infrastructure, shortages of supply, problems of overcrowding and congestion. As the result, Ooty gradually looses its natural charm and importance as a tourist centre.

The first Chapter explains about tourism and its important role at the global level. The second Chapter reviews the related literature, which helps the researcher in finding out the priorities and importance of the study. The third Chapter explains the methodology, objectives, sampling and data used in the research. The fourth Chapter explains the profile of the study area with its background, soil, climate, industries and the important tourist places. The fifth Chapter reveals the impact of tourism on Ooty environment. It discusses the sources of pollution related with tourism activities. As a travel based recreation, tourism involves a wide range of attractions and activities. The hill station becomes the natural destination choice of domestic tourists during the summer.
It has great tourist potential in terms of its climate and scenic beauty, which are particularly vulnerable to overuse. Environmental problems associated with the tourism may not be as evident as pollution but it is identifiable. It is pertinent to note that the environment is the resource base of this tourism, impinges on its every resource. As hill tourism is environmentally dependent, it is potentially destructive. Without good environment tourism cannot be promoted in the long run. The sixth Chapter explains various problems faced by the residents of Ooty due to tourism activities. The summary of the findings is presented in the seventh Chapter.

Of the respondents selected in the study men outnumber women. More than 70 per cent of the respondents' age is not more than fifty. Of the total respondents more than 70 per cent of them have studied up to secondary level of education. A look at the data shows that more than 50 per cent of the respondents either work at private firms or as a wage labourer. More than 60 per cent of the respondents come under their monthly income Rs.6000 only. Most of the respondents live in nuclear families and have medium size families.

About the residential status, 60 per cent of them have own house. More than 70 per cent of the respondents are living more than ten years. Of the
respondents, 72 per cent of them have municipal water line connection and all of them are depend the same for their needs. From the remaining, more than half of them are waiting for their turn in getting water line connection for a long time even though they paid deposit amount to the local municipal administration. It reflects the local administration not able to give more household water connections due to the water scarcity and insufficient of water tank capacity. Inadequacy in getting water is also felt by the 33 per cent respondents. More than half of the respondents also reflects that the capacity of the over head tank capacity is not able need the fulfill the needs of the growing population. The study results highlight the twin causes of the growth of more households and the low storage potential of overhead tanks resulting in the inadequacy of water supply.

Summer season is the main period for the water problem. Because the hill station will occupy more number of tourists during the seasonal period. So there is a need of special care in the seasonal period. Most of the respondents using drinking water through the proper water purification methods. It reflects majority of the respondents are very caution in spreading diseases through water. Most of the respondents have dissatisfaction in the garbage handling method. Modern technologies need in clearing the garbage removal system. Power supply is also another problem in the study area. More than half of the
respondents reflect the problem in power supply. The perceptions obtained about the impact of the tourism reveals that the overall feeling of the majority of the respondents (95.43 %) that tourism leads to the benefit. Might be that they would have felt that it has helped in the development of the infrastructure and other amenities in the town.

Apart from this good aspect, they also feel that the seasonal growth of the tourist population create artificial hike in the prices of the essential commodities. Seasonal price hike and land value increases mainly suffered by the low income respondents. The business people who depend upon tourism can earn more at the time seasonal period. So it is easy to meet the price hike during the seasonal time, but the people who were having permanent limited income groups will affect in those days. Because their income will not rise proportionately.

The result of analysis on tourist activities in Ooty region reveals the following facts. More than a half of the respondents are concerned about tourists activities in terms of operating excessive smoke vehicles, and illegal plant cutting and habitat destruction. These problems are mainly stated among government employees, private sectors employees and agriculturalists. The problem like plucking flowers, destruction growing seedlings in different parts
of Ooty region and polluting streams and other water bodies are of considerable concern in Ooty region. Agriculturalists are concerned much about pollution of water bodies than those of others.

It is observed that high level educated respondents are more concerned about the problem of tourism in terms of operating excessive smoke vehicle, plucking flowers in garden and pollute the water bodies. Illegal plant cuttings, habitat destruction and destruction of growing seedling are the problems of major concern as per the view of illiterate and respondents with primary level education.

The findings regarding discharge of solid waste into Ooty region by the tourists as viewed by the resident-respondents reveal that the non-degradable waste thrown away by the tourists either moderate or high level.

The respondents' views on tourist activities on environmental degradation reveal the following facts. The high level damage to natural vegetation takes first in order of reporting, followed by high level degradation of natural landscape, high damage wildlife habitat and high disturbance to wild animals in consequence of tourism and tourist activities. In general agriculturalists and wage labourers are much concerned about degradation of natural environment in Ooty region. On the other hand, majority of the
businessmen did not consider such degradation by the tourists and it is obvious that they would always in favour of the tourists as tourism brings them business expansion and huge profit. A considerable number of government employees also did not concern much about damage to wild life habitat and disturbance to wild life in consequence of tourism activities. It is observed that high level educated respondents are more concerned about environmental degradation in Ooty region than low level educated once.

