Chapter II

EVOLUTION OF NATIONAL PARKS:
CONCEPT AND PRACTICES

The ‘National Park’ concept is more than a century old. It emerged when it was observed that due to increasing human pressure, plants and animals were beginning to disappear. The human activities - the ‘anthropogenetic forces’, affected the entire landscape, including the features of geological, archeological, historical and cultural significance. With the passage of time, the importance of such features was recognized. It was emphasised that such areas be preserved. This thought was the beginning for the national park movement.

The idea of national parks was born in the United States. In 1932, an American artist, George Catlin observed the destructive effects of America’s westward expansion on Native American Civilization, wildlife and wilderness areas. He, thought of preserving these areas:

"by some great protecting policy of government ... in a magnificent park ... A nation’s park, containing man and beast in all the wild[ness] and freshness of their nature’s beauty."\(^1\)

Catlin’s vision at that point of history appeared impractical to the scholars and his proposals had no immediate effect. As the time passed and urbanization had its toll on the open space, appreciation for unspoilt nature grew. The

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romantic portrayal by writers like David Thoreau, painters like Thomas Cole, notions for preserving such places began to be taken seriously in the US.

In India, during the ancient times, hunter gatherer societies gave special protection to patches of forests. These patches were known as 'sacred groves' as they were the 'abodes of gods'. Any kind of human activity was prohibited in these protected patches, as they offered protection to wildlife, plants and water sources. These groves still exit in the tribal regions of the country. Later, kings and princes protected the forest areas as royal hunting grounds. Access to these areas was restricted for a commoner. This was to maintain the balance of 'game'.

In the later half of the nineteenth century, around 1869-71, American explorers like David E. Folsom, Henry D. Washburn and Ferdinand V. Hayden were fascinated by the beauty of the Yellowstone Region in Montana, Wyoming and Idaho states of the United States. After exploring this area for several days, the group published its findings and suggested the possibilities of protecting Yellowstone for 'public use', which would prevent it from private control and over exploitation. This was accepted by the then US President and the government and as a result, the first national park of the world was

"dedicated and set apart as a public park or a pleasing ground for the benefit and enjoyment of people ... for the preservation, from injury or spoilation, of all timber, mineral deposits, natural curiosities or wonders ... and their retention in their natural conditions".  

The establishment of Yellowstone National Park set the ball rolling for the national park movement all over the world. It became the global prototype of the national park idea - 'the DNA for the idea of a national park'. Many

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countries of the world followed the example of Yellowstone. It has been replicated in various parts of the world.

For many years national parks were living embodiment of romantic values, as areas of deep emotional involvement. The concern for the founders was to set aside natural areas as reserves to be used by all generations of human beings. This was to be done in such a way that the enjoyment did not impair the values of the national park. It was, therefore, felt that these unique gifts of nature should remain unspoilt for generations ahead, for "it is a glorious place to grow in and rest in". Inspired by the 'Romantic Era' of literature, "impulse from venerable woods" (Keats), and the "ethereal minstrel, pilgrim of the sky" (Wordsworth), the forefathers of national parks like John Muir found solace and escaped in to these "these books - A million years old, well bound, miles in size, with full page illustrations". To ardent lover of nature national parks were something mysterious, virginal and adorable. The most quoted expression of John Muir in the national park literature, describes the values that were initially attached to national parks:

"Climb to the mountains and get their tidings. Nature's peace will flow in to you as sunshine flows in to trees. The winds will blow their own freshness in to you and storms their energy, while cares will drop off like autumn leaves. As age comes on one source of enjoyment after another is closed, but Nature's sources never fail. Like a generous host she offers here brimming cup in endless variety, served in grand hall, the sky its ceiling, the mountain its wall decorated with glorious paintings and enlivened with bands of music ever playing."

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4 John Muir was one of the pioneers of the national park movements in the US. He had adopted the Yosemite national park as his home. He is known for his conservationists approach and later started the famous Sierra Club - a group of environmentalists and conservationists.
5 opcit., Muir, p.41.
6 ibid., p. 35.
The national parks were attributed totally an aesthetic value where a visitor could go and ‘commune with nature’.

