

Linking Green Productivity to Ecotourism

Experiences in the Asia–Pacific Region



2002 ASIAN PRODUCTIVITY ORGANIZATION TOKYO

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Foreword

Tourism traditionally has been viewed as largely beneficial to and compatible with the entire process of economic development. Tourism is an industry employing more than 100 million people around the world and provides all governments with over hundreds of millions of dollars in tax revenues. Tourism is currently one of the fastest growing sectors in the world and many APO member countries, in fact, have given tourism a high priority in their development plans.

As the demand from tourists to visit natural scenic area increases, developers have resorted to developing tourist attractions in and around natural scenic sites, including some in the ecologically sensitive areas. This has, however, resulted in severe environmental degradation, and thereby diminishing the value of the site or feature that attracted the tourists in the first place. The tourism industry is thus also faced with criticisms for the negative impacts on the cultural heritage and the environment of an area. Therefore, there is a need to balance the needs of tourism development with the environmental constraints to ensure both economic and ecological sustainability.

Green Productivity (GP) signifies a new paradigm of socio-economic development aimed at pursuing economic and productivity growth while protecting the environment. Therefore, application of the concept and practices of GP is deemed to be a very appropriate strategy in the context of ecotourism for the socio-economic development.

Recognising the importance of ecotourism for the member countries, the APO has organised a number of ecotourism-related programs since 1996. Specifically, a Workshop on GP and ecotourism in Bali, Indonesia in June 2000, attempted to systematically apply the GP principles, practices and tools for ecotourism. This was followed by a study mission to France on ecotourism under a project jointly organised by the APO and ACTIM, France in October 2000. This book is primarily based on the papers presented during these two events.

To commemorate this International Year of Ecotourism, the APO is pleased to present this book "Linking Green Productivity to Ecotourism: Experiences in the Asia–Pacific Region". I am sure that this book will provide the readers with a valuable resource on the eco-tourism-related information from the APO member countries and will help in further promotion of eco-tourism in the region.

> Takashi Tajima Secretary General

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Preface

This book is the result of an initiative taken by the Asian Productivity Organization (APO) to promote within its member countries the concepts and principles of ecotourism and link these to the practice of green productivity. Green productivity has been a major thrust of the APO's environmental program for some years.

Green productivity (alternatively known as cleaner production or eco-efficiency) has become a well-known tool in the Asia–Pacific region as a consequence of the APO promotion. The link between ecotourism and green productivity becomes obvious once both concepts are defined. This was the task undertaken by the APO at a workshop on Ecotourism and Green Productivity, held in Bali 26–30 June, 2000.

The Bali meeting involved a wide range of typical workshop activities, including the presentation of scene-setting and overview papers plus reports from participants on relevant activities in their home economies. In addition to participants from APO member economies, a number of resource persons attended the workshop on behalf of APO. There were also APO Officers from the organisation's secretariat including Mr Augustine Koh and Mr Mandar Parasnis.

The resource persons all made significant contributions to the workshop. Papers by two of these people are included in this book. In Part A, where general principles are discussed, the keynote paper, titled "Green Productivity and Ecotourism" by Liana Bratasida, is presented. In the Part B, where country reports are presented, an analysis of ecotourism in Indonesia by Anak Agung Gde Raka Dalem is included.

The majority of APO member economies were represented at the Bali workshop and most representatives presented written papers which are included in this book, a total of 14 papers. For some economies more than one paper was presented at the workshop. In this case all papers are included as each has its own special merit, little duplication is involved, and the papers are complementary.

Following the Bali meeting, the APO held a study meeting on ecotourism in France between 2 and 13 October, 2000. A number of country papers were presented at this meeting and subsequently made available for this book (10 are included). Combining the two APO meetings, all member economies are represented with papers except for Hong Kong and Sri Lanka.

In my role as editor, I took the view that while Hong Kong was a major tourist destination, it was not well suited for ecotourism due to the fact it is basically a "city-state" with little scope for nature-based tourism (a crucial element for the development of ecotourism). Hence, I have not included a chapter on Hong Kong. I considered that the book would be incomplete without a chapter on Sri Lanka. Tsung-Wei Lai, a postgraduate scholar and research assistant at the University of Queensland, kindly offered a chapter on Sri Lanka.

As editor, I took a further liberty and included a chapter on ecotourism in Australia. Australia is yet to seek membership of the APO. It does, however, play an important role in ecotourism in Asia and the Pacific. The Australian chapter, which is the last of the book — the others being in alphabetical order — was also written by Tsung-Wei Lai; and she contributed to Chapter Two.

Part A of the book comprises an "Introduction" which highlights the potential global benefits of tourism if it is undertaken in a sensitive and responsible manner. People who meet and eat together must surely become friends. People who travel with their eyes wide open must surely come to love nature and appreciate its fragility.

The Introduction is followed by a chapter titled "The Changing Nature of Tourism". Brief mention is made of the history of tourism leading up to modern tourism, which is the world's largest industry. Tourism is evolving into nature-based tourism, cultural tourism and ecotourism. This process is briefly explained before the general principles of ecotourism are presented.

Chapter Three highlights the need for a partnership between tourism, particularly ecotourism, and nature conservation, as well as between tourism operators and managers of National Parks and World Heritage properties. This chapter was written by the late Bing Lucas. It is a very lightly edited version of a keynote address he presented to the 2000 National Conference of the Ecotourism Association of Australia. As mentioned, Chapter Four, which is the contribution by Liana Bratasida, links ecotourism to green productivity.

Part B of the book comprises the edited versions of the selected country papers. My responsibility as editor required converting all papers into a reasonably consistent format, and, where possible, arranging the flow of the discussion in each paper into a similar sequence. In addition to these tasks, I have made editorial changes to improve the English expression. In making these changes, I have attempted (to the best of my ability) not to distort the original meaning. If I have, I take full responsibility.

This book would not have been possible without the support of the APO, in particular Augustine Koh and Mandar Parasnis. It was their idea to commit the papers from the two workshops to book form. In as much as the book stands as a record of the development of ecotourism in the region at the end of the 20th century, it will serve for considerable time as a reference document and reminder of the start of a very important journey. These two APO Officers deserve our thanks. In addition, I would like to thank Tsung-Wei Lai and Nguyen Thuy Khanh Doan who contributed without having the pleasure of attending either of the workshops. And last but not least, I must thank Jan Ross for many hours of typing and retyping the text.

Chapter One

Introduction

Tor Hundloe

This book documents some initial small steps taken towards improving the human condition. It presents the case that by adopting sensible policies for the world's largest industry, tourism, significant human progress can be made — and in a relatively short time.

At present, the world faces three major threats to the survival of humans, to the survival of the other animals with which we share the planet, and to the planetary ecosystem itself. These threats are ecological degradation, poverty and war. Notwithstanding the brilliant science that has brought us the Internet, an understanding of genetic codes, life-saving drugs and modern medical technologies, we have shown ourselves — so far to be incapable of stopping wars, eradicating poverty and halting ecological degradation. Maybe we have been pursuing the wrong means to achieve our goals. Maybe we have been using the wrong mechanisms, or, as some would say, pulling the wrong levers. There is a strong element of truth in the proposition that our approach has been inappropriate. The biggest mistake we have made in the past is to have viewed our common problems (war, poverty, environmental disasters) as separate, independent issues.

The explosion of technological knowledge in the past century has led to ever-increasing specialisation and, hence, separation of disciplines and fields of endeavour. One might seek to be an expert on the demand for electric energy, or of the culture of the Orang Sungai people of Sabah, or the ecology of proboscis monkeys. However, one will not tend to bring together these disparate pieces of knowledge into an integrated, or holistic, understanding of a bigger picture of tourism in Malaysia.

To make this idea clear, let us discuss tourism in some detail. Tourism is about people travelling for recreation, holidays, to visit friends or relatives, to see places that are new to them, to experience cultures that are different. To understand why people travel requires some basic knowledge of human psychology and, of course, there is an economic dimension in terms of what people are willing and able to pay for a particular tourist activity. Already we have identified two of the disciplines that are involved in travel decisions psychology and economics.

Part I

General Principles

Tourism is not just about people as tourists, it is also about tour operators, owners of accommodation houses and resorts, travel agents and airline companies, among others, working to meet the demands of tourists, and to make a profit in doing so. Certainly, an understanding of some economics helps in understanding the role and motives of the suppliers of tourism products.

As tourists, people need food, water, shelter and energy at their tourism destinations. Natural resources are extracted from the soil, the forests and the oceans to provide these goods and services. That is, the environment becomes a source of supply. Furthermore, tourists not only consume but also create wastes which the environment has to assimilate if human activity is to be sustainable. To comprehend these aspects of tourism, we need some knowledge of, say, agronomy (in terms of food production), hydrology and hydraulics (for water provision), engineering and architecture (for the design and construction of the infrastructure that brings together tourists and the goods and services they need), and so on.

Then there are those attributes and characteristics of a place, whether they be its naturalness or its culture, without which tourism to that place would not happen. The managers of people who visit valuable and ecologically fragile places require a knowledge of ecology and its sub-disciplines. To protect and present antiquities and living cultures one needs some background in archaeology and anthropology. As tourists we meet people from radically different cultures (different religions and different races) but we meet and eat at the same table and do so as "fellow travellers" — in both senses of the term.

It's to address these various, but ultimately interconnected human activities and embrace them in a holistic sense that ecotourism and green productivity have been constructed and applied as sets of theories and practices for the 21st century.

We talk of the principles of ecotourism, and we also talk of ecotourism as an activity and/or a product in the general tourism market (that is, ecotourism is a particular type of tourism). Likewise, we use the term, green productivity, to mean a management philosophy which deliberately links the environment to the economy, and we use the term's derivative, green production, to describe both the process and the products brought to bear by this method.

Both concepts, ecotourism and green productivity, are based on the very simple but fundamental premise that humans and the environment interact. From the time the first humans appeared on earth, they have influenced the environment, and conversely, the environment has influenced humans throughout this time. The result of this interaction is the world as we know it today. For some it is a wonderful place. It should be wonderful for all — but lives are destroyed daily through starvation, famines, natural disasters, motor vehicle accidents, war, government repression and genocide. During the 20th century, 400 million lives were lost by these means. For those who escape death, there are hundreds of millions who experience degraded lives through poverty, ill-health and malnutrition. But it's not just humans who are suffering through our lack of understanding and flawed decision making — forests fall, rivers turn into sewers, seas are depleted of fish, city skies choke with smog, soils washed or blown away, the global climate seriously threatened.

The explosion in human numbers in the 20th century and the consequent demand on resources and on the limits of the assimilative capacity of the globe mean that we can no longer view the way we do things in separate compartments. A healthy, sustainable economy is dependent on a healthy, sustainable environment. No longer can we take our country's political boundaries to be where our interests cease. From an environmental perspective, we have too many examples of trans-boundary pollution; we have growing evidence of global environmental degradation (human-induced climate change, the overfishing of the oceans, and the junk in space); we have conflict between countries for shared resources such as river water.

From an economic perspective, trade (which throughout history has tended to open up new frontiers and new markets) has expanded such that today no country is untouched by the ups and downs of the market. The trans-national corporation — the corporation without a national home — has well and truly arrived. Financial capital moves around the globe at the push of computer keyboard buttons. In the 21st century no economy can remain an island divorced from the rest of the world.

From a social-cultural perspective, ethnic and religious differences have been allowed to flare into bloody conflict in some parts of the world. On the other hand, modern information technology is conveying cultural images that have common appeal. Where the message is a humanistic one, this is a positive force to confront the divisive ones based on religion and race. If humans have a future, it surely must be a common future. The notion of a common future is so necessary and fundamental that the book which drew our attention to the principles of sustainable development is called "Our Common Future". Humans are linked to each other just as their economy is linked to the environment.

Ecotourism and green productivity are first and foremost theories and practices which recognise that humankind's future is intricately linked to the ecological health of the planet, and to how we treat each other and the other animals we share the earth with. However, neither concept is simply a call for humans to be kind, considerate and sharing, that is, to be good citizens. They are that and more. Both concepts recognise that the good life requires people to work with machines, land and human capital to produce the goods and services which provide us with our livelihoods and satisfaction. That is, humans are both producers and consumers. Ecotourism and green productivity are concepts for us to use as producers, as business people. Of course, we will need to be ecotourists when we travel if our ecotourism businesses are to survive and grow.

As producers we seek payment and profit for our work and our investments. The marketplace (where the laws of supply and demand prevail) provides the incentive for us to be conscious of costs. However, if our timeframe is short we pay no heed to the long-term sustainability of the resources we use (for example, the soils of our farms and the fish in the sea) and deplete them — ultimately, completely exhausting them. If institutional arrangements are such that we need not concern ourselves with the costs that our waste disposal places on others (say, pollution from a factory killing fish downstream), other industries will fail and overall we will be worse off.

As producers we need to face the correct prices (prices which reflect the costs of pollution and resource degradation). We need to have the best available information on such matters as the conservation of inputs (such as energy and water); and we need a general management philosophy that looks to "do more with less". You will understand that a profit-maximising goal should drive businesses to this very approach. Yet lack of good information and the wrong price signals - both of which are prevalent in modern economies — result in waste, environmental degradation and reduced profits. This is what some call a "lose-lose" situation. The philosophy of green production comes from understanding this. It is a philosophy based on a sound theoretical and practical understanding of how business works (how entrepreneurs and managers think) and a sound understanding of technical possibilities for saving resources such as energy and water, and the environmental costs associated with not saving them. Because of its role in the production process, green productivity is often called "cleaner production" or "eco-efficiency".

Ecotourism has evolved during the period that green productivity has also evolved, although ecotourism started earlier. A very brief sketch of the history of modern tourism, leading to ecotourism, is presented in the next chapter. goods and services which provide us with our livelihoods and satisfaction. That is, humans are both producers and consumers. Ecotourism and green productivity are concepts for us to use as producers, as business people. Of course, we will need to be ecotourists when we travel if our ecotourism businesses are to survive and grow.

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The Changing Nature of Tourism

Tor Hundloe

Introduction

Chapter Two

Tourism is the world's largest industry, a position it achieved after the end of the Cold War. In 2000, 698 million people were classified as international tourists (meaning that they spent at least one night in a foreign country). Fifty years ago there were only 25 million international travellers. By the year 2020, it is predicted that 1.6 billion people, or one-fifth of the forecast world population, will be international tourists.

Expect Change

The history of modern tourism covers nearly three centuries. It started with the Grand Tour by the sons (with some notable exceptions, women were not in this privileged position) of the northern European aristocracy, and the travels of famous scientists such as Carl Linnaeus in the early 1700s. With the formation of a middle class in Europe as the Industrial Revolution gathered pace, the weather-weary and wealthy sought sun, relaxation and health-giving waters in the Mediterranean, in locations such as Nice, the coasts of Italy and Greece, and the Canary Islands.

Nice, originally an obscure stop-over on the Grand Tour of Italy, promoted its sun as the best in the world. The rich came for health purposes. Honeymoon travel became fashionable for the well-off in the 1830s. A much sought-after destination became Niagara Falls. This location's reputation was such that by the late 18th century it was considered the greatest natural wonder in the world. Today, we have an extensive list of places competing for this accolade, and those that are deserving are on the World Heritage List (see Box 1 for those in APO economies).

Box 1: World Heritage Properties in APO Member Countries

Bangladesh

- Historic Mosque City of BagerhatRuins of the Buddhist Vihara at
- Paharpur • The Sundarbans

India

- Ajanta Caves
- Ellora Caves
- Agra Fort
- Taj Mahal
- Sun Temple, Konarak
- Mahabalipuram
- Kazianga National Park
- Manas Wildlife Sanctuary
- Keoladeo National Park
- Churches and Convents of Goa
- Khajuraho
- Hampi
- Fatehpur Sikri
- Pattadakal
- Elephanta Caves
- BrhadisvaraTemple, Thanjavur
- Sundarbans National Park
- Nanda Devi National Park
- Buddhist Monuments at Sanchi
- Humayun's Tomb, Delhi
- Qutb Minar, Delhi
- Darjeeling Himalayan Railway

Indonesia

- Borobudur Temple Compounds
- Ujung Kulon National Park
- Komodo National Park
- Prambanan Temple Compounds
- Sangiran Early Man Site

Lorentz National Park

Iran

- Tchogha Zanbil
- Persepolis
- Meidan Eman, Esfahan

Japan

- Buddhist Monuments in the Horyu-ji Area
- Himeji-jo
- Yakushima
- Shirakami-Sanchi
- Historic Monuments of Ancient Kyoto
- Historic Villages of
- Shirakawa-go and GokayamaHiroshima Peace Memorial
- (Genbaku Dome)
- Itsukushima Shinto Shrine

Historic Monuments of Ancient

- NaraShrines and Temples of Nikko
- Shrines and Temples of Nikko
- Sagarmatha National Park
- Sagarmatha National Pa
 Kathmandu Vallev
- Roval Chitwan National Park
- Royal Chitwan National Park
 Lumbini, the Birthplace of the Lord Buddha

Pakistan

- Archaeological Ruins at Moenjodaro
- Taxila
- Takht-Bahi and Sahri-Bahlol
- Historical Monuments of Thatta
- Fort and Shalamar Gardens in Lahore
- Rohtas

Philippines

- Tabbataha Reef Marine Park
- Baroque Churches of the Philippines
- Rice Terraces of the Philippines
 Cordilleras
- Puerto-Princesa Subterranean River National Park
- River National Park
- Historic Town of Vigan
- Republic of Korea
- Sokkuram Grotto Pulguksa Temple
- Haeinsa Temple Changgyong P'ango
- Chongmyo Shrine
- Ch'angokkung Palace Complex
- Hwasong Fortress

Sri Lanka

- Sacred City of Anuradhapura
- Ancient City of Polonnaruva
- Ancient City of Sigirya
- Sinharaja Forest Reserve
- Sacred City of Kandy
- Old Town of Galle and its Fortifications
- Golden Temple of Dambulla
- Thailand
 - Historic Town of Sukhothai
 - Historic City of Ayutthaya
 Thursday
 - Thungyai-Huai Kha Khaeng Wildlife Sanctuaries
 Ban Chiang Archaeological Site
- Vietnam
 - Complex of Hué Monuments
 - Ha Long Bay
 - Hoi An Ancient Town
 - My Son Sanctuary

Following Rousseau's description of all mountain streams and abysses, came the cult of the mountains with the inevitable comparison of all mountainous places to the Swiss Alps. Henry Thoreau promoted the nature walk from which bushwalking was to develop. In 1872, the world's first National Park, Yellowstone, was declared, and the concept of National Parks was adopted around the world. The coming of the camera and landscape photography played a fundamental part in promoting tourism, with native and human cultural artefacts as backdrops to recreational experience.

Of course, without mass transport (originally trains, then in the 20th century steam ships, followed by the motor car and jet passenger aircraft from the 1950s) tourism would not have grown, and continue to grow as it does today.

From the 1980s the film industry, and then television, played a significant role in enticing people to dream of sun, surf and sand. Popular music by groups such as the Beach Boys and by Elvis Presley (in "Blue Hawaii") exported the beach culture worldwide. Today it is "Baywatch". But, as we will point out, the beach culture does not suit everyone, everywhere, at all times. However, the warm waters and sunny days of the French Riviera and the Mediterranean (and their more than comparable rivals) are no longer the sole privilege of the aristocracy.

Until very recently the growth in tourism was concentrated in the West and in the northern hemispheres. By the end of the 20th century new groups of tourists emerged from all corners of the globe. In particular, the fast-growing middle class in Asia is creating an expanding market of millions of tourists.

Wherever tourists gather in large numbers there are impacts: usually positive financial ones for the local hospitality industry and for those who supply the hotels and restaurants with food, resources and labour; but sometimes negative impacts on the local culture, and more often than not negative environmental impacts.

As tourist numbers inevitably increase, so will these positive and negative impacts. However, this does not mean that the future will be like the present, or the past. Tourism — what tourists are seeking from experiences — has changed over time. Still, there are some constant themes, such as seeking the sun (or at least a warmer climate in winter for those living in colder climes) and coastal destinations (the beach and sand). In Box 2, Tsung-Wei Lai summarises the threats of expanding tourism and the promises (Is that all they are?) of ecotourism.

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Box 2: A Snapshot (by Tsung-Wei Lai)

The rapid expansion of international tourism is fostered by economic globalisation. Modern mass tourism is embraced by governments as well as multinational aid and lending institutes as a "smokeless" (non-polluting) industry to increase employment and economic prosperity, especially in developing countries. Amid the trend of free trade and economic globalisation, the influx of foreign capital for tourism development projects flows into remote and pristine areas to create holiday paradises. With foreign capital, remote fishing villages are being transformed into world-class island resorts catering to tourists from around the world.

Beneath the image of paradise painted with sun, beaches, and coconut trees, however, mass tourism development projects are often ridden with long-term negative impacts on the environment. Mass tourism often promotes unsustainable production and consumption patterns in developing countries where appropriate technology for waste treatment and pollution abatement is often insufficient or entirely lacking. Equally, if not more important, concerns regarding conventional tourism projects include the associated social and cultural impacts on the host regions/communities through disruption of traditional ways of life, promotion of monoculture, and the exploitation of local labour.

Since the publication of Brundtland's report, "Our Common Future," in 1987 "sustainable development" has become a buzzword in the global political arena. In 1992, "Agenda 21", a comprehensive program of action for sustainable development across industries and countries, was adopted by 182 nations at the Earth Summit held in Rio. In 1995, the tourism industry presented its contribution towards a sustainable development strategy with the "Agenda 21 for the Travel and Tourism Industry — Towards Environmentally Sustainable Development," published by the World Travel and Tourism Council, the World Tourism Organization, and the Earth Council.

The "green reform" promoted by the conventional mass tourism industry and government agencies is often considered by conservationists as merely "greenwashing" or ecotourism "lite" that focuses on minor cost-saving measures rather than seriously grappling with the principles and practices of ecotourism (Honey 1999, p. 49; McLaren 1998, p. 109). Honey further contends that the mass tourism industry often promotes self-regulation and green innovations for cost-saving, while opposing any tourism industry taxes, even those designed to promote environmental protection (Honey 1999, p. 32–33).

In the past decade, growing interest in ecotourism and nature-based tourism presents an opportunity to address the environmental and social impacts of tourism activities, while fostering sustainable tourism.

Ecotourism: An Overview

Nature-based tourism gains in significance yearly, and as a sub-set of this type of tourism, ecotourism grows rapidly. There are many explanations for this development, ranging from psychological ones pertaining to human relationships with nature, to the influence of popular education (the natural history television shows), to the very significant change in attitude towards the environment which has seen it become a mainstream issue on par with economic wellbeing, education and health. The principles of sustainable development, put on every country's agenda by the Brundtland report, "Our Common Future", are changing the world.

At this point in time, ecotourism is still special interest tourism, of which there are many kinds. Imagine that there is a large hotel on the outskirts of a city with many cultural attributes and nearby there is a National Park. At any one time, staying in this hotel could be tourists whose prime interest is shopping in the city. Then there could be tourists whose main interest is culture — they undertake tours to museums, cathedrals and occasionally go shopping and take one walk in the National Park. Then there could be tourists whose first love is sport. They might have gathered in this hotel because it is near to a football ground, tennis centre or ski field. While not involved with their favourite sport, they might do some shopping or visit the theatre. And there could be nature lovers at the hotel. They spend most of the time ambling through the National Park, having picnics near a crystal clear stream, but also find time to engage in other activities. There could be adventure tourists who seek the natural environment because of the thrills of white-water rafting, but that is where their interest stops.

What of the ecotourists? They might do all, or at least some, of the things just mentioned, but their main activities will involve not simply walking in the National Park, but seeking out knowledge about it. What animal species live in the area? What is the geological foundation of the place? Are there any threatened plants or animals? What is the area's cultural history? The ecotourists will want to assist in some small way in the management of the area.

The differences between tourist types should be becoming obvious. The ecotourist will be keen to discover that the hotel is practising green productivity: it has had a environmental audit and found that there is waste in the use of water and energy; it has had consultants prepare an environmental management system by which to better manage resources — to do more with less.

The ecotourists — and presumably the other visitors also — are pleased that it is a "green" hotel. However, that does not make for an ecotourism experience. The ecotourist notices that the tour operators in the National Park are extremely careful to stay on the walking tracks, to limit numbers of tourists at any point in time, and to ensure the removal of wastes. The tours are sound "green" products. And the hotel and park management staff work together to achieve the interests of both the public sector and the private sector. It appears that good profits are being earned each year by the operators and are likely to continue. That is, the tourism businesses are sustainable and so is the environment on which they depend. Yet, green tourist products and sustainable businesses based on sustainable ecosystems are necessary but not sufficient conditions to meet the ecotourism criteria. In Boxes 3 and 4, Tsung-Wei Lai defines sustainable tourism, nature-based tourism and ecotourism.

Ecotourism is nature-based tourism; it is low impact tourism (based on the principles of green productivity and ecology); but it is, importantly, both an enjoyable and learning experience for the tourists (that is, the tourists want interpretation of the environment they are in); it is tourism which respects local cultures (however, it is not cultural tourism — where the prime focus is culture); and it gives something back to the community in recognition of the satisfaction gained by the tourists.

Ecotourism is linked to the distinctive nature of a place. It is not adventure tourism — one can bungy jump anywhere! Ecotourism is not sightseeing, because sightseeing does not require tourists to engage with the place. Firsthand (or some would say "hands on") experiences like being able to smell the flowers and vegetation as it rots, being able to hear the song birds, and pull leeches from your skin in a rainforest, are the characteristic of ecotourism.

To summarise, good interpretation services, cultural sensitivity and involvement with the local community are the three issues which differentiate ecotourism from its cousins — green tourism and sustainable tourism.

Readers of this book will discover debate about the acceptable scale of ecotourism. Some advocate small-scale (village level) operations. They don't believe larger operations (whether they be bus, boat, rail or cable-car tours, or resorts and theme parks) can meet ecotourism criteria. There is no easy answer to this other than to say that scale does not matter if the tourism product is low impact (some large-scale operations can have less impact because of their design than the cumulative impact of many small-scale operators) and meets the other necessary criteria of good interpretation and giving something back to the community.

One can understand, to some extent, the proponents of small-scale ecotourism because until fairly recently — until the advent of accredited or certified ecotourism products — there was a strong propensity for the large-scale operations not to meet ecotourism criteria. The scale question is likely to be answered on a case-by-case basis, much depending on the type of tourism operation, the management philosophy, government regulations and type of infrastructure.

A range of views is expressed in Part B on the matter of scale and related issues. At this stage in the development of ecotourism (recall it is of very recent origin) the optimal approach is likely to be "let a thousand flowers bloom".

Box 3: Definition of Sustainable Tourism (by Tsung-Wei Lai)

The definition of sustainable tourism is still open to various interpretations. Sustainable tourism, according to McLaren (1998, p. 109), is defined as meeting the needs of present tourists and host regions while protecting and enhancing opportunities for the future. Based on the principles of ecological economics, Driml and Common (1996, p. 4)define sustainable tourism as tourism which is compatible with the conservation of the existing natural environment while generating a non-declining stream of net economic benefits. The difference between "tourism as sustainable development" and "sustainable tourism" should be recognised. Sustainable tourism only has to maintain its viability as a profit generating activity for an indefinite period of time whereas "tourism as sustainable development" needs to fulfil the principles of sustainable development.

Butler (1993, p. 29) suggested a more comprehensive definition of sustainable tourism, that is, tourism

which is developed and maintained in an area (community, environment) in such a manner and at such a scale that it remains viable over an indefinite period, and does not degrade or alter the environment (human and physical) in which it exists to such a degree that it prohibits the successful development and well-being of other activities and processes.

Box 4: Nature-based Tourism and Ecotourism (by Tsung-Wei Lai)

The concept of nature-based tourism burgeoned in the early 1900s with the Sierra Club outings in the United States. In the early 1980s, the concept of ecotourism was developed by conservationists, such as Hector Ceballos-Lascurain who started to use the term "ecotourism" while lobbying to conserve wetlands in northern Yucatan for a breeding ground for the American flamingo. To persuade developers not to build marinas, he argued that tourist activities such as bird watching would boost the economy of the rural community and help conserve the fragile ecosystem at the same time. Accordingly, ecotourism was branded as a means to give nature value so that conservation can be achieved without sacrificing economic growth.

The definition of ecotourism is still evolving. According to Australia's National Ecotourism Strategy, ecotourism is defined as "nature-based tourism that involves interpretation and education of the natural environment and is

managed to be ecologically sustainable." The Ecotourism Society defines ecotourism as "responsible travel to natural areas that conserves the environment and improves the benefits of local people." Honey expands the social characteristics of ecotourism to include aspects of ethics and democracy (1999, pp, 22–24). According to the broad definition suggested by Honey, genuine ecotourism has the following characteristics:

- involves travel to natural destinations;
- minimises impact;
- builds environmental awareness;
- provides direct financial benefits for conservation;
- provides financial benefits and employment for local people;
- respects local culture; and
- supports human rights and democratic movements.

In essence, the key elements that distinguish ecotourism from other tourism operations are: a focus on the natural environment, ecological sustainability, education and interpretation, and local and regional benefits. As one of the fastest growing sectors in the tourism industry, ecotourism is charged with a mission to promote sustainable tourism practices.

Ecotourism in Detail

In Box 5, the eight principles of ecotourism applied by the Australian certification scheme (NEAP) are outlined. These criteria are consistent with those suggested by a range of experts; in fact, they could be considered marginally more rigorous than those used by Honey, who is very critical (and rightly so) of "lite" ecotourism.

Box 5: Ecotourism Criteria

Focuses on directly and personally experiencing nature.

Provides opportunities to experience nature in ways that lead to greater understanding, appreciation and enjoyment.

Represents best practice for environmentally sustainable tourism.

Positively contributes to the conservation of natural areas.

Provides constructive ongoing contributions to local communities.

Is sensitive to and involves different cultures, especially indigenous cultures.

Consistently meets customer expectations.

Is marketed accurately and leads to realistic expectations.

What these criteria do not explicitly focus on are matters such as how to have minimal impact, how to "design with nature", how to interpret nature, how to benchmark, and how to prepare an ecotourist audit. Consider the following issues as examples.

With regard to minimal impact on animals, think of whale-watching. The number of tourists to a whale-watching area will be determined by the size of the area. The number of boats will be limited, the movement and noise of the boats will be strictly controlled. If the tourist activity interacts with dolphins, the number of people in the water at any one time will be strictly limited. Feeding of the animals will not be permitted.

If the issue is design of an accommodation house, the basics will include (before a sod of earth is turned) a climate analysis, a locality analysis and a site analysis. Climate will determine the design of the building and the materials used. The locality analysis will determine the actual site of the building, the construction methods, the water supply, etc. At the site level, a large range of matters will be dealt with to minimise impact: drainage, stormwater, solid waste, noise, visual impact, air quality, cultural sensitivity, and personal experiences.

As an example of how climate determines design, consider Box 6 which relates to a small tourism establishment in the wet tropics. At the site level see the discussion in Box 7.

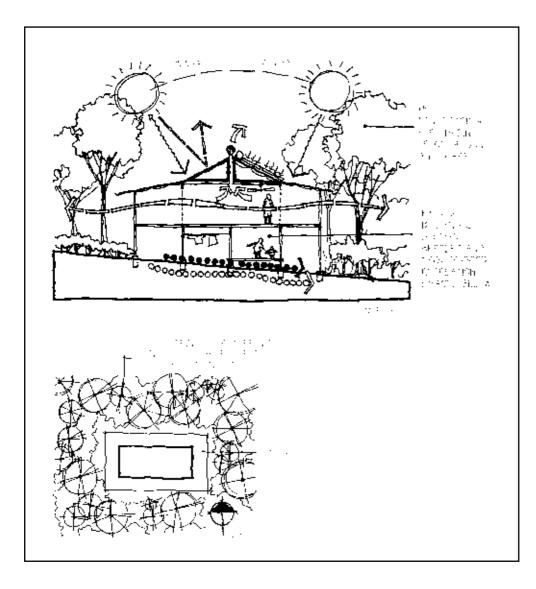
Box 6: Climate and Design: Wet Coastal Tropics (from Queensland Tourism)

Climate Condition

- Very humid all round with warm to hot conditions and high ground temperatures
- Solar radiation is intense.
- Summer is usually a wet season.

Design Response

- 100% shading of habitable area all year round by use of large overhangs.
- Lightweight materials for structures (heavy materials like bricks or blockwork store heat)
- Raised floors to assist in cooling.
- Roofs should be well insulated, as should walls and floors.
- Ventilation should be maximised.



Box 7: Site Analysis (from Queensland Tourism)

When conducting a site analysis, development site needs to be selected. there are two issues that need to be addressed: • where to build; and include: what to build. Where to Build

After decisions have been made on the best general location, a specific

- There are some general rules to be followed when deciding upon the specific site of a structure. These
 - building on the least sensitive areas. or areas that have already been subject to human disturbance;

- siting the development in an area Layout with natural values that can be in a wider context; and
- considering the type of tenure, and rights of access and use.

What to Build

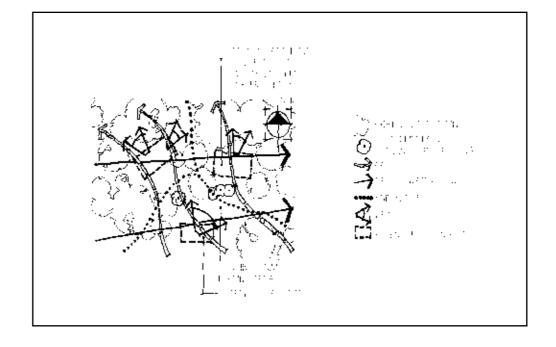
This process can be broadly broken down into eight categories, or 'building blocks'. Each building block integrates with the others to form the final design of the structure. Each will play some part in influencing the choices made about one or more building blocks.

The eight building blocks are:

- 1. layout;
- 2. planning:
- 3. building practice;
- 4. materials;
- 5. forms;
- 6. material's qualities;
- 7. technology (energy, water supply, waste); and
- 8. costs.

When deciding upon the exact used to interpret the environment location of the building, and the relationships between the different components of the development, there are a number of factors that need to be considered. These include:

- The site features of the site such as: aspect, slope, vegetation, hydrology, soil types, fauna, geomorphology and cultural heritage.
- ٠ Interactions between people and the site - the movement of people around the site, as well as the views, sounds and smells that can be experienced. for Opportunities these experiences should be enhanced, as they will add to visitors' appreciation of the location.
- Technology systems energy, waste, water supply communications. lighting, etc. The layout of the buildings on the site should allow these systems to operate efficiently, and should also assist in minimising the effects of their installation and operation on the site.



- External lighting should be kept to the minimum needed for safe pedestrian movement around the site. Lights should be positioned low to the ground or controlled for coverage and to minimise glow spread. This reduces the impact of lighting on the activities of fauna and the visual disturbances of the natural nightscape.
- For similar reasons, any high-noise mechanical systems (e.g. extractor fans) should be located within a building near areas that are used for high noise activities (such as loading docks or playground areas). Otherwise they should be isolated in purpose-built structures. Avoiding, or limiting the use of these systems is the most acoustically effective means of noise control.

The figure illustrates a design response to a selection of potential site constraints:

- buildings are placed to minimise or avoid damage to natural vegetation, to minimise interference with natural ground and surface water flows and, importantly, fauna pathways and feeding areas;
- taking advantage of breezes, winds and access to sunlight; and
- balancing views and privacy (visual and acoustic).

Next consider interpretation, there is a need to be conscious of various facts: (i) interpretation provides information, but information is not necessarily interpretive; (ii) interpretation should be pleasurable; (iii) interpretation should involve first hand experience and awaken visitors' senses, motivate and develop attitudes based on knowledge; and (iv) interpretative tools (guided walks, activities etc.) are only limited by the imagination.

In Conclusion

Ecotourism is the future of tourism, but it will have to resolve the issue of large-scale ecotourism. Depending on the circumstances, there can be better ecological and economic benefits from large-scale ecotourism. There are already examples in Australia where this is obvious. However, scale is a case-by-case decision. The fundamentals of ecotourism (given that it is taken as given it will be based on green productivity principles, in that it is nature-based, provides quality experiences, is enjoyable, and is profitable not only for the operators but the local community) do not change with a change in scale. And there are as many ways as there are intelligent people to practice ecotourism.

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Chapter Three

Tourism and World Heritage

(The late) PHC (Bing) Lucas

Introduction

Conferences can be life changing. Two I attended in 1972 certainly were for me and were influential in my being here today (the 2000 Annual Conference of the Australian Ecotourism Association, Phillip Island). At the time, I was New Zealand's first Director of National Parks and, while tourism was still relatively low key in our parks, already some in the tourism industry were seeing parks people in a negative light, always saying "No".

For my part, I was battling to get resources to manage the parks and needed allies. I saw a need to build bridges between park management and the tourism industry. For it seemed to me that tourism and conservation should be natural allies — tourism helping people enjoy and appreciate their natural heritage and park management maintaining the integrity of nature essential to sustain tourism.

My thinking received positive reinforcement at the Banff General Assembly of IUCN in 1972. Venezuelan Gererdo Budowski spoke on the subject "*Tourism and conservation: conflict, coexistence or symbiosis?*". At Banff, with the exponential expansion of the townsite cutting across the migration paths of wildlife in the Bow Valley, conflict was very evident.

I sensed that in New Zealand we were moving from conflict to coexistence as I was in regular dialogue with tourism industry leaders, having been appointed to the National Tourism Advisory Council. But the ultimate goal had to be symbiosis, a term Budowski drew from biology meaning *"interaction between two different organisms living in close physical association, typically to the advantage of both"*. An immediate product of Gererdo's address was that I chaired an informal workshop at Banff which drafted a recommendation adopted by the General Assembly. It stressed the vital importance of working towards a symbiotic relationship between conservation and tourism.

The need for this relationship is even greater today as the world has become a global village with vastly increased mobility of people seeking to escape city life and find recreation, refreshment and inspiration in great places typified by World Heritage sites.

An Idea Whose Time Had Arrived

From the Banff meetings, I flew south for the centennial of Yellowstone as the world's first National Park and to attend the Second World Conference on National Parks. At the 1972 Parks Conference, I heard an address by American judge, Russell Train, advocating what he called "*An Idea Whose Time has Arrived*". The idea — a World Heritage Trust — had been in the melting pot for five years or so, having bubbled up independently in UNESCO, in IUCN and in the United States. All proposals had the aim of providing a mechanism for international cooperation to identify and protect places considered part of the heritage of all people.

It was indeed an idea whose time had arrived as separate draft proposals for conventions on nature and on culture were tabled at the UN Conference on the Human Environment in Stockholm in September 1972. They were endorsed in principle provided they were integrated into a single draft. They were and in Paris on 16 November, 1972 the General Conference of UNESCO adopted the *Convention concerning the protection of the world cultural and natural heritage*, which we know today as the World Heritage Convention.

The idea had gained momentum remarkable in diplomacy, and the Convention to identify and protect natural and cultural places of "*outstanding value*" and "*universal value*" came into being. Today some 160 nations are parties to the Convention with more than 600 sites inscribed on the prestigious World Heritage List.

Tourism and World Heritage: Presentation and Education

But where does tourism fit into this international agreement, for the words "*tourism*" or "*tourists*" do not appear in the Convention's text? In fact, tourism appears in the text in the guise of "*presentation*" and "*education*". Article 4 of the Convention says that a State (meaning country) which is party to the Convention has the primary "*duty of ensuring the identification, protection, conservation, presentation and transmission to future generations of the cultural and natural heritage ... situated on its territory ..."*

For us, "presentation" is the operative word here as my dictionary defines it as "the act of presenting, the mode of presenting, introducing to the public, exhibiting to view". Article 27 of the Convention commits State Parties (countries) to "strengthen appreciation and respect by their peoples of the cultural and natural heritage ... in particular by educational and information programs". I see the tourism industry as a key partner with State Parties in presenting World Heritage sites to the public and in informing and educating the public, thus helping implement two articles of the Convention.

Sustainable Tourism

The Convention, then, provides a clear basis for public enjoyment and understanding of World Heritage sites where public use is compatible with the maintenance of a site's integrity. With appropriate safeguards, this can apply even to strict nature reserves which are World Heritage sites, such as the island of St Kilda off the Scottish coast, Aldabra Atoll in the Seychelles and the Australian and New Zealand Subantarctic Islands for all of which exist tight restrictions on landing to protect sensitive natural values.

There is no doubt in my mind that carefully planned sustainable visitor use of a World Heritage site can play a significant role in its long term conservation, both in making visitors more aware of its qualities and in giving an area an added economic value. This was recognised in July when Ted Turner's United Nations Foundation announced a US\$2 500 000 project to develop models for linking sustainable tourism and biodiversity conservation in six World Heritage sites. The project will support integrated activities involving site managers, NGOs, communities and the private sector in innovative partnerships to generate concrete benefits for biodiversity, local communities and the tourism industry. Four of the sites chosen for the project are in Latin America and the other two in Indonesia — Ujung Kulon and Komodo.

The Socio-economic Aspects

The economic value of tourism has proved very important for Yellowstone, one of the first natural sites inscribed on the World Heritage List in 1978. Yellowstone is currently listed as World Heritage in Danger following a recommendation to this end from the United States administration to the World Heritage Committee in 1995. This move was triggered by a major mining proposal on US Forest Service land in the catchment of the Yellowstone River. The issue created a major controversy, the mining proponents claiming that the minerals could be worth a billion dollars. "So what", said conservationists, pointing out that Yellowstone as a World Heritage site generates a billion dollars in income not once, but year in and year out.

In the event, the Clinton administration spent US\$64 million buying out the mining company. However, Yellowstone still has the status of World Heritage in Danger, in part because ever-increasing visitor use has led to threats to water quality from leaking wastes and sewage. So tourism is not always benign and there must be limits if the goose that lays the golden tourism egg is not to be put at risk.

As Yellowstone shows, the economic stakes from tourism in World Heritage sites are high. The US Park Service has developed a simple "Money Generation Model" (MGM for short). This shows that Yellowstone's 6 million visitor days generate one billion dollar visitor sales and 15 000 jobs. Even a remote World Heritage Area — Wrangell-St Elias in Alaska — generates almost US\$19 million a year and around 200 local jobs from just 55 000 visitor days.

IUCN has estimated that visits (not tourists) to 150 World Heritage sites listed for their natural qualities total some 600 million annually, 90% of those visits being to sites in just four countries — the United States, Canada, Australia and New Zealand. This surely means that there is a strong mutual vested interest among park managers and tourism operators in our region to ensure that visitor use is compatible with protection so that tourism is genuinely sustainable.

Principles for Managing Tourism in World Heritage Areas

In 1993, the UNESCO World Heritage Centre, with UNEP, organised an International Workshop on "*Managing Tourism in Natural World Heritage Sites*". Held in Dakar, Senegal, the workshop attracted both tourism interests and World Heritage site managers from many countries including Australia and New Zealand. All involved agreed that "*site managers must take a more active role in working with the tourism industry to protect resources and provide quality visitors' services and opportunities to local residents*".

The workshop identified ten general principles which should guide management of tourism in World Heritage sites. These are presented in summary form in Box 1.

Box 1: The 10 Principles

The principles are:

- (i) that tourism respects ecological and socio-cultural values and World Heritage status;
- (ii) that management plans be regularly updated and address the regional context and the tourism component;
- (iii) that environmental assessments precede any approvals for recreational and commercial facilities;
- (iv) that monitoring programs with indicators are taken into account in decision making;
- (v) that local people are involved so that they take pride in their heritage and benefit from tourism;
- (vi) that cooperation with tourism interests is sought and promotion of the site is coordinated;
- (vii) that all site staff are aware of World Heritage values and are adequately trained in visitor management;
- (viii) that information and education programs ensure visitors and local people understand and respect the site;
- (ix) that a substantial proportion of income from any entrance fee is allocated to site management; and
- (x) that the site helps promote the World Heritage concept.

The Partnership Approach

Cooperation between World Heritage management and tourism operators is increasing in many World Heritage Areas. For example, Parks Canada is currently developing a Heritage Tourism Strategy in the Rocky Mountains World Heritage Area. This involves working with hoteliers and transport operators so they can inform visitors about the National Parks and the World Heritage values. Already, Parks Canada works with management of Canadian Pacific Hotels in Banff and Brewsters (operators of hotels and transport) to develop courses on the area's heritage values for staff, including coach drivers, hotel desk staff, waiters, waitresses and shop assistants.

With a similar aim, the Hadrian's Wall Tourism partnership in Northumbia produces a "*Practical Guide to Hadrian's Wall for tour operators, coach drivers and couriers*" among an impressive array of visitor publications for this World Heritage site where landscape quality complements its historic importance. Since 1995, local government and tourism interests have combined with management agencies such as English Heritage and the National Trust to establish the partnership as a public and private sector initiative to promote sustainable tourism around Hadrian's Wall. A key aim is to spread visitation across the whole site, both to minimise environmental impact on the most visited places and to spread the economic benefits to more communities. It is also part of the partnership's objective to promote Hadrian's Wall as a World Heritage site to increase the number of higher spending overseas visitors from the current level of 25%. In fostering overseas visitors, the partnership works through the British Travel Authority and uses World Heritage status as an important marketing tool.

A cooperative approach is also vital to ensure cultural values are respected in sites inscribed for both natural and cultural values. In New Zealand's Tongariro National Park, the need to respect Maori concern for their sacred mountains meant that inscription of the site was deferred until a revised management plan was completed. It prescribed an upper limit for ski-field development that respected the sacred summits. Such cultural issues are, of course, familiar to those involved with the Uluru-Kata Tjuta World Heritage Area in central Australia, in relation to the sensitivities of the Anangu people.

Case Studies

Tourism operators have a vested interest in conservation. I spoke recently with Rodney Russ, a former wildlife officer in New Zealand, who has established Heritage Expeditions, taking tours, among other places, to the Australian and New Zealand Subantarctic Island World Heritage sites — Macquarie and five New Zealand island groups. His major concern with the New Zealand islands is to see World Heritage status provide leverage to achieve greater protection of the marine environment on which the impressive wildlife depends. He feels that his clientele, around 90% international, are attracted by the scientific values and are less influenced in their decision to visit by World Heritage status. His attitude to the need for a conservation emphasis is shared by many of us involved with World Heritage. So much effort goes into nominating sites and putting them on the List that often too little time or energy seems to be left to devote to the ongoing integrity of sites.

I have been privileged to experience some outstanding examples of eco- and cultural tourism in World Heritage sites. I think of Australian Jim Edwards who set up the Tiger Tops operation in Nepal's Royal Chitwan National Park. I recall it as an exemplary operation using a sensitively designed jungle lodge and tent camp giving small groups of visitors a quality experience. Briefings of visitors by company naturalists took place in the lodge during the heat of the day while the company provided different modes of transport for morning and late afternoon wildlife viewing. The Asian one-horned rhino, for example, could be seen from the back of an elephant, with other wildlife seen from a dug-out canoe floating down the Rapti River. The company used to offer a wake-up call to see the Royal Bengal tiger attracted by a tethered goat. Of its own volition, the company ceased this when it realised it was not an appropriate way to present the tiger to visitors. And Tiger Tops Nepal has established its own conservation society as well as bringing social and economic benefits to nearby villages of Tharu people who share in the water supply and health clinics and the market gardening enterprise which serve both visitors and the Tharu people.

There are many excellent examples of ecotourism operations large and small in World Heritage sites but I will conclude with a sizeable company which operates very effectively in the 2.4 million hectare Te Wahipounamu/South West New Zealand World Heritage site which includes four National Parks. Fiordland Travel has grown from a pioneering launch and walking track operator into a major operation from its bases in Queenstown and Te Anau.

Their Marketing Manager, Robyn Jebson, told me that the company's attitude to operating in a World Heritage Area is reflected in its internet site and its brochures which say it is seen as "*a privilege to operate in this designated World Heritage Area — Te Wahipounamu*". Robyn told me that the company recognises that World Heritage status means visitors have higher expectations: they expect the place will be special and they have no tolerance to any signs of pollution, for example. For the company, this can mean higher costs to meet the expected standards but the company sees this as worthwhile.

The company recognises the danger of the "*loved to death*" syndrome and cooperates with the Department of Conservation as the management agency to marry use and protection, recognising that the area's managers "*are guardians of the area as part of the public estate and it is in the company's interest to work to maintain that good relationship*". Attracting a diverse clientele including some 70% from overseas, the company's challenge is to meet a wide diversity of travel preferences from those who travel in groups to those who travel independently, and from those who seek a high level of comfort to those who want an experience close to nature. To meet this diversity, their overnight cruises on Milford Sound, for example, provide in-depth interpretation and soft adventure experiences such as kayaking and tender vessels to allow shoreline exploration. With all this, it must be encouraging to the World Heritage management agency to know that the company's marketing manager holds a postgraduate degree in Resource Management.

Conclusion

Yes, tourism in World Heritage Areas is a vital undertaking which should be carried out in a spirit of mutual cooperation between the tourism industry and the site management agency for the benefit of the visitors and the prestigious concept of World Heritage.

Chapter Four

Green Productivity and Ecotourism

Liana Bratasida

Introduction

Tourism is one of the largest and steadily growing economic sectors world wide, as well as being a sector in which developing nations have a considerable stake. Tourism has great potential to help the implementation of conservation and development objectives, such as creating economic benefits and job opportunities for local communities, adding to national income and furthering the acceptance of nature conservation and environmental protection.

The concept of sustainable tourism development provides an opportunity for local communities to take an active role in conservation and protection of the environment. The involvement of local communities is important, particularly because the tourism sector mostly depends on tourism attractions and activities that are related to the natural environment, history and cultural heritage. In addition, the sustainable development concept underlines the necessity of spreading the social benefits of tourism as widely as possible to local communities.

According to the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (or Earth Summit), held in Rio de Janeiro in 1992, the concept of sustainable tourism is defined as:

"Sustainable tourism development meets the needs of present tourists and host regions while protecting and enhancing opportunities for the future. It is envisaged as leading to management of all resources in such a way that economic, social and aesthetic needs can be fulfilled while maintaining cultural integrity, essential ecological processes, biological diversity and life support systems."

To achieve the objectives of sustainable tourism development assessments of carrying capacity and an environmental planning approach are necessary in order to prevent environmental and socio-cultural problems resulting from tourism. Given the complexity of tourism, and the involvement of various parties in the industry, each with their own interests, it is not surprising that tourism activities can cause unacceptable impacts on the environment. Environmental impacts associated with tourism activities include soil erosion, disturbance of wildlife, exhaustion of water sources, deterioration in water quality, generation of solid wastes, effluent, emissions and so on. Tourist infrastructure, lodging and transport facilities often damage the landscape. Many sites around the world have been spoiled, including some protected areas. In addition, tourism may also disturb the social and cultural structures of local communities, including their way of life.

No one would doubt the need for tourism. Its economic contributions to the individual, and local and regional communities are obvious. However, it needs to be realised that those who gain from tourism are not always the ones who have to bear the costs. Moreover, the costs are sometimes greater than the benefits. Therefore, a holistic and strategic planning approach in developing a sustainable and sound tourism industry is necessary.

Regulation and Monitoring

For many years, numerous regulations to support sustainable tourism development have been issued by a variety of organisations, both at international and national levels. This means that in many places the management of the environment and natural resources in tourism areas is focused on a mandatory approach. This approach, however, often proved to be inefficient. In some cases environmental deterioration still continues as can be seen at many tourism destinations.

Not to underestimate the role of regulations in conserving and protecting environmental quality, regulation should be supported by another, more effective, efficient and flexible approach, namely a self-regulatory or a voluntary approach. Environmental Management Systems (EMS), environmental labelling, cleaner production, green productivity (GP) are tools that use a self-regulatory or voluntary approach.

Fundamentally, it is a matter of integrating the environment with the management of the business as another factor to be considered in the decision-making process. This should be done for economic reasons, because of the major savings that can be made in energy, water and raw materials; for legal reasons, because of the gradual tightening of environmental legislation; for market reasons, given increasing competitiveness, and; for reasons of marketing and corporate image, with the ever-increasing awareness among consumers, and the need to maintain good relations with local communities.

The importance of monitoring environmental performance is now widely recognised, particularly in highly sensitive sectors. Tools such as

environmental audits, environmental reporting and total quality environmental management (TQEM) are now acknowledged as essential components of good environmental management in a growing number of industries. Monitoring and reporting, though two distinct processes, are in fact one function. However, most industries give much higher priority to monitoring than to reporting. The reporting of environmental performance is still at an early stage of development. There is controversy as to whether reporting information should be verified independently by a third party, or by other members of the same organisation, and how this is to be done.

The importance of reporting for sustainable development was stressed in Agenda 21, which states "business and industry should be encouraged to report annually on their environmental records, as well as on their use of energy and natural resources".

Waste Prevention, Reduction and Recycling

Waste prevention, reduction and recycling programs are approaches that can be implemented in almost every type of tourism activity. The concept of waste prevention is very simple: not creating waste in the first place. Waste prevention also means reducing and reusing things, instead of buying new materials. In other words, reduction at source is one form of waste prevention.

The implementation of a waste prevention and reduction program not only prevents resources from being over-exploited but also saves money. Individuals and businesses can often save a significant amount of money through this approach. Recycling is a process of breaking materials down to a simple form before reshaping them into something new. Recycling involves a complex process. Usually, materials that can be efficiently and effectively converted to raw material for use in new products are collected from businesses and residences, then are sold to manufacturers for processing and reuse in the manufacture of products. Paper, plastic, steel and glass are materials that can be recycled very easily.

Recycling activities can be applied directly or indirectly in tourist establishments. Some examples are presented in Box 1.

Box 1: Recycling Activities for Tourism

- Separation of organic waste at origin, either to be delivered to separate containers in the local processing plant (municipal incinerators), or to be treated and turned into compost by the establishment itself, or to be used in some previously agreed agricultural activity.
- Separation of glass and storage in dedicated containers for delivery.
- Collection of batteries and chemicals (photographic products, insulation)

in a special recipient. Do not forget that these should be delivered to an operator licensed for this purpose. Otherwise this constitutes a serious problem, especially when collection campaigns are mounted without identifying who the competent manager is for this type of waste. They often end up at the rubbish tip, creating a very powerful means of contamination because they are concentrated at one spot.

- Recovery of materials both internally and externally, such as stone, wood or soil.
- Collection and delivery for recycling of used engine oil.
- Establishment of standard practices, for example, the use of recycled paper and bottles.

Energy

Tourist centres and accommodation facilities are often large energy consumers. Energy consumption from tourist accommodation alone very often exceeds local consumption. Major electricity consuming activities are air conditioning, lighting and kitchen use. This has an enormous impact, because, in the case of electricity, it forces the authorities to build oversized power stations and other basic energy infrastructure. To reduce the impact, certain GP practices might be implemented, such as minimising energy consumption, promoting maximum use of renewable energy sources and maximising efficiency of energy use.

The solution to unnecessary use of energy involves all management actions, and the use of devices and constructive solutions that help to reduce consumption. Energy saving solutions in buildings will obviously only be feasible if they are introduced in the design process or when a building is being renovated. The latter is very important, as tourist facilities undergo a complete renovation processes every 15 to 20 years. Box 2 outlines a range of potential solutions.

Box 2: Energy-saving solutions

Adopting Passive Systems in Buildings

These can include :

- air circulation and heat insulation systems
- layout to allow maximum use of natural light
- introduction of building techniques and materials that allow an accumulation of solar radiation heat or air currents for cooling
- provision of bio-climate guidelines in the design.

Lighting

- Control extreme levels of artificial lighting.
- Use paints and colors that facilitate saving in lighting.
- Use of energy efficient light bulbs.
- Reduction of unnecessary exterior impact lighting (advertisements, facades, balconies).
- Proper maintenance of the lighting system.
- Central disconnection system for the lighting in each accommodation unit, and information for tourists about the company's energy-saving policy.
- Sensors for light off/on.

Air conditioning and hot water

- Optimise temperatures in common spaces within acceptable limits.
- Disconnect heating or air conditioning in unoccupied areas.
- Centralised disconnection, or reduction to minimum level of air conditioning, in accommodation units when unoccupied.
- Use of thermostats for regulating air conditioning.
- Use air conditioning disconnection devices when outside terraces and windows are open.
- Installation of energy-efficient air conditioning units.
- Avoid overheating water supply to bathrooms.
- Use twin-speed motors in the air conditioning cooling towers (reduces noise level and energy cost).

Kitchen and Laundry

- Clean heat exchange surfaces in fridges systematically, avoiding the formation of frost in the evaporator.
- Systematic cleaning and maintenance of ovens, kitchen stoves, steam baths, etc. to ensure good heat transmission.
- Use the central hot water system in high-capacity laundries, avoiding an independent system.
- Separate hot zones from refrigerated zones.
- Guarantee airtight closing of freezer and cold stores.

Other Saving Measures

- Monitor and adjust the operating time of all energy-consuming equipment.
- When conditions allow, replace obsolete equipment with equipment that consumes less.

Water

Water is a scarce and strategic resource. In the context of tourism on islands, water availability is often critical. The development of tourism in many island destinations has increased consumption to levels that are way above

water replacement rates and availability. In fact, desalination of seawater and using seawater for toilet flushing is becoming a normal option for many islands. The risks of the tourist industry over-exploiting water resources are obvious: exhaustion of the water table; deterioration in water quality; and competition with local activities like farming, increasing water prices for the local population. All too often these generate serious conflicts between tourist centres and their neighbours. The volume of water needed by a hotel can vary, often exceeding 200m³ per unit of accommodation per year. This is because both direct and indirect consumption by tourists must be counted, such as that from bathrooms, general services, kitchen, laundry and swimming pools. Box 3 presents a range of potential solutions.

Box 3: Water-saving Solutions

The following will assist in saving water:

- Adjust discharge volumes in toilets to the minimum level at which they do their job. Most tanks discharge far more water than is necessary.
- Fit flow metres or automatically opening and closing devices to the water pipes, limiting flow time in the establishment's common services.

Fit low consumption heads in showers. They should be cleaned periodically to maintain efficiency. Monitor and maintain water pipes and circuits in good condition to avoid loss.

- Fit time switches and flushes activated by photo-electric cells.
- Use drought-resistance plants in gardens.
- Adjust watering times in the gardens to the minimum necessary.
- Fit rainwater collection systems on buildings, on roofs and flat surfaces.
- Re-use wastewater. For example, by establishing independent circuits for toilets, fed from recycled soapy water, or water gardens with the same water, after simple treatment.
- Inform clients and encourage them to save water. Suggest measures they can take and promote a reasonable use of water in their activities.
- Establish recommendations on how often towels and sheets are changed. For example, leaving a towel on the floor means it should be changed, or a sign to be left on the bed when sheets do not need changing. The frequency with which sheets and towels are changed in many hotels can be justified from the point of view of cleanliness, but it also represents a large consumption of water in the laundry.
- Minimise renewal of swimming pool water by optimising filter and treatment systems.
- Re-use swimming pool water for other purposes.
- Adjust water consumption in the laundry by establishing minimum use in machines or by acquiring more efficient equipment.

Waste Treatment

Waste is a huge environmental issue world wide. Waste impacts on the environment, both because it takes energy and materials to produce in the first place, and because it leads to pollution problems when disposed of. The activities of the tourism industry, taken together, always produce waste, and emissions of undesirable particles that pollute the air. They also produce effluents which, when discharged, can affect water tables, watercourses and seas. The waste generated by a tourist establishment varies enormously and solutions will depend basically on the kind of waste that needs to be treated.

The environmental objectives are to reduce waste production to the strictly necessary minimum; reduce the pollution of air, water resources and impacts on surrounding land; and increase the environmental health of the area around the establishment. The ideas and solutions that are provided below might also make sound business sense; we can work out how much money could be saved by carrying out the most practical options. These savings can come from: (i) ordering less originally; (ii) lower disposal costs, and (iii) revenue from sale of waste materials.

Most tourism infrastructure and services (especially hotels) dispose of large quantities of solid waste of various kinds. The different fractions of solid waste include: (i) organic waste from kitchens and gardening; (ii) non -organic waste such as bottles, cans, packing, plastics, and wrapping in general; (iii) contaminated or hazardous waste and products: remains of containers with chemicals, fuels, ash, batteries, pesticides, insecticides, solvents, varnishes and paints; (iv) office paper, toner, plastics, inks and computer consumables; (v) maintenance and building waste: inert waste, metals, wires, panels and glass. As always, the general solution is to prevent the generation of waste from the origin, reduce waste production, recover and recycle, and re-use. Box 4 sets out in some detail and range of potential solutions to the waste problem.

Box 4: Reducing Waste

- Supply bathroom products in refillable dispensers. There is a wide range available on the international market.
- Eliminate or reduce the use of disposable products in all services: cutlery, serviettes, mats, tablecloths, glasses and trays.
- Reduce as much as possible the use of small individual portions of products, as these represent one of the main sources of solid waste.
- Promote the use of returnable containers, primarily for drinks. Use glass, and recycled and returnable containers.

- Use refillable and ecologically compatible systems in office material, inks and toner cartridges.
- Drastically reduce communiqués and printed circulars concerning customer information and activities. Electronic and telematic media and fixed panels and notice boards are a good alternative.
- Reduce both in-house and external disposable advertising: leaflets, stickers and labels.
- Use returnable bags (cloth and other materials) for clothes being sent for laundry or ironing.
- When direct or auxiliary services require the use of bags or containers, these should be returnable.
- Order food supplies to avoid unnecessary leftovers, even if prices are insignificant within the overall budget of the company.
- In general, try to adjust purchase estimates to real demand, monitoring "best-by" dates carefully.
- Maintain a policy of total use of all consumables, including maintenance materials: paint, chemicals, oils, fuel and building material.

Effluents and Emissions

This section focuses on releases (to land, water or air) of liquid or gaseous substances that are potentially a hazard to health or bad for the general environment. The most frequent sources of risk come from the disposal of untreated effluent and emissions: hazardous chemical products, emissions from fossil fuel combustion and CFCs. A number of necessary actions and potential solutions exist. These are outlined in Box 5.

Box 5: Reducing Hazardous Wastes

- Elimination or drastic reduction of machinery and consumables that contain halons or CFC compounds.
- Monitoring quality and composition of untreated waters disposed of into the sewer or directly into the surrounding environment, with a view to taking appropriate measures.
- Monitoring the emission of boilers, combustion equipment, etc. in order to take the necessary measures to reduce NO_X, solid particles, CO₂, SO₂ and CO emissions.
- Check that the aerosols used in the establishment do not use CFCs as propellants, and that this is duly stated on the product.
- Replace fire-extinguishing equipment that uses halons, with other harmless ones, such as those based on controlled atmosphere (CO₂, argon) or micro-springs.

- Choose cooling equipment that does not use CFCs or halogen. When old equipment that used these substances has to be disposed of, do not forget that they must be delivered to specialised companies that know how to eliminate the risk to air quality.
- Install active carbon filters in kitchen extractor fans.
- Replace chlorine bleach in swimming pools with a non-toxic ionisation process.
- Carry out periodic reviews of boilers and equipment that use burners, maintaining them in good working order. This will drastically reduce emissions.
- Install a wastewater treatment system if the general network does not do this. There are many different technical solutions.
- Maintaining fuel and substance storage tanks with a high pollution risk in perfect condition, preventing any possible leaks into the environment.

