2.1. Tourism in Madhya Pradesh

Tourism activity in Madhya Pradesh is mainly concentrated in protected areas (Bhattacharya and Dubey, 2002). But due to the lack of infrastructure, trained manpower and absence of separate contingent staff for visitors use and interpretations; the level of enrichment through a variety of experience is not adequate.

Tourism in Madhya Pradesh is characterized by the following trends:

- The continued dominance of cultural tourism as far as foreign tourists is concerned.
- A shift towards nature resorts and wildlife areas for domestic tourists.
- Growing interest in tribal art and culture and the emergence of adventure tourism as a major tourist interest.

(MPTDC, 2000)

The state has been divided into six tourism circuits, viz Bhopal, Jabalpur, Panna-Khajuraho, Pachmarhi-Pench, Indore and Sidhi-Bastar (Presently situated in Chattisgarh) zones (MPTDC, 1999).

2.2. Tourists’ arrival in Madhya Pradesh

The annual arrival of visitors during the past ten years is mentioned in Fig.1. The total number of visitors includes the number of visitors for both the major tourist and the pilgrimage centers.

2.3. Tourism Policies of Madhya Pradesh

In November 1982 first Tourism Policy of Government of India was announced. This had marketing as its focus than have a prescription plan for development. In 1992, a National Action Plan for tourism was prepared and in 1996 the drafting of National Strategy for Promotion of Tourism was done. In 1997, a draft new tourism policy according to
the on going economic policies of the Government along with the trends in tourism development was published for public debate and deliberations. The draft policy is currently under revision. A New Tourism Policy, which builds the strength of the national Tourism Policy of 1982, but which envisages new initiatives towards making tourism the catalyst in employment generation, environmental regeneration, development of remote areas and development of women and other disadvantaged groups in the country. Beside these, promotion of social integration is, vital to our economy. It would lead to larger foreign exchange earnings and create conditions for more Foreign Direct Investment. The mission is to promote sustainable tourism as a means of economic growth and social integration and to promote the image of India abroad as a country with a glorious past, a vibrant present and a bright future.

The objectives of tourism development are to foster understanding among people, to create employment opportunities and bring about socio-economic benefits to the community, particularly in the interior and remote areas and to strive towards balanced and sustainable development and preserve, enrich and promote India’s cultural heritage. One of the major objectives is the preservation and protection of natural resources and environment to achieve sustainable development. The New Tourism Policy also aims at making the stay of foreign tourists in India, a memorable and pleasant one with reliable services at predictable costs, so that they would be encouraged to undertake frequent visits to India, as friends.

India is not all geared up to reach its true potential in tourism. The endeavour is to go for a comprehensive tourism policy with focus on ecology economics and local participation and benefit sharing. For this the questions that need to be resolved are as follows:
- How can responsible active participation of the local people in planning and implementing tourism promotion schemes be encouraged?

- How can better municipal governance especially in and around tourism centres be promoted?

- How can vandalism be checked and promotion of responsible tourism be done, especially environmental and local benefits are concerned?

The objectives of the tourism policy are to

- create employment opportunities and to bring about socio-economic benefits to the community.

- facilitate and expand sustainable domestic and foreign tourism in the country.

- minimise negative effects such as cultural pollution and degradation of natural environment.

- increase the tourists satisfaction and making their tourism activity pleasant and memorable.

- create a desirable tourist products supported by infrastructure.

- involve and create synergy among all agencies, public, private and government, in tourism development.

- maintain a balance between the negative and positive impacts of tourism through planning restrictions and education of the people for conservation and development.