Chapter I
INTRODUCTION: A FRAMEWORK

"National parks system is a national museum. Its purpose is to preserve forever ... certain areas of extraordinary scenic magnificence in a condition of primitive nature. Its recreational value is also very great, but recreation is not distinctive of the system. The function which alone distinguishes the national parks ... is the museum function made possible only by complete conservation."

(Robert Sterling Yard, 1923.)

Human Beings and Nature have always occupied the lead roles in the drama of life. The interplay of the two has always intrigued scholars. Which is supreme? Which of the two is dominating? Such questions have always been the core issue of this debate. As the strains of life got more intricately woven, the issue of Man and Nature also became more intense and complex.

In the recent times the future of the global system is one of the most important issues in the world. To save the planet and its ecosystem has become the global concern of every responsible citizen of the world. It is said that the global economic growth and development will be all useless if the environment, in which we survive, collapses. Every environmental ill is associated with human activities. Human beings, who are the largest and the most advanced species on the planet can be held responsible for the selfish destruction of the environment and the habitat of the other species. According to a report, published in one of the international news magazines\(^1\), there are roughly 1.4 million species that have been identified on the earth. Scientists suspect that there are probably 10 to 18 million more, mostly in the little

\(^1\) Newsweek, International News Magazine, June 1, 1992, p. 23
explored areas like the thick rain forests. These undiscovered species of plants and animals are lost with every acre of rain forest that is being destroyed every second. It is estimated that with each acre about 50-100 species are wiped out everyday!\textsuperscript{2} The deforestation has effected not only the lithospheric ecosystem, but also the hydrospheric. The aquatic and coastal life too, has come under threat due to reduced precipitation resulting from excessive exploitation of forests.

Human beings know that their survival depends on the upkeep of nature. Thus, inspite of all these human hostilities towards nature, man has always tried to protect nature. The creation of national parks is an evidence to this. The idea of the national parks was to protect the ecosystems of the world for the future generations and to conserve the various species of flora and fauna.

National Parks have carried different meanings to different countries with different socio-cultural and economic values. In early years, national parks were living embodiment of romantic values. Even today some of the visitors, who are ardent lovers of nature, find national parks as something mysterious, virginal and adorable. Whereas for some they are a store-house of thrill and adventure activities that can satisfy the recreational needs of any visitor. As a result, the consumers oriented societies of the West looked at these protected areas as an object of utility in the market that could satisfy individual needs.\textsuperscript{3} Whereas, Countries of Africa, Latin America, India or Thailand, focused on preservation of the richness of wildlife - both in number and variety.

\textsuperscript{2}ibid., p. 23
\textsuperscript{3}Here, in terms of national parks the needs vary from person to person, depending on their interests. Needs could be recreational, aesthctical, educational or may be spiritual.
There is yet another viewpoint that prevails in the countries like India, which are under population pressure. In such countries national parks are viewed as the means to fight the *anthropogenetic forces* that pose threat to the environment and the ecosystem. National parks in these countries, therefore, stand against pollution, uncontrolled urbanization, deforestation, illegal poaching and merciless killing of wildlife. Some of these areas are for special purposes, like scientific study of the ecological systems and protection of the endangered species. In a way national parks are seen as means to achieve ecological equilibrium. In any case national parks are a complex mixture of cultural values and resources. Each of these units in the national park system has its unique qualities and purpose. These specific qualities of the parks demand and require specific management and operational plans.

Under such a situation, where national parks occupy a multifaceted concept, often questions are raised about the purpose and uses of these protected areas. This leads to various kinds of conflicts pertaining to the goals, values behind these parks. Questions are also raised about their management policies and the visitors' use.

Here, an attempt has been made to analyze these issues. It is a study of the park conflicts, management policies, visitors use and their perception of the idea of national parks in two countries that have a totally different value system and socio-economic development level from each other.

**Areas of Case Study**

The two parks selected for the case study are the *Yellowstone National Park* (referred as Yellowstone hereafter) and the *Corbett National Park* (now onwards referred as Corbett). Yellowstone is located in the northwest corner of Wyoming state of the United States of America. (*Map 1a*). Corbett, its
Indian counterpart, is located in the northern state of Uttar Pradesh, in the Himalayan foothills. The rationale behind the selection of these two parks in particular is their part and whole relationship. Yellowstone is the first national park of the world, whereas Corbett, the first in the Indian Sub Continent. Yellowstone has become the global prototype of national park - "the DNA for the idea of a national park" - and it has been replicated in many countries. Yellowstone is considered to be one of the last great intact ecosystem by the United Nations. It has varied natural resources which have attracted the scholars to write most of the books on national park management in the world, here. These books and the policies made at the Yellowstone often become the principles for the national parks in the other countries of the world. Also, the conflicts originating in Yellowstone are reflected to the larger world of global national park system.