Eco-labels

An eco-label is an award in the form of label, sign or certificate, to provide information to consumers that the product is produced after consideration of environmental aspects in its life cycle, from raw materials, to the production process, distribution, use, disposal and reuse after disposal. It indicates that the product has relatively small impacts on the environment as compared to other products in the same category without an eco-label. It also means that the product has a different environmental quality to non-certified products. Therefore, it is considered as an effective tool to help consumers easily identify which products are "green" or more environmentally friendly.

The growing use of eco-labels reflects an important change in social attitudes to the environment, and is part of a wider movement towards the use of market-based instruments. Eco-labels are intended to bring significant environmental benefits through their positive influence on consumers' purchasing decisions.

Groups of green consumers from developed countries introduced the eco-label concept through their campaigns and demands for green products. Recently, more than 20 eco-label schemes have been developed and implemented world wide by various organisations including governments, NGOs and the private sector. The fact that there are numerous eco-label types and schemes, however, creates problems and confusion and even barriers to trade in global markets. There is evidence showing that a buyer's confusion can become a barrier to trade. Therefore, the International Organization for Standardization (ISO), through its technical committee ISO/TC 207, has attempted to harmonise the eco-label systems by developing guidelines and general requirements. There are three types of eco-label systems according to the ISO 14000 series. These are shown in Box 6.

Box 6: Eco-labels in the ISO14000 series

Туре I (ISO 14024)	Voluntary, multiple-criteria-based third party program that awards a license which authorises the use of environmental labels on products indicating overall environmental preferability of a product within a particular product category based on life cycle consierations.
Type II (ISO FIS/14021)	Self-declaration environmental claims (that is made without independent third party certification) by manufacturers, importers, distributors, retailers or anyone else likely to benefit from such a claim.
Type III (ISO/TR 14025)	Quantified environmental data for a product with pre-set categories of parametres based on ISO 14040 series of standards but not excluding additional environmental information provided within a type III environmental declaration program.

Eco-labels can be characterised by a number of attributes. These are listed in Box 7.

Box 7: The Characteristics of Eco-labels

- A legally protected logo.
- Making a positive statement and rewarding environmental leadership.
- Life-Cycle-Assessment (LCA) of a certain product category (that is, a group of products or services used for a specific function).
- Voluntary participation for potential licences (non-regulatory tool).
- Independence from commercial interests regarding its source of funding and its organisational structure (not-profit-orientated).
- Open access to all potential licencees (e.g. from abroad).
- Periodic review and update of both environmental criteria and categories (for establishing appropriate criteria levels to encourage further technological and market-place development in favour of less damaging products and services).

The transparency, access and credibility of eco-label schemes have emerged as important in the trade and environment context. Transparency at the development stage increases the opportunities for access by exporters. It is also important to provide opportunities for input from the public if the resulting eco-label is to command credibility from consumers. The design of an eco-label needs to take account of the GATT and the Technical Barriers to Trade Agreement. It is also of vital importance that schemes should be rigorous and even-handed in the testing and certification of products. Technical assistance to developing countries is needed in a number of areas, including environmental testing, environmental auditing, life cycle analysis, certification and participation in international technical committees.

Chapter Five

Ecotourism and Green Productivity in Bangladesh

Ruby Afroze

Part B

Selected Country Papers

Introduction

Bangladesh is a country of vast, largely unknown and unspoiled natural beauty and reserves, which are simply unique and fascinating. These natural phenomena are composed of hills and vales, forests, rivers, lakes, sea and beaches, and the evergreen landscape embracing the country.

Bangladesh emerged as an independent country in 1971 after a nine-month war of liberation. It was previously called Bengal. The country, comprising an area of 144 000 km², is situated in the northeastern side of the South Asia sub-continent.

The topography is mainly flat alluvial plain, criss-crossed by the world's three mighty river systems, the Padma (Ganges), the Jamuna and the Meghna and their innumerable tributaries. The east and the northeast of the country joins India, and the southeastern part, adjoining Myanmar, is mainly hilly with dense forest. This area comprises Chittagong and the three Hilly Districts (as they are known) of Rangamati, Bandarban and Khagrachari, with an average elevation of 610 m. These folded ranges run parallel to each other in the north–south direction and the hill slopes are generally enveloped by dense virgin forest. In the south and southwest, alongside the coast of the Bay of Bengal, lies the Sundarbans, better known as a swampy tropical mangrove forest, the home of the Royal Bengal Tiger. These areas are all ideal for the expansion of ecotourism in the country.

The climate of Bangladesh is subtropical with a hot and humid summer and cool and dry winter. Annual rainfall ranges from 160 to 400 cm. The best period to visit Bangladesh is November to March, when the temperature ranges between 13.3 and 26.5 $^{\circ}$ C.

Tourism Attractions of Bangladesh

Bangladesh is endowed with various tourist attractions which include archaeological sites, mosques, temples, monuments, modern resorts and a range of tours, including river cruises and boating. Visitors to Bangladesh are invariably brought close to nature. The following are the major tourist attractions.

Cox's Bazar: This is the tourist capital of Bangladesh with a 120 km long sandy, straight and drivable beach. Thousands of tourists, foreign and local, visit this spot every year. The Inani beach, about 30 km from Cox's Bazar, toward Teknaf, is a beautiful spot, full of coral stones. Not very far from Cox's Bazar is the island of Maheskhali, famous for its Buddhist and Hindu temples and a dry fish industry. A trip to Tefnak, about 100 km from Cox's Bazar, takes a visitor to the southern-most point of Bangladesh. It is simply fascinating. From there, one can go to the coral island of St. Martin by boat. Cox's Bazar is connected to Chittagong and Dhaka by road and air.

Hilly Districts: The three Hilly Districts of Rangamata, Khagrachari and Bandarban are inhabited by a number of tribes, with their distinctive cultures, rituals and traditions. The picturesque town of Rangamati is about 70 km from the port city of Chittagong. The Kaptai Lake is the largest man-made lake in the sub-continent.

Chittagong: This port city is famous for its harbour and port, beach and hills, a World War II cemetery, the shrines of saints and beautiful mosques. It is the second largest city in the country and is the commercial capital. Sitakund, a holy place for Hindu pilgrims, is only 36 km from Chittagong. Chittagong is connected to Dhaka by road, train and air.

Dhaka: Situated on the bank of the Buriganga River, Dhaka is the national capital. Founded in 1608 AD as the seat of the imperial Mughal Viceroys of Bengal and known over centuries for its silk, muslin and pearls, Dhaka has many interesting attractions. These are the Lalbagh Fort (built in 1678 by Prince Azam, son of Mughal Emperor Aurangzeb), the Armenian Church, the Ahsan Manzil Museum (the residence of the Nawabs of Dhaka), the Star Mosque, the National Memorial at Savar, the Central Shadeed Minar (a monument dedicated to the sacred memory of the martyrs of the Language Movement, 1952), Curson Hall, the National Museum, the Baldah Gardens, the Botanical Garden and the National Park. Sonargaon, one of the oldest capitals of Bengal, is 25 km from the present capital of Dhaka.

Mahasthangar (Bogra): Dating back from the 3rd century BC, this is the earliest known city site in the whole of Bengal. One can see the ruins of an early Buddhist monastery near Mahasthangar.

Paharpur (Naogaon): This gigantic temple and monastery of the 8th century is by far the most spectacular Buddhist site that has been discovered. It has been declared a World Heritage site by UNESCO.

Dinajpur: Ramsagor Lake and the Kantajis Mandir (built in 1722) are two important attractions in this northern district. The Mandir, with mythological decorations in terracotta, depicts the entire story of Mahabharata.

Sixty Domes Mosque (Bagerhat): Built in 1454, with 77 domes, this is the most magnificent and certainly the largest brick mosque of Bangladesh. The mausoleum in memory of the Muslim mystic Khan Jahan Ali is located here. It has been declared as a World Heritage site by UNESCO.

The Sundarbans: A cluster of islands with an approximate area of 600 km² form the largest mangrove forest in the world. This is the abode of the Royal Bengal Tiger and a unique place for ecotourism. Only recently it has been declared a World Heritage site by UNESCO.

Comilla: Here the most important place to visit is Mainamati-Lalmai, an extensive centre of Buddhist culture (7th to 12th century), developed during the Chandra and the Deva dynasties.

Sylhet: This is the city of two great saints, Hazrat Shah Jalal (RA) and Hazrat Shah Paran (RA). It is a beautiful area with more than 130 tea gardens. Colourful Manipuri and Khasia tribes with their folk dances and distinct culture are added attractions.

Tourism Development in Bangladesh

Various tourism facilities have been developed in many of the potential tourism areas by the Bangladesh Parjatan (Tourism) Corporation and other government, semi-government and non-government agencies. The Government of Bangladesh formulated a National Tourism Policy in February 1992. The main objective of this policy is to attract investment in tourism from the domestic private sector as well as by foreign investors. The government encourages foreign investment in the sector, either in the form of joint ventures or on a full foreign ownership basis. In order to encourage investments, the government has put in place a number of incentives such as tax exemptions, remittances of up to 50% of the salary of foreign staff, facilities for repatriation of savings and retirement benefits, repatriation of capital and profits, and guarantees against nationalisation.

There was a time not too far in the past when tourism focused on beach resorts with recreational facilities. However lately, ecotourism has developed as a major trend. Travelling to relatively undisturbed natural areas with the specific object of studying, admiring and enjoying the scenery and wild plants and animals is a new phenomenon in developing countries.

Complementary to ecotourism is the emerging concept of green productivity (GP). The term "green productivity" is based on a strategy for enhancing productivity and environmental performance with the goal being overall socio-economic development. GP is the application of appropriate techniques, technologies and management systems to provide environmentally compatible goods and services. The GP concept can be applied in manufacturing, the service sector, agriculture and in personal consumption; but GP is particularly pertinent to the concept of ecotourism.

Ecotourism

As stated above, Bangladesh is endowed with the largest mangrove ecosystems in the world, the Sundarbans, the longest unspoiled natural sea beach in the world, the largest man-made lake at Kaptai, and the Hilly Districts of Rangamati, Bandarban and Khagrachari, and a vast offshore marine environment. These are complex and dynamic ecosystems where there are long-term ecological changes, such as those caused by the formation of new mudflats through the natural process of accretion, and the everchanging micro relief of the innumerable streams and rivers due to erosion and sedimentation.

Bangladesh is engaged in a continuous endeavour to integrate her ecotourism resources through planning, management and appropriate use, based on the following principles: (i) optimum multiple use of the resources; (ii) maximum sustainable use; and (iii) conservation and development of natural resources. When we promote and sell our tourist products (for example, the Sundarbans, the Hilly Districts, Cox's Bazar) we have to make sure that the resources, such as the forests with their numerous varieties of trees, plants, herbs and their animals are not destroyed or overexploited.

Obviously, tourist products should be used in such a way that they are not going to be destroyed. Large numbers of tourists can be the cause of destruction. Tourists, who unmindfully or without caring throw away their left-over food scraps and drinks, leave behind synthetic articles or tin containers cause damage to the local environment and eventually the earth. One way to handle such problems is to control tourist visits to each particular product or place. Restrictions can be imposed on the number of tourists, and on how they undertake their visit, before a site becomes overcrowded. It is a good idea to present a particular tourist location at which there are a number of attractions. By doing this one can spread the load while presenting variety to tourists.

Without controls, it is obvious that the more tourists who visit a place, the more the ecological balance is threatened or degraded. However, we do not unnecessarily restrict tourism. If we can apply the principles of sustainable development, tourism could be permitted, or even encouraged to grow. More forests could be declared as sanctuaries for conservation and animals protected from illegal killings, especially tigers, deer, elephants and crocodiles. I would like to mention here a report published in 'National Geographic' magazine in December 1997. It stated there were only 350 tigers in Bangladesh, whereas the estimated number of tigers in India was about 3500. What the Indians do is have devoted scientists, people in the forestry department and the armed forces working together for more than twenty years to save tigers from poachers, and to help them to breed and survive. It is sad, as well as shameful, that Bangladesh has utterly failed to save its wildlife, including the tigers and large varieties of birds, from their relentless march towards extinction.

Habitats of wild animals are being systemically destroyed not only in the Sundarbans but also throughout the country. Loggers in collaboration with those who are responsible for safeguarding the Sundarbans are gradually turning the largest mangrove forest in the world into a large swamp denuded of trees. The spotted deer, an animal of the Sundarbans and essential food for tigers, are being killed by poachers with impunity. Venison is sold like mutton in local markets.

It was interesting to note that at an international seminar on tigers held at Dhaka in 2000, Bangladesh representatives expressed resolve to formulate an action plan to save the tigers of the Sundarbans. According to the plan, Bangladesh will first conduct research on tigers, for which a large amount of foreign assistance (\$US8 million) is needed. After completion of the research, Bangladesh will decide what action is to be taken to save the tigers. Bangladesh will need more foreign assistance to implement the final action plan. I wonder if the remaining tigers will last that long. I think Bangladesh should learn from the Indian experience and take measures to establish several big National Parks in different parts of the country, to save not only the tigers but also other wildlife, including birds, and our heritage. This step is essential if ecotourism is to develop.

There are good laws in Bangladesh related to the environment, and the legal system is potentially strong. Yet like other laws, the enforcement mechanism remains either weak or is completely missing. Consequently the legislation is not effective in any real sense. Nevertheless, to promote tourism and protect nature at the same time, there is no alternative but to enforce the laws properly.

In the Hilly Districts, tribal people set fire to the jungles for jhoom cultivation (a primitive tribal way of cultivation) causing serious damage to the forest and the species therein. The tribal people need to be stopped from doing this.

Elsewhere, pollutants such as pesticides and toxic industrial wastes have damaged aquatic resources. A few examples will bear testimony of the fact. The scarcity of fish in the Buringanga River is due to spilling of toxic wastes from the tannery industry. The Neelkamal area of Chandpur district has been identified as the breeding place of Hilsha fish (incidentally our national fish). The gradual decrease of Hilsha fish leads to the conclusion that we are destroying their environment. Shrimps in the coastal area face the same destiny. Researchers are of the view that if these problems are not properly addressed, shrimps and the fish will become extinct in the area.

Regional Tourism: Spreading the Benefits

Though Bangladesh is a small country, each region can offer distinctive tourism attractions. In the northwestern zone, we have a couple of ancient archaeological sites, standing as the embodiment of a rich Buddhist cultural heritage. In the northeastern region, we have the panoramic view of the tea gardens and the rich culture of the Monipuri tribe. In the southeastern area, we have green hills and hillocks, forests and lakes, not to mention the flora and fauna. The Buddhist monasteries in the hill districts allow travellers to have a taste of culture, or to undertake a pilgrimage. The age-old, fascinating matriarchal tribal society existing in its primitiveness at the dawn of a new millennium, is certainly worth observing. To the south is the Bay of Bengal — a vast marine area available for aquatic tourism. In the southwest lies the Sundarbans, where for miles the lofty tree-tops form an unbroken canopy. It is the natural habitat of the world famous Royal Bengal Tiger, spotted deer, crocodiles, jungle fowl, wild boar, pythons, monkeys and birds.

From a broader perspective, regional tourism, including that to neighbouring countries, could be developed. Tourists enjoying the beauty of the mountains in, say, Nepal may well make a trip to the Sundarbans. This might increase their enjoyment and knowledge, make for an interesting package, and spread the economic benefits.

However, for tourism to be successful, it has to be recognised that when numbers are too high, tourism can destroy its own attractions. As tourism gains momentum, it has negative impacts on the environment. Tourists visiting Paharpur and Mohasthangarh, a 7th century Buddhist monastery and temple, were found carrying away pieces of brick as souvenirs. If this practice continues for much longer we may lose the most famous archaeological attraction in this part of the world.

The Role of Government

A desire to establish tourism in Bangladesh has been evident for many years; evident in the first master plan for the period of 1965 to 1985 and a second master plan for 1985–1995. Following the latter, a National Policy was formulated in 1992. The Bangladesh Parjatan Corporation (the national tourism organisation) was established in 1973. Bangladesh was a founding member of World Tourism Organization (WTO) in 1975. The National Tourism Policy of 1992 identified five key areas for development: (i) emphasis on

culture and heritage; (ii) preservation of natural and scenic beauty; (iii) preservation of unspoiled beaches and the preparation of land-use plans for beaches; (iv) emphasis on wildlife and preservation, and; (v) protection and rehabilitation of the Sundarbans.

Having proper infrastructure is a prerequisite for the development of tourism, especially ecotourism. Lack of infrastructure has been one of the prime causes of slow tourism development in Bangladesh. A few examples will testify to the fact. Kuakata is one of the few beaches in the world offering a full view of both the sunrise and sunset. It is a sloping sandy beach with coconut groves, towering cliffs, waves to be surfed and fish to be caught. Buddhist temples and the lifestyle of Rakhyne tribal people are added educational and cultural attractions. Unfortunately, it takes 12 hours on eight ferries to get there. This is enough for a tourist to lose interest in making a visit. Our government has taken steps to build bridges over the numerous rivers, thereby reducing the journey by four hours. However, it is imperative to construct a small airstrip to facilitate visitation to this area.

The Hilly Districts offer diversified tourist attractions ranging from fascinating tribal life, tropical evergreen forest, blue lakes, to picturesque valleys. However, many of the attractions have remained virtually inaccessible. Unlike many hill environments around the world, this area is not barren, but majestically green. The average height of the hills is around 1220 m. The highest peak of Bangladesh Tahjindong is in the Chimbuk valley, at 1412 m. This peak is not accessible by road.

The Sundarbans is the world's largest mangrove forest. No infrastructure has been developed to provide tourists with food, lodging and transport to the area. This vast waterway of riverine Bangladesh, and its reflection of local ways of life, could become a major attraction for foreigners. However, there are no arrangements for regular water transport allowing for safe travel through the waterways, and because of this its potential ecotourism attractions have remained largely unexplored. A multidimensional, comprehensive development plan needs to be prepared for the area.

Marketing of Ecotourism Destinations

Clearly, promotion and advertising play a very significant role in establishing a product in the marketplace. Bangladesh Parjatan Corporation doesn't have a marketing unit to promote the country's products. Brochures and other promotional material could be distributed through all foreign missions in Bangladesh, through Bangladesh Biman, the national carrier. Though Bangladesh missions abroad aren't involved with tourism-related activities, inter-ministerial co-ordination between the Ministry of Civil Aviation and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs could pave the way for additional responsibility on the part of Bangladesh missions to do tourism marketing. Participation in international tourism fairs, publication of features and advertisements in trade journals would enable the country to promote its ecotourism products. Only by a serious effort in promotion will Bangladesh start to be seen as an ecotourism destination.

Conclusion

Traditionally tourism has been viewed as largely beneficial to, and compatible with, the process of economic development. As the demand from tourists to visit natural scenic areas increases, developers have resorted to exploit this segment of the tourism market by developing tourist attractions in and around scenic sites, such as mountains, forests, beaches and cultural and historical areas. However overdevelopment, inappropriate development and poor management can cause environmental degradation. There is a need to balance the requirements of tourism development with the environmental constraints to ensure both economic and ecological sustainability. To create a form of tourism that utilises unique local, natural, historical and cultural resources, and to promote the conservation and preservation of forests through proper management, and to combine successfully the resources and the promotion of tourism, it is necessary to implement ecotourism and a green productivity program in a planned way. The philosophies and practices of ecotourism and green productivity can be, and should be, a part of the tourism development strategy for Bangladesh.

Tourists visiting virtually unknown, developing countries like Bangladesh are concerned about food, disease, infection, inconvenience, language barriers, safety and security and so on. Therefore this negative image has to be addressed by the Bangladesh Parajatan Corporation by participating in international fairs, seminars and workshops and also through advertising and publicity campaigns. Government, NGOs and private organisers involved in the general tourism sector should work hand in hand to develop ecotourism and green productivity initiatives. Ultimately, with the right policies and understanding of the relationship between tourism and the environment, all tourism (including mainstream) will move towards being sustainable.

Chapter Six

Ecotourism in Fiji

Manoa Malani

Introduction

Tourism is a major industry for Fiji. Fiji is the major tourism destination of the Pacific (excluding Hawaii) and plays an important role in South Pacific regional tourism. In 1999, an all time record high of 409 955 visitors went to Fiji. Tourism is directly or indirectly responsible for over 40 000 jobs in the formal sector, where it is the most important business, followed by sugar production. The country is now a mature destination with a widespread range of products and markets.

Tourism earnings for Fiji were an estimated \$F619 million in 1999. While the total earnings are the largest sector contribution to the national economy, the direct contribution of mainstream tourism to the average Fijian family is limited. The economic benefits acquired through resort-style tourism development are patchily distributed. It is here that nature and cultural- based tourism in rural districts has the potential to bring economic benefits to grass roots communities.

While many travellers to Fiji have typically sought the "sun, sea, sand, and smiles", there are strong indications that travellers seeking natureoriented experiences are on the rise. According to the World Travel and Tourism Council, approximately 7% of international tourism sales are spent on nature tourism. Tourism in general is on the rise at a high rate. And, according to analyst Kreg Lindberg, nature travel is growing at a rate of 10 to 30%.

It is hard to put figures on ecotourism in Fiji, and probably few foreign visitors come to Fiji solely and specifically for an ecotourism holiday. But many visitors spend at least part of their holiday using areas or products that depend on protection of the significant indigenous natural and cultural values of Fiji. For example, 6000 people visited the Tavoro Falls at Bouma in 1998, many as part of a week's diving package to Taveuni.

While there is strong interest by Fiji nationals to picnic and swim in places such as the Colo-I-Suva Forest Park, the Sigatoka Sand Dunes and the Bouma National Heritage Park, the predominant markets for these parks

are international with visitors from Australia, New Zealand, North America and Europe.

The Fiji tourism industry has become more actively involved in marketing ecotourism over the last three or four years. Even without large numbers of visitors to ecotourism sites, these have value to the industry as a whole by rounding out a complete range of products the country has to offer. The Fijian Visitors' Bureau has a website for ecotourism and actively promotes community-based tourism projects in its international marketing.

Tourism and Ecotourism Policy

Two significant Government policies for ecotourism are the provisions in the Tourism Development Plan 1998–2005 and the recently approved Ecotourism and Village-based Tourism Policy and Strategy for Fiji. The Tourism Development Plan sets conservation and environmental protection measures (which are required for all tourism, not just ecotourism) in the context of development plans for the overall industry. It also deals specifically with ecotourism but refers specifically to the Ecotourism Policy and Strategy for most details. The strategy defines ecotourism as:

A form of nature-based tourism which involves responsible travel to relatively undeveloped areas to foster an appreciation of nature and local cultures, while conserving the physical and social environment, respecting the aspirations and traditions of those who are visited, and improving the welfare of the local people.

The policy incorporates five main principles. It recognises that ecotourism should complement but not compete with more conventional tourism, that tourism should take second place to conservation and, at times, may be banned or restricted in areas considered especially vulnerable, and that successful implementation of the policy can be achieved only through social co-operation. Tourism usually involves a wide range of stakeholders. Ecotourism in Fiji (with the spread of natural and cultural heritage protection functions through many government agencies, and the involvement with communities, customary landholders and those with customary rights to the coast and natural and cultural heritage) has an even greater range of stakeholders than normal. Because of their importance, the major players in Fiji ecotourism are discussed in Box 1.

Box 1: Major Ecotourism Stakeholders

Landholders and Communities. Most land is held communally in Fiji and customary landholders and those with customary rights to marine resources (usually those with adjacent landholding rights) are perhaps the most important players in ecotourism in the country. Without their agreement and

in many cases active participation, the commercial use of many areas with potential for ecotourism is just not possible. It should be noted that 83% of all land in Fiji, and virtually all land with high natural heritage values, is still in customary tenure. While this land may be leased for protection as a reserve or for tourism in some circumstances, increasingly the landholders wish to be actively involved in business on their land themselves. This offers them the potential of making more than a subsistence living on their own land and an alternative to leaving their villages in order to get work.

The Native Lands Trust Board (NLTB). The administration of all Fijian land in customary tenure is vested in the NLTB. The NLTB has the key function of controlling the commercial management of customary tenure lands of Fiji. It is responsible, on behalf of landholders, for negotiating leases for the land. As part of its activities, the NLTB has commercial or industrial leases for tourism purposes, usually for hotels or resorts. By the end of 1998, there were 94 such leases, mainly in the west. However, as an alternative to long-term leasing and in order to promote care of the environment, the NLTB has in recent years actively advocated community-based ecotourism. This it sees as an ideal way of generating income and employment for landholders, without the long-term alienation caused by leasing. Also, it can make a real contribution to conserving natural and cultural heritage values. The NLTB can rightly be perceived as the founder of ecotourism in Fiji. It has been very active in conservation initiatives on behalf of the landholders, in line with its custodial role. The recent restructuring of NLTB re-emphasised the importance of ecotourism initiatives.

The National Trust of Fiji. The National Trust has broad functions that allow it to be involved with the protection of both natural and cultural heritage. It manages several areas of importance to ecotourism, including historic buildings in Levuka, Waisali Forest Reserve on Vanua Levu, and the Sigatoka Sand Dune National Park on the Coral Coast. In many ways, the Trust is the logical agency to assume a greater role in the management of properties, and give advice to landowners in areas of high natural and cultural value, but at present it is woefully under-resourced for this task. The new Government has announced its intention to boost the role of the Trust but has not yet announced how this will be done.

The Department of Forestry. The Department administers several classes of land with current or potential interest for ecotourism, Nature Reserves, Forest Reserves and an informal category, Protection Forest. Only sanctuaries have full protection, and in these, public use is restricted. The Department has an environmental forestry division which is responsible for the Department's activities in ecotourism. Its major role is in the management of Colo-I-Suva Forest Park, a native forest reducing in value for indigenous nature-based ecotourism as it is rapidly being dominated by planted African mahogany.

The Department of Tourism. This body has an ecotourism unit which is responsible for developing policies on ecotourism and for monitoring existing ecotourism projects. The Department has developed an ecotourism and village-based tourism policy which has recently been formally adopted by the Government. The Department of Tourism is also actively involved in supporting pilot community-based ecotourism projects such as those at Namuamua and at the Wayalailai Resort.

The Fiji Visitors Bureau's (FVB). This is Fiji's national tourist board, with functions to market and promote Fiji overseas, to provide information services to visitors in Fiji and in certain cases to be involved in tourism product

development. It can also encourage community awareness of the benefits of tourism and has Roko Tui Tourism to assist in addressing customary tenure issues. The FVB markets Fiji through its national tourist offices in key markets. It has an active website with dedicated ecotourism web pages. Ecotourism products receive considerable marketing support from the FVB.

There are other institutional stakeholders in addition to the above key ones. The following organisations have an interest in ecotourism in Fiji: Department of Environment; Department of Cooperatives; Fiji Museum; Department of Fisheries; Ministry of Fijian Affairs; Ministry of Women and Culture; Budget and Aid Coordinating Committee, Ministry of Finance; Ministry of Regional Development and Multi Ethnic Affairs; Tourism Council of the South Pacific; Fiji Dive Operators Association; World Wide Fund for Nature, South Pacific Program (WWF); South Pacific Action Committee for Human Ecology and Environment (SPACHEE); Foundation of the Peoples of the South Pacific (FSP).

With the involvement of numerous government and non-government agencies in ecotourism, there is considerable overlap in their interest and activities. At times, however, regular breakdowns of communication occur, even within and among government departments.

Once clear benchmarks for ecotourist projects have been established within a national accreditation scheme by the ecotourism committee, there should be more co-operation in marketing ecotourism. The decision by NLTB and Fiji Pine, through the Vanua Tourism concept to consider jointly marketing ecotourism projects on communally-held land, may indeed be correct, but it would seem to involve a considerable duplication of effort.

Most importantly, relationships between local owners and tourist enterprises operated by other villages or outsiders continue to be a problem. Despite the assumptions underlying tourism awareness schemes, it should not be assumed that villagers either want or need tourism, or that the kind of tourism they may (or may not) want is ecotourism. And even if they do desire to play the role of host, the conditions under which they are prepared to do so may differ significantly from those envisaged by tourism developers, planners and hotel management. Unless they are convinced on both counts, efforts to persuade them to develop a quality tourism product will fail. Aside from this fundamental matter, there are a range of other matters that should be addressed.

At present there is no legislation concerning environmental conservation practices in the tourism sector. The only relevant document is the National Environmental Strategy which was drafted in 1993. It encourages ecotourism development as an effective means of resource management. Fiji has never had a proper environmental strategy and the concept of environmental conservation is still relatively new. As a consequence, most development in Fiji has not had to adhere to any environmental guidelines and this has led to substantial damage to the environment and in particular to the coastal areas.

An urgent educational program on coral reef and coastal management needs to be embarked upon by the relevant Ministries and agencies, including the University of the South Pacific. The Government is looking at incentives for energy saving equipment and other items related to better environmental management. The Government is attempting to continue to provide resources to assist with further improvements to infrastructure for the tourist industry, especially for ecotourism in the rural areas. And the tourism industry is trying to work with local authorities and the Department of Town and Country Planning to improve the visual infrastructure of tourism parkways, view corridors, parks, beaches and public spaces.

Ecotourism Products

The main ecotourism products or destinations at present are listed in Box 2. These are based on National Parks and other protected areas.

Box 2: Park-based Ecotourism Products

Colo-I-Suva Forest Park was established in 1972 by the Department of Forestry with assistance from NZODA.

Sigatoka Sand Dunes National Park was established by the Fiji National Trust in 1989, with assistance from NZODA for archaeological investigations.

Bouma National Heritage Park is community-based with some tourism commencing in the 1950s. The present project was initiated in 1990 by NLTB and the Department of Forestry, with assistance from NZODA supporting facility development and training.

Koroyanitu National Heritage Park is community-based and initiated in 1990 by NLTB, Fiji Pine Limited and the Department of Forestry, with support from NZODA and SPREP.

Tavuni Hill Fort, community-based, with developments from 1992 was initially funded by the European Union with development channelled through the Tourism Council of the South Pacific, with cooperation from the Department of Tourism, Fiji Museum and the Department of Forestry.

All the products listed in Box 2 had strong government or donor input. Two are managed directly by Government agencies and the others are community-based projects. Overseas aid may often be appropriate, but too often the first hint of a problem is followed by an instinctive reaction to ask Australia, New Zealand or (less frequently) the UK or the USA for technical and financial assistance. In the long term, what is most needed is local institutions and funding commitment from the Fiji government.

The major repository of cultural knowledge and objects is the Fiji Museum and this has an important role in retaining cultural awareness for Fiji nationals and interpreting it to visitors. The Museum provides advice to landowners on the value and care of archaeological sites on their land. There is thus a key link between the Museum and the protection of sites of cultural importance throughout Fiji. The Museum is already an important visitor attraction and plans for further improvements of the Museum and neighbouring Thurston Gardens will enhance that.

A number of the resort-based dive operations have local arrangements with indigenous fishing rights (*qoliqoli*) owners to stop or control fishing in areas of value to divers, and the Fiji Dive Operators Association has a code of environmental protection for its members.

On land, ecotourism operations include Adventures in Paradise, Rivers Fiji and resort operators such as the Jean-Michel Cousteau Fiji Island Resort. These operators use high standards of environmental ethics and are actively involved in the protection of areas of significant natural or cultural value.

Case Study: Rivers Fiji

Rivers Fiji originated in February of 1998 as a nature-based adventure company. Currently, Rivers Fiji operates one-and two-day river trips on a "class II" river called the Wainikoroiluva in the Upper Navua Gorge. Rivers Fiji also operates one-day sea kayaking programs to the island of Beqa, and coastal areas of Viti Levu near Pacific Harbour. Multi-day packages with river rafting and inflatable kayaking, sea kayaking, island exploration and sailing on tall ships are also available.

Tours are organised and conducted in two central provinces of Viti Levu by local guides, using a 'leave no trace' concept. Local landowners receive land-use fees, lease payments, and employment from Rivers Fiji. The company is owned by a partnership comprised of two North Americans and one Fijian. The Fijian manufactures the boats and other white-water gear locally. A North American manager resides in Fiji and provides technical training for the Fijian guides. To date, one local person has been trained as area manager.

It was necessary for the Rivers Fiji managers to discuss the project with landowning patrilineages (*mataqali*) who controlled access to the rivers. Company representatives consulted with all the villages along each corridor. At the request of the provincial leaders (*Roko Tuis*) of each Provincial District office (Namosi and Serua), a second series of meetings with villages of

Nakavika and Nabukelevu occurred after FTIB approval. The primary focus of these meetings was to secure signatures of approval by relevant mataqali so that Rivers Fiji could begin business.

Rivers Fiji directors also discussed the project with the FVB, the Department of Tourism, the Ministry of the Environment, including the Department of Forestry, local tour operators, and the WWF. In general, government bodies were unaware of the economic and ecotourism potential of whitewater recreation, but they supported the project, primarily because it would provide tourism opportunities in remote areas and support rural communities with an alternative income opportunity.

Once established, Rivers Fiji directors continued to liaise with government entities, provincial offices, and landowners, and found an especially enthusiastic ally in the FVB. It was at the behest of the FVB that a meeting was held in July, 1998 with several Ministers and Directors from the Departments of Environment, Tourism and Transport, Fijian Affairs, and Women and Culture, at which Rivers Fiji outlined a proposal for developing Fiji's hinterland, an area not included in the "sun, sand, and sea" tourism for which Fiji tends to be known. At the meeting, Rivers Fiji directors explained the need for a conservation area on the Upper Navua. As a consequence, the river corridor on the Upper Navua Gorge will be protected through a conservation lease 20 kilometres long and 400 metres wide (200 metres on either side of the high-water mark).

Agreements with villages for exclusive use have been obtained through traditional (i.e. a special ceremony and signed agreements with the village members and the provincial council office) and legal means (i.e. a lease agreement). Significant income has been generated for one of two communities involved in the project (Nakavika Village). Guides have markedly improved their English language speaking skills. All in all, Rivers Fiji has established a good prototype model for conservation through ecotourism.

Case Study: Bouma and Koroyanitu National Heritage Parks

Ecotourism projects in these areas have received considerable technical and financial support. Some of this support can be regarded as the costs of developing new approaches to rural development and conservation in Fiji. Both areas are now receiving significant benefits from ecotourism and the future is bright, providing the communities manage their enterprises well.

As well as direct income to the villages additional benefits include: the conservation of Koroyanitu's forests; the wide range of technical skill development that has occurred during the program; indirect benefits to transport operators and accommodation suppliers based in Lautoka and Nadi. The Fiji tourism industry has gained from having a high profile ecotourism destination near Nadi. The Bouma project, including the Lavena Coastal Walk, the Tavoro (Bouma) Waterfalls Track and the Vidawa Bush Trek, now has about 7000 visitors a year, and generates well in excess of F\$25 000 a year directly to the park owners, and much more to the Taveuni visitor industry. Like Koroyanitu, there has been a wide range of benefits including: conservation of Bouma's forests; creation of several permanent jobs; collective pride in what the Vanua Bouma have achieved; skill development such as in first aid, guiding and book-keeping practices; plus the development of basic infrastructure in the areas, such as bridges, signs and visitor centres. The main Tavoro waterfall is a major tourism attraction for the majority of visitors to Taveuni and is well known within the Fiji tourism industry.

While good progress has been made at Bouma and Koroyanitu, there is still work to be done at both sites in the areas of skill development, product development and ensuring that benefits are spread more widely to some of the other villages, such as Navilawa and Nalotawa at Koroyanitu.

The Japanese Tripple T PECC Group has provided assistance in terms of facility development for the Koroyanitu and National Heritage Park by building a rest room and providing a guidebook for Abaca, which is part of the Koroyanitu National Heritage Park.

Moreover, the Japanese organisation has produced phenological calendars for Lavena and Abaca, which are part of the nature tours of Bouma and Koroyanitu National Heritage Parks.

Conclusion: A Best Practices Program

It is evident that the multitude of incongruent approaches to responsible tourism practices often dilutes the effectiveness of the principles on which ecotourism is founded. Clearly the tourism industry requires internal guidelines and best practices which operators, tourists, host communities, and governments can utilise in working towards common ecologically and socially responsible goals.

A proposal exists to develop a best practices program for ecotourism in Fiji. This proposal is based on bringing experts from the world's first and most successful ecotourism accreditation program to Fiji, to work together with local experts to provide an integrated system (accreditation or best practices program, guide standards, business development and marketing) to stimulate responsible and effective ecotourism development and growth. This program does not aim to transplant Australia's Nature and Ecotourism Accreditation Program (NEAP) to Fiji. Rather, our primary objective is to adapt and integrate that internationally recognised program and guidelines into a system that works for Fiji and meets its cultural, societal, and environmental needs specifically. Ecotourism is moving forward in Fiji and in order to stay ahead of the wave and ensure the quality of product, we believe the task requires an evaluation system that monitors the situation from the field. In addition, the industry must find a way to support an evaluation system that can exist in remote regions. Host communities must be empowered through education and financial means. Lastly, fragile ecosystems must be protected through cooperative efforts at all levels.

The above program is proposed to assist Fiji in meeting the international standards of ecotourism in preparation for the United Nation's Year of Ecotourism 2002. It is the hope of the Ministry and the Fijian Ecotourism Association that this proposal will provide further links with Australia (the major source market for visitors) by creating a pattern of excellence in ecotourism.

Chapter Seven

Ecotourism and Green Productivity in India

Om Prakash Kelkar

Introduction

India is the seventh largest country in the world with a geographical area of 329 million hectares. Bounded by the Great Himalayas in the north, it stretches southwards, and at the Tropic of Cancer tapers off into the Indian Ocean between the Bay of Bengal on the east and the Arabian Sea on the west.

The mainland extends between 8°4' and 37°6' north latitude, and 68°7' and 97°25' east longitude and measures about 3214 km from north to south between the extreme latitudes and about 2933 km from east to west between the extreme longitudes. It has a land frontier of about 15 200 km. The total length of the coastline of the mainland, Ladshadweep Islands and Andaman and Nicobar Islands is 7516.6 km. The climate of India is tropical monsoonal with four seasons: (i) Winter (January–February); (ii) hot weather summer (March–May); (iii) rainy south western monsoon (June–September); (iv) post-monsoon, also known as north east monsoon in the southern Peninsula (October – December).

The Indian subcontinent is one of the most fascinating ecological and geographical regions in the world. It includes the nearly rainless desert of Thar and the rainlest place on earth, Cherrapunjee; the hot, salty Rann of Kutch, and the permanently snowbound peaks of the Himalayas. India, being a very vast country, has enormous tourist potential and many places of tourist interest. Tourists from west and east are equally fascinated by its diversity in human culture, manifested in the form of forts, monuments, temples, memorials, clothing, food, languages, religious practices and social customs. The remnants of ancient civilisations can be seen in many parts of the country including the monuments built by different religious sects during medieval and ancient times. Temples and wildlife are the major tourist attractions.

India lies at the confluence of the African, European and southeast Asian biological systems; it possess interesting components from each of them.

The variety of ecological conditions sustains a tremendous amount of diverse life forms. About 15 000 species of plants (out of the known world total of 150 000) and 75 000 animal species (out of a total of 1.5 million) have their homes in India. India is one of the 12 megadiverse countries in the world. The Western Ghats and Eastern Himalayan regions are among the 18 biodiversity "hot spots" in the world. India's biodiversity is rich, often unique and increasingly endangered. On 2% of the world's land mass, India possesses around 5% of the known living organisms on earth.

Tourist Potential

Tourism has emerged as an instrument for employment generation, poverty alleviation and sustainable human development. During 1996–1997, direct employment in the tourism sector was estimated to be 9.1 million and total (both direct and flow-on) employment due to tourism was 21.1 million. Tourism also promotes national integration and international understanding, and supports local handcrafts and cultural activities.

Tourism in India has grown substantially over the last three decades. Foreign tourist arrivals (including the nationals of Pakistan and Bangladesh) during 1997 were 2 374 094 as compared to 2 287 860 in 1996, an increase of 3.8%. India's share in the world tourist market at the end of the 1996–7 was 0.39 percent. Foreign exchange earnings from tourism in the same year were estimated at Rs. 10 418 crore and for 1997–1998 at Rs 11 264 crore. Thus, tourism has become one of the largest foreign exchange earners of the country.

Domestic tourism's contribution to the generation of employment is very high. With the increase in income levels and emergence of a significant middle class, the potential for domestic tourism has grown substantially during the last few years. About 156 million domestic tourists made trips outside their places of residence and stayed in paid accommodation establishments during 1997.

The Government of India has identified the following as key areas for development of tourism: (i) provision of infrastructure; (ii) environmental protection and preservation of national cultural heritage; (iii) product development and diversification, including development of mega tourism resorts; (iv) development of trekking, winter sports, wildlife and beach resorts; (v) exploring new source markets in regions and countries with cultural affinity; (vi) monitoring and evaluation; (vii) national image building and marketing in key markets; (viii) providing inexpensive accommodation in different tourist centres; (ix) improving service efficiency in public sector corporations; (x) streamlining of procedures at airports; (xi) human resource development; (xii) facilitating private sector participation in development of infrastructure; (xiii) strengthening of tourist organisations; and (xiv) creating public awareness and participation.

The Role of Conservation

Human beings have coexisted with plants and animals on the Indian subcontinent for at least 50 000 years. Ninety percent of this time has been spent by humans as hunters and gatherers. Many tribes continue to live this way even today: the Cholanaiks, a primitive cave-dwelling tribe of the Nilambur forests in Kerala, and the Jarwas of the Andamans, for instance. In the hunting-gathering era, protection was extended to totemic animals. Early Indian writings, including the Hindu epics, the Buddhist Jatakas, and the Panchatantra and the Jain stricture against violence even to lowly life forms, are eloquent proof of the respect and mindset of Indians towards nature.

The modern culture and nature conservation movement had its origins in the conservation interests of aristocrats, sports persons and naturalists. Since World War II, a number of organisations such as INTACH, Bombay Natural History Society, and the World Wide Fund for Nature have carried out significant work in their respective fields.

The tourism and recreation industry is at a crossroads in its development and confronted with serious and difficult choices about its future in terms of its sustainability and compatibility with environmental protection and community development. The decisions made now will for decades affect the lifestyles and economic opportunity of residents in tourism destination areas. Many of these decisions are irreversible because once communities lose the character that makes them distinctive and attractive to non-residents, they have lost their ability to vie for tourist income in an increasingly global and competitive marketplace. India's high human population density, high incidence of poverty, unbridled development-oriented tourist infrastructure, overexploitation of natural resources, industrial and urban wastes and pollution have been responsible for damage to the environment in and around tourist attractions (such as the Valley of Flowers in the Himalayas) which leads to the popular belief that tourism destroys tourism.

World wide, tourism is undergoing fundamental changes and decisions about tourism development are becoming more and more controversial and difficult to make because they can prevent or diminish traditional uses of natural resources and affect the people who have or might have benefited from those uses. Powerful development forces entrenched in a "development at all costs" approach are reluctant to consider changing their ways.

Since the environment is the travel industry's base product, keeping in view the present situation in India and the future demands of the industry, it has recently been decided to promote ecotourism in India. Ecotourism allows visitors to enjoy an attraction, community or region with a volume of tourists and impact such that the local culture and environment remain unimpaired. Strictly speaking, tourism and recreation use always lead to some level of impairment to natural systems. The question is: how much change is acceptable?

Hence there is a need to develop an ecotourism policy that is holistic, practicable, and provides sensible linkages of social and natural environments by encompassing all relevant parameters. An ecotourism policy should have the following components in its framework: (i) recognition of the interface between tourism and the environment, involving primarily social questions as opposed to technical ones; (ii) avoidance of the excessively reductionistic and limited perspective provided by a carrying-capacity-based approach, and the inclusion of the wide range of stakeholders affected by tourism development choices in the planning and management processes; (iii) provision of a better understanding of how tourists value and use natural environments; (iv) enhancement of the communities dependent on tourism as an industry; (v) identification of the social and environmental impact of tourism; and (vi) implementation of systems to manage these impacts.

India is one of the first countries in the world to have enacted environmental legislations covering all spheres of human-environment interaction; the *Water (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act, 1974*; the *Air (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act, 1981*; the *Environment (Protection Act) 1986*; *Indian Forest Act, 1927*; *Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972*; *Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980*; and *Coastal Regulation Zone Notification, 1991*. All are required to follow these laws; and penalties have been incorporated for non-compliance; however, no provisions have been made to provide incentives to industries which comply. In India, the time is now approaching for providing incentives as a motivation to companies and organisations that have sound environmental management plans and practices.

One emerging trend in India is the active public debate on environmental issues, ranging from protection of monuments, heritage sites and wildlife, to concerns relating to the construction of multi-purpose dams, and to municipal solid waste management. The courts in India, especially the Apex Court of India, have been keen to hear "public interest" cases involving environmental issues related to tourism, such as the impacts of air pollution from the Mathura oil refinery on the Taj Mahal, the Silent Valley hydroelectricity project in Kerala, and protection of forest areas in northeastern India.

The growing awareness stems from the realisation that the environment and tourism are interlinked and interdependent. The underlying moral is that "one should not kill the goose that lays the golden egg", and in scientific terms it amounts to maintaining sustainability.

Key Institutions Promoting Ecotourism

In India, the Department of Tourism is responsible for the formulation and implementation of policies and programs for the development of tourism: by way of developing infrastructure; publicity and promotion; dissemination of information; and the coordination and supervision of the activities of various segments of industry. It has 21 field offices throughout the country and 18 overseas to undertake both developmental and promotional activities. The overseas offices are in constant contact with tourists, travel intermediaries and the media, with the objective of promoting tourism in India. The field offices in India provide facilitation services to tourists and co-operate with the state governments on tourism infrastructure development.

The Indian Tourism Development Corporation (ITDC), a public sector body established in 1996, undertakes: (i) construction, management and marketing of hotels, restaurants, travellers' lodges; (ii) provision of tourist transport facilities; (iii) production, distribution and sale of tourist publicity materials; (iv) provision of entertainment facilities such as light and sound shows, and music concerts; (v) provision of shopping facilities including duty free shops; and (vi) provision of consultancy-cum-managerial services in India and abroad.

The Indian Institute of Tourism and Travel Management is an autonomous body set up to provide education in tourism and travel management, and to meet the demands for professionally trained personnel in the tourism industry. The Institute organises executive development programs, seminars and workshops relating to these subjects. It has assisted several universities in organising courses at the postgraduate level.

In order to meet the growing demand for the labour force of the tourism industries, 19 institutes of hotel management and catering technology, and 14 food crafts institutes have been set up in the country. In order to encourage adventure tourism, the National Institute of Water Sports at Goa and the Indian Institute of Skiing and Mountaineering at Gulmarg, Jammu and Kashmir have been established.

The Ministry of Environment and Forests (and its various departments and subordinate offices spread all over the country) is well placed to promote tourism since it exercises control over about 22% of the land mass. Most of the ecotourism sites of natural beauty and biodiversity value are located in the forest areas, and to promote wildlife preservation the government has established 75 National Parks, 421 Wildlife Sanctuaries, apart from seven Biosphere Reserves, which account for most of India's wildlife resources spread over an area of 14 million hectares. This covers 4.3% of the total geographical area of India.

Since the necessary expertise and infrastructure facilities are mostly available in these existing departments and organisations, it would be prudent to re-orient them to promote ecotourism rather than creating new organisations specifically for ecotourism. In the promotion of ecotourism, it is the tour operators, tourists and public who can play a major role by following certain norms and practices. Efforts are being made to give wide publicity in the electronic media and other conventional modes to promote the concept of ecotourism. Development of green productivity (GP) is one of underpinnings of ecotourism. In India the movement for GP has already made humble beginnings through a number of NGOs working to promote the concept. The Government of India is considering incentives for green products, and a publicity and awareness campaign at the national level through the mass media and hotel industry would be a desirable step towards development of GP and ecotourism.

Current Status of Ecotourism Practices in India

Though no major policy documents have been issued by the Government of India or state governments with regard to promotion of ecotourism, certain guidelines have been issued to tour operators and tourists as part of a campaign to preserve the environment in the tourism zones. The key points in these guidelines are summarised in Box 1.

Box 1: Ecotourism Guidelines

Role of Tour Operators

- Advise tourists to avoid impacts on sensitive ecosystems.
- Prepare tourists for encounters with native animals and plants.
- Actively participate in prevention of environmental desecration.
- Offer literature, briefings and lead by example and by taking corrective action.
- Prevent accumulated impact of tourism.
- Avoid areas that are under-managed and over-visited.
- Provide leadership. Maintain groups small enough to ensure minimum impact on destinations.
- Provide extensive and in-depth visitor information.

Role Of Tourists

- Protest if your taxi/bus is emitting excessive smoke. Refuse to ride in such vehicles if there is a viable alternative.
- Pool cars whenever and wherever possible. It reduces your contribution to pollution and is a cheaper way to travel.
- Use bicycles and walk where possible these are better ways of enjoying the scenery and healthier than using motorised vehicles.
- Advise the drivers to refrain from using the horn unnecessarily. It is rude and ruins everyone's peace.
- Keep the travel-generated garbage with you for proper disposal at appropriate points along the route. Remember that garbage by the roadside is an eyesore to all and bad for the environment.
- Limit deforestation. Make no open fires and discourage others from doing so. One small careless fire can destroy an entire forest.
- Where water is heated by scarce firewood, use as little as possible.
- Burn or bury paper, natural refuse and litter.

- Don't throw away any non-degradable garbage like plastic bags, foil, packets, glass bottles and metal cans. These can be recycled.
- Don't carve initials on trees or spray graffiti on monuments they "hurt" too. Graffiti on rock faces are marks of a person's polluting tendencies, for all to scorn.
- Keep local water sources clean and avoid using chemical detergents in streams or springs. If no toilet facilities are available, make sure you are at least 30 metres away from water sources and bury wastes.
- Plants should be left to flourish in their native location. Taking cuttings and roots is illegal in Nature Reserves.
- Avoid making loud noises and playing radios or tape-recorders in wildlife areas. Remember that unnatural sounds and natural wonders do not mix.
- Avoid offering food to animals and birds. You are threatening their foraging/hunting skills and your food will probably make them unhealthy.
- If you see anyone hunting or hurting/teasing animals, report them to the authorities if you cannot stop them yourselves.
- Stop people from plucking flowers or leaves. They should be left as they are for all to enjoy.
- While taking photographs or shooting with your video-camera is always encouraged, please do not disturb your subject in any way. Remember that use of flashes, particularly close up, can disturb and annoy wild animals and nesting birds.

Role of Governments and Facilitators

- Provide as much literature as possible about the destination and the route.
- Involve local Nature Reserve/Park officials in policy formulation and implementation as they are excellent sources of information.
- Make arrangements for the services of local licensed guides.
- Make visual impressions and display posters/photographs about the place.
- Remind tourists of what is sound environmental practice and is appropriate for the place. After all, the less ignorance, the better it is for conservation.

Role of Accommodation Providers

- Offer site-sensitive accommodation that is not wasteful of local resources or destructive to the environment and rather is inclined to protect threatened areas, species and aesthetics.
- Practice energy conservation.
- Reduce wasteful consumption and recycle waste.
- Practice freshwater management and control sewage disposal.
- Control and diminish air emissions and pollutants.
- Monitor, control and reduce noise levels.
- Avoid or control environmentally unfriendly products, such as asbestos, and toxic pesticides.
- If electricity is unavailable, use energy-efficient kerosene stoves.

The Ministry of Tourism co-ordinates support measures and incentives dealing with the policy, funding and technical assistance to private sector entrepreneurs in the promotion of ecotourism. The Ministry maintains liaison and co-ordination with NGOs, entrepreneurs and international funding agencies.

Approaches to Ecotourism in India

Environmental conservation, which is the philosophy behind ecotourism, is deeply set in the minds of the common Indian. As per the Hindu religious scriptures, one is expected to follow certain rules, or Dharma, regarding sanctity to be maintained in hills, sanctuaries, water bodies, villages and marketplaces. By and large these are followed in rural and tribal settlements.

With growing urbanisation and industrialisation, coupled with increased pressure on natural resources due to the population explosion, and the state having the responsibility to make available water and food grains and other essential commodities in the markets, it has become imperative to involve citizens in natural resource management. Environmental management is not only the responsibility of the state, but also a duty of each and every citizen.

The Government of India has decided to involve citizens in environmental management. As a part of this campaign, Wildlife Sanctuaries and National Parks where people can cohabit with the other living things and learn about environmental management are being established in all parts of India. More and more Marine National Parks, Bird Sanctuaries and Biosphere Reserves are contemplated, not only as a conservation measure but also to inculcate a sense of compassion for flora and fauna. Nature interpretation centres are in vogue in all parts of the country. Floating accommodation in the form of house boats prevalent in Dal Lake, Kashmir and the back waters of Aleppy, Kerala are famous throughout the world. This type of accommodation brings tourists close to nature. This kind of informal education will go a long way in promoting ecotourism in India, a country where financial and other resources are limited.

Trekking tours are being organised by not only the private tour operators but also by the state-run corporations and other bodies. Similarly skiing, rowing and other water sports are being organised by the state to promote "soft" adventure tourism in the country.

Major sections of the society (urban, rural, students, employees, workers, employers) are encouraged to undertake tours in different parts of India. The government, academic institutions and private sector provide funds or concessions for this purpose, with the objective of better binding the country's multiethnic, multilinguistic, and multicultural people together, while helping them understand their country better and appreciate each others problems.

Conclusion

There are plenty of ecotourism success stories in India. The famous Ranathambore project in the tiger area in Rajasthan, the Jim Carbett National Park in Uttar Pradesh, Susan Gir Lion Park, Gujarat, houseboat cruises in Kerala, are only some examples of ecotourism. Once these projects and places are brought to mind, it becomes obvious that there is nothing new in ecotourism, as the concepts of tourism have already been integrated with the principles of environmental management, and such practices are in vogue in all parts of India.

In some sense, ecotourism is a western concept of putting the "old wine in a new bottle" as it is not new or unique for countries like India where ecological balance is a way of life for a large section of its population. The following is a modern example.

The administration of the Union Territories of Daman and Diu and Dadra and Nagar Haveli is committed to the promotion of tourism, with the highest priority being the preservation of the fragile ecology and environment of these Union Territories. Special emphasis is given to protect and preserve marine ecology, the coastal ecosystem in Daman and Diu, and flora and fauna in the Union Territory of Dadra and Nagar Haveli. Construction activities have been regulated on the coastal zone to achieve this aim in the Union Territory of Daman and Diu, and eco-friendly tourism activities have been encouraged in the forest dominated by the Union Territory of Dadra and Nagar Haveli. A number of tourist resorts have also been developed by the administration in both the Union Territories. Due emphasis and recognition have been given to the collaborative arrangements with private agencies in providing these facilities. The increasing number of tourists to these two areas are finding the scenic and beautiful layout of these resorts in the coastal and lush green forest surroundings very attractive and enjoyable.

Chapter Eight

Ecotourism in India

Mohan Krishen Khanna

Introduction

India, a country situated in south Asia, is of subcontinental dimension with a population of over one billion people. India is primarily an agricultural economy with a vast range of crops. The livelihood of over 60% of the population continues to be based on agriculture. Of late, there has been a growing trend of urbanisation and diversification away from agriculture. The industrial sector is now playing a larger role in the economy. After the economic liberalisation in 1991, the industrial and services components of the economy have shown a high rate of growth, and today services contribute 46% of the GDP. India is rated as the fourth largest economy in the world based on the "purchasing power party" method of calculating per capita GDP. Having said this, mention of the important socio-economic issues that face India is necessary.

The primary issue is one of poverty, with 320 million people estimated to be living below the poverty line. There are related problems of social and gender inequalities, illiteracy, lack of adequate health facilities, unplanned urbanisation, environment degradation, and underdevelopment of some areas. These are gigantic problems which are receiving the attention of the Indian Government and civil society, with some help from the international community.

Since the foreign exchange crisis of 1991, a more liberal approach towards globalisation of the economy has been adopted by the government. India is a member of the World Trade Organization (WTO) and is opening its economy to the international market in phases. In keeping with the commitments to the WTO, exports have been increasing over the years and were reported to have grown by 30% in April, 2000. Special efforts are being made to attract foreign direct investment by providing attractive incentives to investors.

The Indian Tourism Product

India has spectacularly attractive natural and cultural tourist attractions. It has a rich, over 5000-year-old, cultural heritage and thousands of monuments and archaeological sites for tourists to visit and enjoy.

The remains of one of the most ancient river valley civilisations of the world (the Indus Valley civilisation) are found in India and Pakistan. The Taj Mahal and 16 other World Heritage Properties and several national heritage sites are in India. The country abounds in attractive and well- preserved historical sites and ancient monuments of architectural grandeur. There is a vast variety of building styles, which chronicle the cultural and historical diversity of their creators.

India offers enormous diversity in topography, natural resources and climate. There are land-locked mountainous regions, lush valleys and plains, arid desert regions, white sandy beaches and islands. Central India has numerous wildlife sanctuaries with countless varieties of flora and fauna. The country has unparalled cultural diversity, a kaleidoscope of races, languages, religions, customs and traditions. Indians have embraced almost all the major religions of the world and the country has given rise to five religions: Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism, Sikhism and "Tauhid-i-illahi" of Akbar.

The geographical diversity of India provides opportunities for a wealth of outdoor and adventure sports activities. There is something for all tastes and interests, from the "soft" adventures to fast-paced thrills, and there is something for every level of experience. The prices are highly competitive. The major adventure tourism activities are trekking and skiing in the Himalayas, river running in the Ganges, water sports in Goa, trout fishing in Himachal Pradesh, heli-skiing in Himachal Pradesh, wind surfing, scuba diving and yachting in Andamans and Lakshadweep islands. India has some of the best beaches in the world, many of which are still unexplored, as in the Andamans and Lakshadweep Islands.

Hospitality to visitors is an ancient Indian tradition. The peoples' lifestyles are varied. Life is full of culture, fairs and festivals, colour and spectacle. India is a land of folk fairs and festivals, some say that there is a fair each day of the year. Some of the important fairs and festivals are the Pushkar fair in Rajasthan, the Crafts Mela at Surajkund, Holi and Diwali in North India, Pongal in Tamilnadu, Onam in Kerala, Baisakhi in Punjab, Bihu in Assam, dance festivals at Khajuraho and Mamallapuram. Tourism in India can be a gastronomic delight. Each region has its culinary specialty and beautifully printed and expertly written cookbooks are on sale. But the best part is to sample the exotic fare in the thousands of restaurants.

India has several forms of art and handcrafts. Bharatnatyam, Odissi, Kathakali, Kuchipudi, Mohiniattam are some of the most popular forms of classical dances which have their origins in various parts of the country. Every dance form has a precise vocabulary of emotions (love, yearning, sorrow etc.) and these are displayed by dance gestures that involve the body, arms, fingers, face and eyes.

India is a treasure-trove of handcrafts. The options available include the gamut of multi-storied shopping plazas, air-conditioned stores selling a hand-picked assortment of crafts from every corner of the country, through to whole streets of shops selling specialty goods, to local fairs, where street stalls, set up overnight, stock a variety of exotica.

Ecotourism Resources of India

The geographical diversity of India makes it home to a wealth of ecosystems which are well protected and preserved. These ecosystems (see Box 1) have become the major resources for ecotourism. Following Box 1, each ecosystem is discussed in some detail.

Box 1: Indian Ecosystems and Resources

- Biosphere Reserves
- Mangroves
- Coral Reefs
- Deserts
- Mountains and Forests
- Flora and Fauna
- Seas, Lakes and Rivers
- Caves

Biosphere reserves are multi-purpose protected areas, for preservation of the genetic diversity and the integrity of plants, animals and micro-organism in representative ecosystems. There are seven such reserves in India at present (see Box 2).

Box 2: Biosphere Reserves

- Nilgri
- Nanda Devi
- Nokrek
- Great Nicobar
- Gulf of Mannar
- Manas
- Sunderbans

Mangroves are very specialised forest ecosystems of tropical and subtropical regions, bordering sheltered sea coasts and estuaries. The major mangrove areas are listed in Box 3.

Box 3: Major Mangrove Areas

- Northern Adaman and Nicolar islands
- Sunderbans (West Bengal)
- Bhitarkanika and Mahanadi Delta (Orissa)
- Coringa, Godavari Delta and Kristna Estuary (Andhra Pradesh)
- Pichavaram and Point Calimere (Tamil Nadu)
- Goa
- Gulf of Kutch (Gajarat)
- Coonapur (Karnataka)
- Achra/Ratnagiri (Maharashtra)
- Vembanand (Kerala)

Box 4: Coral Reef Ecosystems

- Gulf of Mannar
- Andaman and Nicobar Islands
- Kakshadweep Islands
- Gulf of Kutch

The Great Thar Desert and the little deserts in the North Western Region of the country are distinct ecosystems which have fascinated tourists from all over the world. Ladakh is a cold desert with high, snow-clad mountains, fast rivers, and the people have a distinctive Buddhist culture.

The great Himalayas and other mountain ranges in the country, along with the snow-clad slopes, forests and rivers have also become important attractions for eco-tourists. The country has an area of about 752.3 lakh hectares designated as forest land and of this about 406.1 lakh hectares are classified as Reserve Forests and 215.1 lakh hectares as Protected Forests.

India is very rich in biotic as well as abiotic resources. It has about 45 000 species of plants. The country also has a great variety of fauna, numbering a little over 65 000 known species, including 1228 bird, 428 reptile, 372 mammal, 204 amphibian and 2546 fish species.

In order to protect and preserve these genetic resources, India has created a number of National Parks and 421 Wildlife Sanctuaries in different parts of the country. Those which have already become popular with tourists are Kaziranga and Manas in Assam; Jim Corbett in Uttar Pradesh; Keoladeo, Ghana, Ranthambore and Sariska in Rajasthan; Kanha and Bandhavgarh in Madhya Pradesh; Bandipour in Karnataka and Similipal in Orissa.

The Arabian Sea, the Indian Ocean and the Bay of Bengal brace the sides of the Indian subcontinent, except for the landlocked northern boundary. The land mass of India is crossed by several rivers and dotted by lakes at many places. These water bodies provide attractive opportunities for water sports.

Economic Significance of Tourism

In India, tourism is emerging as a key sector in the economy. It is presently India's third largest foreign exchange earner after garments, and gems and jewellery. The foreign exchange earnings from tourism during 1997–98 has been estimated to be about Rs.11264 crores (US \$3173 million). The rate of growth in foreign exchange earnings from tourism is exceptionally high.

The most significant feature of the tourism industry is its capacity to generate large-scale employment opportunities, particularly in remote and underdeveloped areas. It offers enormous potential for utilising natural resources like landscapes, mountains, beaches, rivers etc. for the economic benefit of the population. It also adds value to a multitude of human-made attractions such as monuments, palaces, forts and the unique rural and city environments.

A special feature of the tourism industry is that it employs a large number of women and young people in hotels, airline services, travel agencies, making handcrafts, undertaking cultural activities, and other tourism-related tasks. The direct employment in the sector during 1995–96 was about 8.5 million persons, accounting for about 2.4% of the total labour force. Estimates of indirect employment show that in total about 22 million persons derive their livelihood from tourism. Different forecasts of direct employment in the sector have been made, however, they underline the fact that tourism is growing to become an important economic activity. It is estimated that one new job is created in tourism every 2.4 seconds.