**National Parks Around the World**

After the establishment of Yellowstone in 1872, many countries subscribed to the national park idea. Where resources were endangered by public use, countries adopted the resolution of ‘national reserves’, which kept public out of bounds. Now, the global network of national parks protects many of the world’s most spectacular natural features, like the Great Barrier Reef, off the coast of Australia, Mount Fuji in Japan, the Serengeti Plains of Africa, Lake Baikal in Siberia, Tierra del Fuego at the tip of South America, the Angel - world’s highest waterfall in Venezuela. The inventory of national parks is not restricted to areas of natural grandeur but also includes various cultural sites like Ankor Vat, Olympia, Mayan Ruins, etc. Most of the countries have their National Park System, working jointly towards global environment conservation.

**United States**: The US has a wide range of preserves under its National Park System. It includes anything that is of cultural, historical, political, archeological, geological, natural and scientific significance. The National Park System of the US comprises 367 units covering more than 80 million acres of land in 48 states and the District of Columbia, American Samoa, Guam, Puerto Rico, Sipan and the Virgin Islands. These areas in the National Park System are known for their natural values or are expanses of great scenic and scientific qualities over land or water. Accordingly, they have been designated as national park, monuments, preserves, seashores, lakeshore or waterways. Such areas may have one or more attributes, those of forest, grassland, tundra, desert, estuary or riversystem. They may also be a
‘window’ on the past for a view of geological history (Grand Canyon), imposing land forms such as mountains, mesas, thermal areas or caverns (Carlsbad Caverns and Arches) and they may be a habitat of abundant wildlife and rare plants (Everglades). There are 51 national parks in the US, “to conserve the scenery and the natural and historical objects and the wildlife therein and to provide for the enjoyment of the same in such a manner and by such means as will leave them unimpaired for the enjoyment of future generations.”

Canada and Latin America: Canada amongst all the countries, comes closest to matching her park system to that of the United States. It was the first country to follow the example of Yellowstone in establishing Banff National Park in 1887. The governing principles of the Canadian National Park System are very much similar to those of the US.

The Latin American Countries like Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Costa Rica and Venezuela have extensive national park system. Most of the national parks in these countries preserve the fast depleting rain forest and to revive the vanishing species of plants and animals. For instance, Monteverde Cloud Forest is to protect the ‘golden toad’- an amphibian not found elsewhere in the world. Galapagos National Park of Ecuador protects the extraordinary plants and animals that are considered to be a clue to Darwin’s Theory of Evolution.

Africa: Africa contains significant remnants of the life that existed during the Pleistocene period throughout the grasslands of the world. East and South of the Sahara have provided shelter for the reserves of these wildlife - the most diverse and extensive wildlife habitat left on the face of the earth in the form of its national parks and sanctuaries. Most of the continent’s national parks

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were created during the colonial era. Shortly, after the World war II, King Albert of Belgium had visited a number of American Parks. While at Yellowstone, he conceived of the idea of using national parks concept to protect African wildlife. In 1925, Albert National Park was created in present Zaire. This was the first park anywhere in the world devoted entirely to systematic scientific research. Despite pressures from population, poachers and political changes, now, most of the African nations have their parks and preserves. African National parks are known for their unrivalled variety and extent of wildlife.

**Europe:** The small but densely populated countries of Europe have used up almost every acre of their available land for farming and grazing. Natural ecosystems were also turned into manicured parks. Therefore, the national parks here, have been shaped by this tradition. Since, the original wilderness disappeared long time back these preserves "display the living landscapes' characteristics of large areas of Europe."\(^8\)

In England, inspite of the fact that ‘Romantics’ always expressed their love for nature, the national park idea did not originate here. After the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act of 1949, ten national parks were created in England and Wales.\(^9\) British national parks are stretches of countryside so designated because of their natural beauty. Till date the English countryside is the most attractive in the world.