Even though the area of expanse of the two parks selected here for the study, is incomparable, the problems faced by the two parks, bear many similarities. Both these parks face threat due to excessive visitors' use, constant changes in the management policies and the changing attitudes of the visitors. The creation of the national parks has also affected the gateway communities - the communities living at the entrances of the national parks.

Research Objectives
The objectives of this research are:
• To understand and concentrate on thinking that our national parks are vehicle for promoting education towards a diversity based global ethics of management of environment.
• National parks have some intrinsic values and they play an important role in today's changing society. These values can be preserved only by maintaining these areas.

• Industrialization and population pressure on land have adversely affected the national parks and the communities around. It is very necessary to understand that the human survival depends on the upkeep of these ecosystems.

National parks do not carry any meaning without visitors, for the values they have, need to be passed on to the future generations. This can be done only if the visitors are properly managed and the park values are interpreted in their true spirit.

Methodology

This research is based on the descriptive and qualitative analysis of the basic data and information collected from the libraries, United Nation's documents, government documents, various reports of the United States National Park Services (USNPS) and the Department of Forest and Wildlife in India. Primary data was also collected during the field work at Corbett and Yellowstone.

This field work involved interviews with the park officials, scholars and the visitors, both at Corbett and Yellowstone. Questions pertaining to various policy issues and on field, park management problems were asked during the meetings with the park officials in both the countries. The visitors, on the other hand, were surveyed by way of questionnaire (Appendix I). The visitors were asked to fill in the answers to the questions on various aspects of park visitation regarding the park use, purpose of their visit, attitude towards and
perception of the park’s purpose - if it was viewed as a vehicle for recreation, preservation or education.

Questionnaire Design and Assumptions

The questionnaire is configured into the following four sections.

Section I: Profile of Visitors: This is the general information about the visitor’s nationality, age, sex (male or female), occupation and category (foreign or domestic).

Section II: Park Perception: This section is subdivided into two parts:

II (a): Purpose of the Visit: Why does a visitor come to a national park? What does he perceive of the park? This subsection relates to the values and various activities that motivate a visitor to visit a national park. Values that inspire a visitor to come to a national park have been roughly grouped into:

Aesthetics: Where a visitor perceives a park as a place of beauty, nature’s magnificent creation and a work of art. It is assumed that, a visitor is more conscious towards the beauty and judicious use of the park. A park visitor, here, is also concerned about the maintenance and upkeep of the park.

Recreation: For some visitors, parks are mainly a pleasant pastime and a place to spend their vacations at leisure, away from the urban chaos. To them parks provide good opportunity for recreational activities like camping, wildlife watching, fishing, trekking, photography, etc.

Conservation: Some visitors come to the park with very specific purpose of research and education. The study conducted by them could be helpful in achieving the ultimate objective of the national parks, that is, conservation of ecosystems.
A visitor may have one purpose or a combination of them while visiting the park. Here, it is assumed that the degree of awareness amongst the visitors may vary, depending upon their perception and the values that they associate with the park. An average visitor comes to the park with the sole purpose of recreation and leisure. They are on “zooming trips” with less time and more to see. Hence, they perceive little. Such visitors are satisfied with the major commercial attractions offered by the park.

The second level of visitors is that which attaches aesthetics values to the park. They are eco-sensitive in their perception and appreciation of the park as nature’s grandeur. They are involved in more passive activities in the park, which do not bear much scar on the park’s resources.

The third category of the visitors is of conservationists. These people are involved in conservation and their only aim is to contribute towards the process of preservation, through research and education. They follow the law of nature, where conservation and preservation of nature is important for the humanity. It is assumed that this category of visitors knows about the park’s etiquette and respects the existence of nature’s other creations as well. They give more weightage to park’s values and resources, than to their pleasure.

II (b): Activities in the Park: A park offers various opportunities that cater to the varied interests of its visitors. Some of these activities are low in consumption of natural resources and some high. Although there are many activities in a park, but only those activities that are consistent with the Indian national parks have been considered here. The main purpose of this kind of selection is compatible comparison. These activities are - camping, trekking, adventure sports like boating, rafting, fishing, etc., bird and wildlife watching, photography, nature walks, environment education and conservation. There
may be possibility that a visitor’s involvement in these activities is according to the values that a visitor appropriates to the park.