Box 5 illustrates the comparative strength of tourism in creating jobs. A million rupee invested (1985–86 prices) in the hotel and restaurant industry created 89 jobs, against 44.7 jobs in agriculture or 12.6 jobs in manufacturing industries for the same investment. The average for the whole tourism sector was 47.5 jobs.

Box 5: Comparative Job Creation

Sector	Labour/Capital Ratio	
Agriculture	44.7	
Manufacturing	12.6	
Mining and Quarrying	2.06	
Railways	0.9	
Other Transport	13.8	
Hotels and Restaurants	89.0	
Tourism	47.5	

Source: Annual Plan, Department of Tourism, Govt. of India, 1996–97.

Another important feature of the tourism industry, which is of particular significance to India, is its contribution to national integration and the social transformation of the economic lives of people. Over 176 million domestic tourists (see Box 6) visiting different parts of the country every year, return with a better understanding of the people living in other regions of the country and of the cultural diversity of India. Tourism also encourages preservation of monuments and heritage properties and helps the survival of art forms, crafts and culture.

Box 6: Domestic Tourist Visits

Year	Domestic Tourists Visits (Million)
1997	120
1998	131
1999	144
2000	157
2001	176
2002	189 (Projected)

Source: Report of the Working Group on Tourism for the Ninth Five-Year Plan, 1997–2002, Dept. of Tourism, Govt of India, New Delhi.

Tourism has become an instrument for sustainable human development through poverty alleviation, environmental regeneration, job creation, and the

advancement of women and other disadvantaged groups. The Working Group constituted for the formulation of proposals for the Ninth Plan on Tourism considered a growth target of 8% per annum in tourist arrivals as feasible during 1997–2002 leading to total arrivals of about 3.12 million tourists by the year 2000 subject of course to substantial improvement in infrastructure and services.

Major Constraints on Growth

Though India has much to offer in terms of tourist attractions, there are major constraints on the growth of tourism, particularly international tourist traffic. The greatest constraint is inadequate infrastructure. Constraints include lack of sufficient airports and airport facilities, international and domestic air-seat capacity, surface transport systems, basic wayside amenities, accommodation, restaurants, shopping and recreational facilities, trained labourforce resources, and support services and facilities. Both quality and quantity of infrastructure are major impediments to the growth of tourism in the country.

Although there are 121 airports maintained by the Airport Authority of India and 139 airports maintained by state governments and other agencies, there are only 10 airports with a runway length of over 3000 m. Even these airports, including five international airports, do not have the latest Instrument Landing Systems (ILS) and other equipment to facilitate safe and secure landing of aircraft in all weather conditions. Quality of service at the airports is also not up to international standards.

The Ministry of Civil Aviation is making efforts to deal with this problem. In addition to the five existing international airports, seven more airports are to be developed for international air services. More airports will be opened for charter traffic. Four international airports are being leased out to private operators. The new proposed civil aviation policy seeks to develop civil aviation by increasing the forces of competition, economic liberalisation and globalisation.

The international air-seat capacity for India is presently about 5.3 million which is just enough to cater for the existing level of passenger traffic. A number of tourist-origin countries are not directly connected by air to India. Additional international air-seat capacity of at least 2 million would be required if 3.2 millions tourists were to come by 2000. If the target of 5 million tourists is to be achieved, the additional capacity required is estimated to be 5 million seats. Distances to India, considered a long haul destination for tourists from the USA and most of Europe, act as a deterrent to tourists from these countries. Lack of adequate air-seat capacity on international flights during the tourist season, which is from October to March, further compounds the problem, and works against increasing foreign tourists. While there is some

talk of an "open sky policy", in practice this is yet to happen and foreign airlines do not have free access to India. However, the scenario is changing with the negotiation of bilateral agreements which will add one million new seats to international air-seat capacity. Negotiations still underway may yield more seats. Recently United Airways and Virgin Airlines have announced intentions of covering India.

The total air-seat capacity available in the domestic sector today is over 17 million. In 1996, 70% of this capacity was utilised with 12 million passengers travelling in the country, 7.1 million by the state-run Indian Airlines and 4.9 million by the private airlines. It is expected that this sector will grow at about 6% per annum. A major exercise is underway to restructure Indian Airlines and add capacity in the private sector airlines, which should yield results in the years to come.

Although many of these projections seem optimistic given the downturn in the economy in 1997 and 1998, the situation is expected to normalise soon with the upturn in the economy. There is need to address problems of insufficient flights to major tourist destinations particularly during the tourist season, the high cost of internal air travel and inconvenient flight schedules. Efforts also need to be undertaken to improve the efficiency of Indian Airlines and foster growth of private airlines. An efficient and responsive domestic air transport system is an essential prerequisite for generating more tourism to India.

Other important areas which require attention are airline quality and networking. There are too few flights available, particularly during the best tourist season, and the services that do exist are high priced and their schedule of arrivals/departures are inconvenient for travellers. Within the country, the services of Indian Airlines require substantial improvement, and they need to network with private airlines. A viable hubs-and-spoke operation, networking larger commercial centres with smaller tourist destinations needs to be developed to improve access to the interior of the country.

The second serious handicap to tourism in India is the scarcity and high cost of hotel accommodation. The number of approved hotel rooms available in 1997 was around 64 500, with about 36 000 under construction. The demand by the year 2000 has been estimated at 1.25 lakhs, which means there would be a shortfall of 27 000 hotel rooms. Lack of economically priced hotel accommodation in the tourist season is being cited as one of the reasons for not choosing India as the place for a holiday. There are two approaches to this problem. One is to increase the floor-area-ratio for the hotels so that existing hotels are able to add more rooms. The other is to make more land available for hotel construction by inducing land allotting agencies to put aside more land for the hotel industry through auction, long leases and equity participation schemes. The agencies can also play a role in bringing private buyers and sellers together to enable entrepreneurs easy access to land and buildings in private hands. The public agencies need to liberalise the regime for granting licences and approvals so as to expedite construction of hotels. A "one window" (or "one-stop-shop") system could be a measure to facilitate faster approvals.

Access to capital is another limiting factor. The Tourism Finance Corporation Inc. (TFCI) and the other financing institutions which provide institutional mechanisms for access to capital do not have a positive approach to lending for hotels.

There is need to generate more rooms through innovative measures like promoting the Paying Guest Accommodation scheme at major tourist centres. Currently, 1472 units with 5953 rooms are available in 14 states. State Governments need to be more proactive in promoting this scheme as it is a preferred alternative to hotels for many, requiring comparatively less investment and is hence more advantageous to tourists.

Another major means of creating accommodation is approval of guesthouses. Due to the complicated procedure adopted which requires guesthouses to obtain a number of clearances including those from the Police, Municipal Authorities and the Tourism Department, economically priced guesthouses have not developed in keeping with the expectations of tourists travelling on a budget. As many of these are run without due approvals, they have acquired a reputation for dealing in drugs, cheating residents and other criminal activities. It would be worthwhile for the state governments to undertake a campaign to get these guesthouses recognised and approved and hence to generate more hotel rooms. (The Ministry of Tourism is in touch with the state governments over this issue).

Another major inhibitor of the growth of tourism is the difficulty of obtaining visas for India. Visa restrictions need to be liberalised, to ensure a larger flow of tourists to the country. A number of options are available. The visa regime must be liberalised at least in respect of those countries which do not pose any political or security problems. Visas should be issued easily on entry at the airport in respect of visitors from such countries. The principle of reciprocity in the issue of visas should not be insisted on in the case of nationals of those countries with whom India has signed bilateral tourism agreements.

Special tourist visas available on arrival for up to two weeks should be made available at the airports. The procedure for the issue of visas can also be made simple and at least in the major tourist originating countries the applications for a tourist visa could be received through the internet and processed on computers. Another area that requires attention is the possibility of reducing visa charges, particularly special charges on visiting restricted areas.

Increased competition from neighbouring countries and poor perception of the Indian tourism product (particularly with regard to transport infrastructure) in the major tourist originating markets are the other constraints on the growth of tourism. An added negative factor is the image of India as a country overrun by poverty, disease, touts and political instability.

The promotional expenditure in the overseas markets of competitor destinations like Singapore, Thailand and Malaysia far exceeds the promotional expenditure by India. India needs to make vigorous efforts to improve its image as an attractive destination, and for this more resources are required.

There are numerous other constraints in the development of tourism in India, including lack of priority in the planning of development, poor upkeep of monuments and wildlife sanctuaries, inadequate surface transport facilities, poor quality of services etc. The Government of India has set up a group of Ministers under the Minister of Tourism to coordinate activities of various government departments and agencies. A committee under the Cabinet Secretary assists in implementation of decisions and removal of systematic problems. Dialogue with the state governments to liberalise and rationalise taxation and deal with other issues is an ongoing process. Many of the activities in the tourism sector are dependent on initiatives of the state governments. Enlightened state governments like Kerala, Goa and Rajasthan have done a lot to attract more tourists by making facilities more tourist friendly.

Promoting Ecotourism in India

The key players in the ecotourism business are governments at both levels, the local authorities, the developers and the operators, the visitors, and the local community. Each one of them has to be sensitive to the environment and local traditions and follow a set of guidelines for the successful development of ecotourism. In addition, non-governmental organisations and scientific and research institutions also have to play a key role in the development of ecotourism.

A management plan for each ecotourism area should be prepared by professional landscape architects and urban planners, in consultation with the local community as well as others directly concerned. Integrated planning should be adopted to avoid inter-sectoral and cross-sectoral conflict. A first step should be to prepare 20-year Master Plans for each state.

The architectural program for ecotourism centres should include controlled access points, roads, self-guided nature trails, transportation options, interpretation centres, signs, observation towers and adequate but unpretentious lodging and dining facilities, docks, garbage disposal facilities and other utilities as needed. If required, suitable living quarters and facilities for project personnel should be provided. Box 7 is a list of actions for the development of ecotourism, where the responsibility is with the government.

Box 7: Government Responsibilities for Ecotourism

Regulate structures that create visual pollution, unaesthetic views and are non-compatible architecture; and encourage use of local building material and structures befitting the local environment.

Exclude developments in geologically unstable zones and define development and buffer zones after proper environmental impact assessments.

Establish and enforce standards, building codes and other regulations.

Specify environmental, physical and social carrying capacities to limit development.

Ensure continuous monitoring of adverse effects of tourism activities and initiate suitable corrective measures.

Recognise and award quality by accreditation of ecotourism operators.

Provide visitor information and interpretation services covering particularly (i) what to see; (ii) how to see it; and (iii) how to behave. This can be by way of brochures, leaflets, specialised guides, visitor information centres and such.

Prepare and distribute codes of conduct to all visitors.

Launch training programs on ecotourism for tourism administrators, planners, operators and the general public.

The roles and responsibilities of tourism developers and operators are fundamental to the achievement of ecotourism and the long-term success of the businesses. These are listed in Box 8.

Box 8: Roles and Responsibilities of Ecotourism Developers and Operators

Respect and follow the planning restrictions, standards and codes provided by the government and local authorities.

Implement sound environment principles through self-regulation.

Undertake environmental impact assessment for all new projects and conduct regular environment audits for all ongoing activities, leading to development of environmental improvement programs.

Be aware of, and sensitive to, protected or threatened areas, species and scenic amenity; undertake landscape enhancement wherever possible.

Ensure that all structures are unobtrusive and do not interfere with the natural ecosystem to the extent possible.

Recognise the optimal environmental capacity and sociological use-limits of the site in creating tourist facilities; also take into account the safety and convenience of tourists.

Design buildings strictly on functional and environmental considerations and avoid over-construction.

Use local material and designs to the extent possible in construction.

Employ eco-friendly physical planning, architectural design and construction of tourist facilities, for example use solar energy, capture and utilise rainwater, recycle garbage, use natural cross-ventilation instead of air conditioning, ensure a high level of self-sufficiency in food through orchards, ecological farms, aquaculture and such.

Employ energy and water-saving practices to the extent possible; freshwater management and controlled sewage disposal should also be practised.

Control air emissions, chemical pollutants and noise.

Control and reduce environmentally unfriendly products such as asbestos, CFCs, pesticides and toxic, corrosive, infectious, explosive or flammable material.

Respect and support historic or religious objects and sites.

Provide information and interpretive services to visitors especially on attractions and facilities, safety and security, local customs and traditions, prohibitions and regulations and expected behaviour.

Ensure adequate opportunities for visitors to commune with nature and native cultures.

Provide correct information in marketing ecotourism products, as visitors who appreciate ecotourism products usually belong to environmentally-aware groups.

Include training and research programs on environmental issues for company staff.

Prepare tourists before their visit to minimise possible negative impacts while visiting sensitive environments and cultures.

Ensure safety and security of visitors and inform them of precautions to be taken.

Exercise due regard for the interest of the local population, including its history, tradition and culture and future economic development.

Involve the local community to the extent possible in various activities and vocations.

Just as the government authorities and the tourism operators play fundamental roles in the success of ecotourism, so does the tourist. Box 9 lists the responsibilities of tourists.

Box 9: The Responsibilities of Ecotourists

Help conserve habitats of flora and fauna as well as any site, natural feature or culture, which may be affected by tourism.

Make no open fires and discourage others from doing so. If water has to be heated with scarce firewood, use as little as possible. Where feasible, use kerosene or fuel-efficient wood stoves.

Remove litter, burn or bury paper and carry back all non-degradable litter.

Keep local water clean and avoid using pollutants such as detergents in streams or springs. If no toilet facilities are available, relieve yourself at least 30 metres away from water sources and bury or cover the waste.

Leave plants to flourish in their natural environment and avoid taking away cuttings, seeds and roots.

Leave campsites clean after use.

Help guides and porters to follow conservation measures. Do not allow cooks/porters to throw garbage in streams or rivers.

Respect the natural and cultural heritage of the area and follow local customs.

Respect local etiquette and do not wear tight-fitting clothes. Remember that kissing in public is disapproved of in India.

Respect privacy of individuals and ask permission to take photographs of local inhabitants.

Respect holy places; do not touch or remove religious objects.

Strictly follow the guidelines for personal safety and security and always take your own precautions and safety measures.

If a community wants to host ecotourism, it has a central role to play. The host community's success in bringing ecotourism to it and ensuing that the level and type of tourism is compatible with the community's aspirations are matters the community can control. Box 10 lists the matters with which the host community must deal.

Box 10: The Role and Responsibility of the Host Community

Realise and respect the value of the environment, the flora and fauna, the monuments and your cultural heritage.

Practice conservation of nature and culture as a way of life.

Establish guidelines to protect valuable local resources and foster tourism management.

React to the potential threat of investors who see opportunities in development but lack sensitivity to local values.

Become effective nature guides and conservationists of natural areas by utilising practical and ancestral knowledge of the natural features of the area.

Be friendly to the visitors and help them to practise ecotourism principles.

Finally there is a role for others, such as scientific and research institutions and non-government organisations, in promoting ecotourism. The things they can do include: (i) create awareness, among all concerned, about the importance of sound eco-practices in tourism development; (ii) motivate the local community to increase their involvement in sustainable tourism activities; and (iii) organise training programs to prepare the local people to take up various vocations related to ecotourism.

Motivations for Involvement in Ecotourism

Hotel and travel companies in India function in a relatively free environment. The country is slowly but surely moving towards a market economy where commercial considerations dictate motivation for the private sector to take up various activities. Crass commercial considerations have, however, to be controlled by the government on behalf of the public. The environment has to be protected through awareness-generation, legislation, policy and administrative action.

The travelling public is also becoming conscious of the need to protect the environment, to some extent at least. As a result, many enterprises in the hospitality sector have adopted environment-friendly practices like conserving energy and water and recycling unutilised hotel outputs. These can be powerful marketing tools for hotel groups. Furthermore, with the increase in cost of vital inputs like energy, water etc., companies are motivated to conserve limited resources by adopting practices which reduce levels of consumption. Many hotel companies advise their clients to be careful in the use of lights, water and other hotel services.

Civil society has also begun to exercise control over the environment. Many non-government organisations have been generating awareness about environmentally destructive practices. Individuals have taken recourse to public interest litigation to stop environmentally destructive practices. The Indian judicial system has been very liberal in restraining environmentally hazardous activities. At times, political parties also stop environmentally harmful practices by agitation and raising issues in democratic forums such as state legislatures. The print and electronic media have been very active in India in investigating environmentally injurious activities by highlighting such issues and creating public opinion for environmentally compatible practices.

The Government of India has a Ministry of Environment and Forests with a mandate to oversee use of the environment in order to conserve it. The Government has also set up institutions like the Central and State Pollution Control Board to deal with the defaulters. The state governments also have Departments of Environment and Pollution Control.

The Ministry of Tourism has issued ecotourism guidelines for adoption by all concerned organisations. Some tourism bodies and associations like the Pacific Travel Association have introduced an ecotourism pledge which requires their members to adopt environment-friendly practices.

Conclusion

Tourism has proved to be an engine of growth in many economies in the world. It provides for the generation of income, wealth and employment, and helps in the sustainable development of remote areas. In India, tourism provides direct employment to 9 million people and indirect employment to another 13 million persons, thus providing a livelihood to 22 million persons. It contributes an estimated 2.4% of the gross national product. Its contribution to the economies of states like Rajasthan, Goa and Kerala are significant. Although beginning to be understood for its potential to provide for development in India, tourism still remains a sector that needs serious attention.

Tourism has proved to have negative impacts as well as the positive ones. It is criticised for contaminating indigenous culture. This takes the form of changing values, resulting in social maladies like drug addiction, child prostitution, etc. A far more widespread negative impact is caused by mass tourism in environmentally fragile areas like mountains, hills, deserts and coastal regions. Due to heavy tourist traffic in some areas, the cultural and environmental assets of the community are under threat. Although this phenomenon is not widespread in India, there is a need to take note of the possible negative influences of tourism so that timely preservation action can be taken and irreparable loss avoided. The movement towards ecotourism is at once a threat and an opportunity to create more sustainable tourism: by diverting tourist traffic to ensure the carrying capacity of any destination is not exceeded; by planning for regeneration of natural resources; and by generating awareness in the host community whereby they are prepared and forearmed to deal with the negative impact of mass tourism.

As in most cases, a middle path is the most creative way to maximise the economic potential of tourism, while at the same time minimising the negative social influences and threats to the environment. Only ecotourism where the tourists, the service providers, the host community and authorities are well informed and prepared to harness tourism as an engine of growth can yield sustainable results.

Chapter Nine

Ecotourism in Kerala, India

K. G. Mohanlal Ifs

Introduction

India is one of the oldest civilisations with a kaleidoscopic variety of cultures which makes for a rich cultural heritage. It has achieved multifaceted socio-economic progress during the last fifty years since its independence. The nation covers an area of 3 287 263 km², extending from the snow-covered Himalayan heights to tropical rainforests in the south. As the seventh largest country in the world, India is well marked off from the rest of Asia by mountains and the sea, which gives the country a distinct geographical entity. Bounded by the Great Himalayas in the north, it stretches southwards, and at the Tropic of Cancer tapers off into the Indian Ocean between the Bay of Bengal on the east and the Arabian Sea on the west.

The mainland comprises four regions, viz., the great mountain zone, the plains of the Ganga and the Indus, the desert region and the southern peninsula. Possessing a tremendous diversity of climate and physical conditions, India has a great variety of fauna numbering 8 1251 species, which represent 6.65% of the world's total. Of these, insects constitute about 60 000, molluscs a little over 5000, mammals 372, birds 1228, reptiles 446, amphibians 204 and fish 2546.

India is an emerging economic power in the world. For the last ten years the average GDP growth rate has been about 6.5% per annum and it was among the ten fastest growing economies in the world. India has plans to double the per capita income in the next ten years implying a growth rate of about 9%. The country is moving ahead with a clear agenda for reforms in key sectors of the economy to achieve this objective.

Tourism

As per WTO statistics world wide, international tourist arrivals reached 657 million during 1999 with an increase of 3.2% over the previous year. Earnings from international tourism also rose by 3.2% during 1999 to reach US\$455 billion. The industry provides jobs to over 200 million directly and indirectly. The East Asia and Pacific region made a comeback during 1999

attracting five million more tourists than the previous records set in 1996. The growth was widespread with good results in Singapore (11%), Japan (9.6%), South Korea (9.6%), Malaysia (8%), China (7.9%), Hong Kong (9%) and Thailand (5.6%). However, most of the South Asian region grew by only 3.7% in 1999. India (1.1%) and Pakistan (1.6%) showed slow growth and arrivals to Bangladesh fell by 2.3%; Sri Lanka (16%) and Maldives (10%) showed better performance.

As per the WTO long-term growth forecast, the global tourism sector will expand by an average 4.15% a year over the next two decades, surpassing a total of 1 billion international travellers by the year 2010 and 1.6 billion by the year 2020. It is useful to look at the Indian performance in this context. The total arrivals in India were 2.5 million during 1999, registering only a marginal growth. The employment generated by tourism in India is roughly about 17.7 million. Among the world's 60 most important tourism countries India's position was 46th. Out of the total of 657 million tourists, India was able to attract a small number and earned only US\$2600 million from tourism.

Institutional Framework For Tourism

In India, the Ministry of Tourism is headed by a Cabinet Minister. He is assisted by a Secretary of Tourism and in turn by a Director-General of Tourism and a set of professionals. The Department of Tourism is both a policy making and executive organisation and corresponds directly with the other ministries and departments of the central government and the state governments. There are four regional offices. In addition, there are seven sub-offices at the focal points of international tourist importance. To market the image of India abroad. the department has opened 18 offices outside the country. The India Tourism Development Corporation is the commercial arm of the department. The government has also established the Tourism Finance Corporation of India in order to provide institutional finance to the sector.

While culture and the variety of environments are the major attractions, wildlife tourism in India has gained importance during the last two decades. The protected areas are managed under the overall policy guidance of the Ministry of Environment and Forests. National Parks and sanctuaries are under management plans, which lay down guidelines for tourism in these areas.

At local level, various state governments have their own departments for tourism and there are state tourism development corporations to look after the commercial aspects. The departments provide policy support and concentrate on infrastructural development, human resource development, product development, marketing etc. The state forest departments have their own systems of management of tourism zones in National Parks and sanctuaries, in order to cater for the needs of wildlife tourism. There are voluntary organisations working in the tourism sector, and they influence the policies of government. Key private bodies are the Indian Association of Tour Operators, the Travel Agents Association of India, the Pacific Asia Travel Association (Indian chapter), the Federation of Hotel and Resorts Association of India, the Tourist Transport Operators Association, and the India Convention Promotion Bureau.

The government has institutions for tourism training such as the Indian Institute for Tourism and Travel Management at national level, and five other regional institutes. Apart from that, a chain of hotel management and catering institutes exist. There are other smaller institutes. Recently the universities have started offering courses in tourism. Other national institutes of some relevance are the National Institute for Water Sports, at Goa, and the Indian Institute of Skiing and Mountaineering, at Gulmarg.

The Emergence of Ecotourism

In the last decade, ecotourism has emerged as one of the most important sectors in tourism. During 1998, the Government of India prepared a policy document on ecotourism. This identifies the ecotourism resources of the country and lays down the need for a specialised, participatory, policyplanning approach for the development of the ecotourism destinations. It also stipulates the roles to be played by the stakeholders such as the government, the tour operators, the destination managers, the tourists, the host community and the voluntary organisations.

The State of Kerala ("gods own country") has taken a pioneering step in this regard by creating a separate directorate for ecotourism. Some other states have public sector corporations to promote ecotourism, for example, Jungle Lodges and Resorts Limited of Karnataka State. The Wildlife Institute of India, which is a national institute, has got a separate wing to consider various issues related to ecotourism. This institute and others like the Kerala Forest Research Institute, and the Indian Institute of Forest Management, provide technical support by way of consultancies in preparing environmental impact assessments for ecotourism projects.

Recently the national government has taken over eight sanctuaries for eco-development projects, with the support of the United Nations Global Environment Facility. In all, these eight "project tiger reserves", ecotourism has been visualised as an important component to provide employment opportunities for the local people, without having adverse impacts on the delicate ecosystems.

The tourism destinations of India present a wide range of natural and cultural products. These include beaches, hill stations, wildlife sanctuaries, mountain regions, archaeological monuments, religious monuments, fairs and festivals, amusement parks etc. The government has taken several policy initiatives including providing incentives for promoting tourism in these areas, and also for developing new destinations and products. The incentives are given by way of interest subsidies, allocation of funds to state governments for unique schemes, classification of hotels, and awards for the best hotels, tour companies, destination managers etc.

In the ecotourism program, the Government of India supports state governments in the purchase of trekking and camping equipment, and also helps projects which use renewable energy resources. Non-governmental Organisations (NGOs) work as watchdogs to see that the tourism activities are managed on sustainable principles. NGOs also help the government and private sector in feasibility studies, development of strategies etc. Ecotourism lies mostly in the public sector and projects are being developed by government, but private sector support is expected by way of provision of accommodation, conduct of tours etc. There are not many ecotourism projects financed by international funding agencies.

The Kerala Initiatives

The varied nature of destinations provides comparative advantages for tourism in India. Most of these destinations, such as hill stations, archaeological monuments, and pilgrim centres had been developed historically. Several tourism-related studies are being undertaken in these areas in order to collect baseline data to support management plans. Environmental impacts are taken note of in the studies. In recent times, especially in the last two decades, keen interest is being taken to conduct environmental impact assessments for all new tourism development projects.

In general, ecotourism is mostly confined to wildlife sanctuaries and National Parks, the mountainous regions of Himalayas and the islands. New ecotourism destinations, under internationally accepted principles, are being developed as awareness about ecotourism is being created through the media, seminars and workshops. Recently the Ministry of Environment and Forests, in connection with the World Environment Day Committee, declared that ecotourism in National Parks, sanctuaries and other forests would be a major area for development.

The Tourism Department of the Government of Kerala, the organisation which I represent, has taken steps to give focused attention to ecotourism in the state. A separate ecotourism directorate has been created to give policy support for the development of ecotourism. Accordingly, a project for the first planned ecotourism destination (Thenmala Ecotourism Project) has been formulated in and around a wildlife sanctuary, with the cooperation of departments such as Forest, Irrigation and Tourism. In order to allow flexibility in the development of this destination, a separate organisation has been formed. The major objectives of this project are: (i) to develop Thenmala dam and its surroundings as a major tourist destination; (ii) to promote ecotourism on the basis of the principles of ecological sustainability in the areas surrounding Thenmala; and (iii) to have a well-planned tourism destination with the emphasis on sustainable tourism development as a model for other destination development programs. The project envisages three major components: eco-friendly general tourism, ecotourism and pilgrimage tourism. Facilities and activities such as a garden, boating in the reservoir, a boardwalk, an elevated walkway, a walk-in aviary, amphitheatre, musical fountain and mountain biking will be provided.

As noted above, ecotourism is planned for the surrounding forest area. An environmental education centre and an interpretation centre will be set up. Activities will include bird watching, trekking, mountaineering, wilderness treks, staying in natural caves, studying flora and fauna, simple bushwalking, animal behaviour studies, ecological studies etc. A unique trekking package is being developed in the nearby Shenduruney Wildlife Sanctuary.

Before the start of the project, an environmental impact assessment was prepared by a research institution. A total of 15 local youths have been trained as guides. This is an obvious benefit from ecotourism. Strategies are also formulated to involve voluntary organisations to work among the local people to help them get involved.

The idea at Thenmala is to provide some sort of basic ecotourism exposure to those who are not very keen eco-tourists, and provide a better ecotourism experience in surrounding forest areas for those who really have a concern for nature and are real eco-tourists. This management strategy can ensure ecological sustainability of the destination.

An innovative trekking program with stays inside the forest in the Periyer Tiger Reserve in Kerala has been formulated as a part of the program being implemented in this wildlife sanctuary with assistance from the Global Environment Facility. The tour group size will normally be about six or seven, which is in line with expert opinion on group size for this type of environment and the experience being offered.

The team guiding the project consists of local people who were once involved in forest destruction. A destructive dependence on forest was their previous mode of existence, leading to severe conflict with Forest Department. This project provides them with an alternative means of livelihood, and turns their dependence on the forest into a positive one. Their excellent knowledge of the forest and the camping sites (which were essential in their former occupation) makes them the appropriate people to assist with this program. Further, their presence in the area, along with the forest officials and tourists, ensure its protection from poachers and other illegal encroachers. An eco-development committee has been constituted for the project and a certain portion of the revenue earned will go to a fund held by this committee for common use. The forest department and private tour operators are cooperating on the development. All in all, it will ensure: (i) the conservation of the natural resources; (ii) that local people will benefit; and (iii) that authentic ecotourism experiences are provided.

Elsewhere

The Jungle Lodges Resorts Limited is a public sector corporation promoted by the government of Karnataka. This corporation has four destinations in the state which promote ecotourism. Each of these resorts has a unique specialisation. At K. Gudi there is a wildlife adventure resort with travel in the wilderness on elephant back and camping in the forest. Another resort is at Bimeshawri which is a Mahseer anglers' paradise, a fishing camp. There is also a resort called Kabini River Lodge in the Rajeev Gandhi National Park which offers a variety of ecotourism products. And there are similar resorts at Dandali and Karwar.

Major Issues In Ecotourism

As explained earlier, the majority of the ecotourism resources are to be managed on internationally accepted principles, which ensures ecological sustainability of natural areas, with adequate provision for learning by the visitor, and with a strong component of local participation. Economic benefits should accrue to the local population as local people develop a stake in the conservation of the natural resource.

To make ecotourism successful, there is a need for policy and institutional changes in the decision-making systems. Since the majority of the potential ecotourism sites are not with the Tourism Department, interdepartmental coordination and cooperation is crucial for their success. Community awareness issues related to the empowerment of the local people and the creation of adequate ecotourism interpretation are some of the major challenges.

Establishment of scientific parameters of sustainability, continuous monitoring and making the data available to stakeholders needs to be done, and in a transparent way. There needs to be significant attitudinal changes among the policy makers, the private entrepreneurs, tour operators, destination managers, the visitors, and the local community in order to make ecotourism happen the way it should. The Government of India, the state governments, the trade bodies and the NGOs are all fully aware of the problems and issues of resistance to change. Earnest efforts are being taken to formulate strategies to overcome negative influences and to prepare India to attract a large portion of this fastest growing segment of the international tourism sector.

Conclusion

India with its wide range of unique tourism products offers excellent opportunities for tourists. Even in the narrowly defined ecotourism niche market India offers a lot. In emerging 21st century ecotourism, India is expected to gain momentum in view of the policy and institutional support provided by government. The roles of the private entrepreneurs, trade bodies, the local communities, NGOs and all other stakeholders are well recognised in this regard.

Mutual sharing of information among experts in the region will definitely benefit each country and assist to further develop ecotourism. Such a mutually beneficial approach will help to utilise the potential of the region in ecotourism, and ultimately will lead to the creation of visitors (ecotourists) who may become ambassadors for conservation of our valuable natural resources. If we achieve this, that will be the biggest tribute we can offer to Mother Earth.

Chapter Ten

Ecotourism in Indonesia

Anak Agung Gde Raka Dalem

Introduction

Indonesia is the world's largest archipelago, consisting of more than 17 000 islands. The country is 5000 km long, located around the Equator between Asia and the Australian continent, and between the Pacific and Indian oceans.

Biogeographically, the western part of Indonesia (Sumatra, Kalimantan, Java and Bali) has the characteristics of Asia, while the eastern part, Maluka and Irian Jaya (Papua), has the characteristics of Australia. Sulawesi and Nusa Tenggara have separate characteristics. The diversity of ecosystems reflects the diversity of flora and fauna in the country. Indonesia is the second-most biodiverse country after Brazil (Primack et al., 1998). The diversity of flora, fauna and their ecosystems, as well as the diversity of culture, are potential attractions for the development of ecotourism in the country.

Ecotourism and nature tourism are recognised as being particularly conducive to enriching and enhancing the standing of tourism, on the basis that these forms of tourism respect the natural heritage and local populations and are in keeping with the carrying capacity of the sites.

It is quite interesting to explore the ecotourism concept from an Indonesian point of view, as well as its implementation in Indonesia. There is a vision in the country that tourism will be the main source of foreign exchange within the next 10 years (Sudarto, 1999). The role of ecotourism in this vision is fundamental.

What is Ecotourism?

The Ecotourism Society defines ecotourism as "a responsible travel to natural areas which conserves the environment and improves the welfare of local people" (Western, 1993). Ecotourism in its Indonesian version (Sudarto, 1999; Dirjen Bangda Depdagri, 2000) is defined as activities of responsible travelling in intact areas (*daerah alami*) or in areas which are named according to *kaidah alam* (the role of nature), the purpose of such activities being

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to enjoy natural beauty, involves education, understanding, and supports conservation, as well as increases the income of the local communities.

Ecotourism covers ecological, economic and community issues. The ecological aspect means that ecotourism contributes positively to the conservation of nature. The economic aspect means it is a tool for a sustainable economy. Community opinion requires ecotourism to empower the community, in an economic sense by giving roles in ecotourism to local people, and by improving their participation in conservation (Sudarto, 1999: 12).

Ecotourism in Indonesia should follow five principles: (i) support nature conservation programs; (ii) involve local communities; (iii) provide economic benefit to the community most immediately affected by tourism activity; (iv) preserve the socio-cultural and religious values of the local community; and (v) abide by the regulations related to tourism and environmental conservation (Anonymous, 1997; Anonymous, 1998).

History and the Birth of Ecotourism

The birth of ecotourism was marked by successful campaigns undertaken by conservationists and scientists for the protection of humpback whales in 1966. In 1991, The Ecotourism Society (TES) was founded in the USA. TES is an international, non-profit organisation, fully dedicated to finding the resources and building the expertise to make tourism a viable tool for conservation and sustainable development. The society is documenting the best techniques for implementing ecotourism principles by collaborating with a growing network of active professionals in the field.

In Indonesia, ecotourism started to become an important concept from 1995, when there was a national seminar and workshop hosted by Pact-Indonesia and WALHI in Bogor. In order to strengthen the Indonesian ecotourism movement, the participants in the Second National Workshop on Ecotourism held in Bali on 1–5 July 1996, agreed on the formation of the Indonesian Ecotourism Society (Masyarakat Ekowisata Indonesia, MEI). The scope of activity for this society is: (i) increasing awareness about the need for conservation of potential natural tourism resources in Indonesia; (ii) developing the quality of education which has an environmental perspective for tourists who visit ecotourist destinations; and (iii) providing economic benefits in a proportional manner to the communities in the ecotourism destination areas. Since 1996, the discussions, workshops and strategic planning and implementation of ecotourism in Indonesia have increased. This encouraged MEI to run its first meeting in 1997 in Flores (NTT), and in 1998 in Tana Toraja, Sulawesi Selatan (Sudarto, 1999).

The Directorate-General of Nature Protection and Conservation (Dirjen Perlindungan dan Konservasi Alam), Ministry of Forestry and Plantation, the State Minister for Tourism and Art, the Local Development Board (Dirjen Pembangunan Daerah) Ministry of National Affairs, MEI, as well as other NGOs are now involved in establishing guidelines for the development of ecotourism in Indonesia. The general guidance for development of ecotourism at local government level was published on 28 April, 2000 (Dirjen Bangda Depkagri, 2000).

Some Examples

Taman Nasional Tanjung Putting (Kalimantan): Development of ecotourism in Tanjung Putting National Park was undertaken by Kalpataru Adventure between 1990 and 1997. Development of this site was based on the following considerations: (i) the site provides the highest possibility to see orang utans and proboscis monkeys in Kalimantan; (ii) visitation was increasing; (iii) Tanjung Putting had the potential to be a model for the development of ecotourism (Sudarto, 1999).

The eight eco-lodges in Tanjung Putting obtain 80% of their workers from the local community. The local community gets income from various tourism activities: boat rental, supplying agricultural products, selling handicrafts and guiding. Operational employees, besides getting a salary, also get service charges and tips from the tourists. This encourages the locals to shift their activity from logging to agricultural pursuits and conservation of the forest. The higher incomes as well as the vision they have about their future encourages parents to send their children to school to obtain a better education (Sudarto, 1999).

Threats to ecotourism in Tanjung Putting include smoke from fires, the present economic crises, political instability, and concerns about the safety of travel in Indonesia. There are both economic and natural events which can, temporarily at least, change the attitude of local people with regard to providing tourist services. For example, the recent economic crisis caused the rupiah to weaken against hard currencies and the price of wood and gold increased with the result that the people become more interested in going back to the forests to cut timber. Then floods destroyed farmers' crops, so they preferred to harvest timber rather than farm as floods make it easier to get the wood out of forests (Sudarto, 1999).

Taman Nasional Gunung Halimun (TNGH Java): The development of ecotourism in Gunung Halimum National Park (TNGH), West Java was undertaken between 1994 and 1999. Funding was from the Biodiversity Support Program of the Biodiversity Conservation Network facilities funded by USAID. The private sector, NGOs, government, universities and international boards have got together with the local community group (KSM) to develop a four-year work plan for the park (Sudarto, 1999).

The aims of the development are to: (i) promote conservation and sustainable use (*perlindungan dan pemanfaatan lestari*) of flora and fauna (*kehati*); (ii) conserve the park based on empowerment and involvement of the

local community; (iii) improve the capabilities of the local community, and (iv) increase the local community's income (Sudarto, 1999).

This approach to achieving the goal was made possible by establishment of a local community organisation (KSM). The KSM has a board of trustees (consisting of village representatives, local government, NGOs, and TNGH). The executive board consists of a leader (*ketua*), secretary, treasurer, eco-lodge (*pondok wisata*) manager, kitchen manager, eco-guide manager and handcraft manager. They are to set up cooperative business activities (*koperasi wisata alam*) based on the needs of the local community (Sudarto, 1999).

To unify the activities, an eco-lodge (which belongs to the KSM) was designed and built. The eco-lodge is functioning as the core business for the local KSM and is also the office, the venue for meetings, training and other social activities (e.g. *pengajian*). The ecotourism products at TNGH are: (i) accommodation (rooms, dormitories), tent sites, rental of equipment for field observation; (ii) provision of food and snacks; (iii) provision of handcrafts, agricultural products, and souvenirs; (iv) guiding services, porters; (v) laundry, massages; and (vi) transportation and art performances. The price of a room as well as the cost for transport have been decided by the KSM. The revenue may be given to members monthly or annually (Sudarto, 1999; see Table 1).

Description	KSM Pada Asih	KSM Warga Saluyu	KSM Sinar Wangi
Tax (to local government and villiages)	5.0%	5.0%	5.0%
Maintenance	15.0%	15.0%	15.0%
Conservation (monitoring, maintenance of trails etc.)	10.0%	10.0%	10.0%
Landowners	6.7%	0.0%	12.5%
Salary and incentives	30.0%	30.0%	30.0%
Social activities*	13.3%	15.0%	10.0%
Education/ training	10.0%	10.0%	7.5%
Operational	10.0%	10.0%	10.0%

Table 1: Sharing the money (Sudarto, 1999)

*Includes providing a subsidy for construction of bridges, mosques, schools and electricity (decided annually)

Marketing of ecotourism at TNGH is carried out through direct and indirect promotion and dissemination of materials. Direct promotion is through brochures, trekking maps, videos, slides and posters. Indirect dissemination includes press releases, articles, hosting seminars and distributing information to research centres, NGOs and conservationists.

Registration data at the eco-lodge shows that the Gunung Halimun project attracted 80% domestic tourists and 20% international, with an average length of stay of 1.4 days and an occupancy rate of 13%. The eco-lodge earned income of Rp 178 000/family/year (1997–1998), or 11% of the KSM income. The economic crisis caused visitation to TNGH to drop in 1998 which explains the very poor occupancy rates, but the ecotourism project will survive (Sudarto, 1999).

Ecotourism in Sumatra: The idea for the development of ecotourism in Sumatra first emerged at the MEI meeting in Bali in 1996. The project was funded by USAID through Pact Indonesia, commencing on April 16, 1997 (Sudarto, 1999), after considering the economic, environmental, socio-cultural and technical feasibility of the project (Samsudin et al., 1997). The location of the eco-lodge is in Dusan Pamah Simelir (approximately 2 km from Medan). There are water rafting and bird watching opportunities on this site, and other attractions include orang utan, deer (*rusa*), and siamang (Sudarto, 1999).

Since September 1997, the project has faced problems because of a Garuda airlines accident, a natural disaster (forest fires), and political riots and instability. The latter caused the European and the USA governments to ban their citizens from visiting Indonesia for a period in 1998–99. This, coupled with the economic crisis faced by Indonesia caused a quite disastrous impact on the development of ecotourism in this area, evidenced by 40% of travel bureaus becoming bankrupt by mid-1998 (Sudarto, 1999). The decrease in visitation and increase in the price of agricultural products encouraged people to shift from ecotourism to agriculture, with the results that much timber was cut and forest buffer zones have been opened up for planting ginger and coffee (Sudarto, 1999).

The Dusan Sayum Sabah ecotourism site (40 km south of Medan) was developed after Pamah Simelir. Attractions at Suyum Sabah include the river, local fruits, the friendliness of the karo zahe ethnic group (*suku karo zahe*) and an old Dutch castle (Sudarto, 1999).

"Sua Bali" (Gianyar, Bali): Sua Bali is a popular example of a high quality ecotourism "settlement". It is entirely in accordance with the fundamental principles of sustainable tourism. The owner of Sua Bali received the "To Do 95" prize for socially responsible tourism at the International Tourism Exchange in Berlin, in 1996. As a small-scale tourism resort (consisting of five "houses") Sua Bali has no water discharged outside of the area; all effluent is utilised for watering plants in the garden.

Sua Bali is much more than a place to relax. It is also a study centre. Visitors have the opportunity to learn the Indonesian language as well as traditional Balinese skills, such as the art of batik, handcraft making, woodcarving, cooking and using herbal medicine. The resort can also arrange seminars. At Sua Bali, the guests have the chance to start to understand the Balinese culture. They are treated as part of the community. In return, each guest shares in the upkeep of the village by donating US1\$ a day to the village.

Alas Kedaton (Tabanan, Bali): Alas Kedaton is a tourist destination located in Tabanan regency, southwestern Bali. The site is approximately 12 ha and about half of it is a forest (Ado, 2000). The major ecotourist attraction are the hundreds of monkeys in a Balinese forest ecosystem, where a unique temple (*purs*) and bats are supporting attractions (Dalem and Astarini, 2000).

Alas Kedaton is probably the only tourist destination in Bali which is totally managed by "Desa Adat" (customary village), including the management of personnel and finances (tax and income). Desa Adat established a committee (*badan pengelola objek*) which is in charge of management. The method of running the operation is unique. Staff are appointed from 12 "banjar adat" in the village (Kukuh Village), and are in charge of cleanliness, parking, and collecting the entrance fee (Ado, 2000).

The income earned is distributed among the people and relevant bodies. Every family gets on average of Rp 25 000 annually, and Desa Dinas in comparison gets Rp 1 million per year. Desa Dinas also obtains income from renting the shops around the site. Money from parking is shared between the community and the local government (*pemda*), 65% of which goes to local government and 35% to Desa Adat (Ado, 2000).

The people who have shops next to the site (currently there are 202 shops) actively participate as tourist guides, and before the guests leave the site, the guides show the tourists the crafts and souvenirs in their shops. This provides income for the local community. Revenue from ecotour activity also provides money for temple rehabilitation, development of public facilities and for temple festivals (Dalem and Astarini, 2000).

Other potential sites in Bali: Some sites which have the potential to be developed for ecotourism include: Jatiluwih village (a traditional village with terraced rice fields as an attraction); Nusa Dua lagoon and mangrove forest (with birds and mangrove ecosystems as attractions); Perancak village (nesting sites of turtles and makepung close by); Lembongan island (snorkelling and diving); Pelaga–Belok Sidan, Sibetan, Tenganan and Ceningan villages for agro-ecotourism (Dalem and Astarini, 2000); West Bali National Park (bird watching; the highest bird diversity in Bali with 160 species recorded); and Petulu village because of its strategic location between other tourist destinations (Bochmer, 1999; Budiartha, 1990; Dalem and Astarini,

2000). Development of ecotourism in these areas needs careful consideration of technical, economic, environmental and socio-cultural issues.

The Status of Ecotourism in Bali

Ecotourism development in Bali started in the mid-to late 1980s by Ida Ayu Mas (from Sua Bali), based on the Balinese philosophy of life (a dynamic, balanced and harmonic relationship between humanity, spirituality and the environment).

Ecotourism in Bali is very much supported by the Kehati Foundation which provides money to empower communities to adopt ecotourism in their villages, such as Pelaga-Belok Sidan, Sibetan, Tenganan and Ceningan. This initiative is likely to be able to slow down the development of mass tourism (which is considered to cause destruction of nature and cause social problems and, hence, work against sustainability) in those areas (Carroll and Turpin, 1997).

In order to achieve maximum impact, local values such as "Tri Hita Karana" (a harmonic and balanced relationship among human beings, God and the environment) need to be adopted — not just mentioned — in the development programs. Local values can be used more effectively if they are supported by technical guidance and a legal framework which recognises them.

Ecotourism Potential for Indonesia

The development of ecotourism should be able to provide a significant amount of money to support Indonesian development programs. In 1993, US\$950 billion was earned from tourism in the Pacific–Asia region alone, and 10% of that came from ecotourism activities. Since Indonesia is rich in biodiversity and culture, there is a chance for this country to get 10% of this amount. If this happened, Indonesia would get US\$950 million from the ecotourism sub-sector. A potential market for ecotourism is the USA, where 43 million people are ready to undertake ecotours (Sudarto, 1999).

Ecotourism has not been optimally developed in Indonesia, something that could be done by utilising its high potential (related to the diversity of its flora, fauna and culture). It is generally believed that less than 5% of Indonesian tourism revenue comes from ecotourism (Gatot Sudarto, pers. comm., 1998). The situation for marine ecotourism is even further lagging behind its potential. Most marine resources utilised for development of tourism activities (snorkelling and diving) have not been adopting ecotourism concepts, or the appropriate sites have not been opened up for tourism. Success in empowering communities in developing marine ecotourism in Kepulauan Seribu (Jakarta) needs to be complemented by other activities. Indonesian marine resources have great potential to be ultilised in ecotourism activities (Sudarto, 1999). In the development of marine tourism there should be careful consideration of the condition of coral reefs, especially in light of the impact caused by scuba divers (Rouphael and Inglis, 1997). For example, recent WWF Wallacea bioregion data showed that most coral reefs in Bali have been damaged. This is due to fishing (related to fish bombing and the use of toxic chemicals).Careless snorkelling and diving may also contribute to this problem.

Targeting the right markets is a prerequisite for successful ecotourism. The market segment for ecotourism consists of: (i) "The silent generation", 55–64 year-old people who are wealthy enough, generally well-educated and have no dependent children, and can travel for four weeks; (ii) "The baby boom generation", junior successful executives aged 35–54 years, who are likely to be travelling with their family and children (spending 2–3 weeks on travel) — travelling for them is a stress reliever; and (iii) the "X generation", aged 18–29 years, who love to do ecotours as backpackers — they are generally students who can travel for 3–12 months with monthly expenditure of US\$300–500 (Sudarto, 1999). It is suggested that promotion of Indonesian ecotourism products should aim to reach these various cohorts of tourists. The country of origin of the travellers also needs to be accounted for in promotion, as different cultures respond to different messages and stimuli.

The Strengths and Weaknesses of Ecotourism

A comparison of the various forms of tourism is presented in Table 2. With ecotourism, Indonesia employs more local people than in mainstream tourism and less foreign exchange is lost. Loss of money can be significant in the development of mass tourism, due to the involvement of foreign consultants, managerial persons, etc. (Lee, 1997; Sudarto, 1999). It is estimated that the loss of money out of the tourism sector from aid funding (such as that provided by the World Bank) is 50% or much more, up to 80–90% for some countries, such as Zimbabwe and Jamaica.

Table 2. The strengths and weaknesses of ecotourismcompared to mass and nature tourism (Sudarto, 1999)

Activity	Strengths	Weaknesses
Mass tourism	 a large number of tourists large earnings fast development of infrastructure many employees 	 large leakage of money the income is not evenly distributed serious negative impacts on the environment

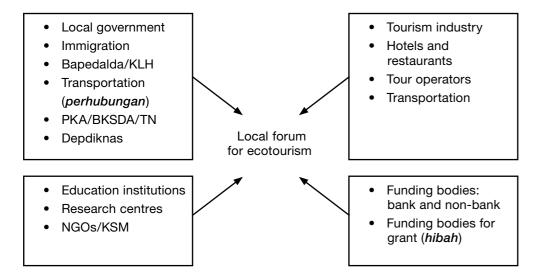
Activity	Strengths	Weaknesses
		 need highly skilled employees, importing a large number of foreign experts for top management
Nature tourism	 low number of tourists/visitations large earnings does not need massive development of infrastructure 	 large leakage of money income is not evenly distributed small negative impact on the environment
	 small number of employees 	 high standard, needs foreign experts for top management needs monitoring and evaluation continual law enforcement
Ecotourism	 number of visitors is based on carrying capacity high income need lots of employees and at the grass roots level 	 small leakage need time so that the concept is accepted by all parties (the government, community, and the private sector)

Mass tourism focuses on strictly economic returns, frequently abandoning the need for conservation, and causing pollution and social/ cultural damage, such as marginalisation of the locals and moral degradation (Nepal, 1997). Nature tourism does not necessarily address income distribution to local people, and it often requires considerable foreign expertise.

For ecotourism to be adopted, it needs to be better explained to all relevant groups. This is necessary because understanding of ecotourism varies greatly across the stakeholders (Lawrence et al., 1997). The public generally thinks that all nature-based tourism is ecotourism. The relevant people need to see successful models of ecotourism. Mainstream tourism people need to take time to visit ecotourism projects in Indonesia and learn about the concept. For example, they can come to Pamah Simelir (Gunung Leuser National Park, Sumatera), Wanawisata Village (TNGH, Java), Tourism Village Sekonyer (Tanjung Putting National Park, Kalimantan), Sua Bali (Bali) or to Marine Tourism Village Komodo National Park (in Nusa Tenggara).

One of the development problems in Indonesia, not just in tourism, is related to weak management and lack of involvement of all relevant parties (Manuaba et al., 1999). For a better output, it is suggested that all stakeholders need to be involved. One model of doing this is to put in place local forums. This could be done for ecotourism as in Figure 1.

Figure 1: Forum for the development of ecotourism in Indonesia (modified from Sudarto, 1999)



Generally the major attractions for ecotourism are based on nature or flora and fauna at 90%, and culture at 10%. For Indonesia, the ratio may be 60% nature and 40% culture, since the country is very rich in culture (Sudarto, 1999). For Bali, the importance of culture as an attraction is likely to be higher than in general. Bali has a very special culture.

Since nature and culture are the major attractions for the development of ecotourism in Indonesia, the people need to look after these resources so as to attract tourism and keep it sustainable. This job is not so easy because, as Ryan and Crotts (1997) reported, impacts of tourism on culture are relatively complex (Hvenegaard and Dearden, 1998) and can be hard to understand and manage.

How to protect natural resources? The answers are law enforcement, getting social understanding and acceptance, empowerment of the local people so that they can actively participate and get appropriate benefits

(Sudarto, 1999). To support the development of ecotourism in Indonesia, the tourism people should understand the things that threaten its development. Some of the threats that have been previously identified include logging (e.g. in Tanjung Putting), mining (Tanjung Putting, TNGH) and hunting (common in Bali). Some sites tend to be polluted by hazardous chemicals (e.g. mercury) from gold mining. Other threats include flooding, riots and an unsafe environment (Sudarto, pers. comm; Sudarto, 1999). Law enforcement, empowerment of the local community, and public education are the necessary measures.

There is a need for high-level education in ecotourism. An ecotourism subject has been taught in the Biology Department, Udayana University, Bali since 1998, and this is going to be followed up by establishing a Diploma and a Postgraduate Program in Ecotourism and Environmental Management in the near future. Udayana University's lecturers have started data collection to provide baseline information for the development of ecotourism around Nusa Dua (bird watching; Dalem, 1999), in Perancak village (turtles as the attraction; Dewi, 1999; Dalem, 2000), and identification of plants around Bali (Eniek Kriswiyanti and colleagues).

Conclusion: Ecotourism a Model for a Sustainable Development

Ecotourism is not just a tool for conservation. It should be used to promote the philosophy of sustainable development (Sudarto, 1999). By involvement of, and economic benefits delivered to, the local community, the sense of tourist developments belonging to the local community is realised. As a result, the community's participation in looking after the environment is much better than when it is marginalised economically. There is also the influence of ecotourism on the attitude and actions of the tourists. Hvenegaard and Dearden (1998) reported that in Thai National Parks ecotourists contribute more to conservation than other tourism types.

Setting up ecotourism businesses requires careful planning and management. If tourism is to contribute to sustainable development, then it must be economically viable, ecologically sensitive and culturally appropriate (Wall, 1997). Indonesia needs a strategy for the development of ecotourism in anticipation of the move to local autonomy. Improvement in the quality of human resources as well as empowerment at the local level are very important in preparation for the new era. There is a possibility of an increase of conflicts across the regencies (when autonomy is given to them), especially with regard to the use of natural resources which are available more than in one regency (e.g. river water). For this reason, environmental resource management at the provincial level may be better than at the regency level.

Ecotourism in Indonesia has been working hard against the destruction of nature and culture (see Ryan and Crotts, 1997) and the economic

marginalisation of local peoples (Nepal, 1997). The development of ecotourism slows down if there is political instability and riots occur. Tourists do not come and this forces people to go to the forests to cut trees in order to get money. Instant money from cutting trees (e.g. in Pamah Simelir) and mining gold (in TNGH; Sudarto, pers.comm. 2000) are examples of the situations that need to be managed appropriately so that they do not bring negative impacts on the development of ecotourism. In contrast, it is expected that ecotourism will be able to give the incentive to people to be involved in conservation.

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Chapter Eleven

Ecotourism in Indonesia

Ricardo Manurung

Introduction

Indonesia is an archipelago with more than 17 000 islands. Approximately 6 000 of these islands are inhabited, of which five main islands and 30 smaller islands serve as home to the majority of the population. The main islands are Sumatra, Kalimantan, Sulawesi, Papua and Java.

Even though Indonesia has more than 580 languages spoken by many distinct ethnic groups across the archipelago, the official national language is Bahasa Indonesia. The diversity in ethnic and cultural richness, various landscapes and marine resources are definite national assets in the development of a sustainable tourism program.

The strategic position of Indonesia and its waterways, between the Indian and Pacific oceans, has led to a fascinating and complex cultural, religious, political and economic history. The country is rich in natural resources. There are approximately 49 different types of ecosystems. Even though the area of Indonesia territory is only 1.32% of the total world area, it has 10% of plant species in the world, 12% of mammal, 16% of reptile and amphibian, 17% of bird, 25% of fish and 15% of insect species. No wonder Indonesia is known as a country with "megadiversity" in natural resources and is one of the world's "mega centres" in biodiversity. Currently, Indonesia has approximately 120 potential ecotourism areas including National Parks, forest parks, ecotourism parks and marine tourism parks. Box 1 lists some famous conservation areas in Indonesia.

Box 1: Conservation Areas

- Leuser Mount National Park in North West Sumatra
- Kerinci Seblet National Park in West Central Sumatra
- Tai Tai Batti/Siberut Game Reserve in West Sumatra
- Berbak Game Reserve in Central Sumatra

- Thousands Islands Marine National Park in Java
- Munt Palung National Park in West Kalimantan
- Bunaken Manado Tua Islands Marine National Park in North Sulawesi
- Dumoga Bone National Park in North Sulawesi
- Mount Mutis Protection Forest in Timor
- South East Aru Marine Nature Reserve in Malaku
- Teluk Bintuni Nature Reserve in Papua
- Mount Lorentz Nature Reserve in Papua.

Institutional Framework for Tourism

There are three institutional pillars involved in promoting tourism and ecotourism: the government, the private sector and society. The government is involved through the Ministries of Transportation and Telecommunication, the State Ministry for Tourism and Arts, the Environmental Impact Management Agency and local government. The government is the head (or the brain) of tourism development, while travel agents, and other segments are the executors or the hands and legs of the body. The central government promotes the image of diversity in Indonesia as a whole, but every province or municipality has the authority to carry out promotion of their own products.

Coordination between the three pillars must be increased as the State Ministry for Tourism and Arts cannot handle all tourism issues. However, the new regional autonomy does not mean that the central government is free from obligations to tourism, considering that tourism development is multi-dimensional, multi-disciplinary and multi-sectoral.

Limited funds, inefficient use of funds, security problems and the rarity of leaders in government who have high levels of dedication and motivation to handle tourism development are challenges. The lack of professional human resources and promotional funds are concerns. Still, every challenge is seen as an opportunity. Promotion of tourist attractions or destinations must be heightened, especially because of the poor image of Indonesia at the moment in the eyes of potential tourists. Promotion should be fair and accurate, for if the real situation is different to that depicted by the promotion, it would only worsen the image of the whole country. Being part of ASEAN can be used to promote Indonesian tourism. Cooperation among countries in the region through ASEAN should benefit all its members.

In the case of ecotourism, the office of the State Minister for the Environment coordinates environmental management at national level, as well as being responsible for defining national policy on managing the environment. In addition, the Environmental Impact Management Agency (or BAPEDAL) was established by Presidential Decree No. 23/1990 to anticipate the impacts of development. BAPEDAL realises that not all stakeholders in the tourism industry are aware of the importance of environmental performance in supporting Indonesian competitiveness in the world of tourism. Neither do all stakeholders realise the value of it, mainly because their orientation is short-term investment and profits, without considering the sustainability of their businesses and industry. Therefore, to achieve the goal of sustainable development, BAPEDAL combines mandatory programs with self-regulatory or voluntary programs (environmental management systems, environmental labelling, cleaner production, green procurement and green productivity).

In the field of sustainable tourism, BAPEDAL is currently in the process of formalising national policy and a strategy for sustainable tourism development. The policy will not only be based on the command and control approach but also on a voluntary approach. BAPEDAL will develop a code of practice as well as guidelines for implementation.

The code of practice for sustainable tourism development is definitely important. It sets boundaries for environmentally sound tourism practices that could be implemented by all tourism development activities. It also helps establish a system and procedure to incorporate sustainable development considerations at the core of the decision-making process. In addition, it gives direction to stakeholders in developing tourism products such as ecotourism, agro-tourism, culture-tourism and so on.

With the introduction of autonomy, the regions in Indonesia will have more authority to manage their own territory. However, the central government will still have the power and authority for some essential affairs, such as the highest level policy making, foreign affairs, defence etc. In tourism, each local authority will conduct programs according to its own needs and environmental attributes, while the central government will only provide the general rules and supervision.

An Action Plan for Ecotourism

After identifying the potential and obstacles for ecotourism development, the next step is an action plan. The general description of an action plan is presented in Box 2.

Box 2: The Elements of an Action Plan

Socio-economic Development

Socio-economic development can be achieved through participation, commencing with the planning stage and following through to management and profit sharing. This should result in:

- (i) an increase in society's capability and capacity;
- (ii) an increase in society's income and;
- (iii) an increase in society's participation.

Product Development

The ecotourism product that will be developed in the destination area must be adapted to the local environment, and its potential place in the tourism market. Matters to be considered include:

- (i) natural attractions and activities for tourists;
- (ii) the use of space;
- (iii) accommodation for staff;
- (iv) equipment necessary for the site;
- (v) tourist accommodation;
- (vi) education of staff and tourists and;
- (vii) awards for excellence.

Effort Improvement

Several criteria must be addressed in planning ecotourism development, namely:

- (i) the uniqueness of natural phenomenon (ecosystem, endemic flora and fauna);
- (ii) local culture;
- (iii) the society's acceptance of tourists;
- (iv) threats to the ecosystem;
- (v) allocation of land;
- (vi) transportation to ecotourism destinations and;
- (vii) infrastructure.

Marketing

The development of ecotourism can be an ongoing process if consumers are made aware of what is available via a segmented marketing strategy. There is a need to:

- (i) segment the market;
- (ii) develop a methodology for product marketing and;
- (iii) develop material that will be used in marketing.

Funding

Funding development can be done in several ways, including by the local community, through to the whole array of investment strategies.

Monitoring and Evaluation

To guarantee the continuation of ecotourism, it is necessary to monitor and evaluate its impacts on the environment, society and finances. It is necessary to determine:

- (i) the institution that will conduct the monitoring and evaluation;
- (ii) the methodology and material that will be used;
- (iii) when the monitoring will be done.

Ecotourism Practices in Indonesia

Environmentally sound tourism development is one of the objectives that Indonesia wants to achieve. Indonesia recognises that the environment has to be carefully managed and maintained if the tourism industry is to be sustained. Based on the present condition and taking into account the growing trends of tourism, the Government of Indonesia has taken significant steps in order to achieve this objective. Relevant policies have been formed and follow-up measures have been taken. In doing this, the government has strived to gain both economic benefit and environmental protection. A number of laws have been put in place to achieve these objectives.

Indonesia has developed principles and objectives in developing ecotourism in conservation areas. The principles include: (i) to maintain the balance of nature in the ecosystem and its life support system; (ii) to protect biodiversity and to use it as a genetic pool; (iii) to provide facilities for research, development, education and training; (iv) to provide facilities for nature tourism and preserve local culture; and (v) to maintain the balance between economic interest and conservation of natural resources and their ecosystems.

The management of conservation areas is the responsibility of the government. Such activities like delineation and demarcation of boundaries, inventory and identification of park resources, safeguarding and protecting the environment, management planning, establishment of management infrastructure, habitat management and conservation of park properties, and extension and education for the community, are management matters held by government agencies. Concessionaire rights for operating and conducting tourism activities in the approved conservation areas (such as Nature Recreation Parks, Grand Forest Parks or the intensive use zone of National Parks) can be granted to private enterprises, cooperatives and state enterprises.

Enterprises that are permitted to manage specific tourism areas are allowed to collect visitor fees for services they provide in the area, in accordance with existing regulations; and they are obliged to involve local people in their activities. Other responsibilities are to pay licence fees and royalties for the nature tourism concessionaire right, as well as maintaining the integrity of park areas. Overall, enterprises should be environmentally oriented and support community welfare enhancement.

A Case Study

Bali is developing ecotourism. For that purpose the State Enterprises of the Region of Bali will make use of its 1236 hectare plantation in Pulukan, West Bali, 70 km west of Denpasar. Here tourists can undertake various challenging activities such as hiking, trekking and camping. While doing these things they can enjoy the fresh and unpolluted environment far from the crowd. Besides that, they can also see staff planting trees, picking coconuts, cloves, coffee beans and even tapping rubber trees. They can try fresh fruit that has just been picked, such as bananas, rambutans, mangoes, or young coconuts. They can also enjoy pure honey or swallows' nests soup.

The walks vary in distance, ranging from two to five hours. There is also the opportunity to cycle. Fishing is another possibility. Camping right in the middle of the plantation is an interesting experience for those who like adventure. A guide will take tourists to the campsite. Outside the tents there are the soothing sounds of insects and birds. In the evening, tourists can seek out animals such as porcupines and boars, or they can have traditional medication which is undertaken by making use of the stings of the bees.

Conclusion

There are three major impediments to the future of ecotourism. These are environmental degradation, economic instability, and socio-cultural changes. Environmental degradation can happen in many ways. It can be degradation that is easily observed, such as erosion or water pollution, or it can go unnoticed for a long time until it reaches a critical level, such as atmospheric pollution.

