Chapter Five

ENVIRONMENT AND TOURISM PRODUCTS

Environment means the surrounding in which all forms of living and non-living organisms evolve and exist. The living things are called biotic such as mankind, animals, plants, birds etc. and non-living things are called a biotic example, rock, air, water and soil. It is the physical condition and circumstances in which a person lives or the external conditions affecting the life of plants and animals. The environment consists of three areas; atmosphere, hydrosphere and lithosphere. The liquid, solid and gases that cover the earth are called atmosphere which is essential for plants and animals, example, oxygen, carbon dioxide, nitrogen etc. Natural phenomena like wind, rain, snow fall, formation of clouds, weather and climate changes are due to the interaction of these liquid, solid and gases of the atmosphere. The water contained area is called hydrosphere. It is in the form of oceans, seas, rivers, lakes, reservoirs, polar ice etc. It is also essential for the existence of plants and animals. Lithosphere is the top most part of the earth in the form of soil. The major function of lithosphere is to provide a source of producing food required by plants and animals. Moreover, decomposition of organic wastes and biological activities are performed by lithosphere.

Environment is defined as the outer physical ecological system in which man and other organisms live. Broadly speaking the term environment includes land, air, water, flora, fauna, people, their creation and social, cultural and economic condition that influence their lives. Tourism encompasses the complete system of nature.¹

Environment and tourism are closely related. Environment provide the basic resources for tourism such as beautiful landscape, mountains, rivers, lakes, forests, animals, birds and supply natural resources for production of economic goods. Moreover, the undesirable by-product and waste generated
from production and consumption process are destroyed by decomposition. Tourism and environment are mutually interrelated and benefited. Without an attractive environment no country can promote tourism. Hence, environment is the foundation of tourism. It determines the life length of a tourist destination.

In the context of tourism, environment has a wider meaning because tourism development of a country depends upon many environmental factors apart from natural environment; like manmade, cultural, built, human, economic, social and political environment. The attraction of tourist to a particular destination depends upon all these environmental factors. Destination is a place where a tourist visits. It may be a particular place or a geographical area or a state or a country or countries. The total satisfaction derived by a tourist from a destination is the sum total of experiences from these entire environment. People come to an attraction or destination because of its climate, its scenic beauty, or its manmade attractions. It is a totality rather than a collection of individual parts. Thus beaches, surf, climate, green belts, friendly people, historic monuments, the relationship of buildings to their surroundings, historic landmarks, traffic and pedestrian circulation and many other facets are all of a total.

The tourist is experiencing for a temporary period an environment which is strange to him including unique climate, geographical features, and intangible benefits like services, hospitality, atmosphere, culture etc. Hence much of the tourism potential depends on the natural environment as well as historical and cultural environment of the destination.

In the context of tourism, environment is defined as the ecological system or the surrounding in which all forms of living and non-living organisms evolve and exist which includes land, air, water, flora, fauna, people, their creations and social, cultural, political and economic condition that influence a tourist to visit a particular destination. Hence, in the present
study, environment consists of natural, manmade, cultural, built, human, economic, social and political environment.

*Figure 5.1 Classification of environment*

**Natural Environment**

Natural environment are those features such as air, water, flora, fauna, soil, natural landscape or geographical features and climate. It is the heart of tourism. The peculiar feature of tourism is that it offers environment as a part of its product. Therefore, the quality of tourism product is dependent on quality of environment to a large extent. In most cases, environment is tourism. Only if a country has favourable natural environment, tourism can be promoted. The entire superstructure of the largest smokeless industry in the World is constructed in the foundation of natural environment. The geographical location, climate, mountains, rivers, lakes, valleys, forest, backwaters, animals and birds are the attractions to tourists. It is the background of tourism. These attractions cannot be constructed. A country’s tourism possibility is mainly depends upon these factors. All other environmental factors such as built environment, cultural environment, human environment, manmade environment and economic environment, social and political environment are supporting to the natural environment.
All the environmental factors influence the growth of tourism. However, the natural environment is the prime factor which will determine the tourism potentialities of a country. The basic component of tourism is the attraction which a place or centre offers to the tourist.

