CHAPTER VII
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7.1 OVERVIEW

Eco-development with the concept of pro-poor tourism recognized as an important opportunity for the welfare of the local people to reduce their poverty in the form of employment and business opportunities. Understanding the present scenario, efforts should have been taken to find the best solutions with the principle of social and economic development along with the conservation of the natural resources. Consequently, the purpose of this study was to understand the existing status of tourism in Mayureshwari Wildlife Sanctuary and Rehekuri Blackbuck Sanctuary and the awareness and attitudes of the local people towards the role of the sanctuary area in their social and economic condition. Additionally, the perceptions of the local communities also considered regarding the concept of sustainable tourism development to alleviate and improvements with socioeconomic and infrastructure of their area.

7.2 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE MANAGEMENT OF PARK AND PEOPLE RELATIONSHIP

Today many Protected Areas facing several problems respect to the people living within and adjacent to them, their dependence on the forest resources and conflicts with the forest officials regarding the use of the rights to access the resource and conflict with wildlife. These problems could be directed with different management strategies and policies for conservation of the natural resources as well as practices along with rural development. Some issues have emerged from this study, which have implications for management of Mayureshwar Wildlife Sanctuary and Rehekuri Blackbuck Sanctuary. The suggested recommendations should take into consideration to resolve the conflict issues before the management of these two sanctuaries.
i) Alternative resources for income and fuelwood

For the families which are forest dependent for their basic need of livelihood should acquire the alternative fuel resources and source of income. This practice will help to reduce the pressure on the forest and make the local forest based economy sustainable in long way. Women deserve more attention when suggest alternatives, as they have a key role in family and spend major portion of their time in collecting fuelwood and water for the family as well as doing other domestic works. In the study areas, the families who have less income options spend considerable time in collecting fuelwood for meeting their energy requirements, both for cooking and heating purpose, in case where the fuel is available free of cost to them. Therefore, efforts should be made to provide readily available and appropriate alternatives like fuel-efficient stoves, kerosene etc., within villages. Moreover incentives should be given to reduce the present level of consumption in addition to better management of the existing and newly created resources. Alternative sources of income can be generated by providing preferential employment to at least one member of the forest dependent families, in any forest related activities, e.g. fire watchers, watchmen, trekkers, nursery and fencing work and road-making etc. Thus the focus should be on the rural economic development of the poor families, who have marginal land or landless and have low income sources.

ii) Management issues for Park and People Relationship

This observation has been resulted some issues which need proper attention to develop a harmony between park and people relationship. Conflict in people’s perceptions with the objectives of conservation is the result of the struggle of the local people for day to day survival of subsistence socio-economic class dependent on the forest resources. The negative attitude of the people towards the Forest Department due to crop damage and livestock depredation by wild animals also been emphasize in terms of participation based development for these area. Incentives like permission to collect dry and dead twigs before the rainy season, provision of infra structure facilities for marketing of dairy products, supply of fodder should be given to the local people of both the sanctuaries. The animal husbandry department should adopt a more people friendly approach so as to be more
successful in these areas. Relationship between the park and their inhabitants has always been a major problem everywhere, especially in the limited resource areas such as, semi arid, arid and desert areas. Allowing local people ‘controlled access’ to certain resources of the sanctuaries may be useful to meet their critical resource need. It is suggested that local participation would be more successful in creating social protection of the forest rather than applying restriction policies by the forest authorities.

iii) Introduction of indigenous fast growing tree and fodder species

Within the village boundary and on fallow land, the introduction of the indigenous fast growing tree and fodder species will reduce the pressure from the nearby sanctuary. The villagers, under the supervision of the Forest Department and NGOs, should be encouraged to take proper care of these trees. Wherever, private lands are used for planting trees or growing fodder, the owner should be given suitable incentives to encourage them to take such activities. While planting tree and fodder species, care should be taken about the preferences and the supply for the maximum part of the year.