In terms of the economic impact of ecotourism, communities face two main problems. One is that ecotourism, like any form of tourism, may be an unstable source of income. Many external factors such as natural disasters, fluctuations in international currency exchange, or political conflict can severely impact tourism demand. The second economic problem of ecotourism is that many of its financial gains can leak out of the local economy if there are not policies in place to prevent this. A third problem for ecotourism is the potential for socio-cultural changes. Changes to societies and cultures happen for many reasons. To attain sustainability, comprehensive assessment of these essential factors must be conducted.

Promotion of ecotourism activities is a major activity in Indonesia. Ecotourism, marine tourism, cultural tourism and agro-tourism are all advertised. Indonesia also highlights other tourism types such as youth tourism and convention tourism (exhibitions, meetings, seminars and conferences). However, as biodiversity has an important role in ecotourism and Indonesia is extremely well blessed with biodiversity, ecotourism will be a major thrust of tourism promotion. Maintaining biodiversity is fundamental to the integrity of Indonesia's environment and hence its continued national economic output.

Chapter Twelve

Ecotourism in Iran

Kamran Tavassoli

Introduction

The economy of Iran is composed of three sectors: private, governmental (public) and cooperative. Presently, 20.5% of the country's economy is owned by cooperatives and the most dominant ownership is concentrated in the government and private sectors. Fifty percent of Gross National Product (GNP) comes from government monopolies, and with the contribution of other government firms the government total reaches 60%. In the last four decades, the main source of income has been oil and gas exports. This amounted to about 64% of the country's total income in 1995.

Gross Domestic Product (GDP) can be disaggregated into four sectors: agriculture, industry and mining, services and oil. There has been a decreasing dependency on oil income; and due to unstable global prices for oil, the contribution of oil in GDP has decreased from 39.4% in 1979 to 18.1% in 1996 (i.e. less than half). In this period, the contribution of the agriculture sector increased from 14.7% to 26.9% and the contribution of the industry and mining sector increased from 20.8% to 23.7% of GDP.

After the termination of the war in 1988 and stablisation of the political and economic condition of the country, rapid growth occurred. Between the years 1989 to 1994, the average growth rate increased by 5.7% in agriculture, 7.9% in industry and mining, and 6.7% in services. Since 1994, with foreign currency shortages and its impacts on the national economy, the industry and mining sector has become the major sector in accelerating economic growth of the country. Sub-sectors of industry and mining (i.e. water, electricity and natural gas) have been the thriving branches of the country's economy.

In the services sector, the highest rate of growth is in the transportation and communication sub-sector. This has caused the services sector to play an important role in the economy during recent years. In the years 1988 to 1994, the added value of the transportation, warehousing and communication group increased more than 97%. At the end of 1995, the contribution of different economic sectors in GDP was 26.9% in agriculture, 23.7% in industry and mining, 42.9% in services, and 18.1% in oil, on the basis of factor prices. It is in this changing economic context that tourism, and particularly ecotourism, has to be understood.

Tourism Promotion

In Iran, we have various organisations and ministries that promote ecotourism directly and indirectly. Our organisation, Iran Touring and Tourism Organisation (ITTO), is the most important one for promoting ecotourism. The Ministry of Farhang and Ershade Eslami (or Culture and Islamic Guidance) has several undersecretaries. One of these is responsible for ITTO. A unit dealing specifically with ecotourism exists. The chief of Sazemane Mohitee Zist (or the nature preservation organisation) promotes ecotourism indirectly, especially by protecting nature. Jahad Sazendegi is another ministry that indirectly promotes ecotourism. It is responsible for managing forests and pastures.

The private sector is also working on the promotion of ecotourism. We have more than 10 ecotourism agencies. And there are about 170 environmental NGOs which are both serious and active. Three years ago we had only three NGOs.

However, I can say that we are not in a suitable position to develop ecotourism immediately. Much has to be done to correct environmental problems before we can present our valuable attractions. Our cities, lands and beaches are contaminated day after day. We are losing one-fifth of a billion tons of our soil every year. It is forecast that this rate will soar three-fold. Our forests were once 12 million hectares, now they are less than 7 million hectares. There are 35 million surplus sheep putting pressure on our pastures. The Anzali marsh is polluted with contaminated waters. Various kinds of poisons, chemical fertilisers and industrial waters are pouring into our rivers and seas. We think swimming is dangerous. Underground water is polluted. We have two million cars in Tehran, and motor cycles add to pollution and congestion. And our ability to deal with these problems is diminished as Sazame Hefazate Mohite Zist, the body charged with protecting nature, has lost 80% of its expert personnel.

The application of the principles of Green Productivity (GP) as the foundation of ecotourism is weak in Iran. There are some GP successes in industries other than tourism. The best GP project is the changing of the production line in refrigerator making companies. This project was completed with the help of the UN. Several other types of companies operate to environmental standards, for example, Kerman springs, petro-chemical companies, Isfahan steel and others. The other positive initiative is that the Ministry of Agriculture has taken steps to protect biological processes.

Current Status of Ecotourism

Ecotourism is about travelling to enjoy nature without causing damage to nature and human culture. We are trying to encourage people to travel and to come to know and to enjoy their country. But as already stated, our efforts to protect nature and culture are weak. The first action that we are planning is to estimate how many tourists and travellers can stay in one place without doing damage, that is, its carrying capacity.

We want to teach tourists that ecotourism is sound in logic and its principles are the lawful way to behave. We want to warn people of the problems caused by breaking branches of trees, destroying forests, and contaminating water. To this end, we have helped to make educational television programs. We want to sow the seeds of love of nature, of earth and everything that it has, especially to children.

We have made efforts to keep natural attributes. One step has been to increase the size of protected areas. We have several National Parks. However, in the existing National Parks there are still some destructive activities, but overall they are relatively well protected. Five million people visit Golestan Park per year. Our visitors are Iranians, not foreign people. This is in contrast to many other countries where foreigners dominate in visitor numbers. We have a series of nature museums in our capital Tehran and in other cities. Our people like these museums, as evidenced by the high visitation figures.

For several years now, we have been trying to promote ecotourism through publications. We have prepared materials, including identification certificates, for our attractions. These materials contain the following: a description of the attraction; a specification of the attraction; its history; pictures and film; the relationship with other attractions; how many people visit it per year; how many people can be tolerated; distance of each attraction to others; nearest police centre to the attraction; nearest communicating centre; nearest hospital; the kinds of roads; what one can expect to see in terms of wildlife, and so on.

We have several programs to develop new ecotourism products. For example, we intend to renovate about 300 *karvansara* and use them as hotels. For over 2000 years our people made *karvansaras* (a large place of rest for travellers and horses and donkeys—the equivalent to a modern motel in the USA or Australia). Some are bigger than 10 000 m², and most of them are safe but they need to be renovated. They have numerous rooms and stables, and wells for water. The construction material used in them is natural and has resisted hundreds of years of wind, rain and sun. We think that

renovation is the right action. Travellers who stay in them are likely to be happy and comfortable, and we can save money and construction materials. We have started this and we think it is a good move towards promoting ecotourism. Tourists will experience something a bit like the conditions of 2000 years ago and learn about past cultures, while being in a natural environment.

Our ancestors ate foods which were available from their native land. In our country almost all of those were vegetable foods. Unfortunately our habits have changed during the past 50 years. We have a dry country and the production of meat is not economic. We sow vegetables, so that a herbivorous animal can eat vegetables to produce meat. In this process, we consume 10 units to take one unit of meat. One result of our change in diet is an increasing rate of heart attacks. And this type of farming destroys our pastures and native plants. Rice is another kind of food that was introduced 50 years ago. Now rice and meat are more popular than any other food, especially in tourism centres and hotels. Maybe it will be possible to get ecotourists to want to eat our traditional foods.

One of the most important problems in our tourism centres is the use and release of detergents. People are encouraged to travel, and they rush to beaches and rivers and pollute our water. Because we do not have many rivers and water resources, the problem is dangerous as the pollutants are concentrated.

Millions of travellers rush to the northern beaches in summer and pollution results. Though our southern beaches are more beautiful and are suitable for tourism, in summer these beaches are very hot. We want to change 30 days of holidays in summer for holidays in winter. In the first month of winter, Dei, Tehran has 28 days of temperature inversions; we want to send millions of tourists to the southern beaches in winter and save Tehran from this problem. This is, or should be, the new seasonal pattern for holidays.

Conclusion

Iran is not yet an ecotourist destination for international visitors. Most of the travel is by local people. We have identified the important problems and are addressing them. The concept of GP is not yet applied to tourism; however, that will happen if we are serious. The idea of renovating *karvansaras* and using them as eco-lodges is exciting and could prove to be a drawcard for foreign travellers.

Chapter Thirteen

Ecotourism in Japan

Hiroshi Miyakawa

Introduction

Japan is an island nation situated off the eastern coast of the Asian continent. The nation consists of roughly 7000 islands extending in an arc of about 3000 km northeast to southwest. Total land area, if the Northern Territories are included, is 377 837 km².

The major landforms are: mountainous areas (230 331 km²: 61.0%), hilly areas (44 337 km²: 11.0%), lowland (51 963 km²: 13.8%) and inland waters (9232 km²: 2.4%). The major land uses are: rice fields, farms, orchards, etc (69 294 km²: 18.6%), forests, woodland and wasteland (268 531 km²: 72.1%), building sites (17 702 km²: 4.7%), trunk line and road sites (6659 km²: 1.8%), lakes, marshes and rivers (9 597 km²: 2.6%) and seashores and unclassified land (761 km²: 0.2%).

As of 1 October 1997, the population of Japan was about 126 166 000. The aging trend of the Japanese population is very noticeable. In 1997, for the first time ever, there were more people in the 65-and-over age group (with an increase of 0.741 million over the year before) than in the 0–14 age group, whose numbers decreased by 0.28 million from 1996. Starting around 1960, there was a shift in population to the Tokyo, Osaka and Nagoya areas, with resulting depopulation of regional areas. The population in these three urban areas now exceeds 43% of the total national population.

The major economic sectors are the traditional agricultural ones plus industry and the trade sectors. In economic terms, the importance of agriculture has rapidly diminished since around 1960, when the high economic growth period began. This can be seen by the drop in the percentage of GDP accounted for by agricultural production. With regard to forestry, production is stagnant and the self-sufficiency rate is steadily falling. In 1998, lumber imports totalled about 23.00 million m³.

Japan's fishery production decreased for nine years in a row from 1989, due to a decrease in fishery resources in coastal waters, intensified restrictions on international fishing operations and increased imports. Japan had been the top fishing country for many years, but it was overtaken by China in 1989. Since then, China has kept the top position and Japan has been outstripped by Peru to become third. Its fishery production in 1996 was 7.59 million tonnes, accounting for 5.8% of the world's production of 131.93 million tonnes.

Japanese industry developed mainly in the Keihin, Chukyo, Hanshin and Kita-Kyushu areas. Since the economic high-growth period began in the late 1950s, these industrial locations have expanded into surrounding areas and along major railways and highways. The south is called the "Pacific Belt".

Japan's manufacturing industry is characterised by the overwhelming number of small-to-medium-sized companies with technological capability. In the manufacturing industry, 99.0% of companies are small-to-medium-sized with less than 300 employees. Most wholesalers and retailers are small businesses. Stores with one or two employees account for 50% of retailers. According to a 1997 survey, 58.7% of retail stores are owned by individuals, but their sales account for no more than 13.8% of total retail sales. Between 1994 and 1997, the number of individual-owned retail stores decreased by 85 672 due to a lack of successors, and competition from convenience stores and large retailers which offer a wider range of goods.

Tourism and the Environment

In 1998, 15 806 218 Japanese travelled abroad, 82.1% of them for sightseeing and 14.4% for business. In 1998, Japan's "tourist deficit" was 20.5% of the country's trade surplus. In foreign travel, Japan is still a "developing nation" compared to other advanced countries. The state of the environment at home and the increasing interest in different (foreign) environments influences tourism.

In the late 1960s people began to become aware of environmental issues such as pollution, and conservation of the natural and historical environment. With the creation of the *Basic Law for Environmental Pollution Control* in 1971 the Japanese government established the Environmental Agency to tackle environmental issues. New organisations, institutes and university departments were established, such as the National Institute for Environmental Pollution in 1974.

Three private foundations were established in the same year to provide support for environmental studies, the Tokyo Foundation for Better Environment, the Nissan Science Foundation and the Toyota Foundation. Following this, more began to spring up, such as the Foundation of River and Watershed Environment Management in 1975, the Nippon Life Insurance Foundation in 1979 and the Fuji Film Green Fund in 1983. Of particular significance is the fact that these foundations started to provide assistance to non-government organisations. In the 1980s, the environment foundations extended their scope internationally, towards nature conservation in developing countries and the conservation of natural ecosystems on a global scale. These included the Defence of Green Earth Foundation in 1983, the Foundation for Earth Environment in 1987, the Nagao Natural Environment Foundation in 1989, the Aeon Group Environment Foundation in 1991, and the Sumitomo Foundation in 1991.

Ecotourism Potential

The Environment Agency and the Ministry of Transport promote and implement ecotourism in Japan. The Environment Agency manages to maintain natural resources as local ecotourism assets, and the Ministry of Transport promotes the tourism industry through sustainable utilisation of natural resources.

Internationally, the Japan National Committee for Pacific Economic Cooperation Council and the Environment Agency have supported the development of ecotourism in Fiji. Also, the Environment Agency and the National Parks Association send experts on the management of National Parks and ecotourism to South-East Asia and Africa as official development assistance.

In March 1998, the Japan Ecotourism Society (JES) was established. JES consists of central and local government experts, travel agents, researchers in the field of tourism, environment, local planning and local ecotourism promotional groups. JES aims to provide a forum for people involved in ecotourism to discuss the implementation of ecotourism. In 2001, JES got itself formally involved with the APO, and it will continue to play a strong role in the future.

Recently some local ecotourism associations have been established. They have started to research local ecotourism resources, and got involved in the management of these resources, in human resource training and the creation of guidelines for sustainable tourism. An example in Okinawa prefecture, in the southern part of Japan, is the Oriomote Island Ecotourism Association which was established in 1990 by the indigenous people.

Protected areas, such as National Parks, are the prime resource for ecotourism. The legal basis of protected areas is the *Natural Parks Law*. The law aims to conserve scenic areas and their ecosystems, to promote their utilisation, and to contribute to the health, recreation and environmental education of the people. In compliance with this law, protected areas are categorised into three types. National Parks are places of greatest and national-level natural scenic beauty and ecosystem values, worthy of their status as outstanding sites in Japan. There are 28 such parks, 2.05 million ha, 5.4% of the area of the country. Quasi-National Parks are places of great

natural scenic beauty at the district level and next in order to the National Parks. There are 55 such parks, 1.33 million ha occupying 3.5% of the area of the country. Perfecture Natural Parks are places of prefectural-level importance and designated by the perfecture governors. There are 301 such parks, 1.94 million hectares, occupying 5.1% of the total area of the country.

Regulations for protection, and facilities for utilisation of National Parks are established by the Environment Agency and revised about every five years. For Quasi-National Parks, planning is by the prefectures concerned under the guidance of the Environment Agency.

Japan is one of the world's densely populated countries. Most of the land, except for high mountain areas, important religious areas and land inappropriate for cultivation, is utilised for a range of production activities. Almost all private landowners occupy only small plots of land. When National Parks were designated, economic activities were already being undertaken within the National Park areas. Therefore, areas designated as National Parks cover not only state-owned lands (most of which are national forests) and local government-owned lands, but also many privately owned lands. At present 24% of the whole National Park area (particularly located in the western part of Japan and coastal areas) is privately owned land. Several activities such as agriculture, forestry, tourism, and recreation can be undertaken within the parks. Management measures to regulate inappropriate development activities are always taken into consideration by the Environment Agency through the zoning system.

A utilisation plan is put in place to facilitate appropriate access to and within parks, and allow for accommodation for park visitors. A plan includes regulations on how to arrange an exclusive "town site" so as to concentrate park accommodation in a limited area, and also how to arrange facilities required for traffic, lodging and camping, nature observation and other outdoor activities. To conserve outstanding ecosystems and scenic beauty, activities liable to cause deterioration of the natural environment are prohibited without prior permission and licences from the Director-general of the Environment Agency or the Governor of the prefectural government. In order to protect the parks in a reasonable manner and enable people to safely and comfortably use them (in response to the people's desire to commune with nature), the provision of facilities, in conformity with the protection of nature, is permitted. Public facilities are provided by the Environment Agency and prefecture with subsidies from the Environment Agency, under the following policies. National and Quasi-National Parks are to have picnic sites, nature trails, camping sites, visitors' centres, lavatories and other facilities provided in order to promote their safe and comfortable utilisation. In accordance with the law, private bodies can get a licence to operate hotels, inns, ski grounds and visitor accommodation in parks. The licence will be issued according to each park's scheme for visitor use as well as the quality of accommodation and its management. This licencing scheme has contributed to local economic development and provided a number of job opportunities for local people. Licences to municipal governments have also been issued in many National Parks.

The number of visitors to parks has shown a tendency to increase gradually in recent years. Visitors come for a variety of reasons: to appreciate scenic beauty, driving, mountain-climbing, hiking, camping, nature observation, hot spring bathing, recreation and so on.

Ecotourism Principles

Ecotourism has been described as an industry developed specifically to achieve the sustainable use of resources. The question is, how can this actually be done? What happens if the local people disregard the ecological importance of the flora and fauna and give priority to the needs of mainstream tourists? Or ignore damage to the environment to make sure as many people as possible visit the site? This is not our way of thinking. Rather, we believe that sustainable ecotourism needs to meet a certain set of conditions, and that it requires rules and an overall framework. If these conditions are followed, then the chances of putting into practice sustainable use of resources through ecotourism are improved. To illustrate how this works, we would like to share with the reader what we have observed in the process of establishing ecotourism on a Japanese tropical island (see below).

There are usually two ways of looking at ecotourism. The first view puts a premium on the conservation of local wildlife, culture and other resources and uses ecotourism as a method to achieve that preservation. The other view centres on tourism development which, while based on the use of resources, depends on their continued existence in order to be marketable and therefore seeks ways of preserving the attractive or pristine condition of the destination.

In order to establish and manage ecotourism programs, a somewhat different framework is required than for mass or general tourism. The participation of researchers, government officials, and local people is particularly unique and important for ecotourism development. There are specific roles for five sectors: local citizens, researchers, the travel industry, tourists and government.

The local people with their everyday use of the natural, cultural and historic resources are the backbone of ecotourism. They are not only the guardians of these resources, but are also the hosts to visitors. The researcher's role is to look at the local resources from a scientific point of view. The importance of the researchers' involvement is their advisory position, based on their thorough scientific, cultural and historical knowledge, and their ability to diffuse information. They can assist with the detailed planning of tour programs. The travel industry should develop products based on the advice of researchers. The travel industry helps stimulate local economies through running its businesses, such as guided tours. The tourists, thanks to the knowledge imparted to them by local guides, become more informed on the environment and, of course, they bring both direct and indirect profits to the local businesses and community. They are essential in helping local people realise that sustaining and conserving their resources is fundamental to the stabilisation of their economy. Government bears the responsibility of supporting the establishment of ecotourism: for example, contributing to the drafting of guidelines, providing education for staff, and supporting non-profit endeavours.

Can the sustainable development of resources through ecotourism be achieved? The answer lies in working out a process which involves many parties yet reaches a compromise between the diverse views. Common objectives can be found. With representatives of the five sectors working to lay the foundation of ecotourism, we might ask what sort of conditions and regulations they should set down to achieve sustainable use of resources? We believe there are four core areas.

The local people, the best authorities on their own past, have the greatest awareness of the state and value of their natural, cultural and historical resources. To ensure the sustainability of these resources, local people should participate in introducing and welcoming ecotourism development, as advisors during planning, as guides, and general advisors of how to interact with the local environment. It is invaluable to have the presence of guides and involvement of other locals who are aware of the scientific significance and special features of the local flora and fauna, cultural and historical resources.

A management structure needs to be established which evaluates the state of these resources. Proper evaluation will lead towards implementation of sustainable practices. As mentioned before, the local people have first-hand experience in dealing with and understanding the value of local resources, but this knowledge is often limited to how they are directly affected in their daily lives. To evaluate the overall status and condition, a much wider, multifaceted approach to management is needed. This is accomplished by: (i) evaluating resources and documenting data; (ii) individually evaluating ecotourism products with a thorough understanding of the state of the resource; (iii) recording and creating a retrieval system for resource information; and (iv) creating guidebooks for local people — engendering a common sense of purpose.

The development of tour products and services should reflect the local style of living and interacting with the environment. In order to carry out a good ecotourism program and attain more sustainable use of resources, it is important to create travel experiences which reflect the special characteristics and lifestyle of those people who, in their daily lives, have contact with nature and wildlife. Pre-trip orientation and literature can help adjust tourists' expectations of accommodation, food choices, shopping, entertainment and other amenities that may not be available or appropriate for the destination. Tourists must be mentally prepared so that they won't feel disappointed or short-changed. The average tourist expects and deserves satisfaction when he or she goes on a trip or takes part in an activity mentioned in a travel brochure or guidebook. In the case of most travel destinations, there is a high expectation about the level of facilities and amenities. However, in the case of ecotourism, let's turn that idea around and put the state of the resources first. With this in mind, we have to create ecotourism products that satisfy tourists while protecting nature.

Getting tourists involved in resource management and conservation, from simply being a "customer" to becoming a "participant", is a key philosophy of ecotourism. In ecotourism, travellers are not customers in the usual sense of the word. While obtaining an intimate encounter with nature through the skills of their guides, programs should be devised so that the tourists can learn by themselves how to appreciate the actual value of natural resources, and they should be able to make discoveries themselves. Tourists should be encouraged to take a pro-active role in the conservation of wildlife, wilderness areas and cultural resources.

We need to create a system by which the customer may choose to participate in resource management and conservation — have an unforgettable experience — and establish a strong mental and emotional connection between the area and each customer. This may entice a one-time visitor into becoming a repeat customer.

Case Study: Iriomote Island

As an example of the process in action, we would like to present the case study of a subtropical island in Japan, Iriomote Island in Okinawa Perfecture, which has been designated as a National Park. On 14 May 1996, the Iriomote Ecotourism Association was established with about 50 members made up of island residents and others involved in tourism and ecological matters on the island. Members included local farmers, researchers, sea-kayak guides, local innkeepers, and representatives from local transportation companies, tour operators, the Iriomote National Park Office and Forest Bureau, plus local government officials.

Iriomote Island is one of many islands in Okinawa prefecture, located at the farthest southwestern point of Japan. It is only 100 km from Taiwan. Transportation from Tokyo takes about 6 hours, by a combination of flights and boat. Surrounded by coral reefs and atolls, the subtropical rainforest on the island is, of course, rich in biodiversity. While the land area is only 284 km², the centre of the island is crowned by a 400 m rainforest-covered

mountain. The diversity of its ecosystems such as rainforest, mountainous regions, large rivers, coral reefs, mangroves, and extensive wetlands are perfect habitat for a vast array of small creatures. The Iriomote yamaneko (Iriomote wildcat) and ryukyu inoshishi (wild boar) are the only large mammals on this island. While the human population is at about 1800, annual visitors number about 180 000.

In 1972, Okinawa Perfecture was finally returned from the USA to Japan. Okinawa people immediately rushed into development in order to reach a level equal to other parts of Japan, as well as to gain economic power that would alleviate dependence upon government aid. Every island of the region developed rice, sugar cane and pineapple fields. Notwithstanding agricultural development, the Japanese government designated Iriomote Island as National Park, due to its natural resources.

To people living in other regions of Japan, Iriomote and the other Okinawa islands are a strong lure due to the subtropical weather, mangrove forests, coral reefs and unique animals. Okinawa rushed into tourism development. Yet as Iriomote Island didn't have adequate accommodation and few transportation services, most tourists preferred to stay in neighbouring Ishigaki Island. They came by boat and experienced Iriomote by day trip. Visitation was soon overburdening the popular attractions. Large roads were paved nearly encircling the island, and many inns and small hotels sprung up. Islanders supplied many of the goods and services and were available to participate more directly, but as is too often the scenario in general tourism, very little economic or social benefit returned to the local people.

While the island was developing its tourism and agriculture, the endemic Iriomote wildcat was discovered. It was soon declared a national treasure. Nature conservationists argued that in order to conserve nature and the wildcat, there must not be development. They even advocated moving islanders off the island. Naturally, islanders were vehemently against this plan and because most conservationists were not residents, islanders saw visitors as their enemies. Sentiment on the island was fiercely divided.

Researchers started work on the Iriomote Wildcat in earnest, gathering data on all aspects of its ecology, including its habitat range, and a population census. It was then discovered that since the animals were living on the fringe between the mountain and rice fields, they depended upon the small creatures and pests in the rice fields and villages as their main diet. This meant that farmers were actually helping to aid the survival of the wildcats. The conservationists and researchers realised that the fight with the farmers must be stopped.

As for the farmers, the yields of pineapple and sugar cane were not reaping adequate economic benefit. Yet the then style of tourism did not contribute much to their economy either. They could also witness the harm caused to their natural resources, and they had inherited a problem with garbage disposal. Researchers and islanders alike were somewhat receptive to new ideas and started to seek alternative ways of ensuring sustainable development. Ecotourism seemed a potential avenue to help attain this.

Around the same time, the Japan Environment Agency had started to study ecotourism as a viable new program for the National Park Service. It selected Iriomote Island as a model area, and commenced extensive ecotourism resource research. Farmers, local inn owners, native guides, biologists and other islanders cooperated with this research project by providing their extensive knowledge of resources and historical traditions. Results from this project were published in resource maps and a variety of reference lists. This data was also incorporated into an Iriomote Ecotourism Guidebook, sharing the same information with all islanders and visitors in an attractive and easy- to-read format. It was sold and distributed widely.

Another major result was the creation of the Iriomote Ecotourism Association. After the research project, many islanders became more aware of their island's resources, and gained pride in them. Some, for the first time, noticed how important it was to conserve them. They started to inquire about the ecotourism approach in 1994, and after two years of study, all parties participated in the establishment of the Iriomote Ecotourism Association.

The membership of the Iriomote Ecotourism Association is represented by five different sectors. The core members are all islanders. They include local farmers and researchers, who started discussions about new industries. Local guides are interested in sustainable tourism, as sea kayak, scuba diving and boat guides are aware that they play an important role in ecotourism. The Association hopes to train islanders to become ecotour guides. Scientists are using Iriomote Island as their research area and cooperate with the Association. They give lectures for Association members and islanders on their research results. Local travel-related companies are members of the Association and they are looking at how they should treat visitors who come to the island for an ecotourism experience. Tour companies from other parts of Japan contract with local ecotour guides. The national government is playing an important role in the Ecotourism Association, which is young and must operate on a small budget. The National Park office helps by providing a headquarters office in the Wildlife Centre, and it and the Ecotourism Association are cooperating on a lecture series for islanders. Local government helps support education programs.

Considerable research material, collected by both scientists and from local people, provides a wonderful resource for ecotourism; for example, tourists will ask: When and where can we see wildlife? And what wildlife might we see? From scientists, we were able to get information about wildlife ecology and life cycles. From local people, we obtained information about how they treat animals, and what they think about each type of animal. For example, the Iriomote wildcat is very rare and unique on this island, and so there is no question of its importance from the scientific side; yet for the local people in one village the cat is a symbol of something bad. For other villages, it is a messenger of God. These radically different perspectives are both very interesting and informative for ecotourists. Currently, the wildcat is a symbol that appears throughout the island on tee-shirts and even road crossing signs. Throughout Japan, the recognised symbol associated with lriomote is the wildcat.

Then there is a kind of kingfisher bird, the ryukyu aka shoubin which has the local nickname of "Gokkaromina". This bird is a sign of the arrival of early summer as it migrates to the island every year in April. But for local people, this bird holds a negative connotation. Whenever anything is stolen from a house, people say "today, a Gokkaromina came to my house" instead of pointing out who might be the actual thief. Gokkaromina are always in close proximity to villagers' houses, and occasionally fly inside. This small red bird is a scapegoat whenever something bad happens. By being given this kind of information and folklore, visitors become closer to the mindset of islanders.

Then there are the local lifestyles, food, holy sites and traditional practices. Places have been listed where islanders traditionally obtained their food, built settlements, or consider sites to be of religious significance. This resource information not only can enrich every ecotourism program, but provides the basic information needed in order to form guidelines to protect it.

Historical research uncovered traces of early human habitation, evidence of coral mining, and arrival points of foreign ships, etc. These research and recording endeavours provide the basic information for ecotourism programs. Yet to create programs based upon the best conditions and seasons for natural resources, creating a phenology or biological calendar of wildlife was an indispensable reference tool. This tool records and calculates changes occurring to natural resources and human life patterns over the period of one year.

Islanders rely on seasonal signs from wildlife of ecological cycles, such as the blossoming of flowers, migration of birds and levels of tides, to indicate seasons for various activities. Tides, of course, give signs that influence fishing seasons, and the appearance of certain flowers and birds indicate the rice planting season. At the same time, when the tide is rough from a stormy wind called *kajimaya*, people know that it is better not to go out fishing. Instead, islanders head to the rice fields.

Another merit of a phenological calendar is that it shows visitors how every season has a different characteristic to experience. Although it was thought that *kajimaya* season was not suitable for tourism until a few years ago, the calendar clarified that visitors could enjoy this season by learning about rice planting folklore, watching farmers, and viewing the *seishika* flowers. When we visited Sarawak, Malaysia, our guide confided that it is a hardship for longhouse residents to greet visitors during rice planting season. We wanted to suggest that he create a phenological calendar to show his visitors. Travellers might appreciate understanding and participating in the real-life situation of villagers, without any false scenarios created for a "touristic experience".

One of the ecotourism programs on Iriomote Island is a wonderful sea kayaking tour. The guide is president of the Iriomote Ecotourism Association. The most popular program is a day trip on one of the rivers that transects the island. To illustrate how the ecotour operates, the guide always starts with an orientation on the tour plan and the natural features which visitors will probably be able to see and experience. The guide also lays out the rules about safety and taking care to not disturb the wildlife, and about carrying back all rubbish. At rest stops during the paddle, the kayak guide shares knowledge about the mangrove ecology, small creatures in tidepools, and the historical points along the riverside (learned from a biologist and local old-timers).

The clients kayak in the East China Sea and up a river, stopping for snorkelling, to eat lunch along the riverside and to explore an old village. The guide also provides camping arrangements for one or more nights. On each tour, a compact toilet is carried and visitors are mindful to carry out all garbage, even including small seeds from their lunch. These rules turn visitors from being just guests into real participants of ecotourism. They appreciate the chance to do things right.

Conclusion

The starting point of ecotourism development must vary according to the condition and status of the area in question, the national economy, the existence of nature conservation systems, tourism development guide personnel, and the existence of a guide education system. With these in place, it is then important to consider the role of each of the five sectors with an aim toward ecotourism development and management.

We believe that the process for implementing the development of ecotourism is indicated by steps which are based on the conditions we have discussed. Throughout the process of development and management of ecotourism, there are four important points which should be kept in mind: (i) promote involvement of local people throughout the entire process; (ii) local people should be made aware that ecotourism is not only a way to sustainably utilise regional resources but it is also beneficial for local economies; (iii) a strong relationship needs to be developed with researchers so as to assess and manage local resources based on scientific knowledge; and (iv) there is a key requirement to establish an interpreter's and local guide's education system.

Chapter Fourteen

Ecotourism in Korea

Chang-Gi Yi

Introduction

The Korean Peninsula is 222 154 km², almost the same size as the United Kingdom or Romania. The administrative area of South Korea is 99 392 km², slightly larger than Hungary or Portugal, and a little smaller than Iceland. The Korean capital city, Seoul, with about 12 million people, has been labelled a "megacity". This dynamic and thriving city is the centre of the Korean economy and culture.

The population of Korea is about 47 million persons, resulting in a density of 472 people per km². The population of North Korea is estimated to be 23 566 000 persons. Korea saw its population grow by an annual rate of 3% over the 1960s, but this trend slowed to two percent during the next decade. Today, the growth rate stands at only 0.92%, and is expected to further decline to 0% in 2028.

Ecotourism

Ecotourism is a form of nature tourism in which upmost consideration is given to conservation of the environment, including biological diversity, wildlife and ecological systems, with emphasis placed on educating tourists about the environment and how to conserve it. Ecotourism areas often include existing human settlements (or communities), especially of traditional peoples, and an ecotourism plan must consider ways to conserve local cultural traditions and identities and how to bring benefits to these local communities.

Although still a minor component of overall tourism development on a global basis, ecotourism is expanding rapidly and tends to attract tourists who are respectful of the natural environment and local cultures. Ecotourism has potential for development, particularly in local areas that offer ecologically interesting natural environments that are often combined with settlements of traditional ethnic peoples. Because it normally tends to be small scale, ecotourism can usually be developed within the scope of local resources, When we visited Sarawak, Malaysia, our guide confided that it is a hardship for longhouse residents to greet visitors during rice planting season. We wanted to suggest that he create a phenological calendar to show his visitors. Travellers might appreciate understanding and participating in the real-life situation of villagers, without any false scenarios created for a "touristic experience".

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The clients kayak in the East China Sea and up a river, stopping for snorkelling, to eat lunch along the riverside and to explore an old village. The guide also provides camping arrangements for one or more nights. On each tour, a compact toilet is carried and visitors are mindful to carry out all garbage, even including small seeds from their lunch. These rules turn visitors from being just guests into real participants of ecotourism. They appreciate the chance to do things right.

Conclusion

The starting point of ecotourism development must vary according to the condition and status of the area in question, the national economy, the existence of nature conservation systems, tourism development guide personnel, and the existence of a guide education system. With these in place, it is then important to consider the role of each of the five sectors with an aim toward ecotourism development and management.

We believe that the process for implementing the development of ecotourism is indicated by steps which are based on the conditions we have discussed. Throughout the process of development and management of ecotourism, there are four important points which should be kept in mind: (i) promote involvement of local people throughout the entire process; (ii) local people should be made aware that ecotourism is not only a way to sustainably utilise regional resources but it is also beneficial for local economies; (iii) a strong relationship needs to be developed with researchers so as to assess and manage local resources based on scientific knowledge; and (iv) there is a key requirement to establish an interpreter's and local guide's education system.

Chapter Fourteen

Ecotourism in Korea

Chang-Gi Yi

Introduction

The Korean Peninsula is 222 154 km², almost the same size as the United Kingdom or Romania. The administrative area of South Korea is 99 392 km², slightly larger than Hungary or Portugal, and a little smaller than Iceland. The Korean capital city, Seoul, with about 12 million people, has been labelled a "megacity". This dynamic and thriving city is the centre of the Korean economy and culture.

The population of Korea is about 47 million persons, resulting in a density of 472 people per km². The population of North Korea is estimated to be 23 566 000 persons. Korea saw its population grow by an annual rate of 3% over the 1960s, but this trend slowed to two percent during the next decade. Today, the growth rate stands at only 0.92%, and is expected to further decline to 0% in 2028.

Ecotourism

Ecotourism is a form of nature tourism in which upmost consideration is given to conservation of the environment, including biological diversity, wildlife and ecological systems, with emphasis placed on educating tourists about the environment and how to conserve it. Ecotourism areas often include existing human settlements (or communities), especially of traditional peoples, and an ecotourism plan must consider ways to conserve local cultural traditions and identities and how to bring benefits to these local communities.

Although still a minor component of overall tourism development on a global basis, ecotourism is expanding rapidly and tends to attract tourists who are respectful of the natural environment and local cultures. Ecotourism has potential for development, particularly in local areas that offer ecologically interesting natural environments that are often combined with settlements of traditional ethnic peoples. Because it normally tends to be small scale, ecotourism can usually be developed within the scope of local resources, but technical assistance to the local community is often required to ensure proper development and management. Also, some financial assistance may be necessary to help the communities become involved in ecotourism.

Planning principles for ecotourism are: (i) apply strict conservation measures to the natural area to protect the flora, fauna and ecosystems and any existing archaeological or historic sites; (ii) establish carrying capacity standards so that there is not overdevelopment of tourist facilities or over-use of the environment by visitors; (iii) develop small-scale tourist facilities in environmentally suitable locations, with locally based design, use of local building materials, energy-saving devices and proper disposal of waste material (a visitor centre with exhibits on the site and local conservation techniques should be developed); (iv) prepare and distribute ecotourism codes of conduct for tourists and tour operators, and monitor application of these codes; (v) provide well-trained tour guides who will give accurate information to tourists, educate tourists about biological diversity, conservation techniques and observe good conservation measures during tours; and (vi) integrate local communities into tourism development by providing them with jobs and income from tourism, arrange tours where appropriate, and educate tourists about the local cultures including their economic activities.

Recently, the number of tourists who want to use the natural environment as the setting for comfortable recreation and leisure has increased greatly. However, considering that most of the famous places for tourism in the nation are rich in biodiversity, thoughtless tourism may cause damage to the natural ecosystem, and thus, may contribute to the reduction of national biodiversity.

Programs to Promote Ecotourism

Article 35 of the Constitution states that all people have the right to live in a healthy and pleasant environment, and that the government should work to conserve the environment. The same Article stipulates that the exercise of environmental rights shall be governed by the rule of law.

Since the *Pollution Prevention Act* was enacted in 1963 to address emerging environmental problems, over 25 environmental laws (see Box 1) have come under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Environment (as of 1998), not including those environment-related statutes that fall under the jurisdiction of other ministries.

Box 1: Environmental Laws

Field	Act
Environmental Management	 Environmental Disputes Settlement Act Special act relating to the control of environmental crimes Act relating to support and development of environmental technologies Environmental Improvement Account Act Act relating to environmental improvement Environmental Management Corporation Act Korean Resources Recovery and Reutilisation Corporation Act Natural Environmental Conservation Act
Natural Environment Management	 Natural Parks Act Act for environmental, traffic and disasters impact assessment Special act relating to the conservation of island ecosystems such as Tokdo, etc. Soil Preservation Act Wetlands Preservation Act Air Quality Preservation Act
Air and Noise Management	 Noise and Vibration Control Act Air Quality Management Act Water Quality Preservation Act
Water Management	 Act relating to treatment of sewage, night soil and livestock wastewater Drinking Water Management Act Inland Water Body Quality Management Act Sewerage Treatment Act The Han River Watershed Water Quality Act
Waste Management	 Waste management Act relating to promotion of resource saving and reutilisation Act relating to the transboundary movement of waste and its disposal Act relating to treatment facilities <i>Toxic Chemicals Control Act</i> Act relating to establishment and operation of the metropolitan area landfill management corporations

An environmental labelling scheme was introduced in Korea in 1992. This is a certification system for environmentally-friendly products. The government or an authorised organisation certifies products of proved environmental compatibility. They are to distinguish themselves from other products serving the same purpose by reducing pollution, or by saving raw material and energy during the whole processes from the cradle to the grave. Since environmental labelling was first introduced in Germany in 1977, the concept has been successfully applied in more than 30 nations including Japan, Canada and EU countries.

By encouraging companies and customers to engage in environmentally-friendly production and consumption, environmental labelling aims to achieve sustainable development including sustainable consumption. For customers, it provides accurate information on the environmental impacts caused by products, and should inspire participation in environmental protection activities. For companies, it encourages the development of environment-friendly products and technologies which customers are looking for.

The Korea Environmental Labelling Association (KELA) selects the product groups, and establishes and revises the basic labelling criteria; certifies the environmental label used; undertakes the management of certified products; promotes the environmental labelling system; and manages the consultative committee, and undertakes the necessary administrative tasks.

Green Korea 2000

The purpose of the Korean second environmental conservation plan (1998–2002) is to build a society that is environmentally friendly, one that respects ecological values, and that is environmentally sound and sustainable. The second plan consists of 141 projects in total, including 95 policies and 46 investment projects, in which 16 central government offices are participating along with local governments. By sector, US\$8.5 million will be invested for air quality improvement; US\$13 billion for water quality; US\$5.7 million for managing water supply systems; and US\$3.4 million for waste management.

The major policy objections, set out in the document called the Environmental Policy Focus for 2000, are to provide clean water, expand basic water supply systems to areas with poor facilities, and promote water saving. The next objective is to secure clean air in large cities by converting city bus fleets from diesel to compressed natural gas, and enforcing measures to reduce surface ozone pollution at source. The next is to reduce and recycle waste by promoting the reduction of food waste generated, and extending producer responsibility to reduce and recycle waste. Then there is the conservation of National Parks and public lands by creating a basis for environmentally-friendly land management, rehabilitating important ecosystems, and better managing urbanisation and agricultural impacts. Finally, there are regional and global environmental initiatives through promoting international and regional cooperation in environmental issues, including the reduction of greenhouse gases, the transboundary movement of air pollution in northeast Asia, and strengthening partnership programs, especially with other OECD nations and northeast and southeast Asian countries.

Ecotourism and National Parks

Korea's National Parks cover 6.5% of the country (land area 3.8%, sea area 2.7%) and they display splendid natural scenery, encompassing a variety of weather conditions and geographical features, including mountains, coastlines and the sea. They represent all of Korea's major ecosystems.

At present, about 50 000 to 60 000 different animal and plant species live in Korea of which 1359 are vertebrate and 4662 are higher plant life. A comprehensive study estimated that more than 70% of these species live in our National Parks. The National Parks Authority acknowledges that our National Parks are at the heart of biodiversity preservation and is committed to spare no efforts to protect animal and plant life in the parks. This is extremely important because industrialisation and urbanisation have led to destruction of habitat and reduction of biodiversity. Already, tigers, leopards, foxes and wolves have become extinct there; and other animals including moon bear, otter, Korean red-headed woodpecker, brown serpent, and longicorn are on the verge of extinction, which calls for urgent protection measures.

The National Parks Authority implements the "Rest Year System" within the National Park areas, pursuant to Article 36-2 of the *Natural Park Act* and Article 20-1 of the *Natural Park Act Enforcement Regulation*. The purpose of this is to control access for a certain period of time to damaged areas, areas liable to be damaged due to concentration of visitors, and areas that require special protection in order to preserve the ecosystem.

As visitors are concentrated in our parks during specific periods of the year, the eroded areas on hiking trails increase during these seasons. Reckless camping in non-camping areas turns these areas into wasteland. In addition, the typical harsh weather of mountainous regions plays a part. Torrential rain deforms hiking trails, and the sand swept down by wind and rain destroys plants and exposes tree roots, causing damage that cannot be restored by nature.

With that in mind, in 1994 the National Parks Authority embarked on a project to restore the damaged areas in Sesukchigu and Nogodan at Mt. Chiri. This was done with the help of a specialist in the field of ecological restoration. At the time, the authority had no prior experience or knowledge with regard to restoration. However, since the launching of the project the authority has gone through a number of trials and has accumulated its own know-how through self-monitoring. In the future, the authority plans to develop a restoration model that incorporates the specific characteristics of individual parks around the nation. To that end, the National Parks Authority has drawn up short-term plans for National Parks throughout the nation and has started to implement them.

The National Park Natural Ecosystem Conservation Plan was devised and implemented with the intention of establishing nature conservation as the principle of park management and putting the principles of sound ecological management into practice. The plan aims to establish the basis of conservation-oriented park management, and includes various activities and programs, such as a careful examination of the current status of the ecosystem, environmental conditions, and measures to enhance the existing conservation policies and systems.

A Special Ecotourism Activity: Birdwatching

Korea is one of the greatest countries to visit in eastern Asia for both serious and casual birdwatching. With a varied landscape, good road system (signposted in English), cheap public transport, and a rapidly-expanding network of local groups interested in promoting green tourism in their area, Korea offers the accessible spectacle of winter flocks of waterfowl, clouds of migrant shorebirds in spring or fall, or mountain forests in summer alive with the songs of thrushes and warblers.

As a casual birdwatcher on a business trip or with your family for a holiday, you will have the chance to see a number of interesting birds anywhere, but there are several places especially worth visiting, either in the main cities of Pusan or Seoul, or at least within an hour or two of them by car. For those in Seoul, visit several of the temple complexes in the heart of the city; go hiking in the mountainous National Parks, or in mid-winter watch ducks, geese or even eagles and vultures along the Han River. In Pusan, birdwatching is more difficult, but areas of trees and bushes at the base of Pusan Tower can be interesting, and both the spectacular Nakdonggang River and the extremely popular Junam reservoirs, an hour or so out of town, should provide you with a great experience. For temple visitors, the world-famous Kyongju area has not only an abundance of cultural sites, but also rivers and hills for hiking. While for those wanting a weekend away try Namhae Island, with historical sites and beaches.

Because of the still prevalent academic bias to "birding", there is still no real national network and it is difficult to get up-to-date information on birds or their status. Even the Korean Checklist, originally drawn up in the 1980s by the well-renowned father of Korean ornithology, Professor Won Pyong-Oh, officially stands at a little less than 400 species, when the real total is probably closer to 450. The last decade has seen many new species being identified, the most recent being Ross' gull, photographed at the Nakong estuary in late November 1999. The list is therefore in need of serious revision.

Ecotourism in the Demilitarised Zone (DMZ)

As North Korea and South Korea begin to erase 50 years of conflict following a successful summit meeting in June 2000, conservation groups are offering another recipe for peace. They want to protect the DMZ between North Korea and South Korea, which has become a haven for endangered plants and animals. With the exception of a few military intelligence officers, no humans have crossed the barbed wire fence that defines the DMZ. Because of its isolation, the area contains one of the last vestiges of natural habitat. Established at the end of the Korean War in 1953, the 240-km long, 4-km wide corridor traverses a major river delta, grasslands in the west and rugged mountain terrain in the east.

Before the Korean War, the country was known as the "land of embroidered rivers and mountains". But for the past four decades, the integrity of the area's ecosystems has been severely reduced. Industrial sites and urban centres have replaced most of South Korea's natural ecosystems. Plant and animal habitat is drastically fragmented, modified or completely destroyed. A 1994 biodiversity study conducted in South Korea found that 14% of known birds, 23% of freshwater fish, 29% of mammals, 48% of reptiles and 60% of amphibians were endangered or extinct. In North Korea, rampant deforestation has caused severe soil erosion and flooding. Military operations have also contributed to environmental degradation.

As many as 678 species of rare animals and plants inhabit the DMZ that separates the two Koreas, a Seoul National University professor stated in a report after three years of research. The report confirmed that the DMZ, which barred civilians from entering the area for decades, was home to many types of flora and fauna. The report also said Ohryong Reservoir and Sachon River inside the DMZ and Changdan Peninsula in the civilian-controlled area south of the DMZ should be designated as wetlands of international importance, under the 1971 Ramsar Convention. South Korea joined the international convention in early 1997 and the pact took effect here in August 1999. According to the report, 13 species of natural "icons", such as the white-naped crane, were among the animals and plants discovered in the DMZ. In addition, 11 species of rare animals were also found. However, the report warned that the ecological system in the DMZ could be threatened seriously by clearing, road construction and water and land contaminants.

Amid rising hopes for peaceful co-existence on the Korean peninsula, an eco-village is to be established within the DMZ, the place that has stood at the heart of cold war politics for the past five decades. The initiative to turn the border zone into an environmental district has been taken by the newly formed Committee for Peace and Life Community. At the ceremony launching the project in mid-2000, the head of the committee attached symbolic meaning to the project. For now, we should begin on the southern side of the DMZ. But hopefully the project will be extended to the northern side in the coming years. That way the site can become a symbolic venue for peace and harmony in the country. The village to be built in the Inje county, Kangwon-do, will include an ecology research centre, a natural park and a cultural complex. The construction is expected to cost about US\$6 million and to be completed in 2003.

The committee also plans to turn the remnants of the war which have been found in the region into a lasting reminder of its horrors. For example, the debris found in a minefield will be encased for public display in a memorial museum soon to be built. In addition, a multicultural complex will be set up to accommodate a variety of scheduled concerts and theatre performances.

The Environment Ministry will draw up a comprehensive plan to protect the environment in the inter-Korean border area from development zeal which can be expected with the rapid rapprochement between the rival Koreas. The DMZ separating the two Koreas will be covered by this plan, and no development will be allowed there, with the exception of unification projects.

The government plans to assess the environmental impact of the proposed inter-Korean highway on the DMZ. The Environment Ministry and the Construction and Transportation Ministry will form a joint assessment team composed of experts in ecosystems and road construction. To reduce the construction period, the government plans to adopt a "fast-track" approach under which design and execution are carried out simultaneously. About US\$91 million will be spent on the highway construction. In Korea, people implementing large construction projects must conduct an environmental assessment of their ventures in order to gain a construction permit. The highway will span the 6 km between the Unification Bridge in the South, near the truce village of Panmunjom, and Changdan in the North.

Ground was broken in September 2000 for restoration of a severed railroad to connect Seoul and Pyongyang, which will then run to the northern border city of Shinuiju. President Kim Dae-jung and hundreds of Korean and foreign dignitaries attended the ceremony to launch this historic project of rebuilding a railroad across the DMZ. With this another milestone has been reached on the path toward the end of our tragic national division. The reconnected railroad will tear down the lofty ideological barrier that has caused suffering for millions of Koreans on both sides. From a long-term point of view, President Kim's vision of constructing an "iron silk road" is in itself commendable.

Conclusion

In spite of the growing interest in ecotourism in Korea, there is not yet a systemic approach to resolve a number of issues. The first is a lack of annual data updates on species, habitats, numbers of tourists, and threats to natural areas. The second is a need to improve inter-culture relations and appreciation through positive interactions between host and tourist. The third is a lack of local capacity building to promote self-sufficiency, decentralisation and local empowerment.

An example of what has to be done relates to birdwatching. Most areas for observing seasonal birds are located in farmlands. Farmers will be careless about protecting the birds coming to their farms unless they find that the designation of a protected area (for birds) gives direct economic benefits to them. Therefore, in order to maintain areas for ecotourism, some tangible benefits will need to be provided to the owners of farmlands, and to farmers, for taking the responsibility for protecting the birds. These benefits could be tax reductions (for the decline of property values and the limitation of property rights) and compensation payments for losing farm work.

Another issue is how to package the tourism potential of the whole country. In order to transform numerous ecotourism destinations in Korea to valuable tourism products, it will be necessary to make them part of package tours, which include not only the ecotourism sites but also the cultural monuments, industries, historical sites, and recreational opportunities as is the case with many famous worldwide ecotourism destinations. This kind of strategy would promote demand for ecotourism and increase the competitiveness of ecotourism sites by connecting the ecotourism resources with other tourist destinations that are also attractive.

Governments and local provinces in Korea are currently active in transferring forests, habitats of animals and plants, and areas for visiting seasonal birds to tourism destinations, in spite of a lack of proper understanding of the following matters on which ecotourism is based. First is the necessity to protect ecological systems in natural conservation areas. The second is the need to arrange for a transfer of economic benefits to the hosts, such as farmers. The third is to overcome regional selfishness which arises with areas competing for economic benefits. And finally, there are the conflicts which occur in the protection of ecological systems. Ecotourism will only be successful if these matters are addressed. They can be.

Chapter Fifteen

The Ecotourism Development in Malaysia

Mohammed Mohd. Daud

Introduction

Malaysia comprises the Peninsula and East Malaysia on the island of Borneo and covers a total area of 329 758 km². The country's climate is warm and humid throughout the year. Malaysia is one of the most botanically diverse countries in the world. It is endowed with many natural attractions, particularly sandy beaches, enchanting islands, diverse flora and fauna, tropical forest retreats and magnificent mountains that are among the best in the region.

Malaysia is a multi-racial country with a population of approximately 22 million consisting of Malays, Chinese, Indians and various indigenous people in Sabah and Sarawak. This has made the country unique in such a way that it comprises the three major civilisations and cultures in Asia and, without doubt, a land of fascinating sights and attractions.

The services sector, including the tourism industry, is the major revenue earner as well as the largest contributor to Malaysia's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) at 46% in 1999, followed by manufacturing (30%), agriculture (9.3%), mining (7.3%) and construction (3.6%), in order of importance.

Specifically, tourism is a growing sector and gaining importance in the Malaysian economy. In 1999, about 7.9 million foreign tourists visited the country generating some RM13.4 billion in foreign exchange earnings. The majority of the foreign tourists were from neighbouring Asian and Pacific countries such as Singapore, Japan and China. Undoubtedly, the tourism industry in Malaysia is relatively new with tremendous potential to be developed. In view of this, the country is making a concerted effort to further develop the industry as a whole, including the ecotourism sector. The country has also embarked on a plan to promote the country as a tourist destination in other markets and, hopefully, in the coming years, the number of tourists from the Gulf countries, India, Europe, USA and Australia will increase.

Environmental Initiatives

Initially, environmental management in Malaysia was rather loose and confined to protected areas only, particularly the National and state parks, forest reserves and wildlife sanctuaries that were gazetted under various laws. A structured and integrated form of environmental management covering the whole nation was formalised when a regulatory agency known as the Department of Environment (DOE) was set up in 1974. The main functions of the department are to administer and enforce various laws regarding the environment and to preserve its uniqueness, diversity and guality, and hence promote health, prosperity, security and well-being for the present and the future. In this context, the department's environmental policies and strategies are geared towards ensuring economic, social and cultural progress of Malaysia, and the enhancement of the quality of life of its people, through environmentally sound and sustainable development. With the department's existence, not only are the environmental matters in the country regulated but also, more importantly, the public is being motivated, though initially out of fear of punishment, to maintain and enhance the quality of the environment they live in.

Though environmental management in Malaysia commenced formally in 1974, it was accorded a higher priority only in the 1980s. This phenomenon which was in tandem with the global trend was attributed primarily to the alarming scientific findings on environmental degradation due to excessive pollution, global warming and the so-called greenhouse effect. Consequently, environmental issues dominated discussions in many international forums and among the salient outcomes of such discussions were the Langkawi Declaration on Environment and Development at the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) in 1989, the Bio-diversity Convention during the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) meeting held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil in 1992, and the Montreal Protocol on the reduction of non-essential chlorofluorocarbon (CFC) usage. Having participated actively in the above, Malaysia is committed to fulfilling her responsibility in protecting the environment. Throughout this period environmental management in the country was given greater emphasis and the regulatory framework was further enhanced.

One of the determining factors for any form of environmental management to take place is the level of the self-awareness inherent within an individual or organisation. In this context, the Malaysian Government through DOE, other relevant agencies and the non-governmental organisations (NGOs) has been conducting campaigns to raise the level of awareness on conservation issues throughout the country. Government departments, private businesses and the public at large are made aware of the deteriorating world environment and the need to conserve and preserve nature through sustainable development. The continuous effort taken by the government to create awareness on conservation seems to bear fruit, as some organisations have progressed further by initiating their own greening programs. For example, the Kuching City Councils in Sarawak are presently striving to implement an environmental management system for the whole city. Such a system is commonly used by private businesses to achieve the environmental ISO14001 certification, but has never been implemented for an entire city before.

Tourism and Ecotourism

Due to the prevailing legal requirements and the economic development strategy, the promotion of tourism and ecotourism activities in Malaysia involves a number of institutions. The Federal Government through the Ministry of Culture, Arts and Tourism (MOCAT) undertakes the tasks to plan, implement and coordinate strategic policy decisions. It is also involved in managing development funds to provide basic infrastructure facilities as well as performing a regulatory role in the industry. Meanwhile, Tourism Malaysia, which is a federal statutory body, is involved in the marketing and promoting tourism products.

Under Malaysian constitutional law, land use is considered a state matter and therefore comes under the purview of the respective state governments. As such, all the 13 state governments in Malaysia are directly involved in developing and promoting land-based ecotourism activities in their respective states. The mechanism for implementing ecotourism development varies from state to state, but under normal circumstances the state tourism authority (in the form of either a State Ministry or a Tourism Executive Committee) would lead it. The state authority would decide on the tourism policy and provide the necessary funding to the relevant state implementing agencies, particularly Parks, Forestry, and Wildlife departments. In some states special bodies, such as the Sabah Foundation through its nature conservation effort, are also involved in promoting ecotourism.

Local government, which comprises the "City Hall", the municipalities and town councils, are mainly involved in the implementation stage of the ecotourism product life cycle. Since ecotourism destinations may fall within their area of jurisdiction, the respective councils may also be responsible for providing the maintenance services.

Like most economic activities, ecotourism development in Malaysia is mainly private-sector led. As such, private enterprises are encouraged to play their part to develop and promote ecotourism destinations in the country, within the guidelines prepared by the relevant authorities. The private sector is involved in developing eco-lodges, organising tours, and marketing products and, through their various business associations, conducting training programs for their members.

Some non-governmental organisations (NGOs) are also instrumental in promoting ecotourism in Malaysia, with the Malaysian World Wide Fund

for Nature (WWF) and the Malaysian Nature Society (MNS) being the notable ones. WWF Malaysia was established in 1972 and has since worked on scientific research, policy work, environmental education, public awareness programs and ecotourism training. Meanwhile, the MNS is currently working with the government in the management aspects of ecotourism destinations.

There are also instances where international funding agencies are involved in promoting ecotourism in Malaysia. Among the agencies are the Danish aid agency, DANCED, and GTZ of Germany. DANCED was involved in the development of Lake Bera in Pahang and the Perlis State Park in the northern part of Peninsular Malaysia. GTZ was involved in supporting conservation in the Sabah rainforests.

The National Ecotourism Plan

Acknowledging the fact that tourism was a growing industry, the Malaysian Tourism Policy was formulated in 1992. The policy identifies ecotourism as one form of tourism to be expanded and sustained. This was mainly due to the fact that ecotourism was recognised to grow faster than any other form of tourism. It was against this background that a more specific national ecotourism plan was drafted in 1995 and accepted by the government a year later. This was a strategic effort to focus on ecotourism as a niche market rather than grouping it within the broader mass tourism market. The national ecotourism plan is intended to serve both as an appropriate instrument within the overall sustainable development of Malaysia, and as an effective tool for conservation of the natural and cultural heritage of the country.

Although the development of the tourism industry is mainly privatesector led, the Malaysian Government is also doing its share to support ecotourism development. In addition to the planning and coordinating functions, both the federal and the state governments have been providing funds to develop infrastructure facilities at various ecotourism destinations, as stimulus to the private sector. Considering that the ecotourism destinations such as the National Parks and wildlife sanctuaries are often located in remote places, the government would, more often than not, provide basic infrastructure facilities such as access roads, jetties and some amenities. In addition, the government is also supporting ecotourism development by means of sponsoring the cost of technical consultancy work on particular ecotourism destinations. Since the inception of the National Ecotourism Plan, a sum of RM 10 million was allocated between 1996 and 2000 to implement five ecotourism projects as pioneers. A more substantial sum is expected to be approved between 2001 and 2005 to finance the development of more ecotourism products. An early indication is that 28 new projects costing more than RM 100 million are strongly recommended to be implemented.

Quite a number of the tourism destinations in Malaysia are established as either gazetted terrestrial or marine protected areas, in various categories such as forest reserves, wildlife reserves, sanctuaries, wetlands and marine parks. Those protected areas are gazetted under the various federal and state laws such as the *Wildlife Protection Act*, the *National Park Act*, the *National Forestry Act*, the *Fisheries Act* and the *State Park Enactment (Pahang)*. The terrestrial protected areas in Malaysia cover 1 464 973 hectares, which is nearly 5% of the country. Among others, the protected areas consists of a National Park, 18 state parks, 18 wildlife reserves, three wildlife sanctuaries, three bird reserves, and two protected landscapes. On the other hand, the marine protected areas include more than 40 islands. The protected areas are managed by institutions such as the Department of Wildlife and National Parks, the Forestry Department, the Fisheries Department and the various State Parks authorities.

In order to implement the ecotourism activities successfully, there must be joint efforts between the various levels of government, the private sector and the local communities. Thus, a special committee, which comprises members from the federal government, state governments, private sector and NGOs, has been formed in MOCAT to spearhead the overall implementation of the National Ecotourism Plan. Based on the recommended action, the activities that have been conducted are as follows: (i) a national workshop was held to promote and create awareness on the National Ecotourism Plan; (ii) a training program, the Malaysia Eco Host — Sustainable Tourism Training for Frontlines, has been prepared to develop awareness around the concept of ecotourism; (iii) a series of government-funded pilot ecotourism projects has been launched in the Seventh Malaysian Development Plan; and (iv) additional ecotourism projects have been proposed to be implemented in the Eighth Malaysian Development Plan

Case Study: Kinabatangan Wildlife Safari

One of the states that has a number of ecotourism products to offer is Sabah in East Malaysia. The state is located in the northern part of Borneo Island and has rich fauna and flora in primary tropical rainforest. One such area is the Kinabatangan region surrounding the town of Sandakan which includes the floodplain of the Kinabatangan River, the second longest river in Malaysia. The region is inhabited by fascinating wildlife such as orang utan, the rare proboscis monkey, elephant and rhinoceros. The region is also home to some 200 bird species including hornbills, cuckoos and crows as well as some 27 species of bats, estimated to be two million in number. In order to protect and conserve the region's natural asset of forest habitat and wildlife, particularly from logging activities, the Sabah State government has approved the establishment of the Sepilok Orang Utan Rehabilitation Centre and the Kinabatangan Wildlife Sanctuary. The Sepilok Orang Utan Rehabilitation Centre, which includes orang utan research and education facilities as well as accommodation for visitors, is the largest of its kind in the world. Meanwhile, Kinabatangan Wildlife Sanctuary (which covers an area of about 27 000 hectares) is aimed to provide a basis for protection of the forest habitats and ecosystems, and promote the welfare of the local community.

Apart from the Sabah state government, the federal government has provided funding to develop the centre and sanctuary. WWF Malaysia is also involved in the conservation initiatives, particularly in the Lower Kinabatangan floodplain through its Partners for Wetlands program. Among its activities is a program to form an alliance that creates links between conservation and development through sustainable projects; another is to raise the environmental awareness among the local people as well as get their participation in ecotourism activities. The private sector has ventured into ecotourism activities in the Kinabatangan region by building eco-lodges and organising river tours. One of the most successful eco-lodges is the Sukau Rainforest Lodge, which has achieved a number of international awards for its practices.

Although the Kinabatangan Wildlife Safari as a product has not matured yet, it is already showing its potential in becoming a successful ecotourism destination where preservation of natural resources goes hand in hand with sustainable development. All the parties concerned, such as the government, private sector, local communities and NGOs work together in a partnership to protect the priceless natural asset by translating business opportunities into conservation benefits.

Conclusion

Integrated efforts and initiatives to conserve nature and protect the environment have been in existence in Malaysia since the 1970s. Realising both the potential and the vulnerability of the nation's natural attractions, the country took a bold step by unveiling and adopting a national ecotourism plan in 1996. The plan is responsible for enhancing and charting the direction of ecotourism development in Malaysia. It is expected to help the country realise the tourism potential to the optimum whilst at the same time conserving nature and the environment. The implementation of the plan in Malaysia is considered timely given the growing popularity of ecotourism activities worldwide. Nonetheless, the plan has only reached its early implementation stage and there is still much to be done jointly by all the parties concerned (namely MOCAT, the state governments, NGOs, the private sector and the local communities) before ecotourism development is fully accomplished in Malaysia.

Chapter Sixteen

Ecotourism in Mongolia

Bavuu Zorigt

Introduction

Mongolia comprises a variety of relatively untouched, large-scale ecosystems many of which are unique in the world. However, like in many other developing countries, nature conservation in Mongolia faces an array of difficulties most of which can be attributed to a lack of finance and deficiency in know-how concerning management of protected areas.