Scotland has National Natural Reserves to protect the national scenic areas. It does not have any national parks. Poland has a dozen national parks. One of which is an attempt to protect the only remaining heard of Alpine bison. The Scandinavian countries have wildlands like those in the US and

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\(^9\) ibid.
Canada. Sweden was the first European nation to set up a national park comprising of its wildlands. These parks are difficult to access due to severe weather conditions. As a result of this inaccessibility, these parks have light recreational use, with less visitors’ pressure.

Asia and Pacific: The Asian Nations have enormous population pressure on land. The need for arable soil has resulted in depletion of the natural resources. Only some of the countries like Thailand, India or Srilanka are left with very low percentage of unaltered ecosystem.

In India, the Hindu reverence for all living things has helped in protection of a variety of wildlife in diverse habitat. The ecosystems here belong to alpine-tundras to tropical mangroves, from desert to strands of thick evergreen forests of northeast. During ancient times the maharajas protected the forests for hunting. Gradually this practice with the government support aided the creation of national parks. Today, India has 478 national parks and sanctuaries\(^\text{10}\). The Indian national parks are mainly to preserve wildlife and the forest cover by imposing restriction over their use by the public. Most of the parks in India have species specific conservation programmes for endangered species like Tigers, Rhinos, the Asiatic Lions, the Great Indian Bustards, Musk Deer, etc.

The parks in Thailand are similar to those in India, protecting the vast expanse of ecosystem with its large animals. Most of its national parks are concentrated in the northern region, which is less urban as compared to the southern Thailand. Thailand is the only Asian country to begin an international ‘nature conservation programme’ and ‘nature tourism programme’.

\(^{10}\text{Kothari, Ashish,. (ct.al.) Management of National Parks and Sanctuaries in India. Astatus report, IIPA, New Delhi, 1989.}\)
National parks in Japan are rare phenomena. Although Japan has a National Park Association, only one park - Fuji - Hakone Izu National Park is of importance. This park seems to be catering to entire country's need for national parks. According to statistics Fuji-Hakone receives nearly 80 million visitors every year as compared to 57 million in 48 national parks in the US!\(^1\)

Turkey - a country of ancient civilization has preserved its historical remnants of Troy as a national park.

The pacific countries mainly, Australia and New Zealand have national parks based on the American principles. Like the US and Canada, Australia and New Zealand have stretches of natural reserves with plenty of wildlife, which has been preserved in their national parks. Also, these countries have developed marine national parks to protect the world's most spectacular deposits of corals - the Great Barrier Reef.

**United Nation's Commission on National Parks**

Inspite of various nomenclatures, the purpose of setting aside these areas of natural grandeur was preservation of superior scenic beauty, unspoilt and unpolluted by human beings. As stated in one of the directives of the US National Parks Service (USNPS), the aim was:

> "to conserve the scenery and the natural and historical objects and the wildlife therein and to provide for the enjoyment of the same in such a manner and by such means as will leave them unimpaired for the future generations."\(^2\)

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\(^1\) opcit., Everhart, p.71.

For a long time, the national park movement did not have a global platform, that could bring uniformity in National Park System around the world. Later the United Nations (UN) created a Commission on National Parks and Protected Areas (CNPPA) under UN’s International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources (IUCN). CNPPA put forth some criteria for the establishment of national parks and defined a national park unit as:

"Parks are the areas of regional, national or global importance, set aside for the conservation of ecosystem and public enjoyment in such a way that it is left unimpaired for the future generation."

The later definition broadened the canvas for the national parks. A national park, now, meant more than a natural or historical site. Any place that had some unique features supporting the making of a nation, could be designated as a national park. The most important aspect was that these areas were to be preserved for the generations that were to come. The conservation and preservation of such areas were important not at regional level but had a global manifestation. This initiated a sense of urgency and concern in preserving such valuable resources. Preservation of the Royal Bengal Tiger or the Himalayan Panda or the Kangaroos or the Grand Canyon was now a concern of the entire world, not the specific country only. The IUCN with the help of other agencies undertook this task of global preservation of resources. The CNPPA published a list of world’s national parks and equivalent resources. These were categorized in to ten groups according to their importance (Appendix II).