Section III- Use of Park Amenities: A visitor uses various park resources—natural, cultural or various facilities provided by the park. The park is consumed by the human activities. The level of park consumption influences the park management. To cater to the needs of the visitor’s a park has to provide them with the basic infrastructure in the park. These human interventions lead to various issues of park maintenance and management like those of visitor’s management, facilities' management, waste management, wildlife management or pollution control. Thus, this section consists of questions on the use of various park amenities, which, to large extent, decide upon the amount of pressure on the park.

III (a): Places of Stay: Lodging facility is one of the major infrastructural demand of the visitors to the national parks. According to the budget of the visitors, they may choose various places to stay. These places of stay have been grouped in to four groups depending upon the services they provide. Here, the idea of choosing these places is that a visitor’s choice of place reflects his attitude towards the national parks and his purpose of visit as well.

- Luxury Hotels: These are the lodging places with the most modern facilities and very high tariffs probably ranging between 150 to 250 US dollars in the US and about Rs. 3500 to 4000 per day in India.
- Motels: Those places of stay with basic amenities, which suit the pockets of the people traveling on budget. The charges for a room for a day may be about $ 35 to 40 in the US and about Rs. 150 to 200 in India.
- Camps: These are the temporary, make-shift units with absolutely no facility. It does not have any constructed infrastructure, but a self made unit for ‘communing with nature’ in perfect harmony.
• Others: Place of stay other than those mentioned above have been put in this category. These may be forest rest houses (FRHs), dorms, bunkers or recreation vehicles (RVs).  

III (b): Duration of Stay: Based on the random responses of the visitors during the pilot survey of Corbett in 1992, the length of visitors’ stay considered was:
- Less than 3 days,
- 3 days,
- More than 3 days.

III (c): Mode of Transport: There are two ways of traveling to any place, either by private conveyance or by public transport. Private transport is a visitor’s conveyance usually an automobile. Whereas a public transport is a bus, rail or any other, used by many people together. More private conveyances to a park exert more pressure on the park resources for instance, on its air quality, tranquillity, parking lots, etc. If there are less people traveling by private transport then there is less pressure on the park, and this too highlights the way park is managed.

Mode of transportation is important because it influences the park’s natural resources largely. There is always an increased demand for more parking lots, which hamper the ‘visual experience’ of the scenery around. It also distracts the wildlife, bringing animals in direct conflict with the human

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4 The various accommodations available in Dhikala too have been categorized into three groups.

The conversion is as follows:

- **Suites:** They are the most expensive inside park accommodations costing about Rs.400 to 500 a day.
- They have been identified as Luxury Hotels.
- **Cabins:** they are equivalent to motels, rents range between Rs.150 to 200 a day.
- Bunkers/Dorms/FRHs-as Others. Camping inside Corbett is totally prohibited.
- Apart from these inside park accommodation there are various top class star hotels like Tiger Tops, Shergaon, Ramganga Resort etc. outside the park, which are luxury hotels.
- Old Faithful Inn and Mammoth Hotel of Yellowstone also belong to the group of Luxury hotels.
beings. Private transports accentuate this pressure whereas, use of public transport reduces it.

Section IV- Park Awareness: The knowledge of the park is an important aspect of the national park visitation. A visitor has to know the norms of the park to enjoy it. This has following subsections:

IV a. Use of Interpretation Facility: "Interpretation is an educational activity which aims to reveal meanings and relationships through the use of original objects by first hand experience, and by illustrative media, rather than simply to communicate factual information."\(^5\)

It is the most important facility that a park offers. It enhances visitors' awareness and helps in better understanding of the park and its values. This facilitates better management and administration of the park. The visitors were expected to check on one the options of yes or no about the use of the interpretation facility.

The logic is that there may be correlation between the use of the interpretation facility and the purpose of the visit to the national parks. Also, there could be a possibility that visitors staying for a longer duration in the park use more of the interpretation facility. A visitor who has attended the park’s interpretive program has a higher awareness regarding the fragile ecosystem and therefore he is more sensitive towards the park use. There is another assumption, based on the use of the park amenities, that the visitors staying in the luxury hotels are normally those “touristic kind”\(^6\), who are in