The Economy

The Mongolian economy has experienced considerable industrialisation for the last three decades. The agriculture sector remains the backbone of the economy, with about 26% of GNP. It employs 95% of the rural population and 40% of the total labour force, it accounts for about 44% of total exports, mostly livestock products. About 80% of the land is suitable mainly for extensive animal husbandry, and there are 26.8 million head of livestock, including 13.8 million sheep, 7.2 million goats, 3 million cattle, 2.4 million horses and over 0.33 million camels. More than 90% of all livestock are in private possession.

Agriculture has important linkages with the rest of the economy and provides the raw materials for leather and shoe factories, wool processing mills, milk and bakery plants. The strategy of the government is to reduce the dependence of the country on agriculture, in particular, animal husbandry based on traditional nomadic culture, and to move to more technologically sophisticated industry-based production. In this strategy, while agriculture would continue to be an important component of production, the strategic focus will be developing it as an input supplier for higher value-added and growth-leading manufacturing activities.

Crop cultivation began on a significant scale only in the 1950s, by developing virgin land. Most crop cultivation takes place on state and private farms. Although important progress has been made towards diversification of agriculture, and in particular attaining self-sufficiency in cereal crops such as wheat, livestock-raising continues to be the dominant sub-section in agriculture, contributing about 70% of the gross output in the sector. However, agriculture crops that contributed less than 1% of the gross output of the sector in 1940 have improved their share to 30% today. In 1994, farmers harvested 380 000 tonnes of grain and 78 000 tonnes of potatoes and vegetables.

The mining industry is significant. Activity in the 1970s and 1980s focused on industrial minerals, including copper, molybdenum, fluorspar, phosphorites, gold, tin and coal. Today, nearly 200 deposits of coal, ferrous and non-ferrous metals, rare earth metals and precious stones are being mined. Mining is dominated by large-scale development of coal, copper, fluorspar and molybdenum, whereas mining of gold, tin and tungsten is primarily small scale. The mining sector accounts for a significant share of national income, and coal, copper, fluorspar and molybdenum are the most important commodities produced. Copper, molybdenum and fluorspar account for 60% of export revenue. Mongolia is one of the leading world producers of fluorspar, and a major producer and exporter of copper and molybdenum among the former centrally planned economies.

Mongolia has a wide variety of mineral resources available for development. Though the minerals industry will continue to be dominated by production of coal, copper, fluorspar and molybdenum, other commodities will also be subject to new or expanded development, including gold, silver, limestone, nickel, phosphate, rare earth metals, tin, tungsten, lead and zinc. Mongolia will require continued financial and technical investment from external sources to develop its mineral base. Given the varied geological environment of the country, the long-term prospects for mining are considered favourable.

The manufacturing sector is expanding. Mongolia has built a significant capacity in both light industry and the food industry. The major enterprises in the light industry are concentrated in Ulaanbaatar, Darkhan, Erdenet and Choibalsan. A number of enterprises have excess capacity and are monopolists.

The development of the Mongolia light industry was designed to add value to the raw materials produced by animal husbandry and to create jobs for the increasing urban population, mainly female residents. The development of light industry began with the establishment of wool washing, spinning and animal skin processing enterprises. Also large state-owned garment factories were built. Military and other uniforms, fur and sheepskin garments are significant products.

During the 1970s and 80s, the sector extended to the production of shoes, carpets, leather and skin garments. Three big carpet factories are situated in Ulaanbaatar, Erdenet and Choibalsan. Until recently, the large state-owned wool and skin processing factories have played an important role in the national economy. The wool and cashmere processing branch of the sector contributes over 10% to the net industrial production and employs 5% of workers. Only two out of 20 previous large state-owned companies remain as state property and the rest have become share-holding companies.

In recent years, a considerable amount of small-and medium-sized capacity has been introduced in the sector. Mongolia produces 20 300 tonnes of sheep wool, about 2000 tons of cashmere and 1500 tonnes of camel wool per year. Encouragement is given to foreign investment in cashmere processing.

Hide processing is a traditional Mongolian skill. Development of the hide and skin processing industry is based in the raw materials of about 8–9 million animals slaughtered yearly in Mongolia. The industry expanded rapidly with the establishment of an integrated leather garment and shoe factory for production for both domestic consumption and export.

Foreign investment is considered an important source of the further development of the sector. Nowadays, investors from USA, South Korea, Hong Kong and other countries are establishing joint ventures with Mongolian partners, using the existing facilities and skilled workers of the sector. They also are engaged in the production of garments for export using imported inputs. Foreign investors are attracted by the favourable conditions for foreign investment and preferential tariff treatment in the USA, EU and Japanese markets for products of Mongolian origin.

Ecotourism Potential

At the national level, a number of key institutional arrangements have been created to promote ecotourism. A National Tourism Council was established, and a National Tourism Centre was created in 1998. However, the private sector organisations are still in their infancy without a strong backing from the trade, and neither the Council nor Centre are operational. It is anticipated that when the Council is in full operation that it, together with the other associations, will ensure stronger institutional arrangements for the private and public tourism sectors. In May 1997, the Mongolian Association of Travel Agents was founded. Many still view it as inefficient and not speaking for the smaller companies' interests.

The National Ecotourism Association of Mongolia (NEAM) was founded by an individual who worked as an ecotourism officer at the Protected Area Bureau at the time. The NEAM has about 60 members and is mainly an academic institution with a Professor from the National University of Mongolia as its Vice-Director, but there are also some ten private enterprises who have joined the association. NEAM's objectives include the essential ecotourism principles (as adopted, for example, by The Ecotourism Society, based in the United States). Although the association has good intentions, it lacks both financial resources and sufficient experience in tourism. As a consequence, it has hardly produced anything tangible, with the exception of a training seminar for Protected Area Bureau rangers which, however, has been widely criticised as superficial.

At present, about 11.6% of the whole country has been reserved as protected areas by the Mongolian Government and further additions are expected. Most foreign tourists are informed before they come to Mongolia that the country is still "wild nature". Notwithstanding the fact that tourism in Mongolia is considered to be "green", there are a number of signs of environmental degradation which could work against this image.

Today, dirty water, air, pollution, poor management of solid garbage, collecting of firewood, and electric generators are worrying problems for the Mongolian tourism sector. Many of these problems are, in fact, a result of tourism. Therefore, the Tourist Camp Administrations in the State Reserved Areas should focus their attention on the harm tourists cause and tourists' attitude to the natural environment. These problems can be easily solved by the following measures: (i) preparing a tourism management plan, including reserved area planning; (ii) improving the licence system and control systems for use of water; (iii) controlling tourist company activities; and (iv) establishing a General Zone for tourism. Implementing such simple and necessary measures will lead to better control, and Mongolia will be able to produce a "green" product and the best ecotourism.

The second stage for the development of ecotourism is to use the concept of green productivity in the Mongolian market. Every company should manage their ecotourism activity at the appropriate level. Box 1 presents guidelines.

Box 1: Guidelines for Ecotourism Planning

- Pursue an active approach to tourism planning.
- Develop ecotourism management plans including recreational infrastructure, itineraries, regulation of activities, zones for camping and picnicking, and information items and sources.
- Invest in recreational infrastructure and services including the maintenance of roads/bridges, hardening of heavily-used areas, construction and maintenance of toilets, picnic areas, sun shades, campgrounds, occasional garbage bins. These are necessary to better regulate visitation, and to gain a higher acceptance of tourism companies for charging fees. It should be made clear, however, that fees are not just service fees in the strict sense and that, for example, the provision of garbage collection services does not exempt individual tourists and tour operators from their duty to carry out any material they have brought into a park.
- The determination of quantitative carrying capacities can make sense for some zones that receive or will receive high visitation, but not for an entire Protected Area. It is recommended that it is best to define maximum visitor numbers per day or for any given moment (number of people who are simultaneously in a given area) or for a certain period of time (e.g. breeding season of birds), rather than for an entire year.
- Tourism activities in protected areas have to be checked and monitored regularly. This is not just a matter of control, but of proper management. Surveillance should not take a military-like form, but it should nevertheless be firm.
- Do not promote hunting tourism in protected area buffer zones. Hunting should be in special hunting zones with some distance to zones visited by tourists.

Current status of ecotourism

Until 1992, there was no government agency explicitly responsible for tourism. In socialist times, all activities were handled by the state-owned Juulchin Company. In March 1992, a tourism department was established within the Ministry of Nature and Environment, which was later given the additional responsibility to manage protected areas and was accordingly named the Department for Protected Areas Management and Ecotourism. In 1995, as a result of the new tourism guidelines which reflected a growing awareness of the economic potential of tourism, the government established a new Tourism Policy Department within the Ministry of Trade and Industry. After the elections in 1996, this department was transferred to the Ministry of Infrastructure where it is today. In the present situation, the responsibility for tourism in protected areas is still with the department, but the focus has clearly moved to economic considerations. This is also reflected by the fact that the department has no officer at present who is in charge of ecotourism.

The new Tourism Policy Department is currently divided into the following sections: (i) development and manpower planning; (ii) marketing and promotion; (iii) regulations, licensing and operations as well as legal matters, statistics, and research; (iv) international cooperation; and (v) promotion of nature tourism.

Accordingly, the Tourism Policy Department has been assigned a wealth of tasks: (i) preparation of a comprehensive plan and policy for tourism development; (ii) drafting of a comprehensive tourism law; (iii) preparation of regulations and quality standards; (iv) international marketing and promotion of Mongolia; (v) development of a computerised statistical database and information system; (vi) development of training and education curricula for tourism personnel; (vii) co-ordination of the tourism policy with other government agencies and the private sector.

Due to the government's lack of staff and financial resources, the development of tourism in Mongolia is essentially driven by the private sector, including marketing in foreign countries. Apart from hotels and restaurants, there are at present 210 licensed travel agencies and tour operators, almost all of them based in Ulaanbaatar. Most of these have entered the tourism business quite recently (in 1996, only just more than 130 agencies were licensed, according to a WTO report), assuming that tourism would be quick and easy money. As a consequence (and also because the government does not have the means of proper examination and monitoring), most of them are rather inexperienced. Only 20 to 40 agencies are considered to operate professionally and offer decent services.

Several international organisations have been active in Mongolia in supporting the country in the fields of nature conservation and tourism

development. As a result, a number of studies and some follow-up activities have been carried out. The Mongolian Biodiversity Project was started in 1993 and is a cooperative effort between the Ministry of Nature and Environment (MNE) and the United Nations Development Program, with funding from the Global Environment Facility. The project's goals have been to prepare an inventory of biodiversity, identify major threats to it, assess the status of conservation efforts and to develop an action program for conservation and the sustainable use of natural resources. The World Wide Fund has been engaged in nature conservation in Mongolia since 1992 with the major goal to help the MNE establish a coherent protected area system. The project is officially entitled "Protected Areas as a Contribution to Regional Development" which puts a strong emphasis on the sustainable use of natural resources within and around protected areas. The development of ecotourism is an essential component of this concept.

In 1993, DANIDA financed a study entitled "Nature Conservation through Development of Tourism". The study's main purpose was to create work and income from nature-oriented tourism on a sustainable basis, and thereby conserve the environment; to bring nature and wildlife management in line with international standards; and to bring the collection, sale and export of natural materials and objects, archaeological finds and historical artefacts under control. The study was the first to systematically deal with nature tourism in Mongolia. As such, it treated the matter more in a comprehensive than in a specific way, although there was a regional focus on the Gobi.

The International Finance Corporation, which on behalf of the World Bank delivers financial and technical support to the private sector in developing countries, initiated an 18-month tourism project development facility in April 1997, upon the request of the Mongolian government and private companies.

The World Tourism Organization prepared a Tourism Master Plan for Mongolia in 1989. This plan quickly became obsolete with the political and economic changes in the 1990s. Therefore, in 1996, a new mission to Mongolia was carried out with the objective to evaluate the changed situation of the tourism sector and to propose appropriate improvements.

The Technical Assistance to the Commonwealth of Independent States (TACIS) program of EU includes Mongolia. TACIS has supported some smaller tourism-related projects in Mongolia, for example, the elaboration of a model curriculum for the Tourism Department at the National University in collaboration with TEMPUS, an EU academic exchange program. The Japan International Cooperation Agency financed two studies on the requirements and expenditure of Japanese tourism in Mongolia in 1994 and 1995. Both studies contained a rather critical evaluation of the quality of tourism services and facilities.

Approaches to Ecotourism Development

There are a number of matters which should be addressed to promote ecotourism in Mongolia. The first is to focus on high-guality nature tourism with low infrastructure requirements. The second is not to attempt to develop mass tourism which would require substantial infrastructure investment. The third is to develop more opportunities for wildlife observation with the help of knowledgeable protected area guides. Northern steppe animals (takhi, wild ass, gazelles) cannot be observed in other parts of the world, where this type of ecosystem has largely disappeared. The fourth is to develop opportunities for nature-oriented adventure activities, for example trekking and mountain-biking in the Altai, Khangai, Khentii and Gobi Gurvansaikhan mountains, kayaking and fishing at Lake Hovsgol and the northern rivers. The fifth is based on Mongolian culture. Since the traditional nomadic culture is an essential part of Mongolia's tourism product, the concept is to cautiously facilitate direct contact between foreign visitors and rural people who are interested in becoming involved in tourism. This should be followed by support for small tourism enterprises operated by local groups or families. And finally, there is a need to build smaller accommodation facilities which appeal more to most tourists than large complexes do. Related to this is the need to select attractive sites, design the grounds and facilities so as to be as natural as possible, and use alternative, environmentally-friendly technologies.

Every visitor to a protected area in Mongolia is required to pay an entrance fee, but this regulation is hardly enforced and often violated. Sometimes the money is simply not collected by the park administration. Therefore, the following calculation shows the financial potential, not the actual income from tourism. At present, entry fees for foreigners are 1000 Tugrik (US 12.5 cents) plus 3000 Tugrik per vehicle (US 37.5 cents). Sometimes a smaller fee is charged if visits are in short supply or limited to a small section of a protected area. The number of foreign visitors to Mongolia's designated protected areas is estimated to be 15 000 per year, plus 3000 vehicles. This would amount to a total revenue of about US\$30 000. The total number of Mongolians visiting protected areas is unknown, but it is estimated that 45 000 Mongolians visit Gorkhi National Conservation Park, the country's most popular domestic tourism destination. Bogd khan National Conservation Park on the outskirts of Ulaanbaatar receives a lot of Mongolian visitors as well, but in the countryside domestic visitation is not known. Assuming a total number of 70 000 Mongolian visitors and 10 000 vehicles, entrance fees would amount to US\$12 500. Thus, the potential overall revenue going to protected areas administrators from current visitor fees is around US\$45 000 (34 million Tugrik).

Recently, there has been considerable political controversy about entrance fees for protected areas in Mongolia and some government politicians have even questioned the right to charge these fees at all. The main arguments against fees are (i) that they hurt the tourism business; (ii) that every Mongolian should have the right to enjoy nature without paying; and (iii) that administrators do not use the money for improving visitor services and facilities.

Besides traditional forms of land use, tourism, especially ecotourism, is one of the main economic activities in model areas and constitutes one of the few possibilities for the park administrators to raise their own income. It also provides job and income opportunities for Mongolians both at the national and local levels. Therefore, the development of ecotourism and general tourism will not face resistance in Mongolia as jobs are created.

Conclusion

Much needs to be done but progress is being made. Juulchin F.T.C. has not yet established a tourism development plan as a guideline for its activities, but we promote ecotourism and nature tours more intensively than general tourism. Nature tourism products make comparatively large revenue with small cost. We have maintained constant contact with a French company for almost 10 years as it is sending us three to five Jeep tour groups a year. This French company is making very strong, intensive promotion of these tours in the French market. We have also been selling trekking and horse riding tours to a US company for the last four years and have achieved quite significant results. In the last two years, we have established contacts with a company from Austria. It organised a camel ride tour in the Gobi. As we view tourism in Mongolia to be nature-based and ecotourism, promotion of National Parks like Terelj Gorckh and the Khangai and Khovsgol areas are always part of the promotion of mainstream tourism.

Chapter Seventeen

Ecotourism in Nepal

Jeeban Thapa

Introduction

Situated in the southern part of Asia, Nepal is a landlocked country that lies between India in the south, east and west and China in the north. Sandwiched between these two big Asian giants, Nepal, however, represents a mere fraction (0.3%) of the Asian continental landmass. It covers an area of 147 181 km² of which around 83% is covered by the mountains and hills consisting of world famous mountain peaks including Mount Everest, trekking routes and various other tourist spots. Terai, the fertile plain land lying along the southern part of the kingdom, lies in the remaining 17%. This northern extension of the Ganges belt is the main provider of crops for the whole country, and consists of some popular wildlife sanctuaries as well as Lumbini, birthplace of Lord Buddha.

Around 22 million people reside in the country. The Nepalese population mainly derives from the Indo-Aryan and the Mongol race. Two major religions, Hinduism and Buddhism, have moulded the nation's cultural fabric. Administratively, the country is divided into five development regions, 14 zones and 75 districts, 58 municipalities and 3912 village development committees.

Although small in size, Nepal is nevertheless a country of immense diversity in her geography, natural setting and culture. The majestic Himalayas, breath-taking natural beauty and her rich cultural heritage attract a large number of tourists to Nepal. It is not surprising that tourism has been recognised as one of the major potential industries in the country.

The Nelapese Economy

Agriculture is the mainstay of the Nepalese economy on which more than 80% of the economically active population are dependent, and the share of this sector is around 40% of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP). The principal food crops are paddy rice, maize, wheat, barley and millet, while sugar cane, oilseed, tobacco, potato, jute and tea are the principal cash crops. In the past, agriculture produce used to be the foremost export commodity. But now, owing to the rapidly growing population and the low productivity of agriculture, only products such as pulses have remained among the major agriculture commodities for export.

The industrial sector in Nepal is small and industrial development is still in an early phase. The contribution of this sector to the GDP is estimated to be about 10%. However, if we include sub-sectors like mining and quarrying, and construction, which have been categorised as industries in Nepal, the share of the industrial sector in the GDP doubles. And this does not include the contribution from the tourism sector, which also falls under the industry sector (not the services sector) in Nepal.

The industrial sector is mainly comprised of cottage and small industries. The agro-based industries and traditional industries such as carpet making are major industries at cottage level. The ready-made garment industry has also come to occupy a prominent role. Among large industries, food and beverage industries such as sugar, noodles, biscuits, soft drinks, beer, liquors, vegetable ghee have a significant share. Similarly cigarettes, cement, jute products, leather, chemical and iron and steel-based products are among other large industries in the country.

In Nepal, there is no clear-cut demarcation of the service sector as such. However, if we take the GDP by industrial origin, the combined total contribution of service industries such as electricity, gas and water; transport, communication, finance and real estate; and community and social services, their total was about 29% of the aggregate GDP in 1999–2000. This does not include the 11.8% share of trade in restaurants and hotels.

According to the Economic Survey (1999–2000) published by the Ministry of Finance, the share of Nepalese exports to total GDP was 11.2% during 1998–99. Compared with this, imports were more than double at 26.7% of GDP. This clearly points toward a limited export base. India used to be the major importer of Nepalese products, but since 1985–86 other overseas countries have taken over. Most of the exports to India are agricultural products. Industrial products such as woollen carpet and ready-made garments have topped the export sector in recent years.

Tourism in Nepal

Since the advent of modern tourism in Nepal four decades ago, this industry has come of age at least quantitatively if not qualitatively. The direct flights linking Kathmandu to various important Asian as well as European centres have made Nepal easily accessible to aspiring tourists. The total number of 4017 tourists in 1960 reached 491 504 in 1999, increasing more than one hundred times during this period. Table 1 shows the recent trend of tourist arrivals.

Table 1: Annual Tourist Arrivals in Nepal, 1995–99

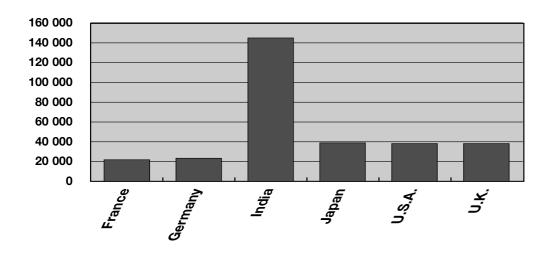
Year	Total Number	Arrival by air	Average Length of Stay (in days)	
1995	363 395	325 035	11.3	11.28
1996	393 613	343 246	13.5	8.3
1997	421 857	371 145	10.5	7.2
1998	463 684	398 008	10.8	9.9
1999*	491 504	421 243	12.8	6.0

* Estimated

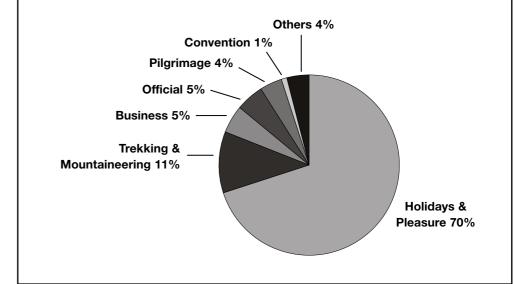
Source: Ministry of Culture, Tourism and Civil Aviation

Because of nearness and easy accessibility due to an open border, Indians are among the largest number of visitors. Indians combined with other Asian tourists account for more than 50 percent of total arrivals. Western Europe, one of the most important target groups, make up one-third of the visitors to Nepal. The USA and Japan are other important origins for tourists (Figure 1).

Figure 1: Tourist Arrivals from Major Destinations Countries, 1998



Holidays and pleasure were the foremost reasons for travelling to Nepal, followed by trekking and mountaineering (Figure 2).



The tourism industry has an important role to play in the national economy of Nepal because of its comparative advantage. It has contributed to employment creation, income generation and improvement of the balance of payments in a meaningful way. In the same vein, the development of tourism is likely to contribute to the improvement of historic and religious places and environmental conservation.

In view of the tourism sector being a major source of foreign exchange for the country and considering its further economic potential, the government of Nepal has identified this sector as one of the industries with most potential for growth. The tourism sector, however, has yet to yield its due share to the government's coffer, as its contribution to GDP is still less than 5% - way below its actual potential. In terms of foreign exchange earnings, its share to total foreign exchange reserves in the country was 15.9%, at US\$178.5 million, in 1999-2000.

For the development of the tourism sector in Nepal, there are various institutional arrangements in place. In order to develop the industry as a backbone of national development and to maintain coordination and cooperation among various agencies related with the tourism industry, a high level Tourism Council has been formed. The council performs such functions as to remove difficulties for the sector, give policy level guidelines to the sub-ordinate executive agencies (Ministry of Tourism and Civil Aviation, Department of Tourism and the Nepal Tourism Board), and it reviews plans or policies related to tourism.

Figure 2: Tourist Arrivals by Purpose of Visit, 1999

The Ministry of Tourism and Civil Aviation (MOTCA), on the basis of the policy and guidelines of the Tourism Council, designs policy for the development of tourism, and makes or initiates the necessary plans and sees them implemented through the Tourism Development Board and Department of Tourism (DOT). Before the establishment of the Nepal Tourism Board, it was the duty of the DOT to frame, in accordance with the stipulated policy, directions and guidelines given by the Tourism Council and MOTCA, and to deliver programs concerning tourism development. Now the Nepal Tourism Board (NTB) has taken over from DOT. It is a national organisation, newly established by an act of Parliament in the form of partnership between the government and the private sector tourism industry of Nepal.

The NTB is responsible for all the marketing activities aimed at promoting Nepal as a premier destination. Although the initial phase of the functioning of the Board will focus on marketing and promotion, the ultimate aim of the NTB is to take over regulatory and product development activities as well.

The NTB is an autonomous institution consisting of 11 Board Members, the secretary of Ministry of Tourism and Civil Aviation as Chairman and four ex-officio members from government ministries and six from the private sector, including the Chief Executive Officer. The funds for the NTB are collected from all tourism related businesses in the form of a tourist service fee, thereby making it financially independent

The Board is working towards repositioning the image of Nepal so as to market and promote Nepal aggressively and extensively both domestically and internationally. Thus, the basic objectives of NTB are as listed in Box 1.

Box 1: The Functions of the Nepal Tourism Board

- To develop Nepal as an attractive tourist destination in the international arena.
- To develop, expand and promote tourism enterprises, while promoting the natural, cultural and human environment of the country.
- To increase national income, to increase foreign currency earnings, and to create maximum opportunities of employment by developing, expanding and promoting tourism.
- To establish the image of Nepal in the international tourism community by developing Nepal as a secure, reliable and attractive destination.
- To do or foster research related to the reforms to be made in tourism enterprises in order to provide quality services.
- To assist to establish and develop institutions necessary for the development of tourism enterprises.
- To develop Nepal as a tourism hub for South Asia.

In addition to the line agencies, other agencies and organisations such as the Department of National Parks and Wildlife Conservation (DNPWC), World Wildlife Fund (WWF) and King Mahendra Trust for Nature Conservation (KMTNC) are responsible for tourism, especially ecotourism promotion. And other international organisations such as the World Conservation Union/International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources (IUCN), and the Nepal and International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD) have also been helping in the development of ecotourism through their various conservation and development works.

Nepal embarked upon the modern era of wildlife conservation with the enactment of the *National Parks and Wildlife Conservation Act* in 1973. The DNPWC presently works with a network of eight National Parks, four wildlife reserves, three conservation areas, one hunting reserve including five buffer zones around National Parks, covering a total of 26 696 km², 18.14% of the country's total land (see Box 2 for a brief description).

Box 2: Protected Areas

1. Sagarmatha National Park

Since Sagarmatha National Park (1148 km²) was gazetted in July 1976, the park has protected the natural environment including forests, and wildlife such as musk deer, the Tibetan wolf, and some 36 breeding bird species for which Nepal may have significant populations. The park's small lakes at higher altitudes are important as staging points for migrating water bird species. The park has attracted world-wide attention primarily because of Sagarmatha (Mt. Everest 8848 m), the world's highest mountain, and the Sherpa communities. It has been declared a World Heritage Site.

2. Makalu-Barun National Park and Conservation Area

Makalu-Barun is the only National Park surrounded by a conservation area. The park encompasses 1500 km². of pristine ecosystems of the eastern Himalayas, and the conservation area encompasses 830 km². The physical setting of Makalu-Barun is unique. Within 40 km, the altitude varies from 435 m at the confluence of the Arun and Shankhuwa Rivers to the 8463 m summit of Mt. Makalu. It shares a border with Sagarmatha National Park in the west and with the Qomolangma Nature Preserve in China in the north. All ecological zones ranging from tropical to alpine occur. The area receives the highest rainfall in the country (over 4000 mm) and 27 types of forests exist, with 3128 species of flowering plants. Of these, 56 are rare and threatened species. Over 88 species of mammals, 421 bird species, 78 species of fish, 43 species of reptiles, 16 species of amphibians and 315 species of butterflies are known to occur in this area.

3. Langtang National Park

Langtang National Park, gazetted in 1977 with an area of 1710 km². represents the central Himalayan ecosystem. With elevations ranging from 1000–7245 m, plant communities of the park extend from upper tropical forest

to regions of alpine scrub and perennial snow, where as many as 32 species of mammals, 246 species of birds, and 15 endemic plant species are found. As Langtang produces enough food only to provide a quarter of the annual per capita requirements, forests are seasonal sources for food, medicine, fodder, fuelwood, handcrafts, and utility tools.

4. Royal Chitwan National Park

Royal Chitwan National Park (932 km²) is known for its sal forest, riverine forest and grasslands; 570 species of flowering plants, 40 species of mammals, 486 bird species, 17 reptiles, and 68 fish species are known to occur in the park. Because of the occurrence of many endangered plant species such as the tree fern, screw pine and several rare orchids and endangered mammals such as tiger, rhino, wild elephant, gaur, striped hyena, sloth bear and dolphin, it was declared a World Heritage Site in 1983.

5. Royal Bardiya National Park

Royal Bardiya National Park is Nepal's largest protected area in the Terai region of the country (968 km²). The area is covered extensively with sal forest, and grasslands and riverine forests are found in the floodplains of the Karnali and Babai rivers. Important wildlife includes tigers, elephants, rhino, and five species of deer. Small populations of Nepal's two crocodile species, and some resident Gangetic dolphin, are found in the major river systems.

6. Rara National Park

Rara National Park, gazetted in 1976 with an area of 106 km², is located in Mugu and Jumla Districts. The park was established to protect the 10.8 km². Rara Lake which is an important staging point for migratory birds, and to conserve representative flora and fauna of the central Himalayas. The park flora consists of 1074 species, of which 16 are endemic to Nepal. Over 51 species of mammal including musk deer, and 212 species of bird including cheer pheasant, occur here.

7. Shey Phoksundo National Park

Shey Phoksundo National Park, the largest National Park in Nepal (3555 km²), represents the Trans-Himalayan region, in the rainshadow of the Himalayan Range. The park area is topographically and climatically varied as it covers both north and south sides of the main Himalayan divide. With the annual rainfall averaging than 500 mm, these varied physical characteristics, coupled with equally complex geology and soil, have supported unique biotic systems. Large mammals include the snow leopard, Tibetan wolf, blue sheep, and the Himalayan thar. Over 105 bird species, primarily of the Trans-Himalayan region, are also found.

8. Khaptad National Park

Khaptad, also a religious site, was gazetted in 1985. It conserves representative Middle Hills ecosystems in an area of 225 km² between 1450–3300 m. Diverse habitats include coniferous forest, mixed hardwood, scrub and grassland. Some 18 species of mammal, 217 bird species, 567 species of flowering plant (including 25 endemic ones) are reported.

9. Koshi Tappu Wildlife Reserve

Koshi Tappu Wildlife Reserve lies on the flood plains of the Koshi River, with an area of 175 km². This reserve was gazetted in 1976, and established

mainly to preserve the habitat for the last remnant population of wild water buffalo in Nepal. In addition, there are larger ungulates such as gaur, nilgai, hog deer and wild pig, and medium-sized predators such as the fishing cat, jungle cat, civets and 280 species of birds including the endangered swamp partridge and bengal florican. The Koshi River also supports sparse populations of endangered species such as Gangetic dolphin and gharial.

10. Shivapuri Watershed and Wildlife Reserve

Established in 1976, Shivapuri Watershed and Wildlife Reserve is divided into a protected area of 9737 ha with a 111 km long boundary wall and an additional 11864 ha managed as a buffer zone. This watershed area is a true representation of the Middle Hills in the protected area system, and it also provides over 40% of the drinking water to Kathmandu Valley. It has a high diversity of forest types (sal, Terai hardwood, mixed hardwood, chirpine, and oak) which occupy 39% of the land. A total of 129 species of mushroom, 150 species of butterfly (with many endemic and rare), nine species of bird which are considered endangered or vulnerable, and 19 species of mammal have been recorded.

11. Parsa Wildlife Reserve

Parsa Wildlife Reserve with an area of 499 km² and gazetted in 1984, forms a contiguous protected landscape with the eastern boundary of the Royal Chitwan National Park. The reserve is dominated with the Chure Hills (sal with chir pine) and bhavar (sal forest and mixed sal forest) where soil is erodable and water is scarce resulting in poor habitat conditions for wildlife. The wild elephant population is estimated between 35 and 40 animals, there are five to seven tigers, a stable population of gaur numbering 75 to 100 animals, and some nilgai. Other common wildlife species are leopard, sloth bear and several ungulate species.

12. Dhorpatan Hunting Reserve

Although Dhorpatan Hunting Reserve (1325 km²) in the districts of Myagdi, Baglung and Rukum, was gazetted in 1987 for sport hunting of blue sheep. The reserve provides refuge to several rare and endangered mammals such as snow leopard, musk deer, red panda and the wolf. Cheer pheasant and the Himalayan pied woodpecker occur, as well as 14 other breeding species for which Nepal may hold significant populations.

13. Royal Shuklaphanta Wildlife Reserve

Royal Shuklaphanta Wildlife Reserve was managed as a hunting reserve beginning in 1969, and was gazetted as a wildlife reserve in 1976, covering an area of 155 sq. km. The area was extended by an additional 150 km². and that makes its area approximately 305 km². It is famous for its deer species (including endangered swamp deer) and grassland ecosystem.

14. Annapurna Conservation Area Project

The Annapurna Conservation Area Project (ACAP) contains some of the worlds' highest peaks (>8000 m), the world's deepest valley, the Kali Gandaki River Valley, Nepal's largest protected area covering an area of 7629 km², and Nepal's most popular trekking destination with over 50 000 annual visitors. Having two distinct climatic regions with an altitudinal range of 1000 to 8000 m, 22 different forest types with 1226 plant species including 55 endemic, the entire habitat gradient from subtropical sal forests to perennial snow, ACAP harbours 101 mammal species including many rare and endangered species

(snow leopard, musk deer, Tibetan argali and Tibetan wolf), and 478 bird species including 38 breeding bird species at risk in Nepal. The Kali Gandaki River is a major divide for bird distributions where species typical to both east and west Nepal occur. This is the only area in Nepal where all six species of Himalayan pheasants are found.

15. Kanchenjunga Conservation Area

Kanchenjunga Conservation Area (2035 km²) consists of the third highest mountain in the world. It receives more rainfall from the summer monsoon than other parts of Nepal. The climatic condition combined with steep elevation gradients support high biodiversity. It has about 2500 species of flowering plant and several endangered species including the snow leopard. The cultural diversity is equally impressive as it contains centuries-old Tibetan monasteries and sites of Hindu pilgrimage.

16. Manaslu Conservation Area

The Manaslu Conservation Area was designated as conservation area in 1998. Occupying a total area of 1663 km², it lies in the northern sector of Gorkha district adjoining the Tibetan Autonomous Region of China. This area provides habitat for 2000 species of plant, 110 species of bird, 33 species of mammal including the elusive snow leopard, musk deer, blue sheep and the Himalayan thar. It has been handed over to KMTNC to be managed on the ACAP model.

The primary objectives of the DNPWC are to conserve the country's major representative ecosystems, unique cultural heritage, and give protection to the valuable and endangered wildlife. The specific activities of the DNPWC are: (i) conservation of endangered species; (ii) scientific management of habitat for wildlife; (iii) creation of buffer zones in and around parks and reserves; (iv) regulation of ecotourism to improve socio-economic conditions of local communities; and (v) increasing conservation awareness through education programs.

Protected areas in Nepal are major travel destinations, and because of the country's rich biodiversity are one of the most important constituents of ecotourism. According to the DNPWC's Annual Report (1998–99), 148 317 tourists visited the different protected areas during 1998–99. Thus, it is obvious that DNPWC's activities have direct bearing on the promotion and development of ecotourism in Nepal. The DNPWC has taken ecotourism development as an essential input in its various project activities, whether it is Makalu-Barun National Park or Bardia Integrated Conservation project. For example, ecotourism development in the Makalu-Barun National Park is among other important project activities such as natural resource management, preservation of religious and culturally significant sites, infrastructure development etc. In order to promote ecotourism in the region, the Makalu-Barun Conservation Area Project carried out activities such as setting up of kerosene depots, establishment of a tourist information centre, handcraft centre, formation of a porter hotel/lodge and porters' association, and an action plan for tourism management for the Makalu-Barun base camp, Salpa-Arun. Other activities are related to trail improvement, campsite development, construction of bridges and viewing towers, and training for hotel and lodge management.

Similarly, the Bardia Integrated Conservation Project, which has been jointly implemented by the DNPWC and WWF Nepal Program with the support of other partner organisations, is a major initiative giving due consideration to ecotourism. WWF has been supporting programs in Nepal for the last 30 years. Initially it focused on endangered species preservation (particularly the tiger) and later expanded to include programs in capacity building, conservation education and institutional support for the effective management of protected areas.

WWF opened its field office in Kathmandu in 1993 and is presently sponsoring a number of grass roots projects such as Northern Mountains Conservation Project, Sagarmatha Pollution Control Committee, Bardia Integrated Conservation Project, Kanchanjungha Conservation Project, ACAP, and the Tiger Conservation Project. In all its conservation area projects, WWF has given due consideration to tourism and more specifically ecotourism. It mostly provides financial and technical assistance to the implementing agencies like DNPWC and KMTNC. The Bardia Integrated Conservation Project (1995–2000) was one important project which WWF implemented in cooperation with DNPWC, KMTNC, Women in Environment (WE) and community groups. One of the major project objectives was to develop tourism without harming the Royal Bardia National Park, the largest park in the Terai area of Nepal.

The King Mahendra Trust for Nature Conservation (KMTNC), named after the late King Mahendra, was established in 1982 by a legislative act as an autonomous, non-profit and non-government organisation mandated to work in the field of nature conservation. It is governed by the Board of Trustees of national and international personalities eminent in the field of nature conservation and sustainable development. A network of international partners supports the Trust. Currently, there are seven KMTNC partner organisations active in the UK, USA, Canada, Germany, France, Netherlands and Japan.

In nearly two decades, KMTNC has undertaken over 100 small and large projects on nature conservation, biodiversity protection, natural resource management, tourism, and sustainable community development. Holistic and integrated conservation and development programs, with active people participation aimed at promoting local ownership, is the focus of all KMTNC activities. As a consequence of this process and direct involvement, the programs should be sustainable in the long run.

Ecotourism

In the Nepalese context, the prime aim of ecotourism has been to promote a symbiotic relationship between tourism and the environment with a particular focus on uplifting the local village economies.

In order to fully tap Nepal's tourism potential and give it long-term sustainability, the impact of tourism needs careful assessment. Ecotourism has been touted as an attractive sustainable development alternative to mass tourism for two main reasons. The first is that ecotourism has fewer negative impacts on natural resources than mass tourism, while the other reason is that ecotourism-related activities can enhance conservation of natural resources, community development and overall socio-economic improvement of the area. In this light, the practice of ecotourism, per se, is a new phenomenon in Nepal. However, the country has seen environmental conservation and tourism being integrated in the name of sustainable development for quite some time. This is largely due to management of the protected areas such as Annapurna and Sagarmatha where considerable conservation works are being carried out. It is interesting to note that when the Annapurna Conservation Area Project, one of the pioneer projects, was launched, ecotourism as such was not in the planners' minds. It was what their initiatives have been labelled more recently.

However, in the last few years, the KMTNC under its largest undertaking, ACAP, has been engaged in implementing Nepal's first formal ecotourism program in the Ghalekharka-Sikles area (area of honey hunters) funded by the Government and the Asian Development Bank, effective from 1992. This project, comprising foot-trail construction, forest zoning, proper camping facilities for trekkers and other environmental conservation works, can be regarded as one of its kind for the promotion and development of ecotourism in Nepal.

The ACAP, Nepal's first and largest (7629 km²) conservation area with a population of 125 000 local inhabitants, is the country's most popular trekking destination. It receives around 50 000 trekkers and an equal number of support staff such as guides and porters. During the 1970s there were hardly any lodges in the Annapurna region. But the influx of hippies and budget trekkers changed the nature of tourism in the region, and the country as a whole. This led to the proliferation of lodges along the main trekking routes, and public land encroachment became common.

Today the Annapurna region has over 1000 lodges and tea shops catering mainly to the independent trekkers and backpackers. Some of these lodges have been built in areas which had never been settled by local people, such as Ghorepani, Annapurna Base Camp and Tolka. Even though the lodge settlements were illegal, the activities continued. Forests were cleared to build lodges and tea shops. Barren fields were used as campsites. Fuel wood was indiscriminately used. Local control over the use of natural resources and tourism development in the region was lacking. Thus rapid deforestation, landslides, loss of topsoil, land and water pollution, and loss of wildlife habitats became very evident, threatening the environmental quality of the region and livelihood of the local people. Against this backdrop in 1986, the government assigned KMTNC to play an active role in tourism management.

The ACAP believes that tourism, properly managed, can bring great benefits to the land and the people of the Annapurna region. Rather than a necessary evil, tourists are regarded as partners in fulfilling the goals of biodiversity conservation, cultural revitalisation and sustainable economic development. In the Annapurna region nature and culture share the tourist spotlight. Trekking is a unique form of recreation that allows tourists to enjoy these features in an interactive, challenging and educational manner. In return they can supply the region with much needed capital to carry out conservation and local development programs. The challenge remains to develop pro-active policies and practical methods to mitigate the negative effects of tourism and highlight the positive effects.

Current Status of Tourism and Ecotourism Practices

One of the objectives of Nepal's tourism policy is to develop and expand the tourism industry by promoting the natural, cultural and human environments of the country. Although there is no specific mention of ecotourism in the policy, it does contain a policy for sustainable development of the tourism sector which can be interpreted as the recognition of the importance of ecology and the overall environment while promoting tourism.

The Ninth Five-Year Plan (1997–2002) has also taken the environment into consideration for the development of the tourism sector. It clearly states that tourism activities based on social, natural, religious and cultural environments of the nation will be developed and diversified during the Ninth Plan.

Despite the above-mentioned provisions in the policy and other official documents, there have been no concrete incentives by the government to the private sector for ecotourism promotion as such. It is just entitled to the normal concessions and facilities as per the *Industrial Enterprises Act*, 1992 and *Environment Protection Act*, 1996 accorded to any other industries which are engaged in environmental protection activities.

The Ghalekharka-Sikles Ecotourism Case Study

A number of eco-friendly tourism ventures, particularly resorts/hotels, have come into operation in Nepal. The Ghaleharka-Sikles trek is one. This seven day trek route in the southern region of ACAP, starting from about 900

metres and reaching up to 2700 metres above the sea level, has an advantage over the rest of the Annapurna region in terms of lower number of trekkers and therefore less pressure on the natural and social environment.

The environment is varied, ranging from temperate jungle to sparsely vegetated hilltops. The route traverses some of the few remaining virgin rhododendron forests and culturally rich villages. The area covers 10 Village Development Committees (VDCs) with a total population of over 20 000. Tourism development in this area has been carefully conceived, planned and implemented to diversify tourism product within ACAP as well as to create new demand in Nepal's tourism sector. The driving force for implementation is the KMTNC/ACAP's commitment and their guiding principles such as sustainability, local participation, conservation for development, a grass roots approach, and implementation of programs by stages (see Box 3).

Box 3: Objectives and Actions

The objectives of the ecotourism project are:

- to minimise undesirable environmental and socio-cultural impacts of tourism
- to generate and retain tourism income in the local economy
- to strengthen links between tourism and the local development
- to diversify tourism product.

The project actions are:

- Natural Resource Conservation
- Alternative Energy
- Tourism Infrastructure Development
- Community Development
- Heritage Conservation
- Local Capacity Building
- Conservation Education and Extension
- Research and Monitoring
- Publicity and Promotion

Since tourism in the Ghalekharka-Sikles area is still in its infancy with around 1000 tourists annually, the pressure on natural resources is low and does not require larger infrastructure development in the area. Its impact on socio-economic and environmental conditions is also limited. With careful planning and implementation of programs, it is possible to avoid some of the mistakes such as the high expectation of the local people, haphazard growth of tourism services etc. as witnessed in other tourist destination areas of the country. With an integrated and holistic approach, tourists are not regarded merely as a source of income, but as a partner in the development and conservation process in the area.

Development of Tourist Destinations

The major tourist destinations for sight-seeing in Nepal at present are Kathmandu and Pokhara valley. Owing to their rich cultural heritage and natural beauty, these two valleys are the obvious choices. Chitwan has emerged as another major tourist destination because of its famous wildlife, especially the one-horned rhino. Altogether 72 258 tourists visited Royal Chitwan National Park in 1997–98, which was 69.2% of the total visitors to National Parks and protected areas in Nepal. Lumbini by virtue of being the birthplace of Lord Buddha also attracts a sizeable number of tourists every year.

As for the trekking destinations, the major areas frequented by the tourists are Annapurna, Manang, Jomsom trek (Annapurna/Pokhara region), Everest trek (Sagarmatha region) and Helambu, Langtang valley trek. The Annapurna region had the largest share with 65 587 trekkers (58.2% of total trekkers) followed by Sagarmatha region with around 20% in 1998.

Development of tourism and more specifically tourist destinations in Nepal has not been well planned. It is generally a case of natural attractions luring tourists automatically without any planned approach by the government. The tourism sector has, therefore, grown haphazardly. So in order to remove the present anomalies in tourism development the government has prioritised the roles of government and the private sector for the systematic development of tourism.

During the Ninth Plan, the government's role will be focused on construction and improvement of physical infrastructure as well as institutional and policy development. Marketing and promotion will be the role of the Nepal Tourism Board and the private sector. Emphasis will be given to development of newer destinations along with provision of infrastructure to relieve the pressure on traditional destinations. Tourism that promotes the rural economy will be encouraged. New destinations will be developed on the basis of research.

Unmanaged urbanisation, environmental degradation and pollution have challenged tourism development and its expansion. Although there have been some concerns about environmental impact while developing tourist destinations in Nepal, there has yet to be a systems approach to this. However, some laudable work geared towards the promotion of ecotourism and environmental conservation has been undertaken.

The Tourism Infrastructure Development Project (TIDP) launched in the Eighth Plan, with Asian Development Bank funding, carried out a number

of ecotourism or environmental conservation activities such as Pokhara Sarangkot road improvement, Pokhara conservation area improvement, and Ghalekharka-Sikles ecotourism development.

Similarly, under the Mountain Tourism Development Program various activities involving the Himalayan Rescue Association, the Sagarmatha Pollution Control Committee Project (SPCC) and the ACAP were carried out. Work to build an international mountain museum was started in Pokhara. The SPCC, a locally formed NGO with financial assistance and technical support from the WWF, has carried out various activities in environmental management, such as the clean-up of mountain areas in Khumbu, an awareness campaign, community development and cultural preservation. Under the Annapurna conservation project, some of the noteworthy achievements have been in natural resource management, heritage conservation, alternative energy development, and community development.

The private sector is also getting more conscious of environmental factors when setting up their tourism ventures and responding to the challenge by adopting proper environment management systems. A case in point is the recent opening of a five-star resort in Jomsom, one of the remote but very popular tourist destinations with a fragile environment. This modern resort has the facilities and amenities required by wealthy tourists (heated swimming pool, sauna, Jacuzzi, and a Yoga meditation centre), but in keeping with the fragile environment of the place it has installed pollution control measures as per international standards. The resort is built according to the local Thakali village concept by blending with its surrounding and claims to be the only "Green Resort Hotel" in Nepal. The management is reported to be sensitive to the needs of the local community.

Besides the few existing popular tourist destinations, there are a number of potential tourist areas in Nepal which if developed properly would not only augment the existing level of tourist inflow and extend the duration of stay, but also reduce the environmental impact on the already overcrowded tourist spots. Diversifying tourist destinations in the country should ease the heavy concentration of tourists in certain areas. In this context, the National Productivity and Economic Development Centre (NPEDC) plans to engage in exploring those potential areas by conducting studies in terms of their ecotourism potential.

Uncontrolled growth, environmental degradation and pollution have challenged tourism development and its expansion. Along with tourism's advantages, the influx of tourists in the country has grave implications for the fragile natural and cultural environment, and made worse by unethical practices, cut-throat competition among the tourism entrepreneurs, and weak enforcement of the laws by the government agencies.

In order to check the mismanagement in the tourism sector and ensure its quality, the government is trying to cope with the situation through using appropriate policy mechanisms, proper planning, enactment and enforcement of necessary laws. According to the Tourism Policy of 1995, in order to prevent adverse effects on the environment, a Tourism Environment Guideline will be framed. In the same way trekking areas shall be classified into three areas; General, Guided and Restricted Areas, depending upon the level of their infrastructural development, remoteness, fragility and ancient as well as original culture.

The Ninth Plan calls for environmental impact assessment (EIA) of tourism activities in conservation areas and their vicinity. Camping sites and other facilities on the trekking trails are to be maintained. Similarly, the private sector and local bodies will be mobilised to maintain environmental quality conducive to tourism. There is also provision for an environment code of conduct and pollution control measures to be developed and specially monitored in eco-sensitive activities such as where trekking and mountaineering occur.

The government came out with a separate *Environment Protection Act* in 1996 and *Environment Protection Regulation* in 1997. This clearly specified certain tourist services (such as setting up 50 to 100 bed hotels, rafting in a river with fish or other aquatic creatures, operating new golf courses and organised water sports, high altitude trekking) which will require an "Initial Environmental Examination" (IEE). Likewise, building hotels with more than 100 beds, new airport construction, rafting by 2000 people in a single river, operating a boat house, sending more than 2000 trekkers annually in a single river etc. will require an EIA.

Conclusion

Promotion of ecotourism entails adhering to certain norms and regulations that tourism entrepreneurs may at times find against their interest in the short run. They may not feel very strongly about environmental concerns which curtail their short-term profitability. This might make them resist ecotourism itself.

Proper development of ecotourism requires a great deal of coordination as it involves various stakeholders. If not done properly it just becomes a fad. It has been observed that sometimes a number of organisations are engaged in running the conservation and development programs in a single area which have ecotourism as a major component. So owing to the lack of coordination there is duplication of activities resulting in unnecessary loss of scarce resources. And moreover, ecotourism, being the buzz word today, has everybody wanting to join the bandwagon for publicity without giving serious thoughts to its implementation.

In Nepal, the ecotourism development programs are being managed by NGOs and the foremost problem is how far NGOs can succeed in fulfilling the objectives set forth by the ecotourism program. The very nature of NGOs and non-profit agencies is that they rely on money coming from various sources. Their funds cannot be guaranteed and are not constant. An increasing number of academics have come to see NGOs as a new tool, or the third path for development. Such over-optimism can be dangerous at it raises false expectations.

KMTNC has gained a lot of expertise and knowledge in the field of ecotourism by virtue of pioneering projects such as ACAP, but it remains to be seen whether this knowledge and experience can be transferred to the local people. It is likely that numbers of trekkers will increase rapidly once all the infrastructure is in place. This may result in the over-crowding of the area and thus over-use of the available infrastructure, which may finally lead to the classic case of a "boom and bust" scenario. However, the policies and plans are in place to foster genuine ecotourism and if used the end result should be good.

Chapter Eighteen

Ecotourism in Pakistan

Ismail Hassan Niazi

Introduction

Pakistan emerged as an independent nation on 14 August, 1947. Although a new nation, it is an ancient land. It is located in the south of Asia lying between 23° and 37° north latitude and 61° and 67° east longitude. It shares its borders with five countries namely, Iran in the west, Afghanistan in the northwest, Russia, Tajikistan and China in the north, and India in the east. The Arabian Sea washes its southern shores. Pakistan has a total area of 796 095 km². On the basis of ecology the country is divided into five main zones: the Mountainous North, the Plateau of Baluchistan, the Potohar Plateau, the Punjab and Sindh Plains and finally the Thar Desert. Pakistan is in the warm temperate zone, with summer temperatures of equatorial magnitudes.

Pakistan is predominantly an Islamic country with over 97% Muslims, with Hindu (1.5%), Christian (1%) and other minorities (0.5%). Pakistan has a mixture of peoples and languages. It is enriched with a culture that has its origin in over half a dozen civilisations that have flourished here since the 4th millennium BC and its cultural diversity ranges from Chitral and Kalash in the north to Sindh in the south, expanded and multiplied into subcultures to be found now throughout the whole of Pakistan.

Pakistan is divided into provinces and administrative areas, Punjab, Sindh, North West Frontier Province (NWFP), Baluchistan, the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA), Northern Areas (NA) and Azad Kashmir. The principal cities are Islamabad, Lahore, Karachi Quetta and Peshawar. Pakistan has a federal political structure, and has a parliamentary form of government.

Economic development has been constrained in recent times due to many factors, including political instability, law and order problems, ineffective governance and the cancer of unaccountability. The public sector development budget is under pressure while domestic and foreign investment has stagnated. There is a high unemployment level of about 18%, with the expectation that this figure will increase by as much as half a million annually. The inflation rate is high which is contributing to the poverty levels. fulfilling the objectives set forth by the ecotourism program. The very nature of NGOs and non-profit agencies is that they rely on money coming from various sources. Their funds cannot be guaranteed and are not constant. An increasing number of academics have come to see NGOs as a new tool, or the third path for development. Such over-optimism can be dangerous at it raises false expectations.

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Tourism

All parts of Pakistan have their distinct tourist appeal, ranging from the high mountains in the north to the beaches of Baluchistan on the Arabian Sea. The best known tourist areas have traditionally been in the Northern Areas and NWFP with their high mountains. The four mountain ranges, the Hindukush, Pamir, Karakoram and Great Himalaya form the most dense concentration of high peaks in the world. If Pakistan is known at all in the tourism world abroad it is because of the two northern provinces (NWFP and NA).

The Hunza Valley is one of the most beautiful valleys in the world. The Karakoram Highway, the Silk Road, the Khyber Pass and others have all caught the attention and imagination of the international adventure and special interest tourist. The archaeological sites and rich cultural history in other provinces are relatively unknown outside of Pakistan.

During 1998, Pakistan received 429 000 million foreign tourists increasing by 14.4% over the previous year's arrival of 375 000 tourists. During 1998, tourists arrivals from Saudi Arabia, Greece, Japan, Australia, Thailand, Canada, South Africa, U.K., Oman, France and India increased over the previous year.

Foreign exchange receipts from tourism during 1998 amounted to US\$97.9 million decreasing by 16.3% as compared to US\$116.9 million in 1997. Factors attributable to decline in tourism receipts during 1998 were the high ratio of relatively low revenue generating tourists and improper accounting of receipts due to the frequency of change in the exchange market. During 1998–99, about 46 million domestic tourists were estimated to have travelled within the country, an increase of 2.61%. This increase is based on the growth rate of population, the increase in disposable income, urbanisation and industrialisation.

The average spending per foreign tourist during 1998 came down from US\$ 311.9 to US\$228.2 showing a decrease of 26.8% compared to 1997. The average per day spending per tourist also declined to US\$7.6 compared

to US\$10.4 in 1997. Export earnings during 1997–98 were Rs.373 billion. Foreign exchange earnings from tourism during the same period were Rs.5.3 billion. The exports receipts grew by an annual rate of 17.1% while earnings from tourism increased at an annual rate of 7.5% over the period of 1987–88. The place of tourism in foreign earnings was 11th in 1997–98.

Despite the importance of tourism for the economy, it is relatively low among national priorities. Nevertheless, the private sector is fairly quick to seize opportunities for profitable ventures. On the whole, social attitudes are not very much conducive to mass beach type of tourism which is common throughout most of the world. Hence, Pakistan needs to appeal to specialised segments of the tourism market.

The tourism organisational set-up at the federal level can be divided into two broad categories, viz. organisations directly concerned with the management of tourism and others indirectly related to that. Under the 1973 Constitution, the main duties and responsibilities for tourism rest with the provincial governments. But the administrative set-up at the provincial level is very weak. Out of four, only three provinces have corporations for undertaking functions and duties related to provincial tourism. Except the one at Punjab, the remaining two at Sindh and Sarhad are dormant.

It is at the local level (city or district) that the interaction of host and guests is most pronounced. Local communities experience both the disadvantages and advantages of tourism. The tourists' stay is made comfortable through services such as street maintenance, sewerage disposal, cleanliness, water supply and sanitation. No direct and distinct consciousness concerning development of tourism exists at the local level except in a few hill resorts e.g. at Murree.

No specific eco-related tourism organisation exists in the public sector. However, quite a few NGOs are engaged in caring for the preservation of the environment, especially in the mountainous north. These include: the Adventure Foundation of Pakistan, World Wildlife Fund, Wilderness International, Alpine Club of Pakistan, I.U.C.N. World Conservation Union and its Sarhad Support Unit, and Culture and Tourism All Swat Hotels Association.

Ecotourism

There are a wide variety of terms describing ecotourism; mostly they are used to link tourism development with conservation of natural and cultural resources. These include nature-based travel, trekking, mountaineering, adventure, recreation, sustainable travel, wilderness travel, car and cycle camping, conservation volunteering, nature viewing and special interest travel. Many of these pursuits may be examples of nature-based tourism but they are not ecotourism activities. Ecotourism is to be differentiated from the products that do not reasonably meet ecotourism principles, and it has to appeal to travellers who are actively seeking new nature tourism destinations.

Nature-based tourism is a rapidly expanding sector of the world's travel market. Many of the destinations are National Parks, game sanctuaries and wildlife refuges, but the key motivation is the discovery and experience (challenging or otherwise) of nature and participation in culture. Ecotourism is a component of nature tourism. It is, however, distinct because it recognises the intrinsic values of the natural environment and the culture of host communities and seeks to sustain these resources as a prerequisite of utilisation.

Nature-based tourism (worldwide) is estimated to generate 7% of all international travel expenditure. Moreover, the World Resources Institute estimates that while general tourism is growing by 4% pa, nature-based tourism is increasing at a rate between 10% and 30% pa. Today's global nature-based travel market is dominated by ecotourism products, which are estimated to have net worth of close to US\$15 billion. It makes sense for Pakistan, a country blessed with strong ecotourism potential, to develop and market a comprehensive range of ecotourism products.

Ecotourism is a highly fragile activity. Its continued benefits can be enjoyed if the product is managed strictly and protective measures are in place. The long-term future of the Pakistan ecotourism industry is closely linked to environmental protection. Support for ecologically sustainable development is now emerging strongly in the tourism sector as the logical way of balancing environmental concern with growth and development. Pakistan is environmentally fragile. Unfortunately, the pattern of tourism development that has emerged has led to significant environmental degradation. Environmental concerns are increasingly occupying the attention of the public sector.

There are about 61 pieces of legislation relating to various facets of environmental protection. These have been framed both at the federal and provincial levels. They relate directly to environmental protection and indirectly with its various elements, for example, land improvement, preservation of landscape, plant quarantine, water drainage, motor vehicles, explosive, fisheries, felling of trees, wildlife protection, antiquities, cattle grazing and control of epidemics.

A code of conduct for mountaineering parties has been put into force so as to protect fragile mountain environments. Its main provisions are: (i) every mountaineering party, irrespective of its size, shall contribute US\$200 or equivalent in Pakistani currency to an Environment Protection Fund; (ii) mountaineering parties shall also deposit a refundable amount of US\$1000 or equivalent in Pakistani currency in an authorised bank in Pakistan; (iii) a party shall leave a camping site clean; (iv) a party or its porters shall not damage the forest or animals in the area; (v) if it is established that a certain liaison officer gave a false certificate, the matter will be brought to the notice of his superior authority; and (vi) in the case of breach of these rules, a party or all the members of such a party shall be disqualified for any further mountaineering expedition.

The trekking environmental care code covers the following "dos" and "don'ts": preservation of forests; removal of debris etc. before leaving camps; small group size; do not leave filth behind, burn it or bring it back; protect wildlife; use water carefully; be a good host; cooperation will get you a good natural environment. In collaboration with the Alpine Club of Pakistan and the Adventure Foundation of Pakistan, the government has launched mountain clean-up operations from time to time. The aim is to save, and defend from waste, the natural resources of our country, its soil and minerals, its forests, waters and wildlife. The recent clean-up operations undertaken include; Concordia Clean-up Mountain Expedition 1997; the Nanga Parbat Mountains Clean-up Expedition 1998; the Boltoro Clean-up Expedition 2000 (see Box 1).

Box 1: Boltoro Expedition — 2000

The Boltoro Region is situated in the northeast of Skardu and is a jewel of the Karakoram range where mountains of awesome height meet. At its heart is the Boltoro glacier which is 56 km long, dominated by lofty and precipitous mountains. It is here that four of the five peaks, above 8000 m, are located around the famous glacial junction, the Concordia.

A number of measures have been adopted by the Government and the NGOs to arrest pollution. An increased flow of mountaineers and trekkers to the area, coupled with lack of adequate measures to restore the ecological balance, was straining the local environment. Efforts in cleaning up the area coupled with involvement of the local communities in this urgent work were clearly needed.

The Clean-up Boltoro Expedition 2000 was mainly sponsored by the National Development Finance Corporation, the Pakistan Tourism Development Corporation, the Alpine Club of Pakistan and the Adventure Foundation. It is considered a success story because with community participation the Boltoro Trek, which was the most polluted area, has been cleaned up. It has encouraged residents of other areas to make similar efforts.

In Pakistan there is no system of protected areas as exist in USA, Canada, Japan, Australia and some of the other important tourism countries. However, quite a few National Parks exist. National Parks located in different climatic and geographical regions represent different ecosystems. Preservation of wildlife, fauna, flora and scenic beauty is the primary objective of establishing National Parks, followed by recreation, education and research. In the area of general environmental protection, more than 100 NGOs are currently active. These NGOs have done a creditable job in creating an awareness among governmental agencies, the public at large, and beneficiaries regarding keeping the environment clean. The general awareness has led to launching of specific campaigns; for example, non-use of polythene bags. Government agencies have been compelled to take action on existing legislation on air, water, noise and they have been instrumental in getting the *Pakistan Environmental Protection Ordinance*, 1983 passed which is a landmark achievement. NGOs have directly participated in clean-up operations, and mobilised public opinion into cooperating with government agencies responsible for implementation of environmental policies. However, due to the immensity of the task and the meager resource of NGOs, they have not produced adequate results. Some of the NGOs only exist "on paper" and have no physical presence.

For the protection of the general environment, donor agencies, especially CIDA have played a commendable role. They have provided technical and financial assistance in creating legal, organisational and financial structures for environmental preservation. The IUCN and WWF have also generously contributed to raising the awareness level in the public. However, the magnitude of the problem is so big that generosity at a much bigger scale is needed from the donor agencies.

Ecotourism Issues

The viability and the development of nature and heritage tourism is questionable if a national commitment is not made to preserve the country's resources. The vision underlying the nature, heritage and the community-based tourism development concept is that these resources are fundamental building blocks of the tourism industry. A viable, diverse and competitive tourism industry cannot be developed, and certainly not sustained, without protection and proper management of these resources. Improving the quality of life and developing an economically viable and sustainable nature, heritage and community-based tourism industry are, in fact, mutually dependent upon, and supportive of, protecting the country's resources.

The present policies and measures are based on the premise that pollution is restricted to the mountainous areas or attributable to tourism alone, and the role of other sectors is either not perceivable or only peripheral. The policy and action plan for pollution control has not produced the desired results for a range of reasons, such as lack of focus, inadequate financial resources and lack of monitoring.

It is necessary to understand the links between the environment and tourism development to make correct choices that will be economically efficient, socially equitable and environmentally sound. We have to consider systematically the environmental impacts of tourism on the economic, social, fiscal, energy, agricultural, transportation, trade and other policies. We should create strategies to integrate social and environmental policies at all levels, including fiscal measures and the budget. These should aim for socially responsible economic development, while protecting the resource base and the environment for the benefit of future generations.

Ecotourism policy-making will require changes in information-gathering, management techniques and planning to move decision-makers from narrow sectoral approaches towards integrating environmental issues and into sustainable development. To make informed decisions, the people need regular progress reports on economic and social conditions, and information on the state of the environment and natural resources. National accounting systems should measure the crucial role of the environment as a source of natural capital, and as a sink for our waste by-products.

Much environment and tourism development law-making seems to be ad hoc and piecemeal, or lacks enforcement and requires updating. The government needs to foster the evolution of sustainable development law, based on sound economic, social and environmental principles.

Prices, markets and governmental economic policies shape attitudes and behaviour towards the environment. There is a tendency to treat the environment as a "free good", and to pass the costs of environmental damage to other parts of society or to future generations. Environmental costs need to be clearly visible to producers and consumers, and prices should reflect the relative scarcity and total value of resources like energy, transportation, tourism, agriculture, forestry, water, wastes, health and tourism. The government should have to remove or reduce subsidies that do not meet sustainable development objectives, and move towards pricing policies consistent with these goals. While the government has a national policy for the environment, it is essential that there exists an appropriate institutional framework to support its implementation.