iv) Awareness and Participation of stakeholders

People’s participation is equally important for successful implementation of any the developmental policies. Knowledge + Skills = Tourism Development, it is important that tourism policy makers and development practitioners should strive to equip communities with adequate skills and knowledge to exploit tourism opportunities. Inadequate coordination among the State, District and Forest Department in both the study areas Mayureshwar Wildlife Sanctuary and Rehekuri Blackbuck Sanctuary, is the principal cause after the poor planning related to enhance the awareness among the various stakeholders with training programmes involving forest staff. The youth should be trained and certified as nature guide, tour operators, catering and bird watchers. They should have knowledge of flora, fauna and the community structure within the forest and culture, traditions, history and folklore of the inhabitants of the local area. This is the sustainable way of using tourism to alleviate poverty. In poverty alleviation process, special policies need to be designed to protect women and their interests and economic and social empowerment along with paying more attention towards awareness
among the different generation which can help a lot in efficient implementation with low biasness. A working knowledge of spoken English and basics of plants, ornithology and butterfly identification will enhance the local people interactions with tourists as well as tourist’s interest in visiting the sanctuary area with sufficient information.

This has been suggested that Forest Department should take initiatives for providing conservation and vocational education to the youth and woman through short term training camps. NGOs and Mass Media can play a significant role by spreading the concept behind conservation and motivating the local people to take up small conservation projects at the village level. Youth of the villages were found interested in acquiring vocational training like, tailoring, automobiles, machinery and electric repairing and shorthand and typing etc. However, majority of them lacked financial resources to obtain these skills. The Forest Department should involve local as well as national NGOs to help the interested candidates in obtaining vocational training to make them self-sufficient.

Apart from this, women can be provided with the necessary help to take up horticulture activities on small scale on their own land. The Forest Department and NGOs integrated approaches can also help the women to take up processing and cooperative marketing of collected NTFPs and other cultivated products, for value addition. This will provide opportunities for empowerment to the women as well as provide them financial security. Although, this will help Forest Department to gain support of the women for any conservation oriented activities.

v) Movements to Build Trust by the Forest Department

Socioeconomic characteristics of the villages located at Mayureshwar Wildlife Sanctuary and Rehekuri Blackbuck Sanctuary have been studied to understand the status of the local people at present and beliefs of the people to accept ecotourism as a new source of livelihood. The main problems identified as lack of employment, illiteracy, shelter, unavailability of clean drinking water, health facilities, etc. More emphasis needs to be given on the infrastructure development of the area such as roads, community center, public health center, schools, markets and related areas, as a result the tourism promotion with the positive attitude of local people to support the successful initiatives for their surroundings to attract tourists in these areas. Taking up trust building activities, Forest
Department should make the positive linkages with the local people so that people would be able to understand the approaches behind to provide support with the department’s conservation efforts. Free health and medical checkup camps should be organized for the benefit of the local population. Although, the facilities for primary and secondary education were available in few studies villages mainly Supa at Mayureshwar Wildlife Sanctuary and Bahirobhwadi at Rehekuri Blackbuck Sanctuary, but the management is very poor. The Forest Department with the help NGOs can take the initiative in ensuring better educational facilities to the village children. This will not only help to get primary education to the people and build their trust in the Forest Department, but also the efforts taken by the Department in helping the unemployed youth to obtain vocational training is also an important trust building activity.