The CNPPA also identified the objectives behind establishment a national park. These objectives were:

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13 Definition of national parks as adopted in 1969, New Delhi Conference of IUCN.
1. To prevent exploitation in order to conserve species, ecosystem areas of natural beauty, historical cultural, geological or archeological importance;
2. To enable visitors to benefit at different levels - recreation, educational, cultural - from the favourable results of this conservation;
3. To benefit from the conservation of scientific studies which would be impossible elsewhere.
4. These objectives are the bases for the framing of the national park management policies in various countries.

Yellowstone and Corbett National Parks: An Overview

Yellowstone is a park established for its unique thermal features and to protect the geysers, which are found only in New Zealand apart from the US and nowhere else in the world. On the other hand Corbett is mainly for the protection of wildlife and forest cover. It emphasizes the conservation of the fast depleting tiger population, under the Project Tiger programme.

Yellowstone National Park (US)

Yellowstone National Park (now onwards referred as Yellowstone) is situated in the northwest corner of Wyoming, with portions extending into southwestern Montana and southeaster Idaho (Map 1a.). The area of the park is roughly square and encompasses 3,472 square miles (2,221,722 acres). The region is quite unique in terms of its geography. It is a high plateau surrounded by mountains on all the sides. The general elevation of this plateau varies from 7500 ft. to 8500ft. above sea level.

Park is surrounded by various mountain ranges of the Rockies. Henry's Lake Mountains and Madison Range surround the park from outside and on

15 Geysers are hot springs, that erupt in to the air due to earth's thermal activities.
The forty-eight national parks of the United States are located on this map, each keyed to the list below.

1. North Cascades
2. Olympic
3. Mount Rainier
4. Crater Lake
5. Redwood
6. Lassen volcanic
7. Yosemite
8. Kings Canyon
9. Sequoia
10. Channel Islands
11. Glacier
12. Yellowstone
13. Grand Teton
14. Capitol Reef
15. Arches
16. Zion
17. Bryce Canyon
18. Canyonlands
19. Mesa Verde
20. Grand Canyon
21. Petrified Forest
22. Rocky Mountain
23. Carlsbad Caverns
24. Guadalupe Mountains
25. Big Bend
26. Theodore Roosevelt
27. Badlands
28. Wind Cave
29. Voyageurs
30. Isle Royale
31. Hot Springs
32. Mammoth Cave
33. Great Smoky Mountains
34. Acadia
35. Shenandoah
36. Everglades
37. Biscayne
38. Haleakala
39. Hawaii Volcanoes
40. Virgin Islands
41. Kobuk Valley
42. Gates of the Arctic
43. Denali
44. Katmai
45. Lake Clark
46. Kenai Fjords
47. Wrangell-St. Elias
48. Glacier Bay
the western flanks. Inside the park, this Gallatin Range extends down to the western border. At the northwest corner the Snow Mountains intersect the Gallatins. The Snow Mountains are an extension of another range known as Beartooth, which extends from Montana. These two ranges form the northern boundary of the park. Serrated Absarokas are on the east and Tetons in the south. Absaroka has the 11,300 ft. high Eagle Peak that is the highest point of the park. Washburn Ranges dominate the north central region of the park, with the highest point in the plateau region - Mount Washburn, 10,317ft.

There are two major rivers - the Yellowstone and Snake. These rivers flow through this rugged terrain in middle of the Rockies. The Yellowstone river has its headwaters in the southeast corner of the park and joins the Missouri. The Snake river drains southwards and finds its way to the Colorado system. In middle of Yellowstone, is the Continental Divide, separating the Pacific and the Atlantic watershed.