Finally, we have to firmly commit to protect the natural environment, to regenerate and restore degraded ecosystems, to increase their productivity, and to generate employment through these activities, and to decentralise control over nature and natural resources. Within the above broad parameters an Action Plan which covers promotion, information training and technical assistance has been prepared to form part of the Ninth National Five-Year Plan.

A Trekking Action Plan

The main tourist product of Pakistan is adventure which is available in the mountains where there is a very fragile ecological balance. After assessment of pollution levels we need to prepare a detailed action plan indicating the measures to be taken (see Box 2 for a list).

Box 2: List of Actions

(i) Periodic clean-up operations.

- (ii) Establishing "Junk Yards" at base camps which are to be cleaned regularly under government supervision in the months of May and June.
- (iii) Construction of micro-hydropower units where feasible.
- (iv) Construction of local style latrines and litter disposal bins to suit local conditions.
- (vi) Ban parties if they indulge in polluting.
- (vii) Selective use of punitive policies.
- (viii) Reward by cash/certificates individuals/officers of local administration.
- (ix) Give publicity to persons who have done commendable work in this respect.
- (x) Prohibit use of peaks and routes most heavily damaged through over-use.
- (xi) Charge differing rates of royalties based on a pollution factor.
- (xii) Gradual introduction of hitherto unused peaks.
- (xiii) Vigorous campaign for winter tourism.
- (xiv) Continuous research to assess pollution levels.

Conclusion: Ecotourism Initiatives

Under a Tourism Master Plan being prepared with assistance of UNDP/WTO, special area projects to preserve ecotourism have been pin-pointed. The government will establish an Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) regional office and promulgate the *Environmental Act* 1997 for the Northern Areas. The office will need to work closely with the tourism industry in promoting improved coordination between the public and private sectors; implementation of the low cost sanitary and solid waste action plan for local communities; management and promotion of protected areas; and establishment of a long-term environmental monitoring and evaluation program.

The government will support the Northern Areas Tourism Development Board (NATDB) in preparing a project document to seek funding for the appointment of national consultants to assist in the preparation of an overall Tourism Area Development Plan for the Northern Territories. The Plan will be developed using strategic environmental assessment and planning principles and will identify tourism, conservation and protected areas; identify tourism action plans; produce a Hunza Valley Tourism Action Plan for short-term implementation; produce comprehensive tourism development guidelines; and prepare a long-term environmental monitoring and evaluation program.

The government will support the NATDB and the initiatives set out in the Hunza Valley Tourism Action Plan and work closely with the local community to prepare a program with emphasis on integrated resource management and environmental enhancement. The aim of the program will be to increase the carrying capacity of tourism activities in the area and, by using local user fees from visitors, initiate environmental improvements; increase the quality of life of the residents of Hunza through the promotion of tourism; and empower local people to take responsibility for the future sustainable development of the area.

The government will promote the concept of a "Discover Pakistan" program, initially for the priority tourism development areas of Peshawar, Swat Valley and Bahawalpur, that will include: a discovery route, nature and heritage trails, visitor map and information sheets, visitor signs and interpretation panels and a visitor guide book. The aim of the program is to enable locals and international visitors form a better understanding of Pakistan's natural, historic and cultural resources. The program may also be used to introduce environmental awareness and education throughout all sectors of the community.

Chapter Nineteen

Ecotourism Development Framework in the Philippines

Warner M. Andrada

Introduction

The United Nations Conference on Environment and Development in Rio De Janeiro, Brazil in 1992 (the Earth summit) resulted in the adoption of Agenda 21 which provides for the formulation and implementation of measures to promote sustainable development. Sustainable development was defined in the summit as it was in the Brundtland Report in 1987 as "meeting the needs of the present generation without compromising the ability of the future generations to meet their own needs".

In response to this call, the Philippine Council for Sustainable Development (PCSD) was created in 1992 to demonstrate the country's commitment to operationalise Global Agenda 21. More importantly, the adoption of the Philippine Agenda 21 in 1995, after an extensive and intensive process of consensus-building among various stakeholders, illustrated the country's leadership in sustainable development.

While the discussion on sustainable development was going on in 1992, the Philippine Department of Tourism (DOT) through the assistance of the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) and the World Tourism Organization (WTO) had already initiated the formulation of the Tourism Master Plan (TMP) for the Philippines. The TMP is among the first government plans in the country that have pioneered sustainable development concepts, and made them a mainstream issue.

Policies and Strategies

Among the objectives of the TMP is to position the country as a world-class destination under the guiding principles of sustainable development. Anchored on the TMP's recommendation, the Second National Tourism Congress in 1992 took up the theme "Responsible Tourism: Policy, Environmental and Cultural Challenges". It was during this conference that the non-government organisation, Conservation International, formally introduced the concepts of ecotourism in the Philippines.

During the years 1994–1998, the DOT conducted regional ecotourism orientation and information seminars. Representatives of local government units, communities, non-government organisations and tourism practitioners took part in these activities. In 1998, a Technical Workshop on Sustainable Tourism was held under the sponsorship of the DOT, Philippine Council for Sustainable Development, National Economic Development Authority, and training and technology transfer organisations (in particular the Canadian Universities consortium and Asian Institute of Technology). The workshop disseminated information on sustainable development, identified the core elements of a sustainable tourism framework and defined key issues and obstacles to make sustainable development mainstream in the tourism sector.

These initiatives encouraged the development of ecotourism as an integral part of the sustainable tourism framework. They led to the issue of Executive Order 111 establishing the guidelines for ecotourism development in the Philippines. The Executive Order provided for the creation of a National Ecotourism Development Council (NEDC) composed of the Secretaries of Tourism, Environment and Natural Resources, Interior and Local Government, Trade and Industry, Finance, National Economic Development Authority, Education, Culture and Sports and representatives from the private and non-government sectors.

Realising the need for a conceptual basis for ecotourism development in the Philippines, the DOT together with the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) conducted a national workshop in August 1999 to develop a national framework. The outputs from the workshop were validated during the National Ecotourism Congress organised by the DOT, with support from the United Nation Development Program (UNDP), DENR, Department of Interior and Local Government and the Philippine Women's University, in October 1999 in Bohol, Philippines. The result was a structured national policy and strategic guidelines on ecotourism.

The ecotourism policy provides for the "encouragement, development, management and promotion of ecological tourism (otherwise known as ecotourism), as a tool to sustainable development, to support the development, management, protection and conservation of the country's environment, natural resources and cultural heritage". In 1998, DOT and DENR jointly issued Memorandum Circular No. 98-02, entitled "Guidelines for Ecotourism in the Philippines". The circular defines ecotourism in the Philippine context as a "low-impact, environmentally-sound and community-participatory tourism activity in a given natural environment that enhances the conservation of biophysical and cultural diversity, promotes environmental understanding and education, and yields socio-economic benefits to the concerned community".

The definition was further enhanced after the conduct of the national ecotourism congress held in October 1999. As agreed and defined during the congress, ecotourism is:

"A form of sustainable tourism within a given natural and/or cultural area where community participation, conservation and management of biodiversity, respect for culture and indigenous knowledge systems and practices, environmental education and ethics as well as economic benefits are fostered and pursued for the enrichment of host communities and satisfaction of visitors".

Pillars of Ecotourism Development

The ecotourism framework demonstrates the inter-relationship and inter-dependence among the stakeholders, the environment and the tourists. These three elements, which can be considered as pillars of ecotourism will provide the impetus to propel the development of ecotourism in the Philippines.

The term *stakeholders* refers to parties or groups whose interests are directly affected by any ecotourism-related activities. Stakeholders include the communities directly or indirectly affected by any development, civil society groups present in the area, local government units that have political and administrative jurisdictions over the particular site, and local branches of national line agencies, particularly those of tourism and environment departments.

The tourists, or ecotourists, are the market for ecotourism destinations. They differ from ordinary tourists as they seek to establish a deeper understanding, even communion, with the places and people they visit.

The environment, is the unique physical features or attributes of a locality that serves as its primary attraction. It also refers to distinct socio-cultural patterns exhibited by indigenous communities, resulting from centuries of intimate intercourse with the natural environment.

The relationship between the stakeholders and the environment is anticipated to result in better environmental education and consciousness, as well as increased community cooperation for protection of the environment, and preservation of local culture at ecotourism sites. The implementation of appropriate national and local policies and guidelines will help ensure environmental protection. Indirectly, these policies and guidelines also contribute to the preservation of cultural heritage and indigenous knowledge, practices and systems.

The influx of tourists to an ecotourism destination generates much needed revenue for the local and national economies. Viewed from a broader

perspective, the benefit derived from ecotourism activities goes beyond the realm of the economic. The interaction between the locals and visitors serve as an informal process of cultural exchange which may contribute to the furtherance of international understanding and cooperation between people of different nations.

The integrity of the natural environment enhances the quality of visitor experience. A deeper understanding of the ecosystem and sociocultural fibre of the community is the core of an ecotourist's quest. Positive ecotourist experiences offer opportunities for generating funds for environmental protection and management.

The concerted actions among the pillars of ecotourism will bring about an empowered community characterised by improved quality of life; an enhanced visitor experience demonstrated by quality tourism experience; and an enriched biodiversity that is safeguarded and protected by both local communities and visitors. Consequently, the linkages between the pillars will actualise cooperation, volunteerism and partnership among all concerned sectors, and institutionalise networking as an integral to day-to-day activities.

The way forward in the Philippines is set out in the Vision and Mission Statements and the Action Plan and Goals and Strategies for Ecotourism. These are presented in Boxes 1 to 3.

Box 1: Statement of Vision and Mission

Vision Statement

A world-class ecotourism destination with a balanced ecosystem and a rich cultural heritage where empowered and committed stakeholders, guided by environmentally-sound policies, pursue sustainable practices for the best interests of the present and future generations.

Mission Statement

Our mission is to position the Philippines as a leading ecotourism destination in the world, centred around a network of complementary ecotourism experiences to ensure total visitor satisfaction. To this end, we will work towards providing a favourable investment climate for both domestic and foreign partnerships with multi-stakeholders who formulate appropriate policies and guidelines that promote the conservation of our natural and cultural resources as well as ensure socio-economic benefits to host communities. We will pursue all these, through sustainable development, to improve the quality of life for present and future generations of Filipinos.

Box 2: Action Plan for Ecotourism

After the national ecotourism workshop and congress, the government has taken cognisance of, and has planned for its activities accordingly.

- 1. Undertake the formulation of the national ecotourism plan with the requisite terms of reference drawn up in accordance with the output of the congress. The development of a network of complementary ecotourism sites to achieve our vision of making the country a leading ecotourism destination.
- 2. Program follow-up on capability building activities for the local stakeholders to develop or improve their competence in planning, marketing and product development. Corollary to this, tap international and multilateral agencies to organise or fund similar fora that will tackle networking, develop an accreditation system, and finance ecotourism projects.
- 3. Move to the appropriate legislation (both at the national and local levels) to translate the recommendations made in the ecotourism congress into concrete actions and, thereby reach fruition in the development of a system that will:
 - facilitate the active involvement of major groups, local and indigenous communities, at all phases of the tourism development process;
 - promote the growth of small and medium-sized enterprises;
 - maximise the potential of tourism for poverty alleviation;
 - continue the development and implementation of voluntary initiatives; and
 - promote self-regulation against abusive, exploitive forms of tourism.

Box 3: Goals and Strategies

Five major goals have been identified to help the Philippines realise its vision of becoming a world class ecotourism destination while preserving its rich biodiversity and enabling its government, business sector, civil society and communities to collectively pursue sustainable development.

Goal One: Institutionalisation of policies for ecotourism development in consonance with sustainable tourism development principles and practices

- Strategy 1: Standardisation of systems and procedures for ecotourism development
- Strategy 2: Establish institutional mechanisms to implement ecotourism development

Strategy 3:	Insert ecotourism development concepts and principles in the Philippine education system			
Strategy 4:	Establish policies, guidelines and standards for human resource development, networking and resource mobilisation			
Strategy 5:	Generate awareness and appreciation of ecotourism development principles and practices			
Goal Two: Develop world-class ecotourism products				
Strategy 6:	Identify and develop sites for ecotourism activities			
Strategy 7:	Enhance existing ecotourism sites and products			
Strategy 8:	Mobilise communities as partners in ecotourism development			
Strategy 9:	Promote ecotourism products			
Goal Three: Develop the ecotourism market				
Strategy 10:	Establish a market database			
Strategy 11:	Establish local/international linkages			
Goal Four: Ensure adequacy of support infrastructure and services				
Strategy 12:	Development of off-site infrastructure facilities to support ecotourism development			
Strategy 13:	Develop alternative livelihood/entrepreneurial programs for host communities			
Strategy 14:	Enhance capability of communities in the management of ecotourism enterprises			
Goal Five: Ensure adequate funding support for ecotourism development				
Strategy 15:	Establish linkages with local and foreign funding institutions			
Strategy 16:	Conduct special projects and activities.			

Conclusion

With all these policy initiatives being undertaken by the Philippine Government to ensure the success of ecotourism in the country, we are optimistic that the tourism industry will propel economic growth from the national down to the local level, while at the same time promoting the protection of the environment and preserving our cultural heritage.

Chapter Twenty

Ecotourism in the Philippines

Arturo M. Alejandrino

Introduction

The Philippines offers diverse tourism activities and destinations for tourists with various inclinations. The competitive advantages of the country are its ambiance and natural attractions that are excellent for rest and recreation. Its tropical climate is perfect for outdoor recreational activities. Being an archipelago, the coastline of the country is spiced up with thousands of natural coves and beaches that offer tourists great satisfaction and relaxation. For cosmopolitan pleasures, the major cities of the country offer giant malls, cinemas, shopping arcades, restaurants, hotels, gaming establishments, fashion boutiques and golf courses. The country's various government agencies are conducting continuous product development activities to promote tourist destinations.

Tourism Growth

As the destinations and activities become more multifaceted, the Philippine tourism industry is seen to increasingly play a significant role in the country's economic development. The World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC) noted that in the Philippines, tourism contributed 8.7% of the country's GDP in 1997, and is anticipated to grow to 10.9% by 2007.

Tourism employment generated 2.3 billion jobs in 1997. By the year 2007, an additional 1.4 million jobs are projected to be generated by the sector. Capital investment in tourism accounted for some 10.5% of all Philippine investments in 1997. It grew dramatically from 1995 to 1997 at an annual rate of 20%. The trade surplus from tourism was estimated at P22.13 billion in 1997. This 1997 surplus is 29% of total tourism exports for the seven year period between 1988 and 1994. Tourism's economic benefits are absorbed into the economy as a whole, particularly in such sectors as manufacturing, construction and agriculture.

The country's recorded tourist arrivals in 1999 increased by 0.98% to 2 170 514, from 1998 arrivals of 2 149 357. A downturn was experienced for

the first semester in 2000. Americans comprised 24% of total tourist arrivals, followed by Japanese tourists (18.5%), and Koreans (7.7%). The latter, however, registered the highest growth over the same period at 45.2%.

The slowdown brought by the Mindanao crisis has not dampened the Department of Tourism's (DOT) objective to increase foreign visitor arrivals by 20% and domestic travel by 15% in 2000. To achieve this, the DOT has launched its Tourism Marketing Plan 2000, dubbed as the first plan that actively involves the private sector. The plan pinpoints various countries in North America, South-East Asia, Europe and the Middle East, as target markets.

Despite stiff regional competition for the North American market, the Philippines remains the American and Canadian market's fourth "most favoured" destination next to Hong Kong, Japan and China. In fact, the country hosted 18.2% of total 1998 North American visitor arrivals to the Asia–Pacific region. The DOT has set average annual growth targets for the North American market over 2000–2004 at 18.4% or 1.335 million visitor arrivals. Promotional campaigns will be geared towards special interest tours (veterans groups, students, adventure travellers, etc.) leisure visitors (cruise and holiday markets), corporate travellers and the balikbayans (visiting Filipino family and friends).

Institutional Framework for Tourism Management

The DOT was created to encourage, promote and develop tourism as a major socio-economic activity which will generate foreign currency and employment. It is also mandated to spread the benefits of tourism to a wider segment of the population with the support, assistance and cooperation of both the private and public sectors. It also seeks to assure the safe, convenient, enjoyable stay and travel of foreign and local tourists within the country. Under its wings is the Philippine Convention and Visitors Corporation (PCVC), a government-owned and controlled corporation that is tasked, as the lead agency, to plan and implement the country's tourism marketing efforts. The PCVC aims to position the Philippines as a major tourist and convention destination in Asia. The Philippine Tourism Authority (PTA) was created on 11 May, 1973 as the implementation arm of the DOT. It manages policies and programs of the department pertaining to the development, promotion, and supervision of tourism projects in the Philippines.

The National Parks Development Committee (NPDC) was established primarily for the purpose of developing and maintaining assigned parks, specifically the Rizal or Luneta Park (NPDC's flagship), Paco Park, the Pook ni Maria Makiling and Burnham Park. It assures the provision of well-maintained grounds where people can enjoy outdoor healthful play and relaxation. It also promotes and implements cultural and educational programs, particularly those in support of national heritage and identity. The Intramuros Administration is mandated to restore and develop Intramuros (Walled City). The agency works under the DOT. After having restored 95% of the walls, the agency's thrust is to maintain the premises of this top tourist destination in the Philippines.

Several taskforces and authorities have been created to undertake development programs for priority tourist destinations. For example, the Aklan Provincial Tourism Special Development Project Task Force was created by virtue of Executive Order No. 6 signed by previous President Joseph E. Estrada on 7 August 1998. It was established to promote balanced development and maximise the potential of the province. It serves as an advisory body to the President on all matters pertaining to the tourism development of Aklan, as well as major tourist destinations in the province. It is mandated to set in motion the mechanisms for the preparation of the Aklan Province Tourism Master Plan and the updating of the Boracay Island Master Development Plan.

Ecotourism in the Philippines

The first serious effort to come up with a definition of ecotourism in the Philippine context was on December 1994 when the Philippine Council for Agriculture, Forestry and Natural Resources Research and Development (PCARRD), the DOT and the Protected Areas and Wildlife Bureau (PAWB) jointly sponsored an tourism symposium workshop, solely for this purpose. It defined ecotourism as 'an environmentally sound tourism activity, sustainably implemented in a given ecosystem yielding socio-economic benefits and enhancing natural and cultural diversity conservation.'

This definition was enhanced by a government circular entitled "Guide Laws for Ecotourism Development" in the Philippines and signed in June 1998. It changed the 1994 definition to "a low-impact, environmentally-sound and community-participatory tourism activity in a given natural environment that enhances the conservation of biophysical understanding and education and yields socio-economic benefits to the concerned community."

In 1998, the University of the Philippines, Asian Institute of Tourism Professor, Carlos M. Libosada, Jr. published the book "Ecotourism in the Philippines" which can be considered the most comprehensive study on the subject. In the book, the professor explored the beginnings of ecotourism in the Philippines, factors that need to be considered in its development, the target market, as well as the list of potential and existing ecotourism areas in the Philippines.

To provide the legislative backbone, a Senate Bill was filed to provide for a national ecotourism policy, establishing a framework for its institutionalisation and its implementation. However, in June 1997, to fast track the process of evolving a national policy, President Estrada provided a significant boost to the country's ecotourism program with the issuance of Executive Order No. 111. This Order established the guidelines for ecotourism development in the Philippines, the highlights of which are listed in Box 1.

Box 1: Guidelines for Ecotourism

- 1. **Establishment of the National Ecotourism Development Council.** This council serves as the policy-making body for ecotourism and is chaired by DOT and co-chaired by the DENR.
- 2. Establishment of the National Ecotourism Steering Committee (NESC) and Regional Ecotourism Committees (REC). The REC will assist the NESC in effectively implementing the programs and activities approved by the Council.
- 3. Identification of the Functions and Responsibilities of Ecotourism Committees. Among these are the formulation of policies, guidelines and programs relevant to the development and promotion of ecotourism; and devising an accreditation and incentives mechanism for ecotourism projects.
- 4. Formulation of a National Ecotourism Strategy. This is an integrated management plan to provide a comprehensive direction for ecotourism in the country, recognising issues and problems for sustainable development and to recommend feasible approaches in addressing these issues.
- 5. **Development of National Ecotourism Programs.** These involve: development, management and protection of identified ecotourism sites; product enhancement and development; environmental education and information campaigns; and support programs for community stewardship and livelihood development.

In support of this order, in November 1999, the DOT held the 1st National Ecotourism Congress in Tagbilaran, Bohol. At this meeting, various stakeholders agreed to develop a national policy on ecotourism, as well as a strategy to bring more foreign tourists in the country. The meeting called for: (i) dissemination of information on the concepts, strategies, principles, trends and practices with regard to ecotourism; (ii) enhancing awareness on ecotourism planning and development, promotions and marketing, as well as, financing and investment; (iii) promoting partnerships in ecotourism between the public and private sectors, local government units and the community; and (iv) recognising models and best practices in community-based ecotourism.

The national tourism policy adopted by the Congress stressed that 'the State shall pursue, promote, manage and develop ecotourism anchored on sustainable development through environmental management and education, community empowerment, cultural enrichment and entrepreneurship to improve the quality of life for present and future generations.' Strategies adopted for full development of ecotourism in the country include: (i) establishment of a database for marketing, and product and destination development; (ii) conduct of human resources development programs for tour guides and others requiring specialised skills; (iii) implementation of advocacy, information, education and communication programs; (iv) development of incentives and an accreditation system; (v) formation of multi-sectoral working groups committed to spearhead the planning and monitoring of various initiatives; and (vi) standardisation of systems and procedures.

At the November 1999 meeting, the DOT committed to formulate a national ecotourism plan, supported by necessary legislation, both at the local and national levels, to achieve: (i) concrete action towards developing a system that will facilitate active involvement of major stakeholders; (ii) growth of small and medium scale enterprises; (iii) voluntary initiatives; (iv) poverty alleviation; and (v) self-regulation against abusive and exploitative forms of tourism.

The Philippines is cognizant of the profound impact of human activities on all components of the natural environment, particularly the effect of increasing population, resource exploitation and industrial advancement. It also recognises the critical importance of protecting and maintaining the natural, biological and physical diversity of the environment, notably in areas with biologically unique features, to sustain human life and development, as well as plant and animal life. The government seeks to secure, for the present and future Filipino generations, the perpetual existence of all native plants and animals through the establishment of a comprehensive system of integrated protected areas, within the classification of a National Park, as provided for in the Philippine Constitution.

The government established a National Integrated Protected Areas System (NIPAS) to encompass outstandingly remarkable areas and biologically important public lands that are habitats of rare and endangered species of plants and animals, biogeographic zones and related ecosystems, whether terrestrial, wetland or marine. The Protected Areas and Wildlife Bureau, an Agency of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources, formulates policies, rules and regulations relative to the establishment and administration of the NIPAS, and the management of other biologically important components of the environment such as ecosystems, species and genetic resources. In addition, the Bureau monitors and coordinates the planning and implementation of the country's various programs and projects on biodiversity, as well as provides technical assistance to its regional offices.

Under Republic Act No. 7586 which established the NIPAS, a protected area refers to "the identified portions of land and water set aside by reason of their unique physical and biological significance, managed to enhance biological diversity and protected against destructive human exploitation." The law also identifies the categories of protected areas as listed in Box 2.

Box 2: Protected Areas

Strict Nature Reserve. This is an area possessing some outstanding ecosystem, features and/or species of flora and fauna of national scientific importance. This area is maintained to protect nature in an undisturbed state in order to have ecologically representative examples of the natural environment available for scientific study, environmental monitoring, education, and for the maintenance of genetic resources in a dynamic and evolutionary state.

Natural Park. Refers to a forest reservation, essentially of natural wilderness character, that has been withdrawn from settlement, occupancy or any form of exploitation, except in conformity with an approved management plan, and set aside as such, exclusively to conserve the area or preserve the scenery, the natural and historic objects, wild animals and plants therein, and to provide enjoyment of these features.

Natural Monument. A relatively small area focused on protection of its features, to protect or preserve nationally significant natural features on account of their special interest or unique characteristics.

Wildlife Sanctuary. Comprises an area that assures the natural conditions necessary to protect nationally significant species, groups of species, biotic communities or physical features of the environment where these may require specific human manipulation for their perpetuation.

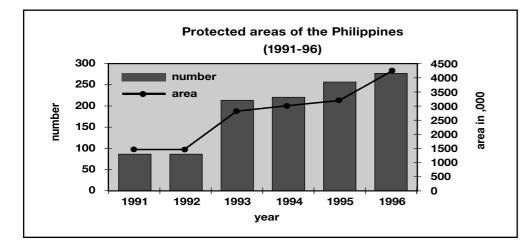
Protected Landscapes and Seascapes. These are areas of national significance which are characterised by the harmonious interaction of humans and land while providing opportunities for public enjoyment through recreation and tourism, within the normal lifestyle and economic activity in these areas.

Resource Reserve. An extensive and relatively isolated and uninhabited area normally with difficult access, designated as such to protect natural resources of the area for future use and prevent or contain development activities that could affect the resource, pending the establishment of objectives which are based upon appropriate knowledge and planning.

Natural Biotic Areas. A natural biotic area is an area set aside to allow the way of life of societies, living in harmony with the environment, to adapt to modern technology, at their pace.

Other Categories: Established by law, conventions or international agreements where the Philippine Government is a signatory.

Figure 1: Protected Areas



Within the six-year period 1991–96, declared protected areas in the Philippines increased at an average of 24% or 344 889 hectares every year. From only 84 protected areas covering 1.5 million hectares in 1991, the number grew three-fold to 268 or 4.2 million hectares of protected areas in 1996 (see Figure 1).

A number of foreign-assisted projects are underway to conserve and expand the country's protected areas. These are listed in Box 3.

Box 3: Foreign-assisted Projects

Conservation of Priority Protected Areas Project (CCPAP). The CPPAP aims to implement the provisions of the NIPAS Act by focusing on the 10 priority sites as identified in the Integrated Protected Areas System I Project. The NGO for IPAS, Inc. (NIPA) is the direct recipient of the World Bank – Global Environment Facility grant covering technical and livelihood components of the project. The implementing agencies of the project are DENR through the NIPAS Policy and Program Steering Committee and the IPAF Governing Board, both of which are inter-agency bodies.

EU-National Integrated Protected Areas Program. The primary objective of the project is to help protect, conserve and manage tropical forest biodiversity areas with endangered endemic species in eight of the country's protected areas. The project is funded by an EU grant for the establishment of the eight protected areas, community-based resource uses, resources management and protection, information and education and, lastly, the administration of the areas.

Philippine Biodiversity Country Study. This project aims to review and assess the status of the country's biodiversity and to formulate the National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan. This is a project funded by the United Nations Environment Program (UNEP).

Apart from these, there are also a number of locally assisted, special projects aimed to complement the foreign-assisted programs (see Box 4).

Box 4: Local Projects

Philippine Raptors Conservation Program. Formerly known as the Philippine Eagle Project, this aims to propagate the Philippine Eagle and other endangered Philippine avifaunal species in captivity at the Centre for Philippine Raptors, Makiling Botanical Garden, University of the Philippines, in Laguna; to conduct scientific research; to restore known habitats; to monitor and protect wild populations of raptors in partnership with the local people; to provide extensive education and information campaigns for the protection of eagles and other avifaunal species; and to develop local expertise in raptor conservation and management.

Tamaraw Conservation Program. This project serves the conservation and protection of the Tamaraw (*Bubalus mindorensis*). Activities include resource and habitat protection, maintenance of the gene pool at San Jose, Occidental Mindoro, population studies and habitat surveys, restoration of denuded habitats, information and education campaigns and community development.

Crocodile Farming Institute. The Crocodile Farming Institute project aims to conserve the two species of crocodiles found in the country, the freshwater crocodile (*Crocodylus mindorensis*) and the saltwater crocodile (*Crocodylus porosus*); to generate breeding technologies for the propagation of these species in captivity; and to transfer these technologies to local communities.

Calauit Game Preserve and Bird Sanctuary Project. This project aims to maintain Calauit Island Game Preserve and Wildlife Sanctuary as a centre for nature conservation, propagation and conduct of studies on the biology and ecology of Philippine endemic species and translocated African wildlife species. Since 1995, the project is being implemented by the Palawan Council for Sustainable Development under a Memorandum of Agreement with the DENR.

Pawikan Conservation Program. This project aims to propagate and conserve economically important marine turtles. It is also concerned with the development and implementation of conservation and protection policies, management and propagation schemes, and a massive information and education program to ensure the survival and growth of marine turtles.

Caves Management and Conservation Program. The project aims to conserve the cave resources of the country as part of the National Integrated Protected Areas System.

Dalaw Turo Outreach Program. This aims to explore and pursue a conservation education scheme through a non-traditional teaching approach on the conservation and protection of biodiversity.

A Case Study

The Aklan Tourism Task Force is proposing an eco-farm tourism project in Aklan Province. The proposed site is within a forest reserve, located halfway between Kalibo and Caticlan, the jump-off point to Boracay Island, with a panoramic view of Jawili Beach and the Sibuyan Sea. It is a stone's throw away from the seven basin Jawili Falls. The project is envisioned to serve as a mini-research facility where small farmer–producers can observe and consult on the latest information on piña cloth production techniques. A display and retail centre for finished piña cloth and other local handcrafted products will be constructed. Implementation will be in partnership with local NGOs who will provide the project's supervision.

This project is within the overall objective of transforming the whole province of Aklan into a destination of its own, anchored on agri- and ecotourism. This is contained in the Aklan Tourism Master Plan that the Task Force drafted and printed in March 2000. Titled "Hala Bira! A Reawakening. Tourism Strategic Development Plan," it offers three planning horizons: the short-term agenda (1-5 years): the medium-term agenda (10 years): and the long-term agenda (15 years). The short-term agenda recommends seven key programs aimed primarily towards the renewal, rehabilitation and redevelopment of Boracay Island. The plan considers Boracay Island as the anchor product that will serve as a platform for mainland Aklan's economic diversification. The medium-term agenda focuses on the development directions for mainland Aklan by prescribing cultural, agri- and ecotourism as key product categories. The concepts of agri- and ecotourism are directed towards countryside development, fuelled by an agricultural economy, in support of the tourism industry. The long-term agenda seeks to recreate the entire province into a destination in itself in the reshaping of its urban panorama in a way that is distinctly its own. The success of the medium and long-term agenda is anchored on the sustainable development of Boracay Island and its magnetic attraction as a tourist destination.

Conclusion

Although ecotourism may be considered the most sustainable form of tourism, it exposes natural ecosystems to risks due to human intrusion. The following are just some of the negative impacts of ecotourism activities: (i) mountaineering or trekking causes trail erosion and garbage accumulation, and spelunking can damage limestone cave formations; (ii) wildlife in its natural habitat is disturbed and plants can be damaged during ecotourism activities (for example, human feeding of fish tends to encourage dependence on visitors, to the point that the animals no longer hunt on their own, and reckless scuba diving can disturb marine life and destroy corals); (iii) frequent contact of mountaineers and trekkers with natives can cause culture-shock and changes in the indigenous culture of the area; and (iv) local communities are deprived of rightful economic benefits when food, beverages, and souvenir items and products are produced elsewhere but sold in their area, and when outside investors repatriate their revenue back to their home bases.

If these downsides are successfully addressed in the planning of ecotourism, it can be an extremely useful tool to make progress towards sustainable development.

Chapter Twenty-one

Ecotourism in Palawan: A Case Study

Nelson Palad Devanadera

Introduction

The province of Palawan is blessed with rich resources (as described below) and with its historical and cultural attractions offers ample opportunities for varied activities. The pristine environment setting is excellent for sightseeing, beach holidays, marine sports, adventures etc. The province has a number of world-class spots, such as the underground river in St Paul National Park, karst terrain and lakes in Coron, Tabon Caves, Quezon, Ursula Island, Bataraza, Tubattacha Reef, Cagayancillo, Calauit Island, Busuanga Island, Honda Bay, Puerto Princesa City, beaches, islands lagoons and dive sites in El Nido, Taytay and Fin Bay, and Cuyo Island.

The Resources

Palawan, the largest province in the Philippines, is composed of 1769 islands and islets. It has a total land area of 1 489 655 hectares and occupies 5% of the national territory. Stretching 650 km from tip to tip, it reclines between Mindora Island and North Borneo and is approximately 240 km southwest of Manila. Palawan is bounded by the South China Sea to the northwest and by the Sulu Seas to the east. Its provincial limits commence with Busuanga Island in the north, the Cuyo Group of islands in the northeast, Cagayancillo in the east and Spratley Islands in the west. It ends with Balabac farthest south. The southernmost tip of Balabac (Mangsee Island) is 48.8 nautical miles from Sabah (North Borneo).

Located west of the main Philippine chain of islands, Palawan is the country's southwest frontier with Malaysia. It forms a link between the Philippines and the East Indies. It lies between 7°47' and 12°22' north latitude and 117°00' and 119°51' east longitude.

The province is subdivided into 23 municipalities, one city and 431 barangays. Eleven municipalities are located on the mainland. The other 12

with a panoramic view of Jawili Beach and the Sibuyan Sea. It is a stone's throw away from the seven basin Jawili Falls. The project is envisioned to serve as a mini-research facility where small farmer–producers can observe and consult on the latest information on piña cloth production techniques. A display and retail centre for finished piña cloth and other local handcrafted products will be constructed. Implementation will be in partnership with local NGOs who will provide the project's supervision.

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The province is subdivided into 23 municipalities, one city and 431 barangays. Eleven municipalities are located on the mainland. The other 12

are island municipalities. The provincial capital, the City of Puerto Princesa, is the chief seaport on the east coast and the centre of trade, commerce and education. Tall mountain ranges run through the entire central length bisecting the province into two areas, the east and west coast. The mountain ranges have an average elevation of approximately 1100 m. Coral reefs along the shoreline of Palawan, especially along its western coast and northwestern coastline, make inshore navigation very risky. Palawan's 1959 km of irregular coastline afford excellent harbours.

The province has two types of climate. One is six months dry and six months wet and occurs in the extreme north and south sections and on the entire northwest coast. The other type of weather prevails in the rest of the province and is characterised by a short dry season of one to three months and no pronounced rainy period during the rest of the year.

The flora and fauna of Palawan are predominantly Bornean in composition. This can be explained by the fact that geologically the island province is part of the stable Sunda shelf which comprises Borneo and other parts of the western Malaysian floral geographic region. This uniqueness of Palawan has created many indigenous flora and fauna, such as the Palawan tree shrew (*Tupaia palawanensis*), the Calamian deer (*Cervus calamianensis*), the Palawan porcupine (*Thecurus pumilis*) and the Palawan peacock (*Polyplectron emphanum*).

The seas around Palawan are a rich fishing ground for commercial and deep- sea fishing. The irregular coastline, resulting in numerous coves and bays, is also a rich fishing ground for municipal or coastal fishing. The best sources of fish are Malampaya Sound, Sulu Sea, Honda Bay and Bacuit Bay. The varieties of fish caught in commercial quantities are sardines, mackerel, albacore, bonito, anchovy, slipmouth, round scad, squid and chud.

The province is a rich source of mineral deposits: chromite, nickel, copper, silica, marble, mercury, manganese, limestones, barite, feldspar, sand, gravel, washed pebbles and guano. Only a few of these mineral resources are mined in commercial quantities. The province's nickel reserve of 330 000 metric tons is reportedly the highest among the Luzon provinces.

Tourism

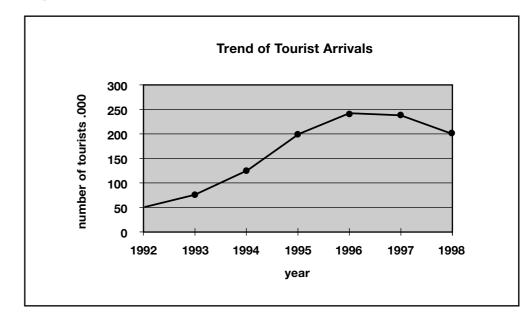
At present the province has a total of 146 tourism related establishments offering different levels of accommodation. As of June 1999 there were six hotels, 69 inns/lodges/pension (most of these are located in Puerto Princesa City), 49 beach resorts/cottages (the majority are operating in the City of Puerto Princesa), 18 island resorts and four special interest resorts operating in Northern Palawan where most marine resources are. There is a total of 1800 rooms with a capacity of two to four person/room. The average length of stay is approximately four days and average expenditure per day is estimated to be P 1816.00. In 1998 the income derived from tourists was estimated to P 606 282 246.00.

In order to deal with the interests of the tourism industry, there are at present four associations and six councils actively supporting the industry. These include the Association of Travel and Tours Operation in Puerto Princesa City and Palawan (ATTOP), Hotel and Restaurant Association of Palawan (HARAP), Hoteliers Association of Puerto Princesa City Inc., Palawan Tourguide Association (PATGA), Calamianes Association of Tourism Establishments (CATE), City Tourism Council, Palawan Tourism Council and four Municipal Tourism Councils for the municipalities of Taytay, El Nido, Narra and Quezon.

The major tourist origin markets are the USA, Japan, Asia and Europe with a total share of almost 90%. The percentage of female tourists to Palawan is relatively high compared with those to the Philippines in general. The main age group of travellers is young to middle-aged, with a relatively high educational level and income. The purpose of travel is mostly for pleasure and for a vacation. Domestic tourists are significantly different from foreign tourists in terms of purpose of travel and group size. They provide a relatively high percentage of business/convention trips and a larger group size.

As Figure 1 illustrates, there has been a very significant increase in tourism from 1992 to 1998, from 50 000 to 120 000. Domestic tourists contributed nearly 69% of the total.

Figure 1: Tourist Arrivals in Palawan (1992–1998)



Of foreign tourists the US market contributed 4655 visitors or 5.52% of the total. The Japanese market registered at 3311 or 3.93%; Taiwan with 1161 or 1.4%; Western Europe accounted for 12 196 or 14.47%; Australia and New Zealand contributed 1079 or 1.28%; Africa managed to contribute 38 or .05%; other foreign markets registered at 5172 or 6.13% of the total. Domestic tourists totalled to 57 857 (68.62%).

The markets for Northern and Southern Palawan differ greatly primarily due to differences in product offerings. North Palawan caters mainly to the holiday segment while South Palawan is know for its culture. Puerto Princesa City, with an airport and seaport, is considered the gateway to Palawan and understandably has the largest number of tourist arrivals.

Major Issues

The following are the issues affecting the tourism industry in the province. Different stakeholders face different issues. The views expressed are generalisations emanating from the stakeholder groups and obviously are biased due to the particular special interest bring represented.

For tourists there are: (i) delays in the development of transportation infrastructure and facilities; (ii) delays in commercialisation of tourism products; (iii) an inadequate tourism information distribution system; (iv) inadequate communication facilities especially outside Puerto Princesa City; and (v) lack of banking services.

For investors there are that: (i) delays in development of transportation infrastructure and facilities; (ii) delays in providing other regional infrastructure; (iii) cost of environmental protection; (iv) time consuming environmental impact assessment processes; (v) the high cost of operation.

For the administrators the issues are: (i) although development fees may be collected, they are on tourist expenditures and the amount of tax revenues is therefore limited; and (ii) there is insufficient and/or inconsistent tourism data.

For local communities there are yet other issues: (i) insufficient education and training opportunities; (ii) inadequate technical knowledge on the development of tourism potential in their area; and (iii) insufficient financial resources to allow the communities to develop tourism products.

Notwithstanding these views, the tourism sector has articulated a vision for its future. If followed through, the negative attitudes would be countered. The vision is "towards a socially environmentally responsible tourism that is globally competitive and contributes to both people's development and conservation of the natural resources". The general objective of the sector is to develop and promote sustainable ecological, agricultural and cultural tourism to become a primary industry in the province.

Green Productivity as the Foundation for Ecotourism

Green productivity (GP) is a strategy for enhancing productivity and environmental performance to provide for overall socio-economic development. It is the application of appropriate techniques, technologies and management systems to produce environmentally compatible goods and services. It recognises that a new balance is required between environmental protection and economic activities. It is simply stupid to lose both the environment and profits for the lack of maintenance of the environment and rehabilitation of what has been degraded. At its extreme, the environment can be irreparably damaged. It is now recognised that tourism is dependent on GP practices, as well as the culture and the peace and tranquillity of the province.

To foster ecotourism, a sustainable development plan has been prepared for Northern Palawan (Department of Tourism and Local Government, Jica Study 1997). The study area, with a total of 8400 km². of land and a 351 000 population in 1995, is characterised by high population growth and a high incidence of poverty. The former is attributed to high in-migration, while the latter to low agricultural productivity and lack of employment opportunities. Infrastructure development in the study area is far behind what is needed. Transportation infrastructure has not been properly developed. Municipal centres are not connected by reliable roads and often, during the rainy season, are totally cut-off making movement within the area very difficult. Common problems perceived by people in the area are their relatively poor livelihood and inadequate basic services.

Biologically, Northern Palawan is considered rich and diversified and there are numerous endemic species unique to the island. Key ecosystems to be preserved include mossy forest and old growth forest, unique ecosystems with biological significance, including forest over limestone, mangrove forest and corals. There are also the endangered species such as the Calamine Deer, the Philippine cockatoo, the Palawan peacock, the Palawan porcupine, sea turtles, and dugongs.

The results of comprehensive environmental surveys conducted in the study area indicate that the natural environment in Northern Palawan has deteriorated much more than had been anticipated. Activities and factors which adversely affect the environment include the following: (i) increasing population pressure in ecologically fragile areas; (ii) illegal activities, such as kaingin (slash and burn agriculture), logging, dynamite and cyanide fishing; (iii) lack of alternative employment and economic opportunities to curb illegal economic activities; (iv) inadequate infrastructure development, e.g. road development, without any workable safeguard against environmental damage; (v) inadequate environmental control and management systems and practices; and (vi) limited resources for environmental conservation.

The process of environmental degradation involves many interactive factors, not only in terms of the environment but also of a socio-economic

kind. This is the reason why the study looked into the environmental issues in an integrated manner.

Environmental administration in Palawan is at two levels; one is the national level led by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) and the other, the provincial level, by the Palawan Council for Sustainable Development (PCSD), which oversees the implementation of the Strategic Environmental Plan (SEP) for Palawan. Among the goals of SEP, there are two key areas: one is to establish an Environmentally Critical Area Network (ECAN) for ensuring protection of vulnerable areas and to implement positive development planning by intensified use of Environmental Impact Assessments (EIA), and the other is to provide for control of development activities harmful to the environment.

Northern Palawan is the ideal setting for environmentally sustainable tourism development. Its rich terrestrial, marine and cultural endowments can provide limitless and exciting tourism possibilities and opportunities. However, the environment, which is the key resource both for providing incomes and tourism in the area, has been deteriorating quickly. It is for this reason that the following goals have been identified for tourism development in Northern Palawan: (i) tourism should become a strategic means of promoting sustainable development, with its effective integration of the environment and the local economy; (ii) it should also become a primary industry for Northern Palawan; and (iii) tourism should contribute to the enhancement of the overall image of Philippine tourism, thus inducing more tourist arrivals to the country.

Strategies

In order to achieve these tourism development goals, the following strategic measures must be considered and undertaken: (i) a diversity of high quality destinations with clear appealing images must be developed: focus should be placed on high-quality marine resorts, complemented with tourism resources and activities; (ii) an integrated transport system must be put in place, as accessibility at international, inter-regional and intra-regional levels is a key to the success of tourism development in the Northern Palawan area, and its archipelagic nature also requires an effective multi-modal system of air, land and sea transportation; (iii) tourism should shoulder environmental costs equitably through direct and indirect contributions, fees, and charges; (iv) tourism should be integrated with the local economy as much as possible, and participation of communities from the planning to implementation and management stages is important; and (v) role-sharing between public and private sectors and the effective introduction of external investment are necessary.

Environmental management is the sole basis for sustainable tourism development and socio-economic development in Northern Palawan.

Environmental Management Area classifications have been prepared to provide a basis for formulating the tourism development plans wherein the proposed classification basically corresponds to that of ECAN Zoning. The results indicate that most parts of Northern Palawan will be covered by Preservation Area and Conservation Area zones, with small areas to be left for development.

In order to restore and conserve the environment in Northern Palawan, a number of measures and actions should be taken immediately, they include the following: (i) rehabilitation of inadequately implemented infrastructure, especially roads; (ii) strengthening of control measures against illegal and/ or harmful activities, particularly illegal fishing, illegal felling of trees, and *kaingin*; (iii) restoration of damaged terrestrial environments, including reforestation, closure of inadequately constructed logging roads, prevention of siltation, slope protection etc.; (iv) conservation of identified superior terrestrial ecosystems; (v) conservation of the marine environment with focus on coral reefs, seagrass beds, mangrove forests, and marine wildlife, especially dugongs and sea turtles; and (vi) remedial work for the old mercury mining site.

Structure plans have been prepared for four tourism clusters: the Calamian, Taytay/El Nido, Roxas/San Vicente, and Puerto Princesa clusters. The structure plans aim to delineate the direction of the development in an integrated manner within the Environmental Management Areas and regional development frameworks. Key aspects considered in forming the plan are: (i) Tourism Cluster Development — to encourage integration in each area and distinguish the characteristics of areas from each other; (ii) Integrated Tourism Network — to integrate each area effectively with international, regional, and local networks through strategic, multi-modal transportation network building; and (iii) Strategic Allocation of Accommodation Facilities — to maximise cost effectiveness of investments. Accommodation facilities are to be gradually shifted from "economy" to "de luxe" class and be more concentrated in areas with larger competitive power in the international market.

The administrative framework to implement sustainable tourism development needs to be more clearly established. Sustainable tourism development can only be achieved through joint and coordinated efforts of relevant organisations which are able to cover various aspects, including policy setting, planning, financing, land acquisition, implementation, operation and management, tourism promotion, investment promotion, local industry promotion, human resource development, coordination with environmental management, and so on. For this, key areas to be considered are: (i) coordination among central government agencies and, especially, between central government and local governments: (ii) role sharing between the public and private sectors; and (iii) involvement of local communities.

Conclusion

It is concluded that tourism development in Northern Palawan can provide a good opportunity to promote sustainable development. However, for successful implementation, the following conditions should be met. An Environmental Management System should function effectively. ECAN Zoning (statutory land use planning) must be prepared and enforced. EIA procedures and environmental monitoring must be properly and strictly applied. The public sector needs to take the initiative on development of the basic infrastructure. Local manpower needs to be developed to capture the benefits of tourism development. Local government and communities need to be involved in the process of planning, investment, operation and management. And mobilisation of the private sector for investment and development is required.

Chapter Twenty-two

Ecotourism in the Bohol Province: the Philippines

Rene Lopez Relampagos

Introduction

Based on statistics of the World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC), tourism has become one of the world's largest industries. As early as 1993, it was accounting for about 6% of the world's gross national product. In 1998, the tourist receipts in the Philippines amounted to US\$246.76 million. The country's Senate Commission on tourism has predicted that the tourism industry will generate one of every ten new jobs that will be created in the country by the year 2004 and it is estimated that tourism will contribute 6% of the country's gross domestic product (GDP).

Tourism is becoming a fast growing industry in Bohol, my province, the tenth largest island in the Philippines, right in the heart of Central Visayas. Bohol has a rich wellspring of ecology, history, culture and natural heritage sites that have earned worldwide interest. We Boholanos envision Bohol to be the prime eco-cultural destination and a strong agro-industrial province in the country. The existing tourism activities on the island and established tourism facilities go to show that Bohol is gaining prestige as a tourist destination in the region.

The roles of business and industry, community and government are changing radically. One clear result of these global changes is that society has increasing expectations that industries, such as tourism, will deliver better and broader value services. This is, essentially, sustainability.

Recognising the challenge of sustainability, the world community adopted AGENDA 21, a program of sustainable development, during the 1992 Conference on Environment and Development in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. In the Philippines in 1995, the Philippine Agenda 21 (PA 21) was promulgated to define thematic and specific regional priorities for sustainable development. Based on the PA 21, the Department of Tourism (DOT) developed a National Framework on Sustainable Development.

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Current Status of Ecotourism

The Province of Bohol, in its development agenda, has identified three priority growth areas to be accorded focus in terms of development and promotion. They are agri-industrialisation, light manufacturing and ecotourism. Aware of the ecotourism potential of the province, both public and private investments are taking an approach that seeks to attain simultaneous economic, ecological and cultural objectives.

For countries like the Philippines, and the Province of Bohol in particular with considerable biodiversity, this has posed a difficult policy question because we do not know yet, in quantitative terms, the conservation and development value of ecotourism. Neither do we know to what extent its benefits can be maximised. What we certainly know, however, is that without an appropriate policy planning and management framework it will not succeed.

The Bohol Agenda 21

During the past years, the province has achieved vital goals: (i) in governance, whereby the provincial leadership has been consistent in its pursuit of participatory and democratic processes, and this is a mark of the present administration; (ii) terms of legislation, with the adoption of the Bohol Environment Code of 1998, the Provincial Administrative Code and the upcoming Bohol Investment Code and other proactive legislation, which reveals a legislative body that is responsive to the needs of the times; (iii) in promoting a critical awareness on environment conservation and protection which has slowly permeated the consciousness of the Boholanos; (iv) in developing increasing interest in the propensity for cultural work and artistic activities in Bohol; a phenomenon which has contributed greatly to the protection of Bohol's remaining frontiers of ecological and cultural heritage; and (v) in promoting the attractiveness of eco-cultural sites to foreign and domestic tourists which has placed the province in the limelight of the industry.

The Province of Bohol is cognisant of its potential for ecotourism as well as the fact that as a logical component of sustainable development, ecotourism necessitates careful planning (both physical and managerial), a multidisciplinary approach, strict guidelines, high standards and regulation that will ensure sustainable operations. The Bohol Agenda 21, the Philippine Agenda 21 in the Province of Bohol, and the Centrepiece Program for the New Millennium together provide a unified sustainable development agenda for the province. To facilitate its implementation and formulation, the Sustainable Integrated Area-based Development (SIAD) program will be utilised to implement PA 21. Inter-sectoral involvement and broad-based participation of business, government and civil society (which balances state intervention and market forces with public participation) are essential to make sustainable development a reality. The projected output of the SIAD will be the Bohol Sustainable Integrated Area Development Master Plan, composed of interrelated plans, namely: the Eco-cultural Tourism Plan the Agro-industrial Plan, the Social Development (Poverty Alleviation) Plan; and SIAD feasibility studies for identified projects.

An Environment Management System

The Provincial Government of Bohol is embarking, together with the Industrial Initiatives for Sustainable Environment (IISE), on a joint project developing an Environment Management System (EMS). The basis of an EMS is to manage the environment by integrating it into the overall management of businesses and, hence, promote and sustain businesses.

In this joint endeavour, the parties undertake the following activities: (i) perform an Environment Review of selected environment-related activities; (ii) develop an Action Plan to carry out the agreement on the promotion of the Environment Management System (EMS) and Pollution Prevention and Cleaner Production (CP) practices; (iii) formulate a practicable mechanism for sustainability of the program; (iv) encourage municipal local government units to participate in the project's site-level activities, particularly in integrating pollution planning with municipal land use and zoning initiatives, as well as integrating the issuing of environment protection permits to business; (v) promote widespread adoption of EMS and CP in the province; and (vi) disseminate information on the various aspects of EMS to citizens and relevant sectors.

The Bohol Enviroment Code of 1998

The stakeholders of Bohol, representing various sectors of the province, drafted the Bohol Environment Code which agrees to adopt adequate measures to safeguard and conserve land, minerals, forests and other resources, and to protect the environment by imposing appropriate penalties for criminal acts which endanger it and such other activities which result in pollution, acceleration of euthropication of rivers and lakes, or impact on the ecological balance.

The Bohol Provincial Government declared to secure, for the use and employment of the present and future generations of Boholanos, the perpetual existence of adequate environment and natural resources in order to support indefinitely the sustainable development requirements of the province. The Bohol Environment Management Office (BEMO) was created to ensure effective implementation of the Bohol Environment Code of 1998 and to assist the various local government units of the province on matters of environmental management, in coordination with non-government organisations that are developing and implementing environmental projects in the province.

Bohol Tourism Development and Promotion

The Provincial Government created the Tourism Development and Promotions Unit at the Bohol Investment and Promotion Centre, under the Office of the Governor, to make certain that tourism project development (both public and private) be in accordance with the principles of ecotourism. The agency undertakes the promotion of Bohol as the "Heritage Province", and the "Eco-cultural Destination" of the country, as well as promoting private ecotourism projects in the province.

The Provincial Tourism Sketch Plan is a document that shows how the tourist assets of the province can be developed into thematic and non-thematic tourism circuits and how they could be promoted cost-effectively to developers and to tourists, and most importantly with the least negative impact on the environment and the host community. The Centre for Culture and Arts Development (CCAD), under the Office of the Governor, was created to preserve and revitalise the intangible forms of our province's cultural heritage. It undertakes the development, promotion and preservation of Boholanos' art and culture which are deemed vital to the establishment of a Boholano identity. The Provincial Government organised a multi-sectorally, representative Tourism Council which is a policy-making, advisory and recommendatory body to the provincial leadership on matters relating to the development, regulation and promotion of tourism in the province. Municipal counterparts of this body are also being encouraged in order to oversee proper tourism development initiatives at local government level.

Aside from the Provincial Government through its various offices, there are key institutions which are assisting in the promotion of ecotourism in the province. They include the DOT, which through the conduct of various technical workshops aims at maintaining sustainable development in tourism policies and programs in the local government units. The responsibilities of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) include the development of the Rajah Sikatuna National Park in Bilar as an ecotourism destination; implementation of environment laws, regulations and policies and the monitoring of the implementation of the laws for the preservation and conservation of natural resources; and together with DOT, is instrumental in formulating a framework that will serve as a guide in the development of national policy and strategic guidelines on ecotourism. The Coastal Resource Management Program assists communities, private groups and local governments in planning for sustainable coastal ecotourism management, to ensure balanced use of coastal resources, provide environmentally friendly livelihood and business opportunities to communities, mitigate environmental impacts and promote greater environmental awareness and best practices. Then there is the World Wide Fund for Nature-Kabong Kalikasan Ng Pilipmas (WWF-KKP) effort which assisted in the establishment of the Pamilacan Island Dolphin and Whale Watching enterprise, a community-based sustainable tourism project. And, finally, the First Consolidated Bank, Inc. provides the livelihood and promotions assistance to community organisations involved in tourism ventures.

Success Stories

Bohol Province has initiated, along with the private sector, ecotourism projects as showcases in the province. Two community-based, ecotourism alternative livelihood enterprises are described here.

The first is the Cambuhat River and Village Enterprise. This is a community-based ecotour venture operated by the Cambuhat Enterprise Development and Fisherman Association (CEDFA) in Cambuhat, Buenavista, Bohol. The tour features a paddle-boat river ride, whereby tourists learn about the values and local management of the estuarine and mangrove ecosystem, and includes a tour to oyster-culture farms and the village to see the traditional industries. The ecotour venture has helped in generating community cooperation, and government and private sector collaboration in local environment management. The enterprise is being assisted by the CRMP, Municipal Government of Buenavista, the Provincial Government of Bohol, the First Consolidated Bank Foundation, Inc. and the Bohol Federation of Travel and Tour Operators.

The other example is the Pamilacan Dolphin and Whale Watching Village. This ecotour venture was initiated by the WWF-KKP with the community through the Pamilacan Island Dolphin and Whale Watching Organisation. The teamwork involved has allowed the people of the island to generate income through an alternative enterprise, the tour, while at the same time conserving the marine mammal population around the island. The project is supported by an inter-agency task force for marine mammal conservation.

Conclusion

In the continually growing tourism industry and the emerging phenomenon of ecotourism, areas of vast potential are waiting to be explored. But there are pitfalls as well. It is therefore important that every country should set up national tourism plans in the context of a sustainable development strategy, from which all other tourism plans in the local government units must follow. The plan should include the social, environmental and cultural components as well as ecotourism guidelines.

Ecotourism must lend itself to the preservation of the integrity and quality of the environment, while management of an ecotourism area must focus on environmentally-sound development activities. Effective nature conservation can only be achieved by rational, judicious and sustainable management of all the biological and geographical resources in the tourist areas. Given the growing reality of a global village (or a planet constantly "shrinking" in size), the strategy for ecotourism development can start from a regional point of view. Several countries within a regional grouping or with common biographic features (e.g. ASEAN) could work in partnership so as to offer an attractive integrated package in the growing world market of ecotourism services. This would provide an excellent opportunity for a country like the Philippines, or a province like Bohol whose geographic location makes it ideal for regional initiatives. Importantly, the process for drawing up plans should be highly participatory as all concerned sectors have a vital role to play.

Chapter Twenty-three

Ecotourism and Green Productivity in Singapore

Tan Kok Yeang

Introduction

Singapore consists of the main island of Singapore and some 63 islets within its territorial waters. It is situated approximately 137 km north of the Equator. The main island is about 42 km in length and 23 km in breadth, and 585.4 km² in area. It has a coastline of approximately 150.5 km. The total land area, including the islets, is 648.1 km².

Singapore's neighbours are Malaysia, Brunei and Indonesia. Singapore is linked to Peninsular Malaysia by a 1.1 km causeway over the Straits of Johore and a 1.9 km bridge at Tuas. The causeway linking Peninsular Malaysia carries a road, a railway and a water pipeline. Two other causeways link Singapore with her Offshore Islands — one with Sentosa and Pulau Brani, the other with Pulau Damar Laut.

Physically, the island can be roughly divided into three regions: the central hilly region of igneous rock formation; the western region of sedimentary rocks, forming undulating hills and valleys; and the relatively flat eastern region of sand and gravel.

As at the end of 1998, the land use statistics were as shown in Box 1.

Box 1: Land Use

	Area in km ²
Total land area (main island and offshore islets)	648.1
Built-up areas (including industrial sites)	323.0
Farms	10.4
Forest	28.4
Marsh and tidal waste	15.5
Others (inland waters, open spaces, public gardens, cemeteries, non-built-up areas in military establishments and unused land)	270.6

Chapter Twenty-four

Promoting Sustainable Tourism in Sri Lanka

Tsung-Wei Lai

Introduction

Sri Lanka is an island country with a rich cultural heritage, diverse landscapes, and a significant number of wildlife reserves. Increasing tourist activities are perceived as a means to bring in much-needed foreign exchange to improve the quality of life of local people. After a decade of decline due to ethnic unrest, tourist activities in Sri Lanka have shown promising signs of recovery. Today, tourism is the fourth largest foreign exchange earner in Sri Lanka and contributes significantly to the economic growth and development of this island country.

Sri Lanka's diverse landscapes and rich cultural heritage present a wide range of tourism opportunities, ranging from "sun and beach" holidays, wildlife excursions, and cultural tours. Generally, Sri Lanka's tourism resources are relatively under exploited. Although "sun and beach tourism" remains the main attraction for most foreign visitors, alternative tourism (i.e. ecotourism, nature tourism, and cultural/heritage tourism) on a smaller scale has been promoted as a sustainable alternative to avoid the negative social, economic, and environmental impacts often associated with mass tourism development.

Country Profile

Sri Lanka, comprised of one large teardrop-shaped island and several smaller islands in the Indian Ocean, is situated about 80 km east of the southern tip of India. The main island stretches 350 km from north to south and 180 km east to west, with a land area of 65 000 km² and a coastline of 1562 km. The southern half of the island is dominated by rugged hill country, while the northern half is a large plain. It also has palm-fringed beaches on the southwestern, southern and southeastern coasts.

Sri Lanka is a tropical country with distinct dry and wet seasons. The island has two monsoon seasons: the southwest monsoon lasts from late

May to late September and the northeast monsoon affects the northeast coasts from December to March. In the lowlands, the climate is generally humid with an average temperature of 27°C. At a higher altitude, however, the central hill country enjoys a mild and pleasant climate with a temperature ranging from 10-16°C. This climate is essential to support Sri Lanka's renowned tea plantations.

The nation, formerly known as Ceylon, was colonised by the Portuguese, Dutch and British, before achieving full independence as a dominion within the British Commonwealth in 1948. Today, colonial remnants can still be found in cities such as Kandy and Galle. The population of Sri Lanka is over 19 million, with a Sinhalese (74%) majority. The balance of the population is made up of Sri Lankan Tamils (12.6%), Indian Tamils (5.5%), and Moors, Malays, and others (7.9%). Although Sri Lanka has a diverse ethnic and religious mix (Buddhist, Hindu, Muslim, and Christian Burgher), the country's architecture, sculpture, and painting are predominately influenced by Buddhism. For over a decade, ethnic and religious strife between the majority Sinhalese (mostly Buddhist) and the minority Tamil (mostly Hindu) has resulted in numerous events of civil unrest and violence.

Sri Lanka is mainly an agricultural country with rice as the major staple crop. In addition, the country produces various plantation crops, including tea, rubber, coconut, cocoa and spices, for export markets. It is also a major exporter of precious and semiprecious gems. The GDP of Sri Lanka is over \$50 billion (1999 estimate) of which 21% is from the agricultural sector, 19% is from the industrial sector, and 60% is from the service sector.

Tourism Development in Sri Lanka

Sri Lanka is endowed with an abundance of tourism resources of considerable diversity, including beaches along its 1585 km coastline, natural/ecological and wildlife attractions, indigenous culture, Buddhist heritage, and remnants left by Arabs, Portuguese, Dutch and British seafarers. Since its independence in 1948, Sri Lanka has enjoyed a growing number of visitors and sustained growth in the tourism industry. However, tourism activities declined dramatically in the mid-1980s due to ethnic unrest and violence between the Tamil Hindu minority and the Sinhalese Buddhist majority. Today, tourists still remain advised to stay away from the northern third of Sri Lanka, the eastern coast, and the far southeast.

In the 1990s, the government of Sri Lanka took initiatives to revive the tourism sector, including the introduction of the Tourism Master Plan. Attractive incentives were provided for foreign investors in tourism sector development. Since then, tourist arrivals have been on the rise. In 1998, foreign exchange earnings from tourism were US\$231 million, a 6.8% increase over the previous year (Ceylon Tourism Board, 2001). Today, tourism is the fourth largest foreign exchange earner in the country (de Silva, 2000), employing over 1.2% percent of the 6.6 million labour force. The Sri Lankan government has identified tourism as one of the five priority economic sectors and granted a range of concessions and incentives for development and promotion of tourism (Mathews, 2000).

The Ceylon Tourism Board (CTB), under the Ministry of Tourism and Civil Aviation, is the statutory body responsible for tourism in Sri Lanka. The CTB is responsible for the implementation of the ministry's policies on destination marketing and promotion, product development, research, planning, and the setting of trade standards (Mathews, 2000). At the local level, provincial councils are responsible for presenting tourism plans and budgets to the central government. In addition, a number of non-governmental conservation organisations and research institutes, such as the Sri Lanka Wildlife Conservation Society, WWF, IUCN, Young Biologists' Association, and the recently formed Ecotourism Society of Sri Lanka, are actively involved with the development, protection, and management of tourism resources in Sri Lanka.