The two-way ANOVA carried out between the occupation-wise and education-wise categories of the respondents on the tourist activities in urban Ooty environment gave highly significant variation. This indicates that there is difference among themselves as well as their opinion about the tourist activities. The occupation wise analysis reveals that government and private employees are more concerned as to how to avoid further deterioration of the environment from tourism. Agriculturists and labourers are concerned much about protection of environment for the animals and plants. There is a significant association between respondents' level of occupation and their views on sustainable measures of environmental development in Ooty region. The same result is obtained from education-wise respondents' categories.
Conclusion

The intensity and rapidity of tourism development has been rampant in Ooty town. Consequently the relationship between tourism and environment has been one of conflict rather than symbiosis. Beyond certain levels of tourism development, the asset base of the tourism rapidly depreciates. The impact of mass tourism is rapid because of growing commercialisation of the destination. Seasonal concentration of visitors is high in the study area, thus making the town crowded and placing enormous strains on the infrastructure.

Random infrastructure development for tourism facilities adds stress to the already decaying environment. Ooty Lake has become a helpless victim of abuse. The visual and olfactory squalor of the untreated water of Ooty Lake bears witness to the infrastructural overloads on the sewerage system. Enormous funds are being spent in an effort to salvage the lake, but the road to recovery is bound to be excruciatingly slow, considering the continuing sewage inflows. Similarly solid waste is a staggering burden both because of the litter and because it exceeds the capacity of the natural process to transform it. The increasing volume of use of elaborately packed and presented throwaways has resulted in an increase in non-compostable matter. Ooty town compost yard bears witness to this. Handling solid waste is hard pressed to the municipality authorities. An infrastructural requirement for disposing solid waste is also
under pressure. Despite growing tourist numbers and increasing amounts of solid waste being disposed, the strength of the conservancy staff has not risen proportionately. Need to appoint more permanent conservancy staff should be appointed immediately. Dispute of the land for dumping must be cleared soon. The methods of clearing and carrying the waste to the dumping yard should be modernized. Need to take more care at the time of peak season.

Environmental and social stresses are noticeable in Ooty. Agricultural and vacant lands are getting rapidly transformed into resorts etc. and the land is scarred by construction activity. Congestion and commercialization, the two conspicuous traits of tourism growth are evident in Ooty. When tourism development is carried too far the quality of life of residents is lost. Floating population is very much high in the peak season compared with the residents population. Consequent to this crowding, there is a loss of residential amenities to locals. Residents face problems of housing, feel deprived of water supply and hold tourism responsible for price rise and shortages for essential commodities. A resident focused development rather than tourist focused development is desired by the residents of Ooty. The recently constructed buildings in Ooty are multistory and are in slopes. The heavy weight in the slopes will always have to face drastic disaster even for small trimmers. Since these buildings are multistoried they would have digged deeply below for
basement laying. This will pay the way for land slides. If this progress of buildings continues there is a need to face big problems for the light trimmers.

Since urbanization is increasing day by day at the expansion of the agricultural land, the total size of the cultivable land is decreased. The green lands are converted into brown buildings for the infrastructure facilities for tourists. Continuous extract of ground water for the purpose of tourism decreased the ground water table. The quality of environment is the casuality. The attraction of the environment will lose its charm and beauty. Unless systematic and sustainable efforts are made, Ooty may slip out from the favoured destination of the tourists in the course of time.

Suggestions

The following suggestions are made on the basis of the findings of the present study to achieve effective tourism in the study area.

1. The authorities should organise awareness camps for the people in service sector to sensitise hazards on the environment created by the tourists. This, will help them to keep an eye on the tourists activities.

2. Tourism-related constructions need to be regulated in Ooty town, by making the relevant rules more stringent, so that the unauthorised and unplanned growth of buildings could be curbed.
3. Penalty may be imposed on those who dump waste in places other than the one which is meant for it.

4. Introduction of battery powered vehicles in the town limit may help to prevent air and noise pollution.

5. Drainage system must be improved to arrest underground water pollution. Drainage water purification system must also be improved. Immediate steps need to be taken to avoid the mixing of drainage water to Ooty Lake.

6. More number of conservancy staff need to be appointed to clear off the wastes.

7. Need to arrange and check all the incoming tourist vehicles for emission levels to control air pollution through the burning of liquid fuels.

8. Since the existing water overhead tanks are inadequate to meet the needs of the town population, new overhead tanks should be constructed at different localities.

9. In an over exploited destination like Ooty, management rather than promotion should be the focus of tourism policy.

10. Tourism industry should be pressurised to adopt environmentally sustainable practices towards protection and promotion of environment in the long-run.