This high plateau land encounters a variety of weather conditions. Its geographic location subjects it to severe winters, with temperatures falling as low as 60 degree F. below zero in the south west section of the park. During the summer frequent rainstorms with the occasional snow flurries at the higher elevations have been recorded. The summer range of temperature is from 22°F to 90°F. Summer is referred to as 'season' or when the park opens for the summer visitation.

Accessibility: There are six entrances to the park. Since there are many national parks located on the various highways to Yellowstone, visitors to the area take advantage of this. The 'East Gate' is perhaps the most used by the visitors from the eastern part of the country. The 'Southern Entrance' is the gateway to the sister park of Yellowstone - the Grand Teton National Park. Many visitors choose this entrance so they can visit both the parks. It is
noteworthy that although 90 percent of the park lies in the state of Wyoming, only two of the six entrances fall in this state.

Yellowstone may be reached from any direction of the US. Besides the highways that serve the park for the motorists, it may also be reached by bus, air or railroads. At present cars out number any other mode of transport. This has reduced the importance of public transport.

Centres Of Interests in the Park: In historical times as all the roads led to Rome, similarly, roads in Yellowstone lead to 'Grand Loop' - the main highway of the park. It is roughly in the shape of figure ‘8’ with a connecting road between the narrowest point, a distance of 11 miles. The Grand Loop comprises of two units- the Upper Loop and the Lower Loop - a total mileage of 142 miles. (Map 1b).

The park’s major points of interests are on the Grand Loop. The Upper Loop contains the famous Mammoth Hot Springs with their delicate terrace of travertine and cascade of hot water. Tower Fall features the water fall of Yellowstone river and a view its Grand Canyon. Apart from these major attractions, the Upper Loop has Obsidian Cliff a mountain of natural glass, Norris Geyser Basin the second largest thermal basin in the park.

The Lower Loop includes the Yellowstone Lake, a 139 sq.miles of fresh water lake, Fishing Bridge, a place frequented by grizzlies and the most controversial site of ‘management wrongs’. Another interesting feature of the region is West Thumb, where the geysers and the hot springs are active along the icy shores of Yellowstone Lake. The most colourful ‘mud pots’ are found in this region. The star feature of the park, the world famous Old Faithful geyser is also located on this loop. It is known for its loyalty to

\[^{16}\text{A fascinating thermal feature of the park, created by the Hydrogen Sulphide gas present deep in the earth. As this gas combines with water it forms a solution of sulphuric acid and dissolves the surface soils to create pools and cones of clay and mud.}\]
visitors for eruption. In addition to this, majority of park’s large geysers and more famous hot springs and pools are found on this loop. Westward to Old Faithful is the Madison Junction. It is the site of the historic campfire where the national park idea was first conceived. It also houses a museum.

These are some of the attractions for the visitors travelling on the Grand Loop. For those who want to “get off the beaten path” Yellowstone has to offer a lot. Back Country\(^{17}\) offers hiking, trekking, horseback packing, fishing, etc. The open expanse of meadows in the central plateau and the mountain land is a paradise for the wildlife enthusiasts. One is caught by the treasure of outdoor activities in Yellowstone.

**Historical and Cultural Heritage of Yellowstone:** The human history of the park, as evidenced by its cultural and archeological sites date back more than 12,000 years. The history of any park, but begins at the point of time when people began to think of that area as a possible national park. The history of Yellowstone is the history of the concept of national parks itself. It includes the entire record of man’s changing attitude towards natural world.

According to the historians of Yellowstone, the events contributing to the history of Yellowstone can be grouped into four distinct periods. These periods are characterized by the influence of particular segments of American society.

*The Scouts and Trappers (1805-1865)* -- John Colter was the first American to travel to Yellowstone. It was mainly for the fur trade with the native American. Later, after the close of the fur trade towards the end of the civil war, the area used to be a favourite haunt for gold miners. *The Era of Idealists*

\(^{17}\) Yellowstone has been divided in to two zones - the front country and the back country. Front country is like the buffer zone of the Indian national parks, where some developmental activities like infrastructure for the visitors is allowed. Back country is totally a wilderness area, like the sanctum-sanctorum, where no development is permitted.
and Opportunists (1866-1885) -- The unusual and unrivalled beauty of nature of this region, fascinated the romantics. Between 1869 to 1872 two private expeditions, funded by the US Congress, explored the land and reported about the uniqueness of the region. These reports confirmed that hydrothermal features and the Yellowstone Canyon were indeed wondrous. The disciples of Henry David Thoreau and Walt Whitman started thinking about the possibility of preserving these features.