A special Presidential Task Force on Tourism, comprised of private and government representatives, was formed to present a tourism and promotion plan for the year 2000 and beyond (Mathews, 2000). The main strategy of the plan is to prioritise the tourism markets based on their potential and volume of traffic that can be generated in the short term. Accordingly, primary markets, secondary markets, and potential markets are identified and benchmarks are set for the number of future tourist arrivals, foreign exchange earnings, and employment opportunities for locals. To facilitate tourism development, and to attract foreign investment in tourism projects, the Sri Lanka Board of Investment offers various incentives, such as preferential tax rate and duty-free imports of raw material and equipment. Rapid expansion of the transport network around the country is in progress and this will provide easy access to tourist destinations.

Tourist Attractions in Sri Lanka

Endowed with a unique mixture of golden beaches, abundant wildlife, and rich cultural heritage, Sri Lanka is one of the most popular tourist destinations in the region. According to the World Tourism Organization, Sri Lanka has the advantage of having 49 sites classified as unique attractions, 91 as rare attractions, and 7 world heritage sites, and 6 of the 300 ancient monuments in the world (de Silva, 2000). Nonetheless, except the well-established beach destinations along the south-western coast, tourism resources in Sri Lanka are relatively under exploited. The following highlights some of the popular tourist destinations in Sri Lanka.

Beaches: With over 1600 km coastlines, Sri Lanka is known to most tourists for its tropical beach resorts which offer various attractions year round. The southwestern coast is best from November to April and the east coast is best from April to September. Some popular beach spots

on the southwestern coast include: Ambalangoda, home of devil-dancing and mask-making; Hikkaduwa, a popular underwater sports site with coral gardens; Galle, its natural harbour was once a Dutch fort, known for lace-making, ebony-carving, and gem-polishing (Mathews, 2000). The east coastal region offers numerous opportunities for water sports, deep-sea fishing, underwater photography, scuba diving at the shipwrecks and coral reefs off the coast, and whale watching. Popular tourist towns include Trincomalee, Batticaloa, Kalkudah and Nilaveli.

National Parks and Wildlife Reserves: Despite its relatively small size, Sri Lanka possesses a high level of biodiversity due to its wide range of topographic and climatic variation. Sri Lanka is known as one of the 25 biodiversity hotspots in the world as identified by Conservation International. The country has abundant bird life with 251 species resident and no less than 21 indigenous to the island (Mathews, 2000). To preserve displaced young elephants, an elephant orphanage has been set up by the Department of National Zoological Gardens at Pinnawela, 13 km from the main Colombo-Kandy road at Kegalle Town. With over 60 elephants in captivity, the Pinnawala elephant orphanage is reported the largest captive herd in the world.

Since the late 1930s, various areas totalling approximately 4660 km² have been designated as National Parks (7% of the island) and an additional 3270 km² as sanctuaries, reserves, and protected areas (5% of the island). Many of the National Parks and wildlife reserves are now popular tourist attractions. The Yala (Ruhuna) National Park, located in the southeastern corner of the island, and the Gal Oya National Park are popular for viewing large wild elephants and undertaking organised safaris. The Uda Walawe National Park, located in southeast of Colombo, supports large herds of wild animals such as spotted deer, sambhur, and wild boar. It also acts as the catchment for the Uda Walawe Reservoir in the dry zone. The Horton Plains National Park, located in the hill country, is Sri Lanka's highest and most isolated plateau and serves as the habitat for the endemic purple monkey and sambhur (a member of the cat family). The Horton Plains National Park is famous for the precipice known as the "World's End" - a cliff with a sheer drop of 1050 m. The Bundala National Park is the latest addition; it provides habitats for all species of water birds resident in the country as well as the annual influx of migrant birds from August to April.

Cultural Triangle (Heritage Tourism): Sri Lanka has inherited numerous magnificent, century-old monuments and cultural relics in a number of ancient cities. Kandy, Anuradhapura and Polonnaruwa are known as the points of the "Cultural Triangle" of Sri Lanka, where five of Sri Lanka's seven world heritage sites are located. (The seven World Heritage Sites in Sri Lanka are: the ancient cities of Anuradapura, Dambulla, Sigiriya, Polonnaruwa and Kandy; the walled, colonial city of Galle; and the Sinharaja Primeval Rain Forest). Within the triangle, Sigiriya is known as the cultural tourism base in this area. The most important archaeological and cultural site in Sigiriya is the

spectacular rock fortress built in the 5th century AD by King Kasyapa to fend off a feared invasion. Situated atop a 200 m high rock, the fortress houses famous frescoes (rock paintings) on its gallery wall, which is considered one of the finest ancient art examples in the world. Other highlights of cultural tours in this area include the Buddhist cave temples dating to the 1st century AD and a gigantic recumbent image of the Buddha carved out of rock in the town of Dambulla; the largest manmade reservoirs, "Parakrama Samudra", and the colossal Buddha images carved on a granite boulder in the medieval capital of Polonnaurwa; the sacred Bo Tree in Anuradhapura, and an elephant reserve in Habarana.

Hill Country: Kandy, known as Sri Lanka's hill capital, is the second most visited place in Sri Lanka (next to Colombo). The focal point of the town is the golden roofed Dalada Maligawa (Temple of the Tooth), a temple which houses Sri Lanka's most important religious relic, the sacred tooth of Buddha. The Esala Perahera celebrations are a yearly highlight when a replica of the shrine is carried in a procession accompanied by dancers, drummers, and over 100 splendidly clothed and decorated elephants. Another popular tourist destination is Nuwara Eliya, a small town set in the heart of the tea country. Known as "Little England", Nuwara Eliya was developed by the British, and is famous for beautiful parks, well-kept lawns with hedges, Queen Anne- and Georgian-style homes, an Anglican Church, and a golf course.

Ecotourism in Sri Lanka

For the past years, a majority of Sri Lanka's tourism development plans have been targeted primarily at luxury tourism and beach holiday attractions. Some areas in the coastal regions have already exceeded their social and physical carrying capacity (Saleem, 1996: 60). Increasingly, ecotourism and other special interest tourism in Sri Lanka are considered as niche travel products yet to reach their growth potential. Promotion of natural tourism and cultural tourism in the interior is perceived as a sustainable alternative for economic development, especially in poor rural communities. Meanwhile, ecotourism, the fastest growing segment in the tourism sector, has been promoted as a means to divert tourists from the sun and beach holiday attractions to other natural/cultural attractions.

A National Ecotourism Policy Plan is being formulated to promote Sri Lanka as a unique ecotourism destination. In addition, the Institute of Policy Studies (IPS), a research agency, has presented a comprehensive plan for promotion and management of nature tourism in Sri Lanka (Mathews, 2000: 104). To lift the profile of ecotourism, the Ministry of Tourism declared year 2000 as the "Year of Ecotourism." The 13th Pacific Asia Travel Association Ecotourism Conference and Travel Mart was held in Colombo in February 2001 and provided the country tremendous exposure as an ecotourism destination. In addition to ecotourism, the Sri Lankan tourism industry is keen to promote other special interest tourism, such as Ayurveda health packages (i.e. courses of traditional herbal massage therapy designed to rejuvenate and detoxify bodies), exotic weddings, and adventure activities (e.g. trekking, para-gliding, bird watching and archaeological tours).

A number of small tourism operators have been established to promote nature tourism "off-the-beaten-track" in Sri Lanka. The Woodlands Network is a small tourism operator based in the hill station of Bandarawela about 180 km from Colombo. It is a self-help organisation comprised of six women who are dedicated to promoting nature tourism in Uva Province in the central highlands and in the southern lowlands of Sri Lanka. The Woodlands Network aims at promoting socially responsible tourism that is based on the local traditional forest culture, and hence minimises the negative social and cultural effects of tourism development. Individual tourists and small groups are accommodated by local people or in small lodges, an excellent way to promote people-to-people contact and to induce greater appreciation of the local culture. Woodlands' tours offer a variety of activities, including nature walks, excursions to tea estates and culture/religious sites, train rides through the mountains, and culinary lessons using indigenous food and gastronomy (i.e. vegetables, spices and tea). Since its establishment in 1994, the Woodlands Network has attracted an increasing number of foreign independent tourists (mostly from Germany) who prefer to learn about the customs, food habits, culture, environment and history of the countries they visit. The Woodlands effort has won international awards in the promotion of nature tourism.

Conclusion: The Challenges

Sri Lanka has a long-standing reputation as a popular "sun, sand, and sea" holiday destination. Tourism development activities in the coastal areas, such as Hikkaduwa, Negombo and Rekawa Lagoon, have contributed to increasing degradation of valuable coastal habitats and natural settings (Saleem, 1996). The influx of visitors and uncontrolled growth accompanied by mass tourism development has also generated a number of negative economic, social and environmental effects on the host communities.

From an economic perspective, mass tourism tends to grow at the expense of, or the total replacement of, traditional economic activities such as fishing and farming. Local communities therefore become dependent on capricious tourist dollars. Development of mass tourism and luxury tourism also have common ramifications such as social polarisation, inflation of property prices, increased cost of living, and even "deculturation." Furthermore, increasing tourism activities causes congested traffic, increased environmental pollution, and unsightly development. Sri Lanka is in need of alternative development options to foster a sustainable tourism industry.

Integrated with conservation planning and management, ecotourism and other special interest tourism can be highly profitable niche markets that prevent leakage of economic benefits while enhancing the quality of life of the local people with minimal negative social and environmental impacts. With its extensive nature reserve networks and diverse culture heritage, Sri Lanka has great potential to create new value-added tourist products that cater to upmarket ecotourists. However, ecotourism is not a panacea. Common pitfalls of ecotourism, such as over exploitation of wilderness areas and "green-washing," need to be avoided to prevent uncontrolled ecotourism turning into mass tourism. Careful planning and managing are particularly essential in promoting tourism development in cultural/archaeological sites and ecologically sensitive areas.

To foster a sustainable tourism industry, Sri Lanka is faced with numerous challenges. The following highlights some of the impending tasks required to strengthen Sri Lanka's tourism industry: (i) formulate comprehensive policies and criteria for tourism development in and adjacent to coastal areas, heritage sites, ecologically sensitive areas, and National Parks; (ii) specify tourism objectives and alternative strategies — the current mass-tourism oriented marketing strategy needs to be revamped to attract ecotourists who prefer specialised services and gain a life-enriching experience; (iii) improve the existing transportation system for dispersing tourism activities to a greater geographical region; (iv) improve the existing level of accommodation, health and safety network, and on-site facilities; (v) educate foreign tourists to be sensitive and respect local customs; and (vi) encourage community involvement in planning and managing tourism development, as small-scale, single ownership local operators are probably best suited for ecotourism provided they are adequately trained and understand the demand of ecotourists.

Ultimately, carrying capacity is the key element of sustainable tourism. Uncontrolled growth in tourism can lead to diminishing social and economic returns and threaten the ecosystems and cultural assets upon which they depend. Seeking a delicate balance between cultural/nature preservation and tourism development remains a major challenge in promoting ecotourism for sustainable development in Sri Lanka.

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Ecotourism in Taiwan: Green Island

E-Shu Tsao

Introduction

The Republic of China (ROC) includes Taiwan island, the Penghu Archipelago (a group of 64 islands) as well as 21 other islands. Taiwan lies 160 km off the southeastern coast of Mainland China. The island is 394 km long and 144 km wide. Massive and rugged mountains occupy almost 70% of the total land area, and there are more than 100 peaks over 3000 m. Jade Mountain has an elevation of 3952 m and ranks as the highest peak in Northeast Asia.

Straddling the Tropic of Cancer, Taiwan is surrounded by warm ocean currents and enjoys an oceanic and subtropical monsoonal climate which is conspicuously influenced by its topography. The climate is subtropical in the north and tropical on the south. In winter, a northeasterly monsoon brings heavy rains to the eastern and northern part of the island, while in the summer, in the face of the prevailing southwesterly monsoon, the central and southern parts have more rain than the north. Thunder showers and typhoons often bring Taiwan heavy rainfall in the summer months. The mean rainfall is about 2600 mm per year. Except for the mountain areas, the average monthly temperature is above 15°C in winter rising to 20°C in April and remaining high until November.

Due to its wide range of altitudes and its location on the Tropic of Cancer, Taiwan supports four major botanical communities: tropical, subtropical, temperate and alpine. There are about 4300 species of vascular plants. It also supports a wide range of habitats for wild animals and about 18 000 fauna species.

The Economy

In the year 2000, the population of ROC exceeded 22 million, which makes it one of the world's most densely populated areas. The latter half

Integrated with conservation planning and management, ecotourism and other special interest tourism can be highly profitable niche markets that prevent leakage of economic benefits while enhancing the quality of life of the local people with minimal negative social and environmental impacts. With its extensive nature reserve networks and diverse culture heritage, Sri Lanka has great potential to create new value-added tourist products that cater to upmarket ecotourists. However, ecotourism is not a panacea. Common pitfalls of ecotourism, such as over exploitation of wilderness areas and "green-washing," need to be avoided to prevent uncontrolled ecotourism turning into mass tourism. Careful planning and managing are particularly essential in promoting tourism development in cultural/archaeological sites and ecologically sensitive areas.

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The Economy

In the year 2000, the population of ROC exceeded 22 million, which makes it one of the world's most densely populated areas. The latter half

of the 20th century has been marked with amazing changes in technology, transportation, and communication. The economy has developed rapidly. During the 40-plus years from 1952 through 1997, annual growth averaged 8.5% and the per capita GNP soared from US\$196 to US\$13 198. The nation's population was about 0.4% of the world's total in 1997, and the GNP of US\$284.8 billion accounted for approximately 1% of global GNP. The GNP ranked 18th in the world and per capita GNP was in 25th place. The total trade volume was US\$236.5 billion that year; this was 2% of the global total, and ranked 14th in the world. Imports amounted to US\$114.4 billion and exports reached US\$122.1 billion, ranking 15th and 14th, respectively. The mainstreams of the nation's industry are currently heavy and chemical industries, as well as technology-intensive industries. The development of the information industry has been especially striking, ranking third in the world.

In 1999, agriculture products contributed 2.6% of GDP, industry contributed 33.09% of GDP (which includes manufacturing products contributing 26.44% of GDP), service products contributed 64.31% of GDP (which includes commerce contributing 18.36% of GDP).

Tourism

The Tourism Bureau has established an administration responsible for the management of the national scenic areas of Taiwan. The management operates with its objective being sustainable development, on the principal of equal emphasis on the conservation and development of tourism resources. Key tasks are to develop diversified tour itineraries with a native culture and to maintain an ecologically-healthy environment.

At the central level the Tourism Bureau operates under the Ministry of Transportation and Communications. At the local level, tourism sections are set up to supervise and administer tourism affairs under the construction bureaus of country and city governments. Another agency involved on the development and management of tourism resources is the Construction and Planning Administration of the Ministry of the Interior (in charge of the National Park system). According to the *National Park Act*, the Ministry of the Interior is responsible for supervising the parks. The Construction and Planning Administration is responsible for the design, supervision and conservation of National Parks, and also supervises the headquarters for each National Park. The Forestry Bureau of the Council for Agriculture is in charge of the forest recreational areas, and the Council for Cultural Planning and Development is in charge of culture resources.

Ecotourism

Tourism is making an important contribution to economic development in the Asia–Pacific region, especially in developing economies, by generating foreign currency earnings and expanding employment. Since tourism utilises environmental features, such as natural resources, and historical and cultural properties, as attractive resources, it is inevitably dependent on these features. They are extremely important to the future development and promotion of tourism. Ecotourism could be the only way to resolve the conflict between tourism development and environmental conservation.

The current policies for tourism industry development are: (i) development of international tourism on the foundation of domestic tourism; (ii) the use of Chinese cultural features in the promotion of international tourism (with the major events including the Taipei Lantern Festival, Taipei Chinese Food Festival, Hsiukuluan River rafting and Kayak racing); (iii) promotion of outdoor recreation activities for citizens; (iv) placing emphasis on both conservation and utilisation of tourism resources, and encouraging private investment in leisure facilities and travel services; (v) intensifying international tourism publicity and promotion; and (vi) managing safety for travellers.

To promote green products in Taiwan, in May of 1998 when the *Government Procurement Act* was enacted, the Legislative Yuan included a clause for green procurement. The clause stipulates that during government procurement bids, products bearing the Green Mark (Taiwan's eco-label), or with comparable characteristics, should be given priority in the bid and enjoy a price advantage of within 10%. In accordance with this regulation, the EPA drew-up the Regulations for the Priority Procurement of Eco-Products by Government Organisations. According to the framework proposed by the EPA, the initial goals of the program will be tailored to fit with the current trend of applications for Green Mark use. The products prescribed for procurement will initially be office supplies and equipment.

It is commonly accepted that in order to maintain sustainable tourism, industry links must be established between tourism and the environment, as well as between other social and economic sectors. This reality presents a challenge, as both mature and emerging destinations grapple to strike and maintain the optimal balance between the economic gains derived from tourism, and tourism's impact on the social, cultural and natural environments.

The action plans for ecotourism activities being undertaken are: (i) the Tourism Bureau is preparing a Tourism White Paper, and sustainable tourism development and ecotourism will become major goals of the policy; (ii) the Tourism Bureau has already finished a project to investigate the potential ecotourism and adventure tourism products in Taiwan (this project was designed to promote sustainable tourism in Taiwan and includes the definition of ecotourism products, recreational settings and management mechanisms); and (iii) some local communities are preserving the unique natural resources in their regions, and also promoting ecotourism businesses of the aboriginal people.

The Green Island Case Study

One major case study to illustrate the principles of ecotourism, the Green Island Study, was carried out in 1995. A questionnaire-based survey was conducted for this project; it included 49 tourist destinations in 10 economies, with the destinations being divided into four categories: natural resources, tangible cultural properties, intangible cultural properties and townscapes. One of the three destinations chosen was Green Island, which was selected from the natural resource category as an example of how to develop the concept of ecotourism.

The Green Island project has been implemented with two objectives in mind: (i) to identify requirements for the development of ecotourism, including concept planning, methods, processes, education and training; and (ii) to propose recommendations for the implementation of ecotourism.

Surrounded by clear blue water, Green Island, or Lutao, is a pristine volcanic island in the Pacific Ocean, 33 km east of the city of Taitung. This island has a rich diversity of marine resources. A total of 602 species of fish has been seen in the surrounding water, and 40 of the species are very common. There are also 176 species of hard coral, and four kinds of sea snakes, as well as molluscs, crustaceans, echinoderms and algae. This marine life and the sea bed topography have considerable potential for attracting tourists to view Green Island's underwater world for snorkeling and scuba diving, and for taking trips on glass-bottomed boats and a tourist submarine (already operating there).

The water around the island is very clear; divers can see 30 or even 40 m on a good day. They can enjoy vast undersea forests of coral inhabited by sea fans and other corals, reef fish, eels, sea urchins and countless other forms of sea life. All of these resources are practically untouched by pollution, and the relative lack of facilities on the island means that they have not been spoiled by excessive diving activities. The undersea treasures remain intact, making Green Island a truly world-class diving location.

The study suggests that the development of the eco-resort islands be pursued in five ways. The first of these is "eco-development", which means the development of the island through the development of tourism based on sustainable methods. The second is "eco-management", focusing on the preservation of biodiversity. The third is the incorporation of environmental interpretation and education, which can be accomplished through various means including the provision of software. The fourth is "eco-information", which involves the development of information resources for ecotourism. The fifth aspect is "eco-networking", which means developing the resort island with the participation and cooperation of the local residents.

The conclusion of the study established the concept of "point-regioncountry-international". The concept includes the establishment of strategies at the Green Island level, at the national level, and the international level. There are four strategies given emphasis: (i) a process flowchart is recommended in order to promote the carrying through of the plan, from concept to implementation (Table 1); (ii) a funding plan for establishing payment structures based on an analysis of benefits to local communities; (iii) selecting the most suitable tour operators for the various regions; and (iv) the establishment of a management organisation.

Table 1: Proposed Approach to the Promotion of Ecotourismon Green Island

	International level	ROC Level (Eastern National Scenic Zone)	Green Island Level
Resource management Protection of diversity: • Sea areas • Land areas • Lifestyles		Zoning plan	Protection of bats and measures to encourage propagation Deer-related measures Creation of fishing rules Fish feeding Zoning (creation of rehabilitation plan) Public works (coast protection)
Management of use systems Promotion of ecotourism type leisure Expansion of repeat visit market	Workshops on environmental education, international understanding Hosting of overseas groups	Expansion of guide systems for scuba diving Training of interpreters Environmental surveys and preparation of guide information Research seminars Improvement of displays in visitor centre (integrated indoor and outdoor displays)	Construction of garbage incinerator Formulation of diving rules Restriction of automobile use Establishment of a management fund Creation of wildlife observation system Development of programs for children Improvement of submarine captain's commentary

		Establishment of eco-resort facility guidelines	Construction and advertisement of eco- resort accommodation facilities
			Encouragement of supporters' group
Islander participation			Establishment of support system for bird association and other NGOs
Improvement of lifestyle and attitudes			Establishment of eco- tourism guide group
			Community participation in recycling (garbage sorting, etc)
			Composting of organic garbage
Public information systems Regular publications on diving and ecotourism		Erection of all-weather notice boards	
			Enhancement of information services in visitor centre

Conclusion

The people of ROC are aware of environmental issues. For them, the concept of sustainable tourism development and environmental preservation is deeply embedded in the consciousness that the economic survival of the individual is inextricably linked to the imperative to improve the quality of life for all, in harmony with the preservation of nature. However, there are some people who are still "addicted" to the old narrow economic ways of thinking. To change this is the challenge.

Chapter Twenty-six

Ecotourism in Taiwan: Whale Watching

His-Lin Liu

Introduction

The Republic of China (ROC) includes Taiwan Island, the Penghu Archipelago (a group of 64 islands) as well as 21 other islands. Its natural attributes away from the cities and its vast collection of historical artifacts make Taiwan an excellent candidate for ecotourism.

Tourism in Taiwan

There were 2 115 653 foreign arrivals in 1999, an increase of 83 842 visitors, or 4.13%, over 1998. A total of 2 411 248 visitors (included overseas Chinese) arrived in Taiwan in 1999, representing a growth of 112 542 visitors or 4.90% over the year before. Residents of Japan accounted for 826 222 arrivals accounting for 34.27% of all arrivals. Residents of Hong Kong accounted for 319 814 visitors, making up 13.26% of the total. A total of 317 801 United States residents visited, accounting for 13.18% of the overall figure.

According to the results of the Inbound Traveller Consumption and Trends Survey, the average daily spending per visitor in 1999 was US\$191.35. According to the Traveller Exit and Entry Registration Chart, each visitor spent an average of 7.74 nights in Taiwan. Calculated on these figures, the average spending in Taiwan in 1999 was US\$1481.05 and total spending on the island by foreign and overseas Chinese visitors during the year amounted to US\$3 571 000 000.

According to the results of the Outbound Tourist Expenditures and Trends Survey, in 1999 each outbound traveller from Taiwan spent an average of US\$1363.81 per trip. Each outbound traveller spent an average of US\$142.06 per day, and total spending by all outbound travellers in 1999 amounted to US\$8 951 000 000. Taiwan's foreign exchange spending on

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There were 56 international tourist hotels with a total of 17 403 guest rooms in Taiwan in 1999, along with 24 tourist hotels having a total of 2871 rooms. The combined total was 80 hotels with 20 274 guest rooms. The average occupancy rate of all tourist (including international tourist) hotels in 1999 was 60.65%; compared with the average of 62.18% recorded in 1998, this was down by 1.53 percentage points. The overall average room rate of tourist hotels (including international tourist hotels) in 1999 was NT\$2897; this was a decline of NT\$8 from the NT\$2905 recorded in 1998, for a negative growth rate of 0.28%.

Local citizens made a total of 6 558 663 overseas trips in 1999; compared with the 5 912 383 trips made in 1998, this was up by 646 280 trips for a growth of 10.93%. Travellers to destinations in the Asian area made up the largest portion of outbound departures, with 4 978 156 trips accounting for 75.90% of the total. Travel to the Americas came second with 733 888 departures, accounting for 11.19%, followed by travel to Europe with 225 065 departures. The number of visitors to 230 tourist and recreation sites in Taiwan in 1999 totalled 88 029 343, a drop of 8.34% from the 96 038 136 visits recorded in 1998.

Tourism and Ecotourism Institutions

Major tourist resources in Taiwan operate under a number of different jurisdictions. In addition to designated scenic areas (consisting of national, provincial and municipal scenic areas), there are bathing beaches, and private amusement parks, which are under the tourism administration system, and also National Parks under the Construction and Planning Administration of the Ministry of the Interior. There are forest recreation areas under the Forestry Bureau of the Council of Agriculture; farms and forest areas under the Vocational Assistance Commission for Retired Servicemen; and university experimental forests under the Ministry of Education. All of these are important sites for tourism and recreation. These tourist and scenic resources differ in the purpose of their establishment, with regard to the agencies that administer them, and in the laws and regulations which govern their management. Some of the agencies in charge of them list tourism as only one of their multipurpose activities. In view of this situation, the Executive Yuan established the inter-ministerial Tourism Development and Promotion Committee on 21 November, 1996 to effect the integration of tourist resources. The convener of the committee is a Minister without portfolio; the Tourism Bureau provides staff support, and the vice ministers of various ministries, along with tourism professionals and scholars, serve as committee members.

Tourism and Ecotourism Policies

A range of policies are in place to further develop tourism and ecotourism. The first is the development of international tourism on the foundation of domestic tourism and Chinese cultural features are to be used in the promotion of international tourism. With regard to ecotourism a number of policies and initiatives should be noted. The national scenic area administration is responsible for planning interpretation facilities, training interpreters, editing information in other languages, providing interpreter services, setting up exhibitions in the service centre, and raising public awareness of conservation issues. There is a training program for tour guides who operate in the national scenic areas. In the private sector, some hotels and operators in the nature recreation areas provide environmental education programs. And then there is the interest in building ecotourism into infrastructure; for example, in the Penghu National Scenic Area, one major public facility, the Wanan Island Green Turtle Ecotourism Visitor Centre, is now under construction. The central government in Taiwan has directed its environmental protection efforts into four main areas: (i) habitat preservation; (ii) forest resource conservation; (iii) protection of endangered species; and (iv) international participation.

The government has an interest in promoting control quality in the tourism industry. Assistance is provided for upgrading and quality enhancement in the following areas: (i) operating systems in the hotel industry; (ii) development of new itineraries by travel agents; (iii) acceleration of diversified development of national scenic areas; and (iv) promotion of internet operations in tourism, and reorganisation of the Tourism Bureau website.

The Tourism Bureau is preparing a Tourism White Paper, and sustainable tourism development and ecotourism will become major goals. The Tourism Bureau has already finished a project to investigate the potential ecotourism and adventure tourism products in Taiwan. The report includes the definition of ecotourism products, recreational settings and management mechanisms. And, some local communities preserve the unique natural resources in their regions, and also promote the ecotourism business of the aboriginal people.

As with most National Park systems of the world, the Department of National Parks of Taiwan operates under the overriding dual purposes of: (i) protecting the natural and cultural resources of the nation; and (ii) providing quality recreational opportunities for the citizens of Taiwan. More specifically, the goals of the National Park system include: (i) the protection of ecologically significant areas; (ii) the conservation of gene pools; (iii) the provision of nature-related recreational opportunities; (iv) the promotion of scientific research and environmental education; and (v) the stimulation of regional economic growth through compatible tourism development.

Taiwan has six National Parks (Kenting, Yushan, Yangminshan, Taroko Shei-Pa and Kinmen) spread across the entire length of the island and maintained by the Ministry of the Interior. As an example, consider Yangminshan National Park nestled between the Taipei basin and the northern coast of Taiwan. Yangminshan's topography comes entirely as a result of the Tatun volcano. In evidence here are sulfurous deposits and fumes which hint at the underground activity. While boasting a wide assortment of ecosystems, from grass plains to tropical forest to aquatic habitats, the park also supports many recreational facilities to accommodate visitors from Taipei's sprawling metropolitan area.

Case study: Whale watching

Taiwan is surrounded by ocean and its marine resources are abundant. Recently, whale and dolphin watching has become popular. National Taiwan University, Department of Zoology has collected 118 data sheets from July 1997 to May 1998 on cetacean sightings. The data showed them to be more abundant on the east coast, especially from the llan to Taitung Counties. From July 1997 to April 1999, around 30 000 persons went whale watching.

The interest in whale-watching activity in Taiwan is directed at both the preservation of the whale-watching resources and also the sustainable development of whale watching industry. Therefore, criteria for whale watching are required, such as the proximity to whales, providing good interpretation etc.

According to the International Fund for Animal Welfare (IFAW), there are more than 4 million people per year in about 50 countries and overseas territories participating in whale watching. Having recognised whale watching as an expanding tourist industry that may contribute significantly to the local economy, some fishing communities in Taiwan have been actively involving themselves in the business. However, the country still has no substantial and effective mechanisms to manage whale watching. To regulate the activity represents a tough challenge for scientists and governments.

Conclusion

Taiwan's tourism industry boomed in the first half of 1999 as the market advanced toward the new century, and during the January–August period visitor arrivals recorded a growth of 15%. In the last half of the year, the industry was severely affected by the disastrous earthquake that struck central Taiwan on September 21. Thanks partly to swift counter-measures adopted by the Tourism Bureau, the industry still managed to reach historic highs in both inbound and outbound travel for the year as a whole.

In the execution of its operations in 2000, in addition to continuing with the development of national scenic areas and the encouragement of private investment in the tourism infrastructure, the Tourism Bureau devoted strenuous efforts to the promotion of diversified high-quality domestic travel; formulated the "Hot-Spring Development and Management Program"; completed the renovation of the Bureau's internet website; and worked vigorously to carry out tourism revitalisation measures following the earthquake. At the same time, the Bureau sketched out three visions for the development of Taiwan's tourism industry in the 21st century to serve as future directions of development: (1) development of three-dimensional tourism encompassing land, sea, and air so as to draw a new map for Taiwan tourism: (2) creation of an excellent environment for tourism investment in order to develop sustainable tourism; and (3) utilisation of network technology in the overall upgrading of tourism marketing and services.

Chapter Twenty-seven

Ecotourism Case Studies in Thailand

Vunsadet Thavarasukha

Introduction

The tourism industry in Thailand is the country's second largest revenue earner, second only to computers and computer components. In 1999, tourism earned 253 018 million baht, compared to 299 780 baht for computers and their components. Rice, once the country's top export earner, managed only 73 811 million baht in earnings. Tourism has stimulated the direct and indirect employment of 11% of Thailand's total workforce, or about 3.42 million people, earning for the government 79 000 million baht in tax revenues.

Thailand is fortunate that its prime location in the centre of South-East Asia and Indochina has helped the country develop into an aviation hub for the region, facilitating access for international visitors. Its location has also created a diverse range of natural attractions, such as beautiful tropical beaches, rugged mountains and dense forests that are home to a myriad of animals, cultural and historical sites reflecting the glorious heritage of Thai civilisation, as well as a sophisticated infrastructure, which allows tourists ready access to all these treasures.

Tourism

These natural benefits plus extensive tourism promotions internationally have led to a strong, continuing increase in the number of tourists coming to Thailand over the past decade. In 1999, 8.5 million foreign tourists visited Thailand, a 10.5% increase over 1998. The government has set its target for year 2000 at a realistic 9.7 million foreign tourists, and is expected to quickly reach the magic number of 10 million.

With so many international visitors coming to Thailand, tourism has had some damaging effects on the country's social and environmental situation. Overcrowding, pollution and waste management problems are just a few of the troubles that Thailand's burgeoning tourism industry has inflicted on the environment. In a keynote address to the "4th International Conference

on Sustainable Tourism: Community-based Ecotourism Development in the Asia Pacific", H.E. Mr Adisai Bhodharamik, Minister to the Prime Minister's Office who is in charge of Thailand's tourism affairs, stated:

"We have learned the lesson in the past that tourism development which was initiated by our central government, rather than according to local needs, caused damage to both the natural and cultural environment.

Therefore we need to find an approach which will help develop tourism without any negative impact on the cultural and natural environment. If we do not pay attention to this matter, I believe that tourism would bring great damage to the country and the world community as a whole".

As a result, the government's policy on tourism in recent years has been geared towards more and more sustainable tourism development, with an emphasis on community participation, non-exploitation, and safety of tourists.

Sustainable tourism means the management of tourism resources in response to economic and social needs, using valuable resources and the environment carefully and wisely, for the maximum benefit and minimal impact in the long run, while improving the quality of these resources and environment. To achieve sustainable tourism, the local people are the most important group to be educated and encouraged to take part in tourism management at every level, provincial, district and sub-district. The local community plays a pivotal role in any effort to sustain such tourism development because the local people are the ideal caretakers of their own environment.

In response to these developments, the more enlightened segments of the tourism industry have turned to a new and more sustainable form of tourism known as "ecotourism". The Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT) has tried to promote and develop ecotourism since 1997. In doing so, the TAT has drafted a master plan for nationwide tourism development, in order to study the potential for tourist attractions and their appropriate management, as well as to allow the people to join in the decision-making process. This has been executed together with the business sector, academics, NGOs and local administration units. Over the past few years, the TAT has also undertaken many awareness-raising campaigns to keep the nation's tourist attractions in good, safe and clean condition with all the necessary facilities for visitors.

What is Ecotourism?

The TAT provides the following definition of ecotourism:

"Ecotourism is tourism in a natural environment where tourism resources are well taken care of and tourists can learn about and enjoy nature; while local people take part in tourism management, for example, participation in decision making about the tourism business or providing other services which generate income in proportion to the degree of their involvement".

Another definition of ecotourism is that it is a form of tourism in natural areas that is based on knowledge about the responsibility of humans towards the ecological system of the area. Thus ecotourism is a form of responsible tourism in an identified natural area, including cultural and historical components related to this ecosystem. An important component is the active participation of the local community in the management of ecotourism activities.

At present, the number of real ecotourism visitors is still rather low. Mostly, these tourists are included in other types of tourism such as nature-based tourism, agro-tourism, cultural and historical tourism and health tourism. Many ecotourism areas are in National Parks and specific historical-cultural centres.

The National Parks system in Thailand has been identified for its growing importance to the ecotourism industry. To date, approximately 95% of the visitors to National Parks are Thai. With most parks becoming more accessible by road (or boat for marine parks), there exists excellent potential to expand the number of visitors, particularly international tourists, through increased promotion, improved facilities and guided activities.

The National Parks in close proximity to the Mekong River include sites of prehistoric, archaeological and natural significance. The nature-based tourism potential particularly applies to northeast Thailand, one of the poorest areas of the country that the TAT has identified as a priority for tourism development. As the Mekong region gains increased exposure and popularity, these parks will experience a growing number of visitors in search of quality tours in remote and less-travelled areas.

Thailand has a great opportunity to promote ecotourism, especially when compared to other countries in the Asian region, thanks to a strong and experienced national tourism organisation with numerous active overseas offices. The kingdom also enjoys such benefits as easy access by air, a well-integrated infrastructure linking all regions and numerous popular tourist attractions and activities.

Characteristics of Ecotourism

Ecotourism is "a niche within a niche", that is, a specialised form of nature-based tourism. Many of the activities are the same, but the mode of business is often quite different. Ecotourists tend to be college-educated with disposable income and are willing to pay more for a "quality experience", looking for something different or exotic and interested in learning about nature, indigenous culture and having a wilderness experience. The difference between adventure travellers and ecotourists is that the latter seek a deliberate ecology-based educational experience. Ecotourism can be viewed as part of an alternative strategy to meet the objectives of balance, and sustainable tourist development.

The TAT has formed an ecotourism strategy with the guidelines set out in Box 1.

Box 1: Ecotourism Guidelines

- Ecotourism development must manage natural resources in order to retain their original condition as far as possible, and ecotourists are to abstain from travelling in sensitive areas which are easily damaged and difficult to rehabilitate.
- 2. Ecotourism management must take the character of existing resources into consideration in order to arrange appropriate activities.
- 3. Ecotourism must promote educational development and the creation of awareness to maintain the ecosystem of the area rather than just exploit economic growth.
- 4. Ecotourism management must involve the local people in the development process particularly in the transfer of community culture. This should include their participation in formulating development plans.
- 5. In developing sustainable tourism, related organisations must be given their specific roles in promoting ecotourism.
- 6. An ecotourism plan should be incorporated at district, provincial and regional levels along with sufficient budget allocation.
- 7. The development objectives should be supported by research which analyses all aspects of tourism so to adjust management guidelines with the aim of solving any problems that arise and to improve the plan step by step.
- 8. The law should be used strictly to maintain environmental conditions by providing advice and cultivating discipline among tourists.
- 9. A Code of Conduct should be provided to facilitate proper ecotourism development.
- 10. An ecotourism network should be established for the coordination of information and joint management at every level.

The State of Play

During the second year of the "Amazing Thailand" 1998–1999 tourism campaign, the number of international tourist arrivals to Thailand reached 8 580 332, a 10.5% increase over 1998. However, the rapid growth of the tourism industry in Thailand has resulted in environmental deterioration of the country's tourism resources, especially in waste disposal management and the resultant negative attitude towards the tourism industry. The long-term danger of such a situation may be a reduction in the number of return visitors.

In light of these environmental repercussions, the TAT has attempted to analyse the expensive lessons learned and to come up with a plan for the sustainable development of the tourism industry. Ecotourism is one of the strategies for tourism management that is directed towards sustainable development.

The ecotourism potential of Thailand is high due to the country's abundant natural and cultural resources that attract both Thai and foreign tourists. There are more than 600 attractions suitable to be developed into ecotourism destinations. Most of them are in National Parks. Currently, standards of ecotourism services are still low, with many of the operators quite small, offering highly specialised programs, but weak in promotion and marketing.

However, this is beginning to change. In 1997, the operators banded together to form the Thailand Ecotourism and Adventure Travel Association (TEATA), which with support from the TAT and the Association of Thai Travel Agents (ATTA) is pooling resources to promote and market their activities and services.

The association has drawn up standards for each sector of ecotourism, such as diving, bird watching, mountain biking, and is in the process of helping each of its members to bring their operations up to these standards. To assist, the TAT put together and runs special training programs for ecotourism guides who require skills additional to normal tourism guides.

The ecotourism attractions themselves need careful monitoring to ensure they are not abused or overloaded. Many attractions are not ready to accommodate tourists as they lack proper facilities and management. While others, such as elephant trekking in Phuket and sea canoes in Phang-nga Bay, are being strained to their limits because of a rapid growth in numbers.

Nonetheless, the potential for ecotourism activities in Thailand is huge. Thailand has invested in excellent infrastructure to support and enhance its reputation as a premier tourism destination, which in turn is benefiting its fledgling ecotourism industry. Since the days of the first trekkers in northern Chiang Mai Province, adventure travel in Thailand has grown to become internationally famous, with a range of treks to hilltribe villages, elephant treks, rafting, kayaking etc. It is estimated that almost 70% of Thai domestic tourists and 30% of foreign tourists engage in ecology-related activities during their travel.

Thailand's 104 designated National Parks and marine parks are prime destinations for ecotourism pursuits. Here visitors can find the environmental conditions, and abundance of protected flora and fauna, critical to the ecotourism experience. Options range from "intensive" to "passive", depending on the nature of selected activities. Visitors can experience places through small group tours, private tours or as independent travellers. Spectacular mountain views of Doi Suthep and Doi Pui National Park in northern Thailand are examples of long-standing, popular destinations for all types of travel, from soft adventure to incentive-based. Excursions to Tham Lot take tourists by lamplight into spectacular linked caves full of stalagmites, stalactites and cultural relics. Picturesque forest treks, bird watching, prehistoric archaeological sites, camping and river rafting can all be enjoyed at Ob Luang National Park. And the village of Pai in remote Mae Hong Son Province is becoming the centre of highly popular whitewater rafting and jungle trek tours. These are just a few of the natural resources with well-publicised and organised ecological tours in the northern region.

Whether it is in the northern, central or southern regions of the country, elephant trekking, four-wheel drive safaris, jungle trekking, sea kayaking or canoeing, rafting, mountain biking and rock climbing are just some of the activities offered by established tour operators. In recent years, market demand indicates that participation in simply one of the three adventures is no longer sufficient. Tour companies now boast of "four adventures in one day". In the famed Golden Triangle where the Mekong River merges with the Ruak River, visitors can see at least three countries in a day's outing; the tour can include visits to a market, temple, riverside villages housing various minorities, a wilderness walk and, of course, a boat cruise on the Mekong River.

Case Studies

Umphang is the largest district in Thailand, situated in Tak Province in the northwest, about 600 km from Bangkok. Up until recently it was one of the remotest spots in Thailand, set amid rugged mountains and dense jungles on the Myanmar border, with no roads to provide access. As such it is a pristine destination, with a vast wildlife preserve blessed with rich forest and animal resources, and serving as one of the country's major sources of water. Apart from its natural riches and beauty, it is a district with many diverse customs and traditions of the northern Thai people, particularly Karen and Hmong hilltribes, amid a peaceful rural life. These attractive qualities offer fascinating experiences for visitors who wish to make contact with nature and study different cultures.

When the road from Mae Sot was built, opening up the area, it quickly became popular. So many visitors were travelling into Umphang they began to outweigh the capacity of the wildlife preserve to cater for them during the high season. The most popular activities are whitewater rafting, forest trekking, elephant riding, visiting hilltribe villages and the many stunning waterfalls, including Ti Lo Su Waterfall (acknowledged as the most beautiful in Thailand). Consequently, the limited accommodation and restaurants could not cope with the high demand by tourists, who frequently do not plan their trips before travelling, leading to many problems in the preserve: overcrowding, garbage accumulation and littering, environmental deterioration, destruction of bamboo for making rafts, the abandonment of used bamboo rafts, and erroneous and unsystemic information.

The TAT was called in to help in 1995. It decided to set up an ecotourism pilot project which would maintain tour activities while preserving the environment, and which would become a blueprint for other soft adventure attractions. The TAT has set up a working group to respond to these problems, the Umphang Tourism Promotion and Preservation Club, consisting of wildlife officials and local authorities, together with tour operators and village businesses. They met continuously to map out measures to solve the problems. In the end, the group formulated eight measures to preserve the natural environment based on ecotourism principles (see Box 2).

Box 2: Measures to Meet Ecotourism Principles

Measure 1: To limit tourist numbers in accordance with the area's carrying capacity

Overnight visitors are limited to no more than 300 per night in the reserve, while daily visitors are allowed to visit by using natural trails under the supervision of forest rangers.

Measure 2: Permission to enter into the preserve

Visitors are permitted to enter the preserve only if they have passes stamped by trained officials of the Tourist Police or the local Umphang Police. They are required to travel with the travel agents or guides who are properly registered under the Tourist Business and Guides Act of 1992.

Measure 3: Garbage reduction and cleanliness enhancement

To keep the area clean, both guides and visitors are required to bring out their own litter and supplies, none of which are permitted to be left behind.

Measure 4: Donation

Visitors must donate a sum of 10 baht per head to help nature preservation work and as a gratuity to the cleaners.

Measure 5: Set up a coordination centre

Coordination centres are set up at the Umphang police station piers and within the preserve to provide security and prevent unethical practices being committed against visitors.

Measure 6: Manage quality services

The Umphang Tourism Promotion and Conservation Club has set up three different sections to look after tourist services, which are:

- The Raft Section controls and limits the quantity of bamboo to be cu in accordance with individual needs. Operators must bring back the rafts from destinations after use.
- The Transport Section controls the bus charge at a fair rate.
- The Food Section controls both the prices and quality of food.

Measure 7: Zoning

Clear-cut zoning for different uses, such as camping areas, cooking areas and parking is mapped out.

Measure 8: Information signs

Installation of notices and signs, and distribution of leaflets to visitors is provided, with information on how to properly conduct themselves.

In addition to solving these tourism-related problems, there are 13 projects under seven plans to promote and develop Umphang ecotourism. They have been mapped out with the support of the Umphang Tourism Promotion and Preservation Club. Implementation of the plans has been carried out since March 1995 (see Box 3).

Box 3: Developing Ecotourism

Plan 1: Public Campaign Plan

To provide an opportunity for public sector agencies, community leaders, operators and media to exchange views on problem-solving and planning of promotion and development, in order to reach consensus on how to make Umphang a model for ecotourism.

Plan 2: Human Resources Development

To educate the local people on how to be good hosts, how to look after the safety of visitors and how to give local information and advise visitors on preserving the environment.

Plan 3: Promotion of Handcrafts

To promote the production of handcrafts and souvenir items with local identity for sale to the visitors; to create jobs and occupations and distribute income among the Umphang people.

Plan 4: Preservation of the Cultural Environment

To campaign for the Umphang people to recognise the value and significance of old houses and other structures which reflect the identity of the community and to retain the ambience of the local natural and cultural environment of Umphang.

Plant 5: Upgrading the Standards of Economy Accommodation

To develop ecotourism accommodation in Umphang by providing know-how and supporting operators to develop and improve their facilities and surroundings in the direction of energy saving and environmental protection.

Plan 6: Marketing Promotion Plan

To provide an opportunity for local operators to learn and understand how to systemically promote their products in the tourism industry. Some operators were chosen to participate in familiarisation trips from which they will gain experience in selling Umphang in the marketplace.

Plan 7: Public Relations

To invite all forms of media to visit Umphang and to publicise Umphang as a model of ecotourism among visitors and the general public, so that they may make advance preparations to avoid over-congestion in the area. Apart from these plans, an ecotourism handbook for Umphang has been produced which contains geographical facts including flora and fauna, a map of natural trails, rafting routes along the Mae Klong River and guidelines for visiting Umphang. The publication is designed to provide knowledge and understanding about the ecological system. Hopefully, visitors will become more conscious of environmental conservation.

This pilot project has been very successful in terms of local participation, management and planning, personnel and the tourism service development. This success was recognised by the international community when the Umphang project won the Pacific Asia Travel Association (PATA) Gold Award 1998 in the Ecotourism Travel-related Projects category and the ASEAN Tourism Association (ASEANTA) Award 1998 in the category of the Best Asean Conservation Effort category. These prestigious honours highlight the success of Umphang as a role model for Thailand's efforts to seriously move into ecotourism activities.

In contrast to the Umphang pilot project, with its emphasis on natural forest and river attractions, the Ban Prasart project concentrates on archaeology and handicrafts. Ban Prasart is located in Non Soong District of Nakhon Ratchasima Province, about 304 km northeast of Bangkok. Ban Prasart is a medium-sized village surrounded by paddy fields and vegetable gardens. The Prasart stream, a branch of the Moon River, is the main source of water for the community. There is also a man-made pond in front of the Ban Prasart temple.

Ban Prasart was named after the belief that there was a stone castle on the bottom of the river basin. Prasart means a stone castle of the Khmer type found extensively in the northeast. An ancient legend explains the origin of the Ban Prasart castle. During a race to build three castles by the villages of Phimai, Panomwan and Ban Prasart, Phimai falsely signalled that they had completed construction. Unaware of the trick, Ban Prasart quit the race in anger and threw the unfinished castle into the stream, which subsequently became known as the Prasart stream.

The current Ban Prasart village consists of 202 households, with a population of 1219 persons. The characteristic home is a single or doublestorey wooden house combined into neighbouring groups. The villagers usually grow perennial fruits, bamboo and vegetables. Each household has its own barn nearby. In the village, there is a school, a nursery and a handcrafts centre.

The importance of Ban Prasart as an archaeological site comes from an excavation of a settlement dating back 3000 years which uncovered 60 human skeletons at different ages, lying on top of one another from a depth of one to five metres. Many accessories were also found scattered in the area: figurative and colourful pottery, bronze bracelets and rings, shell and marble bracelets, small glass beads, bronze axes and iron tools. The Fine Arts Department says the specimens unearthed are of high quality. It opened the four excavation sites to tourists. Unfortunately the arrival of tourists disturbed the traditionally rural villagers, who gained nothing from the activity.

The TAT adopted Ban Prasart as a pilot project for cultural tourism, with the villagers gaining benefits, and linking it to other tourism sites in the region. Its main objective is handcraft promotion and the sale of souvenirs to tourists, from which the villagers will earn their living in the long run. Handcraft promotion among villagers has been supported by the Centre for Industrial Promotion in Northeast Region, operating under the Industrial Promotion Department and the centre for craftsmanship training in Bang Sai, under the patronage of Her Majesty Queen Sirikit. Training courses are provided on various aspects of product design, quality improvement and marketing. An additional contribution of 80 000 baht has been provided by the Australian Embassy to the housewife career development project in Ban Prasart.

The project has been widely accepted by the public. Ban Prasart became recognised as one of the important archaeological sites in the Lower Northeastern Region of Thailand. The project has generated employment and extra income to the villagers through handcraft making. This is in addition to farm income. It also creates a sense of belonging to the community, and conservation of local ways of life. The environment has become a unique characteristic of the Ban Prasart community through a learning process conducted by TAT.

In addition, the TAT decided to experiment with home stays as a further benefit to the village and propagation of its culture. Students were brought from all over Thailand so the TAT could study the development of social contacts. Since then several youth leadership camps have been organised in the Ban Prasart community.

Conclusion

The TAT's past achievements, particularly with Umphang and Ban Prasart, and an ongoing pilot project based on agro-tourism in the southern village of Khirwan have shown that the agency is taking the right steps in pursuing its goals in connection with ecotourism.

The next goal that the TAT aims to achieve is to develop tourism in Thailand to international standards, while continuing to place strong emphasis on sustainability and community participation. In this way, the TAT hopes to maintain the kingdom's uniqueness, in terms of tourist attractions, high quality services and environmental protection, all of which will have a direct impact on the country's social and economic development.

Chapter Twenty-eight

Ecotourism Policy in Thailand

Eurblarp Sriphnomya

Introduction

The tourism industry in Thailand has continuously prospered since it was supported by the Fourth National Economic and Social Development Plan (1977–81) to stimulate the country's economic development. The success of the tourism industry is evidenced by the fact that it has generated significant revenue and income circulating throughout the country. For several years tourism has been one of Thailand's major industries, as illustrated in Table 1.

The year 1999 was the second year of the "Amazing Thailand" 1998–99 project. With the number of international tourist arrivals to Thailand reaching 8 580 332 persons (10.5% increase from 1998), the tourism industry was above the target set in the Tourism Plan. It was also in accord with the target set in the Eighth National Economic and Social Development Plan, which set the rate of tourist increase at not lower than 7% per year.

Some Important issues

During the past 38 years, the tourism industry in Thailand has enjoyed tremendous progress, with the numbers of tourists increasing every year. However, the rapid growth of tourism has resulted in some deterioration of the environment, particularly related to waste and the management of its disposal. This has led to a negative attitude toward the tourism industry by the general public. And from the tourists' perspective, repeat visits are likely to decline if these environmental problems are not addressed.

Table 1: Comparison of Tourism Receipts and Other Exports,1999

Major Exports	Million Baht
Computers and Parts	299 780
Tourism	253 018
Textile Products	166 108
Electrical Appliances	153 768
Integrated Circuits and Parts	111 645
Canned Seafood	100 283
Plastic Products	75 712
Rice	73 811
Base Metal Products	61 723
Frozen Shrimps	48 348
GDP at current prices	4 681 578
GNP at current prices	4 688 400
Per Capita GNP	73 771

Source of data: Bank of Thailand & National Statistical Office

Because of the environmental problems, an attempt has been made to learn from the past mistakes and come up with a sustainable development plan. This is something which the Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT) has pushed for, while indicating the need for research into the issues. As a result, tourism has started to be more responsible, paying attention to its sustainability. The ecotourism concept has been emphasised as one of the strategies to be used to meet the principles of sustainable development.

The ecotourism potential of Thailand is high due to the country's abundant natural resources and unique cultural resources. These attract both Thai and foreign tourists. There are more than 600 attractions suitable to be developed as ecotourism destinations and most of them are in National Parks. The number of tourists who engage in ecology-related activities, at least some of the time, is estimated to be 67.39% of all Thai travellers and 36.23% of foreign tourists to Thailand. And the overall income from these tourists is 79 071 million Baht.

However, the standard of ecotourism services is still low. At present, ecotourism operators have, in general, not reached the required standard and there is a great need for instruction and support by the relevant agencies. Moreover, most of the existing focus is on adventure travel and nature appreciation rather than the more serious educational aspects of travel in a natural and cultural setting. The latter would have greater impact on the goal of promoting sustainability. Several ecotourism attractions are not ready to take tourists because of the lack of proper promotion and management.

While a variety of relevant organisations cooperate with each other on general issues, more cooperation is needed at the specific level and a better network is required. The involvement among agencies, organisations and the local community is limited and unbalanced. Therefore, it is essential that there should be a government policy to promote and manage ecotourism.

As mentioned, TAT recognised the importance and necessity for an ecotourism national policy. A study underpinning such a policy has been conducted and action has been taken, including setting aside an annual budget to be used on ecotourism development plans and projects. Furthermore, an ecotourism network has been established in Thailand which will place an emphasis on knowledge and services so as to raise awareness of ecotourism among the relevant organisations in both the public and private sectors, and it will include participation by local people.

Policies and Plans

The overall goal of ecotourism development in Thailand is to develop a sustainable industry, to maintain a healthy natural and social environment, and to foster self-reliance. Because ecotourism involves the management of natural resources, socio-development, community participation and general betterment of human life styles, policies relating to all these matters have to be considered together and each has to be influenced for the better. The related policies are in the fields of: environment, forestry and resource management; sustainable tourism; socio-economic development, community participation and human development.

Consideration of policies in these areas has facilitated the identification of a whole range of issues that need to be addressed by an ecotourism policy, and has led to the formulation of various sub-policies on those aspects which are important for the success of ecotourism development. Moreover, the Eighth National Economic and Social Development Plan (1997–2001), which is the current plan for the direction of Thailand's economic and social development, acts as an important framework for tourism development, and has therefore also been drawn up to serve as a significant framework for ecotourism policy.

TAT has developed the ecotourism strategy as a part of a sustainable tourism policy. The policy provides an operating framework and guidelines as follows: (i) ecotourism development must manage resources in order to retain their original condition as far as possible, and to avoid or to abstain from using sensitive areas which are easily adversely affected and are difficult to rehabilitate; (ii) ecotourism management must take the character and potential of existing resources into consideration in order to determine the appropriate activities to be carried out in the area (and this should include avoiding being in serious conflict with other forms of tourism);

(iii) the benefits of ecotourism should flow to the wider tourism industry; (iv) development must promote educational development and the creation of awareness of the community and the industry to jointly maintain the ecosystem of the area, rather than focus only on economic growth and income generation; (v) ecotourism management must facilitate the involvement of the local people and local organisations in the development process, particularly in the management of the resources, services, and programs designed to transfer knowledge and community culture (and this should include their participation in formulating development plans), and opportunities should be created for their representatives to become members of joint-committees at every level; (vi) in developing sustainable tourism, it is essential to give priority to ecotourism and to give appropriate organisations clear roles in promoting it, which can be done through a sufficient budget, personnel provision, and management system design; (vii) an ecotourism development plan should be incorporated into general development plans at all levels, namely district development plans, provincial development plans and regional development plans, along with a budget allocation and distribution to facilitate implementation; (viii) the development objectives should be supported by research which analyses and assesses all aspects of tourism so as to determine or adjust the management guidelines, to solve any problems which arise, and to improve the plans step by step; (ix) the law should be used strictly to maintain the environmental condition of tourism resources by focusing on providing advice and warnings along with cultivating discipline among tourists; and (x) operating guidelines, or a code of conduct, should be provided for relevant persons in order to facilitate proper involvement in ecotourism development.

A Case Study: Umphang

Umphang, an area rich in tourism resources, is one of the significant districts of Tak Province. As a result of the flow of visitors exceeding its carrying capacity in the high season and lack knowledge by entrepreneurs to manage for ecotourism outcomes, TAT has agreed to promote Umphang as a pilot area for ecotourism development in Thailand. The objectives of the pilot are: (i) to conserve the area; (ii) to prepare the destination to be able to take tourists without its deterioration; (iii) to attract target groups which are quality tourists, aware of the environment and wishing to conserve it; (iv) to create jobs and income from tourism for Umphang people.

The responsible agencies other than TAT are the Umphang District, Tak Province, the Wildlife Sanctuary and the Royal Forest Department. These agencies are collaborating on the project. Various initiatives to support promotion of tourism in Umphang are being organised. They are detailed in Box 1.

Box 1: Initiatives in the Umphang Pilot

(i) Mass Campaign Program

There are three projects:

- meetings between community leaders and people of Umphang
- tourism training courses for hill tribes
- a seminar on "The Direction of Tourism Developing in Umphang"

(ii) Personnel Development Program

There are three projects:

- a training course for guides to increase their knowledge
- a training course for mahouts and punters
- promoting volunteer assistance to tourists

(iii) Public Relations Program

There are two projects:

- issuing press releases
- inviting the media to tourist attractions in Umphang

(iv) Handicraft Promotion Program

There is a project on promotion of souvenirs

(v) Marketing Promotion Program

There are two projects:

- getting private businesses to participate in the International Travel Show
- organising a "natural journey" to Umphang

(vi) Cultural Conservation Program

There is a project to conserve an ancient house

Conclusion

In order to make ecotourism the main component of the Thai tourism industry, concrete actions under the national tourism policy framework should be undertaken to ensure that the objectives and targets are attained. Therefore, six management policies and strategies have been formulated by TAT as described in Box 2.

Box 2: TAT Policies and Strategies

1. Policy and Strategy on tourism resources and environmental management: To manage tourism resources and the environment within the carrying capacity in zoned areas; controlling and limiting pollution in tourism areas in order to protect and maintain the environment, and to decrease environmental impacts from tourism. 2. Policy and Strategy on educational provision and creating environmental awareness: To develop a learning process for tourists in order to stimulate an awareness of ecosystem values and, hence, effect people's behaviour. 3. Policy and Strategy on local community involvement and public participation: To allow local communities and concerned agencies to participate in all processes of ecotourism, so as to manage ecotourism, educate people and support ecotourism businesses. 4. Policy and Strategy on marketing, promotion and tour-guiding: To promote ecotourism and develop the quality of tour operations in order to attract tourists. 5. Policy and Strategy on the development of infrastructure and tourism services: To supply adequate basic infrastructure and services in ecotourism areas. 6. Policy and Strategy on investment: To facilitate investment by small proprietors and local communities through providing support in terms of service quality, environment conservation and competitive capabilities.

To achieve the goals of ecotourism a cooperative network has been established. The network includes the Ecotourism National Board, the Thai Ecotourism Society, the Thai Ecotourism Association and Ecotourism Local Committees and the Foundation for the Protection of Environment and Tourism.

Chapter Twenty-nine

The Guidelines for Ecotourism Development in Thailand

Wanaporn Wanichanugorn

Introduction

Although the tourism industry has become a major source of national income in Thailand (and other countries), inevitably there are negative impacts on socio-economic and environmental conditions. A new concept of tourism called "ecotourism" has been introduced to Thailand. The concept is to create environmental awareness through tourism, to promote conservation and protection of limited resources in the interests of the sustainability of the tourism industry and, more importantly, the environment. Ecotourism is about studying the natural environment and the ways of life of local people with the aim of improving their quality of life. As the government considers the tourism industry a major source of national income, it is interested to analyse the opinions of relevant parties with regard to the translation of the ecotourism concept into practice in Thailand.

Understanding Ecotourism

The main purpose of this analysis is to compare the opinions of six parties with regard to guidelines for ecotourism development in Thailand. The six parties are provincial government officials, entrepreneurs, community leaders, local people, Thai tourists and foreign tourists. Purposive sampling was used to select government officials (provincial governors, heads of TAT regional offices, chiefs of National Parks etc.), tourism business owners or managers, and community leaders (village headmen, teachers, etc). Simple random sampling was used for local people whose residences were around National Parks, forest parks and wildlife sanctuaries. As for the tourists, accidental sampling was used for those who had just finished trekking in National Parks, forest parks and wildlife sanctuaries. These areas were targeted because the TAT has a policy to upgrade trekking tours, so that they become ecotourism. The data collection was conducted through four sets of questionnaires and interviews with a total of 1000 respondents, between February and April 1997. The study areas were in Chiangrai, Chiangmai, Uthaithani, Kanchanaburi, Petchburi, Nakorn Nayok, Surathani, Phuket and Krabi.

The opinions of government officials towards ecotourism are in concert with the principles of the conservation of the environment. However, some government officials responded that there was no clear policy on ecotourism in place at present. The entrepreneurs' opinions were significantly different from those of the government officials sampled. Some of the entrepreneurs interviewed had been trying to solve environmental problems and wanted to learn more about viable solutions for refuse, water shortages and pollution, toxic substances, recycled paper, as well as energy conservation. The results show that the government officials are significantly older and better educated compared to tourism entrepreneurs.

The general characteristics of both the local community leaders and the local people are similar in regard to family structures, age, living standards etc. However, the community leaders are significantly better educated and have a higher social and economic status compared to the local people. Quite a few of the community leaders and local people thought that tourism as presently practised had improved their living conditions, although it had already caused problems, such as increasing the cost of living as well as the cost of land, noise pollution, water pollution, garbage and drugs etc. Most community leaders and the local people want to be involved in managing tourism in their area. Community leaders were eager to join forums to advance tourism efforts and to participate in problem-solving activities. However, few wanted to be involved in the industry itself (by, for example, providing bed and breakfast services). On the other hand, being providers of tourism services was something the local people desired.

With regard to tourists, it was found that both domestic and foreign ones are similar in sex, age, marital status and education. However, more foreign tourists have higher incomes than the Thai tourists. The majority of both groups thought that tourists should take part in environmental conservation. More Thai tourists than foreign ones saw environmental destruction along walking trails (such as garbage and human excrement); and were more willing to donate money for conservation compared to their counterparts. The majority of the two groups wanted pamphlets and maps of trekking routes including dos and don'ts as the first priority. Foreigners tended to want qualified ecotour guides. They were willing to recommend to friends and relatives that they take an ecotour in Thailand. They were more likely to buy souvenirs compared to Thai tourists. Most of the differences between the two groups are not unexpected. Local people are likely to be more familiar with the local environment and, hence, notice degradation. Foreigners are likely to be attracted to souvenirs, which would not interest locals.

If we consider in more details the opinions of the various groups, we get a better understanding of the opportunities and the difficulties in developing ecotourism. We start with government officials.

In the provinces, the lines of administration are vertical, from each agency up to Bangkok. This leads to a lack of coordination among government agencies in the same province. The government officials seem to be confused about their roles in tourism and environmental management. This has meant that any problems resulting from the tourism industry still wait for solutions. All tourism master plans prepared in the provinces have been developed by the TAT (or an organisation hired by TAT) without participation from local government officials and local people. There is no follow up so that the strategies can be adjusted to be more practical if that is desirable. High-ranking officials in the provinces do not play key roles as leaders in environmental and resource conservation. Information necessary to promote and manage ecotourism (geology, the function of forest ecosystems, history and the evolution of local communities, and their present socio-economic conditions including their ways of life) has not been organised and hence ecotourism does not develop as rapidly as it could. Another negative factor is that the laws governing preserved areas are outdated and the levels of fines and penalties are very low.