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\(^6\)There is a technical difference between a tourist and a visitor, in national park literature and also according to the language dictionary. A tourist is one who makes a tour for recreation, pleasure or culture. Whereas a visitor is a person on a social call, a brief resident as a guest. As Dan Sholly, Chief Ranger Yellowstone, says "I had been taught in my ranger career never to call anyone who came to national parks a tourist. Supposedly that term connoted loud pot bellied men in floral print shirts, platinum glasses and screaming kids who have fingers up their nose". Here too the term visitors have been used for the people visiting the parks, because these people are visiting the home
the park only for a short duration, probably 3 days or less. The only motivation for them is perhaps ‘recreation’. They prefer a comfortable home like stay even if they are away from their home. A visit to a national park is more of a fashion and a status symbol for them, so that they can boast about a very adventurous trip to a wild place, even if they have not perceived anything! A more sensitive visitor prefers ‘communing with nature’ and does not mind a lower level of facilities like in camps. Visitors staying in small lodges could fall in both the categories, for they are the travellers on budget.

As stated earlier, interpretation influences awareness about the park in a positive way. A visitor’s awareness, interests and attitude towards the park are reflected by the number of visits a visitor makes to these protected areas, here to Yellowstone and Corbett, in particular. A keen visitor with interest towards nature is drawn to a national park repeatedly. These repeated visits make a visitor well versed with the park norms and natural laws. This helps in the management and conservation of the park in a more efficient way. Thus, the two questions, of the three, in this section were on:

IV (b): Number of Visit to any National Park.
IV (c): Number of visit to Corbett/Yellowstone in Particular.

The visitors were asked to check one of the two options amongst once or never.

IV (d): Sources of Information: It is another important factor of the park awareness. The three sources considered for the questionnaire were:

- Friends: This is one of the most popular and convenient source of information. The word of mouth plays an important role in deciding about a visit to the park. A person’s decisions are often guided by the experiences of others, who have already visited the park before. There is a
probability that information generated this way could be biased depending upon the interest of the informer.

- **Media:** Parks have been a "media fad". Media has always publicised national parks with little distortion to lure visitors. Media has been used widely by the private entrepreneurs for commercials to earn profits.

- **Tourist Information Center:** It is assumed that the information obtained from the tourist information center is more interpretive about the park, for it informs about the various park regulations - the 'do's' and 'don'ts'. These sources of information may have some influence on the perception of the park.

**Data Collection and Analysis**

The data was randomly collected at various centers in both the parks. The data collection period was spread over two seasons in both the parks. A visit to Corbett was made during the summer of 1993, in May, for a preliminary survey and another in May 1995 for a detailed one. One the other hand, Yellowstone was visited during the beginning of 1994 season, i.e., in the beginning of June and other visit was in September 1995.

In Corbett the visitors were interviewed at Dhikala that is the only tourist complex for the overnight visitors\(^7\). Some visitors were interviewed at the peripheral resorts, i.e., at TigerTops, Shergaon and Ramganga Resort. These luxury hotels are located outside the park boundaries with in a radius of 12 kms from Dhangarhi entrance. Some visitors were also interviewed at the Corbett’s Head Quarter, at Ramnagar and at the enterance gates at Brijrani and Dhangarhi.

\(^7\)Overnight visitors are those visitors who stay for the night inside the park. Day Visitors are those who visit the park during the day time only and do not spend the night within the park boundaries.
The officials at Corbett with whom meetings were held during the two visits, one in May 1993 and then in May 1995, were the Director, Corbett National Park, the Deputy Director, the Rangers for Dhikala and Kinnanauli range, the Dhikala Library Incharge, which is the only interpretation center of the park and the Director, Corbett Foundation. Lower Cadre staff was also interviewed, which included the Mahavats$^{8}$ and attendants. People from the commercial sector, who were associate with resorts outside the park were also met for their views. These were entrepreneurs of Tiger Tops and Ramganga Resort. Another group of people with whom a casual conversation was held, were the local people - the ‘gateway community’, who lived outside the park’s boundary.

Some meetings were held with the higher level bureaucrats of the Indian Park System, which is under the Ministry of Environment and Forests in New Delhi. These officials were the Director General, WildLife, Director, Project Tiger, Wildlife Specialists and IUCN Experts on Cats (tigers), Wildlife Conservationists and the Director, Ranthambore Foundation.

At Yellowstone, visitors were interviewed at various points, like Mammoth, the park’s headquarter; Old Faithful, the star attraction of the park, the Norris Geyser Basin which is the largest basin of thermal features and the Canyon. Visitors were picked at random at these places. Most of the visitors were overnight visitors, staying at any of the one- at Mammoth Hotel, Old Faithful Inn, Camps, RVs or in cabins. Some of them stayed in the Motels located in the ‘gateway towns’ of Gardiner, Billings or Cody, which were closer to the park as compared to other entrances like Jackson Hole or Livingston.