On the other hand there was a group of opportunists - the Great Northern Railroad, which needed business for its new rail lines and the influential citizens of the territories of Montana and Wyoming with their political interests. Thus, idealists wanted to preserve the country and the opportunists wanted more commercial activities and both these sects found themselves working towards the same end - development. The goal was realized in 1872, when the Yellowstone region was established as the first national park of the country and the world.

The Cavalry and the Engineers (1886-1917) -- Initially, as the park was not funded by governmental organization, it was inaccessible to most people and too accessible for exploitation by hunters. This led to more demand for conservation. In 1886, making use of the legislative provision contained in 1883 congressional bill, Secretary of the Interior called upon the Secretary of War for assistance in protecting the national park entrusted to his care. So, for the next thirty-two years the Yellowstone was jointly administered by both - Interior and War departments. It was protected by the cavalry units of the US army. During this period many roads and buildings, some of which are still in use, were planned and constructed by army engineers. There were investments by concessionaires also. This expanded the facilities at Yellowstone and the accessibility.
Park Service and the People (1918 to the Present) -- In 1969 the national service was created within the Department of Interior, for the special purpose of administering the fifteen national parks those then existed. In 1918 USNPS ranger force under the park superintendent, Horace M. Albright, took over the administration of Yellowstone. Since, budgets were extremely limited, the administration had to depend on concessionaires for funds. But the creation of a professional corps with the specific responsibility of the park was only in 1926. This was an attempt towards realization of the basic purpose of the 1872 legislation. Henceforth, the NPS has worked for the protection of Yellowstone.

Corbett National Park (India)

The Corbett National Park (now as Corbett) lies between 29°25'N to 29°39'N latitudes and 78°44'E to 79°07'E longitudes, in the civil districts of Nainital and Pauri Garhwal of Uttar Pradesh.\(^1\) (Map 2a, refer Appendix III for the list of Indian National Parks and Sanctuaries shown on the map). It is roughly a trapezoid with an area of 52,082 hectares. The area of the park was increased from 32,375 hectares to its present size in 1966\(^1\). Corbett extends from the outer Himalayas, locally, represented by the Shivaliks.\(^2\) Shivaliks run in an east-west direction in the middle of the park, across Patli Dun\(^2\) to

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\(^2\) There were proposals to enlarge the park by 12,900 hectares, and create a new buffer zone by establishing Sona Nadi Wildlife Sanctuary and a corridor of protected areas between Corbett and Rajaji National Park in the northwest, for the new management plan. (Panwar,1985).

\(^3\) The Shivaliks are distinct from Himalayas, for they are formed by erosion of Himalayas-a product of sand, gravel and conglomerates. In western Kumaon, they can not be distinguished from the Himalayas as they abut directly on the Himalayan chain.

\(^4\) 'Dun' is a local term for a valley. Patli Dun is an elevated valley with a virtually level floor through which the Ramganga river flows, which is the only perennial source of water.
the foothills of the middle Himalayas. The configuration of the ground presents numerous variations. A series of approximately parallel ridge run from northwest to southwest of the park, decreasing in height southwards, to the plains. The southern hilly belt is of Shivalik sand rock formation and is extremely rugged. These slopes have been cut in all directions largely, by rain and streams. The altitude of the park varies from about 400mt. to the peak of Kanda at 1,210 mt. above sea level, on the northern extremity. It is also the highest point in the park.