vi) Micro-planning for Sustainable Tourism Development with Local participation

Planning with local participation should be taken up in the studied villages with different needs. The knowledge of the positive and negative attitudes of the local people is essential for development of any business opportunity. The study overviewed the positive and negative attitudes of the respondents related to the forest and its presence in their surroundings. Mayureshwar Wildlife Sanctuary and Rehekuri Blackbuck Sanctuary has unique dryland biodiversity and the variety of the plants, animals and birds could set an base for the tourists attraction in term of spreading awareness with the activities like bird watching, information about the medicinal and native plants of the dryland ecosystem and key animal species of the area (Chinkara /Blackbuck) which are facing the threat of extinction if not conserved, within the Interpretation Center. These sorts of information and activities could be promoted with integrated approach of Forest Department and State Government among the school, colleges and large academic institutions to extend the awareness about the Sanctuary areas among the potential tourists. MWS and RBS belonging districts have visited by large number of tourists due to some good pilgrim places like Morgaon and Jejuri (MWS) and Siddhitek (RBS). It is felt that if some initiatives put towards wilderness areas of these regions under the concept of ecotourism, it will attract the large number of tourists during their visit passing through these areas.
The National Forest Policy of 1988 promotes the concept of forest management with the active participation of the local people. It is necessary action which should taken to create awareness and bringing the greater involvement of the local people in the protection and management of the conserved areas. The study suggest that for better management and long-term conservation of Mayureshwar Wildlife Sanctuary and Rehekuri Blackbuck Sanctuary, the Forest Department should win people's support and cooperation through trust building activities and educational programmes aimed at convincing people about the need for benefits of conservation and successful implementation of the tourism based activities. Ecotourism based promotional activities would be able to provide appropriate alternatives and income sources to the local people for alleviating poverty as well as encouraging the active participation of local government and NGOs in the conservation efforts for the Mayureshwar Wildlife Sanctuary and Rehekuri Blackbuck Sanctuary.

7.3 PROBLEMS OF THE STUDY AREA

In both the study area, Mayureshwar Wildlife Sanctuary and Rehekuri Blackbuck Sanctuary, agriculture is the primary source of earning income for livelihood followed by labor work. Agriculture practices mainly depend on the irrigation facility and rain in the area. As this rainfall is very low and the geographical conditions are semi-arid, therefore local people faced the problem of less productivity resulted low revenue from crop production. Most of the middle class and lower class people work in the fields of large landholders but due short duration of the crop production they need to look for other working opportunity to fulfill the need of their families for basic things. Geographical ignorance, negligence of the government officials, poor infrastructure and health facilities and lack of employment opportunities are the primary reasons for the less tourism development in the Mayureshwar Wildlife Sanctuary and Rehekuri Blackbuck Sanctuary. These sanctuary areas are facing the pressure of cutting, looping, grazing, fires and low rainfall lead to the loss of vegetation cover and enhance the human wildlife conflicts.

In the study area, local communities have negative relation with the park officials as a result to put restriction over the use of forest resources and entry in the forest area. Therefore, local people have
perceptions that if any development plan will be initiated to their area the maximum benefits will go to the park authorities. The negative attitude of the local communities towards the role of the forest officials also considered as problem requires resolving for successful planning of the ecotourism.

7.4 SCOPE FOR THE FUTURE STUDY

The present study provides a benchmark for the future studies in linking areas of the study. It may provide the details on the aspects those need more attention and effective implementation by the concerned authorities for the development of any conservation and poverty reduction based strategy. This study will also useful to design strategic plan with site specific perspectives. The implementation of any developmental plan may helps to develop a tourist place with considering its own natural and cultural situation that helps to sustainable development of ecotourism. The methodology used in this study would be helpful for the other related areas which seeks attention to develop tourism based approaches. Such efforts may be useful to understand the accuracy and effectiveness of the methodology and techniques and also to identify area specific problems and complex nature of the stakeholders of tourism industry.

7.5 LIMITATION OF THE STUDY

This study has some limitations apart from the scope for the future. This study is very specific and new to these areas aimed to access the feasibility of ecotourism to provide maximum benefit to the local people and look for their participation with forest based conservation practices. In the both study areas the lack of scientific research and best planning practices identified as major limitation in data collection on various related issues as well as secondary data was also insufficient to provide the information related to the tourist activities and management practices carried by Forest concerned authorities. Therefore the collection of the data the primary basis was quite time consuming and sometimes became very exhausted. However the attempts have been made to use proper sampling strategies to collect the relevant information on the selective issues.
Success of any initiative based on the perceptional analysis of the various stakeholders to understand the different attitudes, working nature and traits of necessities from the surrounding conserved area and related activities. This will give more insight to the ecotourism related consequences and attitudes of local people. As ecotourism is new concept to this area and the available information is insufficient thus the attempt to design planning strategy under this study cannot be formulated.