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$^{8}$Mahavats are the people who drive the elephant. They are the people who come in direct contact with the visitors during the elephant rides in the park for wildlife viewing.
The Officials were generally based at Mammoth. The meetings were held with the Park Superintendent Chief, Resource Management, Supervisory, Out Door Recreation Planning, Director, Yellowstone Institute, Chief Ranger, Yellowstone, Wildlife Management Biologist, Park Historian and the Chief, Park Archives and Library.

The National Park Service Officials at the Park's Regional Office at Denver were also interviewed. The officials were the Chief of International Affairs, Chief, Socio-Economic Studies Park Planners, Interpretation Specialists and the Public Affairs Officer, Grand Canyon National Park.

The information collected from the visitors was categorized age group wise. The age groups were:
(i) Less than 15 years; (ii) 15-25 years; (iii) 25-35 years;
(iv) 35-45 years; (v) 45-55 years; (vi) 55 years and more.
This data, so grouped, was tabulated in tables 1-12, and was represented graphically, figures 1-11. The views of the officials have been quoted verbatim to analyze and explain.

Design of Chapters

This research examines various issues - but by no means all - of National Park System in India and the US. The first chapter is the Introduction to the research and its framework, which include the details of the areas of the case study - the two parks - Yellowstone and Corbett, research objectives, methodology, questionnaire design and assumptions, data collection and its analysis and the limitations of the research work.

Chapter two - Evolution of National Parks: Concept and Practices, explores the concept of national parks in various countries of the world and as developed by the United Nations. Various aspects, like the location,
accessibility, places of interests and the history of Yellowstone and Corbett have been described here.

*The National Park Policies in the US and India*, have been studied in chapter three. It discusses the details of the park policies in two countries. This includes the study of various eras in the US national park management policies, the principles governing the Indian national park management policies and the shift in views in the new policy draft for the Indian national parks.

Chapter four - *Conflicts of Values and Policies in Yellowstone and Corbett*, delves in to the realms of environmental and value conflicts that emerge from the park management policies, as designed by the government. The various conflicts that have been analyzed here are - the conflicts of principles that govern the park policies and the social conflicts that emerge out of the policy implementation. This chapter also explores the various issues and threats related to Yellowstone and Corbett.

National parks are known to attract visitors. Chapter five - *National Park Visitors: Patterns and Values*, critically analyzes the most important component of national parks - the visitor. Visitors are assessed in terms of their visitation pattern, perception of the parks that are under study here, park use and awareness. This is based on the data collected during the field surveys at the two parks.

Finally the sixth chapter is the *Conclusion*. It summarises the trends in policy and visitation in Yellowstone and Corbett. It also attempts to make recommendations for the park management policies.


Limitations of the Research

There are many lacunae in the research due to various limitations: The basic limitation of this research was the logistic problem of time and accessibility. The national parks have their visitor’s season. Only during this season one could interview the visitors. There could be a possibility that the time frame may have affected the sample. The accessibility from one point to other was another limitation. The distances in Corbett were manageable but it was difficult to cover more area in Yellowstone.

Furthermore, both the governments had their park regulations. Survey of visitors was not allowed on a large scale in Yellowstone without Federal Government’s permit. Many times the visitors too, were reluctant to fill in the questionnaire. In the case of Corbett, at times many anomalies were found which may have affected the findings to some extent.

There were no detailed and clear policy documents for the Indian National Parks, thus one had to depend on whatever documents one could find from various sources, for Corbett. On the other hand most of the books in the world on national park management have been written on Yellowstone. Most of the environmental thinking on the national parks came from the West, thus, this research too is dominated by the western views.

The visitors data for Corbett has not been compiled in a systematic manner neither by the park authorities nor by any other organisation or institutes like the Wildlife Institute of India or the Forest Research Institute. Therefore, it was difficult to obtain temporal data of visitation to Corbett. Although the data for Yellowstone was easily available, but it has not been considered here, for the sake of compatibility. The Indian National Park System is a part of the forests and wildlife department. There is no separate
Park Service like that in the US. This also, may have effected the research at various points, particularly when it came to plans and policies.

The difference in the level of awareness of the local people and the gateway communities around the two parks has also influenced the inferences at some places particularly when it came to the issues of the gateway communities. The passiveness and ignorance of the local people around Corbett made the conversation with them little difficult.