Tourism and environment are closely interrelated. Tourism and environment benefited mutually interrelated and exist in harmony. The natural beauty of the place must be kept as such so as to sustain tourism development. More interference of human action in the environment and nature results adverse effect in the tourism development rather than positive effect. So, all human interference on the environment shall be made for tourism development with the object to sustain it unless the satisfaction of the visitors becomes negative. The overall natural scenic beauty of an area may be a major motivation to visit. To this, are added certain other attractions such as seasonal festivals or added physical attractions that provide opportunities for recreation activities. Conservation of a desirable climate through control of air pollution or retaining the styles suitable to the climate is therefore essential for tourism.5

The history of tourism clearly indicates that the environment of places has contributed to the birth and progress of tourism. Scenic sites, amenable climates and unique landscape features have had an important influence upon the patronage of specific localities, regions or countries. The environment of host region exerts an attraction so that tourist comes. It offers things that the tourist is looking for the needs.6 The result of a survey conducted in West Germany revels that 72% of the tourist consider high quality natural environment as the primary condition for successful vacation. In another study conducted in Scotland, 86% of the tourists are attracted to a destination only on account of natural environment.7 Hence, the root cause of tourism development is attractive natural environment. Natural environment is a strong base of tourism. Most of the tourism products in Kerala are based on natural environment.

The examples and tourism statistics of various States and Union
Territories of India reveal the story. In India, some States and Union territories are very back in tourism development. The under development in these States and Union Territories are due to lack of attractive natural environment. For example, during 2006, the number of foreign tourists visited in Manipur- 295, Mizoram- 436, Nagaland- 426, Arunachal Pradesh- 607, Dadra & Nager Haveli- 1400 and in Lakshadweep- 2142. But in Kerala, it is 4,28,534 during the same period, even if it has only about 1.18% of total land mass of India. The State of Kerala has a strong base of natural environment which provides a wide range of tourism products. Hence the State has high potential for tourism development.

**Manmade Environment**

Manmade environment means the attractions purposefully made for attracting tourists such as amusement parks, entertainment clubs, medical tourism facilities etc. These facilities may used by the tourist in the destination. However, manmade attractions such as palaces, museums, architecture, historical monuments, religious buildings, cultural centres etc which form part of culture of the country is called cultural environment.

**Cultural Environment**

Cultural environment of tourism is also an attraction of tourists. Tourists may have shown more interest and meaningful attention to the art forms of the country visited than the people of the host country. Cultural factors have a magnetic power to attract tourists. Many tourists showed interest to visit the birth place of famous men, architecture and historical monuments. The cultural environment of tourism is related to literature, music, drama, poetry, painting, sculpture, folklore, engraving, handicrafts, arts, fairs and festivals, monuments, architecture, historical sites, museums, religious building, cultural centres, archeological sites and centres of contemporary life. Sustaining the old age tradition, culture and custom of
every country is very essential for successful development of tourism since it is gaining much attention of tourist in the present time.

Cultural factors attract tourists to destinations. Hence, cultural and historic events can also be strong tourism attractions. The challenge to the tourism planners is that how the best can be preserved and developed out of these cultural assets to fuel tourism development. In the mind of many tourists and certainly in the context of tourism promotion which builds tourism industries, architectural landmarks have frequently become symbolic of the areas in which they are located.

**Built Environment**

Built environment of tourism is an important prerequisite for tourism development. Natural attraction of a place draws tourists to a destination. However, there must have adequate facilities to cater to the needs of the tourists since they are totally away from home. Everything must be made available to him. All of their wants and needs must be satisfied. If a tourist is facing any problem during his travel and stay or any auxiliary services, he may not be satisfied, that will in turn adversely affect the growth of tourism. Built environment can be broadly classified into two; infrastructure and superstructure environment.