The river Ramganga and its principal tributaries - the Palain, Mandal, Gaujera, Ratapani and numerous other minor streams constitute the drainage of the park. This drainage system has further carved the ground into innumerable ridges, ravines and plateaus. The most important and significant feature of this drainage system is the South Patti Dun. It is an elevated valley through which Ramganga flows. While flowing west ward, Ramganga widens beyond Kinnanauli, creating Sheeshum Island, an island dominated by ‘Sheeshum-Dalbargia Sisoo. West of Dhikala, the Sheeshum islands give way to strips of grasslands known as the chauds. These chauds provide grazing for the wildlife, but now most of it is inundated in water as far as Kinnanauli, due to the construction of the Kalagarh Dam, in 1974.

There are three distinct seasons in Corbett: Winter (November to February), Summer (March to mid June) and the Monsoon (mid June to October). The temperature ranges from 26°C to 44°C (maximum). Annual

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22 Chauds are flat grassy lands. These are the result of man made clearing of forest and were used for agriculture in the historic times. Chauds, in the park, are very significant ecologically for the most favourite grazing grounds of wildlife. The important chauds of Corbett are Dhikala, Phulai, Kinnanauli, Patpati, Bahda and Bijrani. These chauds are the major attraction for the wildlife viewers.

23 The Kalagarh reservoir, which was filled to its full capacity by 1979-80. It covers 4,220hac. of prime wildlife habitat (Source: Internet Site of Corbett National Park, as on May 22, 1997).
rainfall varies from 1400 mm. in the outer hill to 2800 mm. in the upper hills, with 1500-1600mm in the main Ramganga valley. A wind locally known as 'Dadu' blows down the valley during the nights, lowering down the night temperatures. During the summer season, a thick haze of suspended dust develops in the atmosphere, which is cleared only by the thunderstorms of monsoon season. The visitor season in the park is from 15 November to 15 June every year. The park remains inaccessible during the monsoons.

Accessibility: Corbett is very popular with the visitors due to its association with the 'man-eaters of Kumaon'. It can be reached by air and road. Ramnagar is the park’s head quarter and to access the park one has to come to Ramnagar. There are two entrances to the park at present. One is at Dhangarhi, which is 19 kms. north of Ramnagar. It is for the visitors who have the permit to stay inside the park at the Dhikala Tourist Complex or at any of the Rest houses. For the day visitors, Bijrani is the entrance point. There is a proposal to open entrances at the northern and the western periphery if the park to make it more accessible.

Centres of Interest in Corbett: Corbett does not have as many varied features as Yellowstone has. Wildlife, particularly the tiger is a major attraction of the park. Most of the wildlife viewing is done at Dhikala. Dhikala is located in the core region - sanctum sanctorum of the park, 41 kms. from the park’s head Quarter at Ramnagar. Ungulates and predators both can be viewed in the chauuds from here. The 'Elephant Rides' for tiger sighting are the most enticing feature of the park. Kinnanauli, Sarpduli, and Ghairal are paradise for more serious visitors with higher level of awareness about the park and its wilderness values. (Map 2b).

Gharial (Gavialis gangenticus E.), which can be observed in Ramganga river close to Kinnanauli also attracts the visitors on their way to Dhikala.
PLACES OF INTEREST
(CORBETT NATIONAL PARK)

MAP # 2(b)

LEGEND

--- PARK BOUNDARY
--- CORE ZONE
~ METALLED ROAD
Natural History Museum at Dhangarhi entrance is an interpretation centre. Kaladungi, located in the most scenic environs of the Himalayas, 32 kms. from Ramnagar, on Nainital road has the Jim Corbett Museum housed in his former house.

Ramganga River, which is a home of 'golden mahasir, a fish found only in this river, is supposed to be a heaven for anglers. Outside the park boundaries a visitor can indulge in sport activities like fishing, rafting, camping, trekking, etc. These activities are totally prohibited inside the park.

Historical and Cultural Heritage of Corbett: Like any other park, Corbett too has a long history and cultural heritage. Chronologically it has been divided into different eras.

Pre British Era (1815-1820) -- Before the British rule the forest that constituted Corbett was the property of the ruling powers. Patli Dun was a part of the princely state of Tehri Garhwal. Then its forests were cleared to make the area less vulnerable to attacks from Rohillas. Later, the Raja of Tehri ceded part of his state to the British in return for their assistance in driving out the Gurkhas. Boksas, tribals from the terai settled in this area and practiced shifting agriculture for sometime. These tribes were later evicted in early 1860s under Major Ramsay’s orders.24

The British Era (1820-1947) -- Under this era, this region saw both-exploitation of resources and conservation as well.

(i). Period of Total Exploitation (1820-1858): After the British took over the region, forest management received little attention. Most of the accessible forest of this region was reduced to ruins. Successive felling of trees stripped the forests of tree cover. Collection of large revenue was the sole purpose of the government then.

(ii). **Efforts Towards Conservancy (1858-1907)** -- It was only in the 1858, when the first step was taken towards forest conservation under Major Ramsay. In 1861-62 cultivation of Patli Dun was completely stopped and cattle stations were removed from the forests. A regular establishment of troops was maintained to protect the forests from fires, to cut climbers and to mark trees before felling. Removal of timber was totally stopped. Thus, only after a span of 36 years of strict and careful conservancy, these forests again recovered in 1894.

In 1868, the management was taken over by the Forest Department and in 1879 these forests were marked ‘reserved’ under the Forest Act and thereafter were managed under various working plans and interim schemes.²⁵

(iii). **Declaration of National Park (1907-1947)** -- For the first time in 1907, possibility of creating a game sanctuary in these forests was considered by the British government in Sir Michael Keen’s letter of 3 January 1907.²⁶ This proposal was turned down by Sir John Hewett in 1909. E.R. Steven, the then Deputy Forest Officer, Ramnagar again raised this issue and proposed that Dhara (now Kalagarh) should be made a sanctuary. The proposal was pushed by Smythies, who succeeded Steven in 1917. It was again put down by Wyndham, the then Commissioner of the region. In 1934, Sir Malcolm Hailey, the then governor, passed the proposal for the creation of the sanctuary with sufficient area, which later could be turned into a national park. The charge to delineate the boundaries of the park was given to Major James Edward Corbett (popularly known as Jim Corbett). After, the U.P. National Parks Act was passed in 1935, and the reserve became the first national park if the country on August 8 1936, when the Act was implemented.

²⁵ opcit., Corbett Management Plan, p. 3.
²⁶ ibid., p. 4
Post Independence Era (1947 onwards) -- With independence the region became a protected area completely, prohibiting all kinds of activities in the park. The management of the park became a joint responsibility of the Ministry of Environment and Forest and the Directorate of Tourism and Wildlife. Initially Corbett was named as *Hailey National Park* and it covered an area of 323.75 sq.kms. Subsequently, after independence, in 1954, it was renamed to *Ragang National Park*. Finally in 1956-57 it was given its present name *Corbett National Park* to pay homage to Jim Corbett for his contribution in creating this park. To make park more viable and partly to make up for the area submerged under Ramganga reservoir, an additional area of 197.7 sq.kms. was added in 1956, bringing it to its present area.

Inspite of having been declared a national park, forestry, grazing and lopping continued till 1971-72. In 1973, Corbett became the venue for the inauguration of the 'Project Tiger'-a total conservation programme. This status of Corbett prohibits any kind of exploitative operations in the park's sanctum-sanctorum.

The national parks all over the world, now stand for higher human values. They are known for their scenic beauty, expanses of wildlife, natural grandeur and above all constitute the national heritage. They are seen as a vehicle for nature conservation, which is very important for the well being of humanity. The significance of protecting these areas lie in the passing on the national and cultural values to the next generations, for national parks offer:

"an opportunity to gather what old-timers sometimes call 'native wisdom' the knowledge of a place gained through personal experience - actually seeing, touching, hearing and smelling the rhythms that roll across its nook and crannies."

(Gary Ferguson, Walking Down the Wild, p.16)