Tourism infrastructure is a broader concept, which encompasses basic as well as supportive facilities required to cater to the needs of the tourists. In fact, tourism infrastructure is the foundation for the healthy growth of tourism sector. Technically, tourism infrastructure includes accommodation, transportation, communication, drinking water and civic amenities such as parking, health, sanitation, power, toilets, parks, amusement and entertainment facilities. All these basic facilities influence the tourism industry in terms of tourist inflow to the region particularly at any destination.

The infrastructure facilities are not only meant for tourists but also for
the existence of the people in general and contribute to the overall economic
development of the country. These infrastructure facilities are also used by the
tourists and leads to tourism development. Attract tourists to an area, it must
have roads which are capable of handling existing and anticipated traffic
volumes comfortably and safely. Superstructure is meant for meeting the
food and accommodation requirements of tourists. It consists of hotels,
restaurant, motels and other types of accommodations. If built environment is
not properly planned and monitored, it will create damage to the natural
environment and it will mar the prospects of the tourism development.

Human Environment

Human environment of tourism is perhaps the most important factor
for tourism development as it depends greatly on the involvement of people in
every phase of the industry. Now, tourism is an important sector which
provides maximum employment to the World population. For sustainable
growth of tourism, human environment is significant and has to play a key role
too.

Tourism is a social activity between man and environment which
merges life on earth and love of nature. Human environment of tourism
consists of the literacy of people, education, attitude of local people to tourists
and hospitality of people working directly or indirectly in tourism sector etc.
Human resource is of supreme importance to tourism industry. When a tourist
goes back to his home he carries with him the invisible mental image of the
people besides the physical objects purchased from the destination.
Hospitality, warm and charming behavior of the people are the notions which
a tourist is unable to buy but he can share it with people and when he shares it
he feels ‘at home’ and a sense of self-attachment with people and place thus
develops a desire to visit again and again with increased companions, friends
and relatives.
Economic Environment

Economic environment is also important for tourism development. Major part of cost of tourism consists of cost of travel. It depends upon the distance travelled, mode used, speed and comfort. Higher the distance of the destination country, more will be the cost. Even though India possesses wide diversity in respect of geography, climate, culture, people, language etc., we are receiving only about one per cent of the total tourist arrivals in the World because the distance between the main tourists destinations in the World, that is the European countries and India are very long, which is one of the reasons for the low arrival of international tourist. Cost of travel, accommodation, food, recreations, shopping and other activities of the tourist at the destination country results outflow of money. As a consumer, a tourist compares the cost of living of his country with that of the destination country. If the cost of living of the destination country is lower than that of his home country, it will promote the tourism development of the destination country and it will attract more tourists from that country.

Social and Political Environment

Political and social environment is gaining more importance in recent times. Terrorism is a global challenge. Almost all countries are facing the threat of terrorism. For example, in November, 2008, terrorist attack at Bombay affected tourism in India adversely because it caused the death of few foreign tourists. Likewise, terrorist attack in the World Trade Centre on September 11, 2001 caused decline of 4.77 per cent in respect of world tourism receipts compared to the previous year 2000. Political and social environment means international peace, the relationship between home country and destination country, political stability of the destination country and the general law and order situation of the destination country etc.

Tourism and terrorism are interrelated. Tourism is a state of relaxation
and enjoyment. It is possible only if peace and security exist in the whole World particularly in the destination country. If a country is facing the threat of terrorist, the arrival of tourist particularly international tourist will be adversely affected. In addition to these, social conditions like natural calamities, epidemic diseases etc. which are called social environment will also affect the inflow of tourist. All the environmental factors affect the growth of tourism of a country because all tourism products are the output of these environments.

**Tourism Product**

In the course of tour, a tourist may consume different products and services, experiences the wonders of the World which may be strange and novel to him. Tourism product is the sum total of all experience of a tourist derived from different environment in the course of travel and stay. It begins from the time when he leaves his home and ends when he returned back to his home. In the course of travel and stay, he may make use of so many services such as room in a hotel, seat in a train or bus or aero plane, eats some food, visiting historical places, sights seeing and enjoying some entertainment. These are in the strict sense various tourism products. Most of the tourism products are in the nature of service which is intangible. It is greatly psychological in its attraction and depends upon the mental satisfaction of the person.

‘Ideally, tourism product is a package tour which comprises an air seat, accommodation at the place to be visited, local transportation, sightseeing, entertainment, meals, shopping etc. The product is composite in nature and includes everything a visitor purchases, sees, experiences and feels from the time he/she leaves home until the time he/she returns.’ Hence, tourism product is composite in nature and includes everything a visitor purchases, sees, experiences and feels and the satisfaction derived from economic, social and political conditions from the time he/she leaves home until the time he/she returns.
returns to home. So, tourism product is a combination of different types of environments which a tourist experiences from a destination. The different environment can be natural, manmade, cultural, human, built consisting of infrastructure and superstructure, economic, social and political environment. The total satisfaction derived by a tourist in relation to a destination depends upon all these environmental factors. Hence all these environments form different tourism products. The total satisfaction of tourists related to a destination depends upon all these environmental factors.

An important feature of most of the tourism product is that they are in the nature of services. Unlike any other product, we cannot inspect or examine it before it has been purchased. The place of production and consumption are the same and even people or the destination form part of tourism product. The consumption of the product cannot be postponed. The product is highly perishable and cannot be stored for future consumption. For example, in a flight, there are hundred seats. On a Particular day, there are only ninety passengers. Ten seats remain vacant. The consumption or use of these seats is lost forever.

Most of the tourism products are gifts of nature like forest, rivers, valleys, backwaters, mountains, lakes, historical sites, cultural heritage, friendly climate etc. which cannot be made by human action. A tourism product is consumed for the purpose of keeping in mind the sweet memories. It cannot be taken to home. The enthusiasm and level of satisfaction differ from person to person, place to place and even from time to time. The prices of products vary from season to season. The supply of most of the products cannot be increased even though there is high demand.
Tourism product is something different from other products. The products are mainly related to services. According to the nature and significance, it can be basically classified into two; primary tourism products and secondary or auxiliary tourism products.

**Primary Tourism Products**

Primary tourism products are the prime attractions which motivate a tourist to visit a particular destination. The primary tourism products are natural environment products, symbiotic environment products, manmade environment products and cultural environment products. Once a product is identified as a primary tourism product, it will continue to be known as such.

**Secondary Tourism Product**

All tourism products other than primary tourism products are known as secondary or auxiliary tourism products. Secondary tourism products are facilitating and supporting the demand and consumption of primary tourism products. These products are equally important for tourism development and also contributing to the total satisfaction of the tourists and attract them to the
destination. Without secondary products, primary products are meaningless. The secondary tourism products are built environment products, human environment products, economic environment products, social and political environment products.

*Table 5.3*

*Classification of Secondary Tourism Product*

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**Tourism Products and Environment**

Tourism product is the sum total of experience of a tourist during the course of tour. The opinion and satisfaction of the tourist related to a destination depends upon different environmental factors which provide various tourism products. So, the total satisfaction related to a destination depends upon all these environmental factors. Hence tourism product means the sum total of experience of a tourist from different environment such as natural, manmade, cultural, human, economic, social and political environment. Hence, tourism products and environments are one and the same in this study.

**Environmental Impact on the Tourism Industry in Kerala**

Environmental impact on the tourism industry in Kerala is a study on the influence of various environmental factors forming different tourism products
and how it contributes to the total levels of satisfaction of tourists visited Kerala which affects the tourism development of the State.

**Impact of Tourism on Environment**

Impact of tourism on environment is the effect on the environment due to tourism activities. The effect of tourism on environment may be positive and negative. The positive impacts are improvement and preservation of historical monuments, parks and cultural heritage properties, protecting and maintain rare specious of animals and birds and instrument of beautification. The negative impacts on environment are effects on flora and fauna, pollution, soil erosion, depletion of natural resources, sewage and poorly sited and constructed buildings.
References
14. *UNWTO*

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