Turning to the private sector, we find a wide range of issues and many problems which must be addressed. Entrepreneurs' opinions towards ecotourism are poorly developed. This has led to conflicts between some entrepreneurs and government officials. The terms "ecotour" and "ecotourism" have been used in some tour operators' brochures without concrete plans for environmental and resource conservation in the local community. Local tour guides are also taken advantage of, receiving low wages, whereas the price of an ecotour is very high. Some entrepreneurs are not taking the precautions required for tourists' safety, for example by selling tours in the heavy rainfall period without measures to prevent accidents. Without planning, activities like rafting and campfires have already aggravated deforestation. Supplies of bamboo have become short and bamboo must be imported from Myanmar. Elephants, an important selling point of an ecotour, are over-used and have inadequate food to eat. Thai elephants are now endangered and may be extinct in the next 15 years due to loss of habitat. Captive breeding of elephants is still not successful.

As tourists seek new experiences different from what they have at home, entrepreneurs assume that no sign of development should be seen in the local areas. In one case, even a transistor radio was kept out of tourists' sight during their visit. Finally, some entrepreneurs said that only those tour operators who have close relationships with regional TAT officials would be strongly recommended to tourists.

If we turn our attention to local communities, it is obvious that local people are concerned about the current negative impacts from the tourism

industry: the high cost of living and expensive land, the rapid increase of garbage and drugs brought in by tourists and the rapid decrease of plants and animals in the area. With no knowledge of ecotourism, the local people do not understand its possibilities and they do not exercise their rights in managing resources in the development process. They would be pleased to provide a home stay for tourists, but they do not know where to begin and what the expected standard of services should be. As for local traditions. culture and the natural environment, local communities want to sustain them as they are something new for the tourists and in demand, but the communities need advice and leadership on how to do this. Local people want to help solve these problems. But, they need someone to initiate and set up a system for them. Leadership and knowledge of tourism are the missing ingredients at present. With no opportunity to participate in development in the past, local people have become very eager to join in the planning and management of ecotourism, for the sustainability of their way of life, the environment and the future. Then there is a range of other problems.

There are very few signs or directions in English. This makes it difficult for tourists to travel by themselves. Tourists lack information, pamphlets and maps in English or other languages. Most tour guides are not fluent in English. Ecotourists who come across a big group of tourists making loud noises, or noticing litter have their enjoyment of trekking destroyed. And tourists find it annoying to be pressured into buying souvenirs. Finally, overdevelopment of tourist areas will certainly decrease a destination's attractiveness.

What Should Be Done?

As protected areas (National Parks, forest parks, wildlife sanctuaries etc.) and water catchments cover a large area of the provinces, there should be regional and provincial master plans, formulated by all interested parties, including local people. This will strengthen coordination and cooperation in resource allocation, utilisation and the provision of services. However, training is required. An integrated short-course on environmental management should be provided for government officials, entrepreneurs and representatives of the local people. The knowledge that comes from learning will help them reduce potential conflicts between resource utilisation and conservation. Also, environmental impact assessments should be conducted before a project commences. Indicators of ecosystems and socio-economic conditions need to be measured, and assessment undertaken of development both in the protected areas and their surroundings. This will enable administrators to adjust the development proposals to meet the inter-related goals of ecotourism growth, the well-being of local people and the sustainability of the environment and resources.

As ecotourism businesses will be introduced in some already protected areas (such as National Parks), the existing laws and management practices must be revised, and the number of visits must be controlled. The relevant environmental policy and planning should be widely publicised, and a working group should be set up to regularly check environmental quality. A public hearing should be conducted before concessions are granted. This is because tourism resources do no belong to the local people only, but also to the Thai people as a whole, and all views need to be considered.

As for the entrepreneurs, an environmental guarantee should be added to a tour operator's deposit paid to the TAT. Furthermore, ISO 14001 or green accreditation (certification) should be implemented to assure quality services and to decrease environmental impacts. Tour guides should be trained and permitted to work in areas only where they have the appropriate level of knowledge. Moreover, an environmental watchdog group should be set up by the entrepreneurs in a province or in a region. This would be an industry ecotourism association which would develop and police the principles of its members.

With regard to the local people, environmental education should be considered an urgent matter. More content on local environment issues should be included in formal education. Research about local socio-economic and environmental conditions must be given support, so to enhance planning; and tour guide training in the local areas is required. In addition, cooperation among local owners of accommodation houses, tour businesses, and those involved in souvenir production and sales should be organised. This will allow these groups to set a reasonable price for all products. Moreover, the traditional economic sectors such as agriculture, cloth weaving and handcraft production should be supported by purchasing policies to strengthen the local communities. Finally, local participation in problem solving should be encouraged.

As for the tourists, networks of regional and local information should be set up to offer tourists choices to visit different places, and perhaps control and spread the flock of tourists within Thailand. For this purpose, advance reservations should be made possible. Pamphlets and maps of trekking routes and other information should be available in various languages. Furthermore, tourists should be registered before trekking to allow for the monitoring of their safety and to provide information to measure carrying capacities of trekking areas. In concert with local villages, activities should be arranged which allow tourists to experience aspects of village life. Finally, a tourism fund for local education and environmental conservation, based on donations by tourists and entrepreneurs, should be initiated.

Conclusion

What needs to be done has to be put into a conceptual framework: first, taking into account those things which drive ecotourism and sustainable development (as in Figure 1); second, taking into account the role of all sectors (as in Figure 2).

Figure 1: The Conceptual Framework

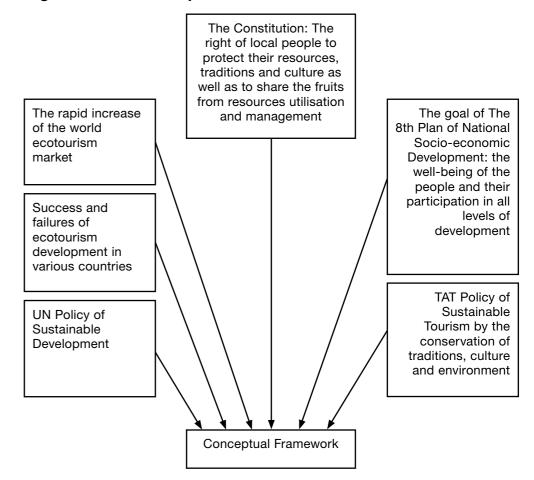
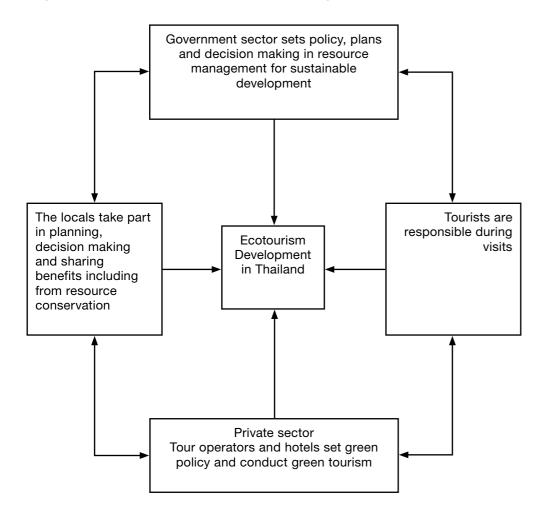


Figure 2: The Framework for Planning



It will only be within the constraints and opportunities of these frameworks that ecotourism in its full potential will come to be realised.

Chapter Thirty

Sustainable Tourism Development in Vietnam

Nguyen Thuy Khanh Doan

Introduction

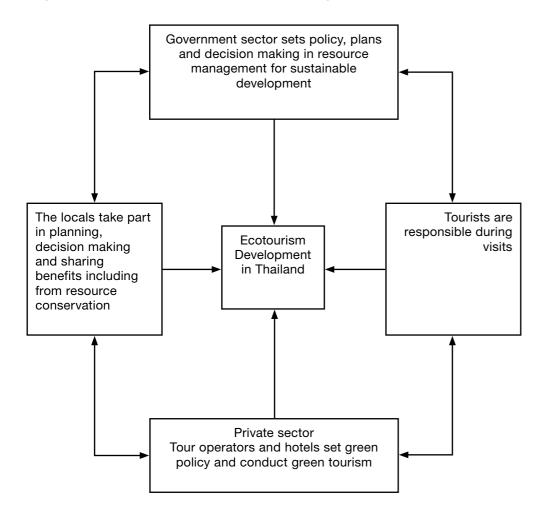
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The following attempts to outline a general direction for sustainable tourism development in Vietnam, in the context of its current state of development. To do this, it will: (i) review tourism development in Vietnam in the last decade; (ii) argue its potential to become one of the most attractive tourist destinations in Asia in the near future; (iii) identify possible environmental problems caused by such a development; (iv) argue that it should combine traditional mass tourism with sustainable alternative tourism, more particularly ecotourism, in its tourism strategies, with the latter as the long-term objective and finally; (v) review the main problems for such a strategy and propose some initial tasks.

Tourism Booming in Vietnam

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Figure 2: The Framework for Planning



It will only be within the constraints and opportunities of these frameworks that ecotourism in its full potential will come to be realised.

Chapter Thirty

Sustainable Tourism Development in Vietnam

Nguyen Thuy Khanh Doan

Introduction

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with high demands for labour); (iii) generate regional economic development; (iv) generate both personal and business incomes; and (v) contribute to government revenues through taxation. Tourism growth is considered the fastest way for economic development to occur in developing countries because of the absence of tariff barriers which some other sectors face, the relatively low investment required, and the growing trend to travel as a matter of lifestyle.

In the case of Vietnam, tourism has shown its economic strength in the last decade. Since Vietnam's ruling Communist Party started the renovation policy, widely known as "doi moi", in 1986, the country's tourism size and scale has developed beyond the expectation of local and international experts. The number of visitor arrivals in the country went up stunningly from 250 000 in 1990 to nearly 2.13 million in 2000. In 1994, a total of 1.02 million tourists arrived in Vietnam, spending US\$210 million and representing 11.3% of the country's GDP. This number of international tourists exceeds what many international and local scholars and economists forecast for Vietnam by the year 2000. It also doubled the number of international arrivals expected by Vietnamese tourism planners for 1995.

Although there has been a slowdown in growth in the number of arrivals in the past few years (mainly due to the Asian economic crisis), tourism is still a major contributor to the country's socio-economic development. Latest official records reveal that in the year 2000, Vietnam received 2.13 million international tourists and earned a total of US\$1.2 billion from tourism. Currently, the country's tourism industry is providing 150 000 direct jobs in tourism service businesses and about 30 000 indirect jobs from tourism-related economic activities.

Linked with that is the rapid increase in the domestic tourism demand, a fairly unique feature among Asia's developing countries. The rapid economic development of the country in the past decade has resulted in higher incomes and living standards, creating a new demand for leisure and travelling. According to Koeman and Lam (1999), in 1998, a total of nearly 10 million domestic tourists was recorded in Vietnam. The introduction of the five-day working week in October 1999 has further stimulated the domestic tourism demand. In the first nine months of 2000, the turnover from domestic tourism reached VND 2500 billion (approximately US\$180 million), an increase of VND 700 billion (US\$50 million) compared to the same period in 1999. This will encourage further tourism development in Vietnam, which is important as the government aims to increase the service sector's contribution from 41% to 45% of the GDP by the year 2005. Vietnam has a coveted potential for tourism to contribute substantially to this aim.

The Potential

Readers might view the figures stated above as very small. They are in fact much smaller than in some other ASEAN countries. Given the context of

Vietnam as a new open economy, however, they say much about the potential of the country as a tourist destination in the 21st century.

Local and international researchers, economists and tourism business leaders have widely acknowledged the potential for Vietnam to become one of the most attractive tourist destinations in Asia. A survey of 600 international travel agents in 1996 found that the majority of respondents rated the country as one of the most popular in South-East Asia thanks to its beautiful countryside scenery (58% of respondents) and its rich cultural heritage (82% of respondents) (Luu and Dinh, 1997).

Culturally, Vietnam is a country with a 4000-year history of some real international interest, and a long-established and diverse cultural tradition. Its recent history is known to the world as a consequence of the failure of the French in 1954 and the U.S. in 1975.

Along with this, Vietnam has a complex ethnographic make-up including 54 hill tribes with their distinct languages and cultures. Consequently, Vietnam has much to offer visitors. According to Rakthammachat (1993), Vietnam has more historic relics than many other South-East Asian countries. It is rich in architectural monuments, French colonial architecture in major cities and "Indo-Chinese" cultural heritage, as well as war heritage, and spirits.

The historical heritage of Vietnam, however, is still largely unknown to the outside world. There is great potential for much that could be interpreted as tourism products and given strategic marketing: interesting architecture, ancient and modern art, music, dance, handcrafts (lacquer ware, embroidery, bamboo ware, reed baskets, pottery and woodwork) and religious customs and festivities. Among its cultural heritage, Hue, Hoi An and My Son are on UNESCO's list of the world's cultural heritage.

In terms of geographic natural conditions, Vietnam is in a good position. It is convenient for visitors' arrivals. Located in the central of South-East Asia, it is an important port to enter the region in general and Indo-China in particular. According to Verbeke (1995), both business and leisure travellers are likely to visit Vietnam as a stopover on their regional tours. Along with this is the pleasant monsoon climate, with a cool and damp winter from October to April, and a hot and humid summer (May–September), allowing the tourist season to be spread out over the year.

More importantly, Vietnam is considered "the land of leisure" with "tremendous" future prospects for hospitality and tourism thanks to its beautiful natural features (Rakthammachat, 1993). To name a few, these include: (i) 3250 km of mostly untouched coastline including numerous pristine beaches, beautiful lagoons and the awe-inspiring deltas of the Red River in the north and the Mekong Delta in the south; (ii) wild mountain scenery with tropical rainforests and cool plateaus; (iii) biodiversity with an estimate of 12 000 plant and 275 mammal, 800 bird, 180 reptile, 80 amphibian, 2470

fish and over 5500 insect species — of which many are endemic and listed as endangered; (iv) 2 million hectares of protected lands, including 11 National Parks and 64 natural reserves; and (v) 77 protected wetland systems (mangroves, marine ecosystems). Many of these resources have an international reputation, for example, Ha Long Bay has been recognised by UNESCO (listed as a World Heritage Property) and Phong Nha is widely accepted by international scientists as the deepest cave in the world.

Along with that, Vietnam has some advantages in terms of potential markets. Firstly, as a new destination (in the sense of being both only recently "discovered" by tourists and recently marketed) with these cultural and natural features, it has many mysteries for the tourists to discover. These are not only just for leisure tourists but also for other types of visitors, especially researchers in ecology, culture, anthropology and so on.

The reminder of the Vietnam War creates the second market advantage. Early in the 1990s, a Vietnamese tourism official stated in a Thai newspaper that the interest in the war was attracting thousands of foreigners to the country (Rakthammachat, 1993). In the future, those foreigners are likely to include not only 2.7 million U.S. war veterans and their relatives but also concerned and curious Americans who opposed the War by demonstrating in peace marches or actively dodged the military draft.

Then, there is a relatively large Vietnamese community outside the country. There are currently 2.5 million Vietnamese living in other countries around the world, one million of which are in the U.S. and the others in popular tourist-origin countries such as France, Canada and Australia. Although this fact seems to have received little attention in the literature, it can be a positive feature for tourism development. Vietnamese people living overseas can contribute to tourism development in Vietnam in at least two ways: they are potential foreign visitors with the most potential to repeat their visits; and these people can be an active agent in creating international interest in Vietnam through their daily interaction and communication with people in their new home countries.

These last two factors will be of much greater importance in the future because in July 2000, Vietnam signed an important trade agreement with the U.S. which was followed by President Bill Clinton's historic visit to the country in November 2000. Not only stimulating an interest to visit Vietnam among the American population, these events have also raised Vietnam's status in the global economy in general and in Asia in particular, which will in turn boost tourism.

In the context of the recent boom in domestic and international tourists and the significant potential, it is not too optimistic to predict that Vietnam will become one of the most crowded tourism destinations in Asia in the next decade. By the year 2005, the country is expected to attract 4 million international tourists and 30 million domestic visitors (Voice of Vietnam, 2000). These numbers, however, will pose a potential threat to tourism itself.

Mass Tourism's Threat to the Environment

Lessons from tourism development around the world imply a potential danger to Vietnam, or any other country, beginning on this economic process. Poorly managed tourism will sooner or later result in a diversity of negative ecological and socio-economic impacts on the host countries. These include damage to tourism assets such as the erosion of cultural values and the degradation of the environment — the natural resource base for tourism. The following discussion will only address the environmental aspects, with a focus on natural resources.

International tourism is an export industry, in which the environment is "a zero-priced public good" and thus is vulnerable to excess demand and over-utilisation (Buhalis and Fletcher, 1995). Accordingly, there is an antagonistic relationship between the traditional mass tourism and the environment, which can be identified as having these following main features: (i) pollution of air, water, sites and noise (due to motor traffic, untreated water discharge, solid waste disposal, littering, crowds etc.); (ii) loss of natural landscapes (due to construction of housing, and limited public access to privately-owned natural sites); (iii) destruction of flora and fauna due to pollution/natural loss/excessive access; (iv) degradation of landscape and historic sites and monuments; (v) congestion at sites and on roads; (vi) increased danger of fire; (vii) undesirable social outcomes (e.g. the replacement of traditional activities by tourist-related activities); and (viii) others (ugly advertising, obstruction of scenic views etc.).

These environmental impacts, unfortunately, have been little acknowledged in Vietnam. A review of the relevant literature indicates little assessment of these problems, let alone research into how to solve them. Some preliminary studies, however, have set off an alarm bell. For example, Koeman and Lam (1999) state that it is now time to add the multifaceted impacts of tourism to the list of the key threats to Vietnam's biodiversity — a crucial resource for tourism development. More evidence is needed but given the context of the lack of the country's commitment to conservation and a shortage of expertise and effective enforceable controls (Elliot, 1997), there would have been some damage already, and there are potential threats to the country's tourism development. It is time, therefore, to urge the acceptance of the principles of sustainable development for tourism in Vietnam.

Sustainability and Alternative Forms of Tourism

The increasing awareness of the severe impacts of mainstream tourism contributes to the global concern to accept sustainable development and the call for so-called "alternative tourism" — a controversial issue in the global debate in the last decade. The ambiguous nature of this term has resulted in confusing interpretations in many countries including Vietnam (Koeman and Lam, 1999). Forms of alternative tourism have received numerous labels sometimes, if not often, misleadingly used and abused: such as

"soft", "green", "eco", "responsible", "defensive", "low-impact", "endemic", "progressive", "appropriate", "sideline", "quality", "new", "small-scale", "controlled", "cottage", "people to people" and so on (Buhalis and Fletcher, 1995; Griffin and Boele, 1997; Fennell, 1999). To capture the right meaning of alternative tourism and distinguish it from conventional tourism is therefore the first task for tourism managers in Vietnam, as elsewhere in the world.

There is a general agreement that the core philosophy resulting in alternative tourism is the idea of sustainable development, which is defined by the United Nations' World Commission on Environment and Development (1987, p. 43) as development that "meets the needs of present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs". Out of this has developed the Globe 90's definition of sustainable tourism as tourism "meeting the needs of present tourists and hosts while protecting and enhancing opportunity for the future". According to Fennell (1999), sustainable tourism development aims to: (i) develop greater awareness and understanding of tourism's significant contributions to the environment and the economy; (ii) promote equity and development; (iii) improve host communities' quality of life; (iv) provide high-quality experience for visitors; and (v) maintain environmental quality.

In addition, Griffin and Boele (1997) identify four main constituents of a successful application of sustainable tourism; namely: (i) maintaining the current resource base to ensure a sustainable supply of resources, or their values; (ii) maintaining the productivity of the resource base to ensure the continued well-being of the physical and social environments; (iii) maintaining biodiversity and avoiding environmental changes to ensure ecological sustainability (with less tolerance for changes and more emphasis on constraints); and (iv) ensuring equity within and between generations.

To gain these benefits, it is necessary to find an alternative to conventional mass tourism, which has proved to be destructive to the environment as stated above. This is where alternative tourism has a fundamental role. Briefly, it encompasses tourism forms that take an approach opposite to mass tourism. Alternative tourism means that tourism policies no longer concentrate only on short-term economic and technical necessities. Rather, it should emphasize the tourists' demand for an unspoiled environment and the needs of local communities.

The rationale for alternative tourism with the focus on the principle of sustainability is not just ethical. It also carries an important economic meaning. Tourism is a highly "resource base-dependent" industry (Fennell, 1999). That is to say, environmental quality is a crucial consideration when tourists choose a destination. Environmental and cultural damage of an irreversible scale will thus result in the "suicide" of tourism. To put this in the context of Vietnam, what if the country's beaches were seriously polluted? What if its immense biodiversity did not exist? The answer is clear. The last decade would not have seen such an amazing boom of tourism because there wouldn't have been much for tourists to see and enjoy in the country. These scenarios could become the reality in the future if sustainable tourism development is not pursued. As McCool argues: "Once communities lose the character that makes them distinctive and attractive to non-residents, they have lost their ability to vie for tourist-based income in an increasingly global and competitive marketplace" (quoted in Fennell, 1999).

Alternative Tourism or Well-managed Mass Tourism?

There is little dispute over sustainable tourism as a developmental philosophy. The problem is how to bring it into play. Sustainable tourism remains mostly a concept because, as Fennell (1999) argues, "few sustainable projects have withstood the test of time". Alternative tourism is widely suggested as an approach but it has also received criticisms.

Most of the criticism focuses on the small-scale philosophy, based on restraining human activity in natural areas - a broad characteristic of alternative tourism. There are two difficulties with this argument; mass tourism is a huge source of foreign exchange for countries; socio-psychologically, many people enjoy being mass tourists (Fennell, 1999). In an intensive literature review, Griffin and Boele (1997) challenge the idea of restraint-based tourism, arguing that alternative tourism is unrealistic and even unsustainable in itself. Their main arguments are as follows. Alternative tourism seeks new exotic destinations for others to follow and thus spreads mass tourism. Alternative tourism is based on "an appropriate small scale," but how appropriate is "appropriate"? This seems impossible to define and therefore is likely to be unrealistic. Restraints require tactics such as increasing prices, thus creating a sort of elite tourism which can only be afforded by middle-class people: and it will provide services meeting only these people's values and preferences. This is at odds with the World Commission on Environment and Development's 1987 report that sustainable development involves "extending to all opportunities to satisfy their aspirations for a better life". Alternative tourism ignores the needs of most tourists. This does not comply with the United Nations' human right for rest, leisure and paid holidays. Further, as it is not geared to market realities; it is futile and counterproductive. As Griffin and Boele (1997) argue: "The likelihood of such a global approach is remote. The desire to travel is strong and the prospect of economic advancement through tourism may be too compelling for a nation or region to resist." Restraint-based tourism is based on a "tomorrownever-comes" attitude. Griffin and Boele (1997) put the case along the following lines: "If we are preserving special environments and elements of cultures for future generations, when do we give them the opportunity to enjoy the benefits of access to them?" Alternative tourism places an undue faith on the prospect that tourists' behaviours will be modified through education and awareness programs

Along with these flaws in the argument for small-scale, restraint-based tourism, there is the fact that mass tourism is not always destructive. As Griffin and Boele (1997) argue, although there are many tourist destinations

being destroyed by mass tourism, a great number of others have not lost their appeal despite their long existence as tourist sites and the numbers who have visited. Their examples include Cannes, Nice, San Sebastian, Florence, Interlaken and Lucerne in Europe. Added to this list could be better examples such as Rome, Athens and Venice. This indicates that environmental decline is just a possibility — not an inevitable outcome — of tourism. This argument has found acceptability in recent years when there has been a clear trend to sustainable mass tourism around the world (Fennell, 1999).

Griffin and Boele (1997) thus go on to conclude that: "There is no one 'appropriate' form of tourism or general strategy that will ensure its sustainability. To some extent, different solutions will need to be devised for different nations and for different regions within those nations." In the light of these counter arguments, it could be proposed that alternative tourism as defined to be small-scale is not always necessary. In the recognition of the irresistible continuation of mass tourism, efforts should be focused on a diversity of well-managed tourism development measures to ensure relative sustainability.

What, then, is the best way for Vietnam to go at the moment? The country is in a somewhat paradoxical situation. As a developing country with a shortage of foreign exchange, a problem in balancing payments, an urgent need to replace infrastructure, and the huge demand for employment, the country is forced to expand tourism (Elliot, 1997). The inherent economic strengths of tourism imply that it would be a waste of Vietnam's enormous potential if tourism development was not exploited as much as possible to meet the country's urgent needs.

A combination of alternative paths and well-managed mass tourism development may be the best way for the country to get out of this dilemma. However, it is suggested that the country should regard developing alternative forms of tourism as a long-term objective. To put this more clearly, for its immediate needs Vietnam should maintain mass tourism with good management strategies particularly in certain natural areas. At the same time, in environmentally vulnerable natural areas, especially those that are being protected, it has to strictly implement ecotourism — the alternative tourism outgrowth aiming for environmental protection and nature conservation. In the long-term plan, ecotourism should be the only direction; that is to say, to ensure sustainability the country has to step by step eliminate the mass tourism constituent in its combined approach. Is this long-term goal a sound approach? The next part of this essay will be devoted to arguing that ecotourism has enough benefits in both terms of sustainability and economic development for Vietnam to regard as its long-term aim.

Ecotourism and Vietnam

To understand the long-term benefit of ecotourism, there needs to be a basic understanding of what it is. In Vietnam, as elsewhere in the world, its meaning is still often distorted due to the poor understanding of the principles. In a thoughtful analysis of available official documents, Koeman and Lam (1999) show that Vietnam's national tourism authorities have equated ecotourism with travelling to natural sites out from urban areas, such as resort complexes and recreational parks. Ecotourism, however, is not simply nature-based tourism.

Ecotourism has received much attention in the literature. Controversies over its nature and approach are still going on in the global debate. Dozens, probably hundreds, of definitions of ecotourism have been discussed and up to now resulted in no agreement. In general, however, the following definitions in Box 1 will be helpful for an initial understanding of ecotourism.

Box 1: Ecotourism Defined

- (i) Ecotourism is "responsible travel to natural areas which conserves the environment and improves the welfare of local people". (Ecotourism Society, quoted in Fennell, 1999);
- Ecotourism is "nature-based tourism that involves education and interpretation of the natural environment and is managed to be ecologically sustainable" (Australian National Ecotourism Strategy, quoted in Fennell, 1999);
- Ecotourism is tourism in which "the traveller is drawn to a destination because of his or her interest in one or more features of that destination's natural history. The visit combines education, recreation, and often adventure" (Laarman and Durst, 1987, quoted in Fennell, 1999);
- (iv) Ecotourism is "travelling to relatively undisturbed or uncontaminated natural areas with the specific objective of studying, admiring, and enjoying the scenery and its wild plants, as well as any existing cultural manifestations (both past and present) found in these areas" (Ceballos, 1991);
- (v) Ecotourism is "environmentally responsible travel and visitation to relatively undisturbed natural areas, in order to enjoy and appreciate nature (including any accompanying cultural features — both past and present), that promotes conservation, has low visitor impact and provides for beneficially active socio-economic involvement of local populations" (IUCN, 1996, quoted in Koeman & Lam, 1999);
- (vi) Ecotourism is "low impact nature tourism which contributes to the maintenance of species and habitats either directly through a contribution to conservation and/or indirectly by providing revenue to the local community sufficient for local people to value, and therefore protect, their wildlife heritage area as a source of income" (Goodwin, 1996, quoted in Fennell, 1999);
- (vii) Ecotourism is "a form of tourism inspired primarily by the natural history of an area, including its indigenous cultures. The ecotourist visits relatively undeveloped areas in the spirit of appreciation, participation and sensitivity. The ecotourist practises a non-consumptive use of wildlife and natural resources and contributes to the visited area through labour or financial means aimed at directly benefiting the conservation of the site and the economic well-being of the local residents. The visit should strengthen the ecotourist's appreciation and dedication to conservation issues in general and to the specific needs of the locale. Ecotourism also implies a managed approach by the host country

or region which commits itself to establishing and maintaining the sites with the *participation of local residents*, marketing them appropriately, enforcing regulations, and using the proceeds of the enterprise to fund the area's land management as well as community development" (Ziffer, 1989; quoted in Fennell, 1999; author's emphasis).

In reviewing the literature, Fennell (1999) views ecotourism as one of the two outgrowths of alternative tourism (along with sustainable socio-cultural tourism), thus suggesting another definition: "Ecotourism is a *sustainable form of natural resource-based* tourism that *focuses primarily on experiencing and learning* about nature, and which is *ethically managed to be low-impact, non-consumptive and locally oriented* (control, benefits, and scale). It typically *occurs in natural areas*, and should *contribute to the conservation or preservation of such areas*" (author's emphasis).

Without entering the debate of these sometimes controversial definitions, it is suggested that the Vietnamese tourism management body should analyse the common characteristics of ecotourism in these definitions to find a definition that suits them best. Based on the literature, ecotourism is a tool for conservation with the following main features: (i) ecotourism occurs in natural areas — preferably, but not compulsorily, those that are relatively undisturbed; (ii) ecotourism is implemented not only with low negative environmental impacts but also with some positive contribution to conservation; (iii) ecotourism should be educative and interpretative; and (iv) ecotourism should provide the local people of the visited areas with an active involvement in decision making and in distributing its benefits to improve their living standards.

There have been several definitions proposed for ecotourism in Vietnam. Among these, the Koeman and Lam (1999) definition mentions all these aforementioned basic elements: "Ecotourism is a type of tourism based on nature and indigenous culture which necessarily includes environmental education, and contributes to conservation efforts and sustainable development with the active involvement of the local community".

This definition, however, regards the indigenous culture as a primary resource base for ecotourism (as seen in some other definitions in the literature). But if we consider ecotourism a tool for nature conservation, the cultural element should not be included in the definition of ecotourism in such a way. In other words, ecotourists are primarily motivated by natural experience, not cultural experience. The latter should be viewed only as a by-product of ecotourism, or an accompanying element as seen in the IUCN's definition. There needs to be a separation of ecotourism from cultural tourism. As Fennell (1999) argues for his definition: "This definition views culture only inasmuch as the benefits from ecotourism accrue to local people, recognising that culture, whether exotic or not, is part of any tourism experience. If culture was a primary theme of ecotourism then it would be cultural tourism".

In the case of Vietnam, because most undisturbed natural areas (the foundation of ecotourism) are located near indigenous hill tribes (Koeman and Lam, 1999), ecotourism and cultural tourism can be combined in tour packages to diversify tourists' experiences but they should be considered two different forms of tourism. In any combined tour packages, to meet the requirements of ecotourism, it is necessary that the natural experience is the primary constituent and the indigenous people's culture should be ideally nature-related.

Thus a proper definition of ecotourism for Vietnam could be as follows:

Ecotourism is a nature-based tourism form that should enhance the understanding by visitors of nature (and where possible, the nature-related culture of surrounding indigenous communities) through education and interpretation programs; directly or indirectly contribute to conservation efforts and sustainable development, with the active involvement by the local community.

Why Ecotourism in Vietnam?

As tourism in Vietnam is just at the beginning stage, sustainability in general and ecotourism in particular have not been a central concern. It was not until 1997 that the first international conference on sustainable tourism development was held in the country. In relation to ecotourism, as Koeman and Lam (1999) comment, "there is a long way to go before genuine ecotourism arrives in Vietnam". Beside the overall principle of sustainability, however, there are some other social and economic reasons for Vietnam to speed up ecotourism development.

Ecotourism development is projected to be a major tourism component in the future. According to Dowling (1998), ecotourism is the fastest growing component of tourism. Around the world today, it is growing between 10% and 30% per annum (Koeman and Lam, 1999). As early as 1988, it contributed about US\$12 billion to the total of US\$55 billion earned from tourism by developing countries (Cater, 1994). By the end of the 1990s, 7% of the global tourism turnover came from ecotourism (Koeman and Lam, 1999). Within the United States alone, there is an estimated 43 million ecotourists and in Australia, ecotourism increased by 131% from 1988 to 1993 (French et. al., 2000). The growth has not shown any sign of ceasing: recent research on visitors' behavior has found a clear trend to choosing clean and green destinations (Buhalis and Fletcher, 1995). In 1999, a report at a WTO seminar stated that there were about 20 million European tourists who identified environmental quality of their destination as the main motivation for their travel.

In such a global context, Vietnam has much potential to become one of the best ecotourism destinations in South-East Asia. Most importantly, it has an almost undisturbed natural resource base (Rakthammachat, 1993; Elliot, 1997). Its extensive system of intact natural areas (and protected areas) with a high level of biodiversity is a potential asset and a coveted competitive advantage in the development of ecotourism as an excellent vehicle for both economic development and ecological sustainability. Thus, as the absence of distinctly recognisable characteristics of the destination is a major obstacle to tourism development in Vietnam (Travel and Tourism Intelligence, 1997), ecotourism provides a good chance for the country to build a unique image in the region. Also, as the Vietnamese government is making its best attempt to attract investment, ecotourism is a good product to promote. As Cater (1994) points out, "as the fastest growing sector in the tourism industry, ecotourism is an attractive investment proposition" thanks to its potential lucrative return. Up to now, however, the country has been much slower in ecotourism development than most other South-East Asian countries. The need for more effort is therefore much more urgent.

Market reality promises fast development of ecotourism in the country as the number of nature-based tourists has gone up steadily in Vietnam. In 1998, for example, Vietnam's natural areas received 4.8 million domestic tourists and 420 000 international visitors — far up from the 3.4 million and 320 000 respectively in 1994 (Koeman and Lam, 1999). This implies that ecotourism with its combined themes of "living with nature" and "learning something about nature" can be an attractive choice in the future.

Apart from this, alternative tourism has another strategic role in Vietnam. An appropriate application of ecotourism helps the government to achieve its aims in "Xoa doi-giam ngheo" (famine eradication and poverty reduction) — one of the country's most important socio-economic programs. This is because most of Vietnam's undisturbed natural areas are located in remote regions where the local people are still very poor. The development of ecotourism in these areas not only provides jobs but thereby prevents the mass immigration wave to urban areas as seen in Vietnam in the past decade (Elliot, 1997). As a fair distribution of tourism-generated benefits among the local people is a basic principle of ecotourism, it also helps them live better lives.

A better living standard for these poor people in turn will help nature conservation. Currently, overexploitation of natural resources (such as deforestation and hunting) in and around many remote natural areas is a headache for Vietnamese environmentalists. This is the result of poverty. Unless this problem is solved, the environment will continue to be destroyed for daily needs. Also, as a principle of ecotourism is an emphasis on education and interpretation, ecotourism helps local people raise their environmental awareness (as much as those of the tourist) and, along with economic rewards, stimulates motivation for protecting their precious resources.

Conclusion: Where to From Here?

Given all of these very likely benefits, ecotourism has enough persuasive power for Vietnam to follow the lead. A number of problems, however, are ahead for Vietnam on its way to sustainable tourism. The proposed approach cannot be effectively implemented without a certain environmental awareness among tourism stakeholders, a well-designed and feasible tourism management strategy and an effective management system. These are, unfortunately, among the most serious things lacking in Vietnam today, according to recent reports and studies on Vietnam tourism (Elliot, 1997; Travel and Tourism Intelligence, 1997; Koeman and Lam, 1999; Dearden, 1992 and 1997).

At the government level, although there is a commitment to conservation, the lack of understanding of the importance of ecosystems and other natural resources in tourism development is still an impediment. This is clear in the way the Vietnamese tourism management body equates ecotourism with nature-based tourism. Added to this is the absence of institutional "infrastructure" such as effective administrative and law enforcement ability. The most serious problems concerning this are the long-established bureaucracy and red tape, and the overlapped administration with too many restrictive and heavily regulated practices relating to tourism investment.

Under such an ineffective administration system, tourism operators have been booming in a chaotic scene. These stakeholders, like similar ones in other developing countries, are characterised by running small-scale ventures, seeking short-term benefits and paying little attention to environmental problems caused by tourism. Among the population, environmental awareness is still a luxury. This determines the behaviour of domestic tourists as well as local communities living around tourism destinations. For example, the majority of domestic tourists visiting protected areas mistreat the environment and behave inappropriately without knowing better (Koeman and Lam, 1999).

In such a context, designing a well-managed mass tourism strategy combined with ecotourism development is not an easy task and there is still a long way to go for the country to reach guaranteed sustainability. However, as a newcomer in the global tourism market in general and in the South-East Asian market in particular, the country has the advantage to draw lessons from the failures and successes of tourism development in other countries. Recent efforts of the government in designing sustainability policies and in attacking bureaucracy, and of researchers in searching for a way out for tourism-generated problems suggest hope for significant improvements in the future. To conclude, this essay proposes (as set out in Box 2) the following first tasks for the Vietnamese government to take on its long way to ensured sustainability.

Box 2: The First Tasks Towards Sustainable Tourism

Recognise the environment as an important tourism asset and recognise the need to take action as soon as possible. Survey and identify special places whose extraordinary environmental qualities need to be protected from mass tourism, thereby deciding which regions will be developed for mass tourism and which for ecotourism in the next 10-15 years. Build a healthy legal environment for tourism investment by reviewing the existing regulations and eliminating those that are unnecessary or overlapping. This should include rearranging tourism's organisational structure, assigning clear-cut and non-overlapped responsibilities to different authorities under a centralised body. Design a system of ecotourism management strategies with attention both to ecotourism's conservation and economic values (including restraints on number of tourists, entrance fees, conditions and commitment of service providers etc.). Raise environmental awareness among the public, tourism operators and others involving service provision (by distributing free materials, organising environmental promotion campaigns, training tourism employees, etc.), Adapt good mass tourism management tactics from other countries. Integrate environmental issues in tourism planning, the most important of which is to develop a national long-term ecotourism strategy for Vietnam with an agenda involving all tourism stakeholders.

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Chapter Thirty-one

Ecotourism Case Studies in Vietnam

Quach Mai Hong

Introduction

Lying near the middle of South-East Asia, Vietnam is an S-shaped country, stretching from latitude 23°30'N to 28°30'N and longitude 102°E to 110°E. Its total area is 330 363 km2. Vietnam shares a 3730 km inland border with three countries: China, Laos and Cambodia. Its coastline is 3260 km long. The population is about 76 million with the growth rate 1.8% per year. The average density is 230 people per km². Three quarters of the land is mountainous and the rest is plains. The two largest deltas are the Red River delta and Mekong River deltas.

Vietnam has numerous ecosystems and landforms: submersed deltas, limestone areas, a long coastline, high mountains, highlands, wetlands and large basins. Vietnam has natural conservation characteristics and a system of National Parks. Hence it has strong potential for developing ecotourism.

Economic Resources

In 1999, Vietnam achieved generally good results in economic development such as: (i) producing 34.5 million tonnes of rice (average quantity of rice is 420kg/person/year); (ii) income from agricultural, fishing, forestry sectors was 101 200 billion Vietnam Dong (25.3% GDP); (iii) the income of the industrial sector was 134 800 VND (33.7% GDP); and (iv) the income of the service sector was 164 000 billion Vietnam Dong (41% GDP).

The general thrust for the next five years is that the economic structure of the country will undergo a transformation in the direction of increasing the stake of the industrial sector (35% GDP) and service sector (45% GDP) with a decreasing agricultural sector (25% GDP). It is expected that GDP will increase 6% per year. To achieve economic growth through exploitation of natural resources is possible to a certain extent, but it will not be in keeping with the principles of sustainable development if natural resources are depleted.

The distribution of land resources in Vietnam is shown in Box 1.

Box 1: Distribution of Land

Farming land: 6 933 000 ha
Forest land: 9 395 000 ha
Land for special purposes: 972 000 ha
Dwelling land: 818 000 ha
Barren land : 14 925,000 ha (including 1 035 000 ha delta land and 1 268 000 ha mountainous land).

The mineral resources are diversified and plentiful; so far 3000 sites with 90 sorts of ores have been discovered. About 1000 mines are being exploited. Oil exploitation commenced in 1986 and reached nearly 10 million tonnes in 1995. Now the sector is exploiting about 15 million tonnes of oil and 1.1 billion m³ of gas per annum. Vietnam has plenty of mineral water and hot water resources, and some of them have been exploited.

Vietnam owns a large part of sea with a coastline of 3260km. There are many islands and the largest are Cat Ba, Phu Quoc, Con Dao and Phu Quy. Typical ecosystems like sand dunes, marshes, estuaries, mangroves, coral reefs and rock cliffs are found along the coast. The importance of wetlands, a typical ecosystem in rainy tropical climates, has not been recognised though Vietnam has a large number of such areas. The two largest are the Red River and Mekong River deltas. Halong Bay, including Bai Tu Long, Lan Ha and thousands of small islands is considered one of the world's valuable cultural heritage areas. Vietnam makes use of many of its marine resources. The marine fisheries produce 800 000 tonnes annually.

Extremely diversified plant and animal communities are to be found in the country. There are 273 mammal species, 1000 birds species, 180 reptile species, 500 species of freshwater fish, 2000 species of marine fish and several thousands of invertebrate animals. The Vietnam Red Book lists 365 animal species and 356 plant species needing protection.

In Vietnam there are 11 National Parks: Bach Ma, Ba Be, Ba Vi, Ben En, Cat Ba, Con Dao, Cuc Phuong, Cat Tun, Tam Dao, Yokdon and Tram Chim. There are 52 natural reserve zones and 22 landscape conservation areas. Usually such areas of special ecosystem value are also attractive sites for tourism.

Environmental Management

In the past, Vietnam failed to perceive thoroughly the significance, role and importance of environmental protection. Over the past approximately 10 years, greater attention has been paid to activities in this area. The main achievements are outlined next.

In regard to legislation, the Constitution of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam contains articles 29 and 84, which set out the basic principles of environmental protection in regard to the various sectors, localities, organisations and individuals. There are important provisions for the formulation of the law on environmental protection, passed by the National Assembly on 27 December 1993, and coming into effect as of 10 January 1994. The environmental protection laws and the series of statutory instruments and regulations that have been brought into play are contributing significantly to environmental management in Vietnam.

According to Article 12 of the *Law on Environment Protection*: "Organisations and individuals shall have the responsibility to protect all varieties and species of wild plants and animals, maintain biodiversity and protect forests, seas and all ecosystems"; and Article 13: "The use and exploitation of natural reserves and natural landscapes must be subject to permission by the management authority concerned and the state management agency for environmental protection and must be registered with the local people's committees with the administrative management of these conservation sites".

With regard to institutional changes, the National Assembly established in 1992 the Ministry of Science, Technology and Environment. The National Environment Agency (NEA) has been in existence since October 1993. In all provinces and cities there is an office of the Department of Science, Technology and Environment. This organisational system is gradually carrying out the management activities required by law. The public information and motivation network is also gradually expanding, aimed at improving the environmental awareness of the public. Scientific research and establishment of environmental monitoring and forecasting facilities have been increased, making more systemic and accurate the information collected on the status of the environment on a nation-wide scale.

The Government is very concerned to integrate Vietnam with the international community in the area of environmental protection through UNEP, FAO, UNICEF, APO, WWF etc. Vietnam has taken part in international conventions and treaties, such as Ramsar, climate change, and biodiversity.

It is also necessary to underline that many sectors and many localities have been pro-active in environmental protection with regard to their own activities. Some provinces are taking part in projects in green productivity supported by APO, Sida, CIDA, to improve productivity and look after the environment. In Vietnam, the tourist companies need to comply with all environmental regulations. On the other hand they have to meet demand by customers for a relaxing and enjoyable vacation. These two objectives are not necessarily in conflict. However, an important change is that tourism has begun to be diversified to include hunting on land and at sea. That is the reason why in addition to the existing rules and regulations with regard to protection of the environment new ones will be needed.

Tourism

In recent years the Vietnam government has paid attention to tourism development. A resolution of the Vietnam government on 22 June, 1993 determined that tourism is one of important sectors in the country's economic development strategy. A national tourist agency was established to manage all tourist activities, under the government law of 26 October, 1992. Following that, in some provinces with cities having significant tourism, tourist departments were established.

The authorities in Vietnam recognise that ecotourism offers significant benefits for humans and recognise the need to promote ecotourism and the conservation and preservation of natural resources through appropriate management, so as to avoid the destruction that can be caused by mass tourism. In concert with this, the Vietnam government issued a decree on 20 February, 1999.

In Ninh Binh province there is significant potential for promoting ecotourism. Since 1992, tourism has increased year after year, and since 1994 the Ninh Binh Tourist Department has existed to manage sustainable development of tourism. In Vietnam and in Ninh Binh province, local government deals with afforestation. From 1992, Ninh Binh implemented the transfer of forest protection and plantation rights to farmer households and the forestry branch passed 23 000 ha of forest to 1100 households for protection and 4948 ha land for cultivation.

Advancing towards 2010, Ninh Binh will carry out its forest protection policy in combination with permanent agriculture and settlement, putting in place a plantation on 10 000 ha of bare hills. It will raise forest coverage from 9 to 31% by 2000. It is a policy which should encourage ecotourism to the area.

Green Productivity as the Foundation for Ecotourism

Green Productivity (GP) is a strategy for enhancing productivity and environmental performance, to achieve overall socio-economic development. Productivity provides the framework for continuous improvement while environmental protection provides the foundation for sustainable development. Ecotourism is based on using natural resources to bring benefits to people. The principles of sustainable development in terms of ecotourism are: (i) using natural resources for sustainable tourism; (ii) minimising excess consumption and waste; (iii) integrating master development plans and tourism development plans; (iv) supporting local economic development; (v) educating tourism staff; (vi) providing marketing information about landscapes and historical places; (vii) continuing research and monitoring to solve existing problems with visitors and tourist companies; and (viii) undertaking discussions with local people and concerned persons to solve problems.

A GP strategy is based on ecological and productivity principles. The above principles for sustainable development and ecotourism are the same as the guiding principles of GP.

Ecotourism in Ninh Binh Province

Ninh Binh is 90 km south of Ha Noi region, the centre of historical relics from the Dinh, Le Ly and Tran dynasties. Hoa Lu as the ancient capital of Vietnam still has many relics and temples from the Dinh Le dynasty (from AD 968–1010). Hoa Lu is still called "Shallow HaLong" with caves and grottos at Tam Coc, Bich Dong and the Luon cave. Phuong National Park is home for thousands of tropical animals and plant species, with existing relics of human life from 7000 years ago.

Vietnam tourism in general, and Ninh Binh tourism in particular, is based on nature and culture. A grouping of tourist landscapes, besides the beauty of nature, the history and culture, make Ninh Binh more attractive than many other places. Tourism in Ninh Binh has only developed since 1992 when the province was established by separating Ha Nam Ninh province. With the efforts by local governmental tourist staff, we have made some significant gains in tourism. The number of visitors has increased year after year, from 180 500 in 1995 to 405 600 in 1999. Turnover increased from 15 billion Vietnam Dong (in 1995) to 27 billion (in 1999) including 15.6 billion to the state sector, and 11.4 billion to the private sector.

A Case Study

Since 1999, the Van Long wetlands project has been supported by UNDP to keep the biodiversity of the wetland intact and promote ecotourism. There have been good results. Local people are getting benefits and they are protecting the environment better than before. In 2000, in the ecotourism area of Hoa Lu district, with the support of APO, a project (community development for Thanh Thang village) is being implemented. The process was that a GP team was formed, then the local people identified problems and their causes and next they considered the options. They now plan to implement the following strategies: (i) reducing by 30–50% fuel for cooking

by applying new economical cookers; (ii) applying eco-farming methods; (iii) installing water and waste water treatment plants; (iv) dealing with human and animal waste treatment by composting and putting in place a solid waste disposal programs; and (v) installing water quality supply and environmental process technology. These are the practical actions to move towards ecotourism.

Conclusion

In the development process the government allows all economic sectors (state and private companies) opportunities to establish their companies. Local governments establish master plans for developing ecotourism in special areas. Local people can take part in tourist business which are under the management of tourist companies; for example they can sail boats, provide food and produce handcraft products. The benefits of ecotourism will go to the government as taxes, and to local communities and persons involved with tourist activities.

The major difficulties in moving towards ecotourism in Vietnam are: (i) lack of knowledge of ecotourism; (ii) untrained tourism staff; (iii) difficulties in achieving environmental protection because of poverty; and (iv) lack of investment funds to upgrade tourist facilities.

Some organisations such as UNDP, Sida, and APO provide Vietnam with financial assistance to raise public awareness on environmental protection, with the result that living standards are improving for local people from the expansion of ecotourism.

The Department of Science Technology and Environment (DoSTE) has the responsibility to support all economic activities in their development, particularly, ecotourism. DoSTE experts often work together with experts from the tourist department in drafting tourist development projects, drafting regulations to cover the use of special areas for ecotourism, and generally promoting ecotourism.

Chapter Thirty-two

Ecotourism in Australia

Tsung-Wei Lai

Introduction

In Australia, where ecologically sustainable development is placed high on the political agenda, a growing number of government agencies, protected area management authorities, and conservation groups are committed to promoting nature-based tourism and ecotourism.

Tourism is a major economic activity in Australia. The Bureau of Tourism Research estimates that tourism contributed over 10% to Australia's GDP in 1995–96, generating AU\$14.1 billion in export earnings and direct employment of one million people, or 12.4% of the workforce in the same time period. Following the strategic approach set forth in Australia's National Strategy for Ecologically Sustainable Development for Tourism, numerous measures for sustainable tourism have been initiated by the Commonwealth and state government agencies, the tourism industry, and protected area management authorities.

The National Ecotourism Strategy

In March 1994, the Commonwealth Department of Tourism released the National Ecotourism Strategy as one of the major initiatives for developing sustainable tourism in regional Australia. Based on the principles of ecological sustainability, the National Ecotourism Strategy provides an overall framework to guide the integrated planning, development and management of ecotourism in Australia. To facilitate implementation, the Government provided AU\$10 million for funding the National Ecotourism Program which aims to foster innovative projects, enhance visitors' appreciation of natural and cultural values, and contribute to long-term conservation and management of resources. In addition, the program provides assistance in regional ecotourism planning to reduce environmental pressure on peak demand areas and to distribute the benefits of ecotourism more widely. Other auxiliary projects include infrastructure support for ecotourism (e.g. boardwalks and interpretation centres), baseline studies and monitoring projects, and extensive market research by the Bureau of Tourism Research.

The Queensland Ecotourism Plan

At a state level, the Queensland Government is at the forefront of ecotourism promotion. In 1997, the Queensland Government launched the Queensland Ecotourism Plan (QEP) to serve as a framework for planning, developing, managing, operating and marketing ecotourism. The QEP adopts an approach of integrating "environmental and economic considerations in natural areas in ways which ally environmental protection and the commercial viability of ecotourism operations". The QEP is a comprehensive planning document with specific objectives, strategies, action plans, responsibilities, and timelines to fulfil key objectives in four areas, namely, environmental protection and management, ecotourism industry development, infrastructure development, and community development. During the past two years, Tourism Queensland, the lead agency of QEP, has built a comprehensive environmental tourism database, developed the methodology for the Environmental Tourism Rapid Assessment Model (ECORAM) for site assessment, and initiated the concept of the Environmental Tourism Infrastructure Fund (ECOTIF) for seeking seed government funding for ecotourism projects.

Tourism in Protected Areas

Tourism in protected areas is crucial to maintaining the integrity of fragile ecosystems. For example, tourism in the Wet Tropics and the Great Barrier Reef World Heritage Areas (WHAs) has increased dramatically in the last decade. Approximately 4.7 million visits to the Wet Tropics WHA were reported in 1993 and approximately 2 million visits to the Great Barrier Reef were reported on commercial tours in 1994 (Driml and Common 1996: 7). The tourism activities in both WHAs are still growing at a rapid rate. It is estimated that the tourism industry in these two WHAs is worth over AU\$1.1 billion per annum in gross expenditure terms.

The management processes of these two WHAs are classic examples to illustrate the importance of integrating tourism and conservation into a regional resource management platform. To minimise visitor impacts while achieving conservation goals, the management authorities have used various tools, including zoning, permits, management plans, entry fees, education, research and monitoring. Other uses that are not compatible with conservation, such as oil drilling on the Reef and logging of rainforest in the Wet Tropics, have been prohibited.

To promote the appropriate type of tourism, the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority has initiated the Great Barrier Reef Tourism Operator Training Program, including "train the trainer" courses, self-teaching materials, reference videos and resource kits for marine park tour operators (Office of National Tourism, 1996: 21). Throughout the development of this training program, tourism operators and local communities have been actively involved. In September 1999, the Wet Tropics Management Authority launched the Draft Wet Tropics Nature-based Tourism Strategy for public review and comment. The strategy divides the region into 12 nature-based tourism precincts, each with its own distinctive features and themes. In addition, the strategy provides policies and guiding principles for various management issues, including monitoring, research, permits, accreditation and training, marketing, and cost recovery (Wet Tropics Management Authority, 1999).

The Ecotourism Association of Australia (EAA)

Beside the Australian Governments, the tourism industry has also responded to the emerging ecotourism business. Formed in 1991, the Ecotourism Association of Australia (EAA) serves as the peak national body for Australia's ecotourism industry. Currently, EAA has approximately 500 members, publishes an annual Australian Ecotourism Guide, and hosts an annual conference. In addition to strengthening the industry network of ecotourism operators, the EAA actively promotes "best tourism practices" through self-regulation and accreditation.

To provide tourists and the travel trade with a recognisable and authentic ecotourism product, the EAA initiated the National Ecotourism Accreditation Program (NEAP) in 1996 in cooperation with the Australia Tourism Operators Network (ATON) and the Tourism Council of Australia, with funding support from the Office of National Tourism. In 2000, the certification program changed its name to the Nature and Ecotourism Accreditation program. Under NEAP, products awarded ecotourism accreditation are required to meet a comprehensive set of core criteria based on ecological sustainability and minimum environmental impact. At this stage, NEAP mostly relies on a self-assessment procedure and four forms of monitoring measures, including random on-site audits. In addition, NEAP requires periodic monitoring and management review for accredited ecotourism operators to ensure continuous improvement of standards.

Challenges and Opportunities

The development of ecotourism in Australia is still in its infancy, with approximately 600 ecotourism operators (mostly small in size), providing an equivalent of 4500 full-time jobs and A\$250 million turnover (BRT 1995: 133–34). Although a plethora of plans and strategies are being developed in Australia to promote ecotourism, the long-term effectiveness of these newly formed programs and initiatives has yet be evaluated. To contribute towards sustainable development, these initiatives must be able to move ecotourism beyond simply a niche market within nature-based travel. Ecotourism must serve as a vehicle to transform unsustainable mass tourism practices towards genuine "greening," not just "greenwashing" of the tourism industry. In a highly competitive marketplace, the ecotourism industry is likely to face immense challenges to live up to the promise of sustainable tourism. Ecotourism by definition promotes travel to remote natural areas with a pristine environment. The influx of tourists inevitably increases the pressure on the regional environment as well as the demand for local resources and infrastructure. Without proper planning, management, and monitoring, pristine areas may be rapidly degraded as they become popular tourist destinations (Honey 1999: 54–55, citing examples in Nepal and Kenya).

To prevent tourism operators from using ecotourism as an excuse to encroach upon protected areas, the area management authorities must evaluate the feasibility of ecotourism development projects in the context of regional resource conservation objectives as well as the ecological and social carrying capacity of the host regions. In particular, the accumulated impact of tourism development projects on the region needs to be carefully evaluated.

In addition to limitation and regulatory instruments, such as zoning and the use of permits, resource and tourism managers can employ marketplace mechanisms (e.g. pricing differentials) to provide incentives to encourage a better regional dispersal of visitors. To achieve these goals, cooperation and coordination between the tourism industry and resource planning and management authorities is absolutely crucial.

Tourism is a highly competitive industry that heavily depends on customer satisfaction from personalised services. From the demand side, consumers have many choices about how and where they use their time and money. Numerous research projects have been conducted to build up a profile of ecotourists and nature-based tourists so that different consumer segments can be identified for more effective marketing (BRT 1995: 55–132). Commercial tourism operators will market more environmentally sustainable products as soon as customers demand them and are willing to pay what it costs.

From the supply side, many commercial tourist businesses also have a wide choice of location and tourist products and play an important role in shaping the demand for holidays through active marketing and advertising. To foster sustainable tourism, ecotourism needs to grow beyond just being a niche market. To do so, the industry needs to appeal to a wider customer base at a competitive price.

Private sector business possess the practical influence needed to shift key aspects of tourism towards sustainability. However, as Middleton and Hawkins (1998: 84) point out, too few commercial tourism operators perceive an obvious incentive to do so. To encourage tourism operators to undertake responsible marketing and adopt good management practices, measures for self-regulation, such as an environmental management system and a code of practice, are particularly important in a free marketplace. Since most of the ecotourism operators are generally small in scale, governmental and institutional support for staff training, environmental interpretation, marketing, and business management are critical to their survival.

In the ecotourism sector, identifying genuine projects that meet the criteria for sustainable development is a major issue. Some tourism operators simply use environmentally friendly terms, such as "ecotourism" and "sustainable tourism", as a marketing strategy to repackage traditional tourism and attract environmentally-conscious travellers. To discourage such "greenwashing" and irresponsible marketing, the aforementioned NEAP in Australia has the potential to set the industry's standards. To be effective, the value of NEAP ultimately needs to be recognised by both the tourism industry and consumers.

The effectiveness of ecotourism initiatives needs to be evaluated by its contribution towards sustainability. Thus measurements of sustainability are essential to assist operators and management agencies in developing and implementing tourism projects. To date, no Australian national standard on measuring sustainability in the tourism industry has been established. Measuring sustainability in the tourism industry is a difficult task because stakeholders seldom agree on the selection of indicators and the determination of the acceptable performance (Sebastian and McArthur 1998: 21).

To measure sustainability of tourism development, many researchers propose to adopt the performance evaluation methods and frameworks developed for planning and management. For example, Sebastian and McArthur (1998) propose a "Sustainability Barometer" model, a multi-criteria scoring system originally developed for planning, as a self-assessment tool for tourism operators, communities and government agencies to evaluate progress toward sustainability. Regardless of what method is adopted, sustainability measurements need to encompass environmental, economic and social parameters yet remain flexible and straightforward for wide application.

Contrary to traditional mass tourism, ecotourism businesses are usually small in scale and operated by local communities. This presents an opportunity not only to minimise the "leakage" of economic benefits to outside investors but establish "linkages" between tourism development and conservation objectives (McLaren 1998: 30). Community "ownership" is crucial to avoid the boom and bust cycles of typical tourism development projects and to provide local long-term employment opportunities (Honey 1999: 91). In addition, ecotourism can serve as a vehicle to promote environmental awareness and cultural sensitivity through interpretation, education, and training.

Conclusion

Tourism and its supporting industries are dependent upon a given stock of natural, constructed, and socio-cultural attributes to satisfy tourist needs. As such, the conventional mass tourism industry is consumptive, rather than productive, in nature. Genuine sustainable tourism should focus on reversing the trend of the consumptive practices of traditional mass tourism through active resource conservation, planning and management. More importantly, the economic gains from sustainable tourism should benefit the host communities who are the ultimate custodians of these resources. As the tourism industry expands globally, its associated environmental, social and economic impacts can no longer be ignored.

In Australia, the tourism industry and government organisations have responded to the rising level of environmental awareness of the public and have started to promote sustainable tourism through low-impact nature-based tourism and ecotourism. Although the development of sustainable tourism is still in its infancy, genuine sustainable tourism has the potential of providing a win-win solution to achieve nature conservation and economic development under sound planning and management practices.

Ecotourism is the fastest growing sector of the tourism industry. In Australia, ecotourism is considered as a niche market with great potential in setting industry standards for sustainable development. It offers the potential to generate foreign exchange earnings, create local employment opportunities, promote environmental awareness, and provide incentives for the conservation and sustainable management of public and private lands. Nonetheless, many challenges still lie ahead in promoting ecotourism. In addition to the challenges on the demand and supply side of tourism management, the overall social, economic, and environmental impacts of ecotourism development on host regions should be carefully evaluated using appropriate measurements of sustainability.

To promote sustainable tourism, a plethora of ecotourism policies and strategies already have been developed by various government agencies as well as tourism bodies. Private tourist operators are developing ecotourism products in response to the increasing demand for low-impact nature-based tourism. Only time will tell whether current tourism management, publicprivate partnerships, and marketing initiatives are coupled with enough safeguards to protect the resources upon which the long-term survival of the tourism industry so clearly depends.

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Part III **Appendices**

Appendix 1

List of Participants and Resource Persons

APO PROJECT NO. SPE-DA4-00:

Workshop on Eco-Tourism and Green Productivity

(26-30 June, 2000 – Denpasar (Bali), Indonesia)

Participants:

	-	
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The APO GP Program

The objective of the Asian Productivity Organization (APO) is to enhance productivity and accelerate economic development in Asia and the Pacific Region. To do this the APO works in close cooperation with the National Productivity Organizations of member countries.

In 1994, the APO created the Office for the Environment (OfE), which subsequently became the Environment Department, to help member countries integrate environmental concerns into their productivity enhancement work. The Department promotes waste reduction and environmental preservation by championing the development of GP. It does this through three main activities: promotion, demonstration and dissemination. It particularly targets small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) since such companies generally lack the resources and expertise to undertake the work themselves.

The Meaning of GP

Definition & Distinguishing Characteristics

Green Productivity (GP) is a strategy for enhancing productivity and environmental performance for overall socio-economic development. It is the application of appropriate productivity and environmental management tools, techniques and technologies that together reduce the environmental impact of an organization's activities,



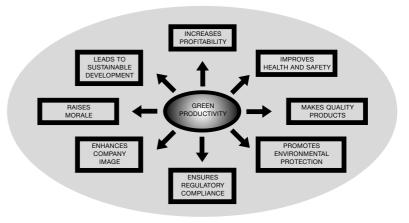
The Need for GP

Previous approaches to environmental protection have tended to ignore economic performance. Traditional 'end-of-pipe' technology has proved costly and ineffective, while many other preventive environmental management solutions are not productivity-focused. This has reduced the attractiveness of such schemes to environmentally conscious and productivity-oriented businesses. At the same time conventional productivity improvement programs have generally ignored environmental issues and have given companies little opportunity to centralize such issues in their business strategies. GP overcomes the constraints inherent in these old approaches and combines environmental protection with quality, cost-effectiveness and technological innovation to bring significant competitive advantage.

Benefits of GP

In the industrial sector, improvements in productivity and environmental performance achieved through GP bring many bottom-line savings everything from reduced fuel and raw material consumption to lower insurance expenses (see Fig. 1). Cost-effectiveness, profitability, competitiveness and an improved working environment are central goals of any GP strategy. Products and by-products are more environmentally friendly, while the changes GP brings to the production process improve both workers' health and safety and product quality.

Because GP encourages creativity and innovation and allows companies to capitalize on markets that demand high environmental specifications, it creates new business opportunities and helps companies to increase their market share. All in all, GP is a multi-dimensional strategy that improves both the performance of business and the overall quality of life.



Overview of GP Methodology

The Six Step GP Methodology

The central element of the GP methodology is the examination and re-evaluation of both production processes and products to reduce their environmental impacts and highlight ways to improve productivity and product quality. Implementation of these options leads on to another cycle of review and so promotes continuous improvement (see Fig. 2). The six principle steps of the GP methodology are:

1. Getting Started

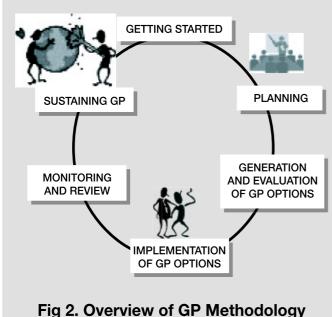
The beginning of the GP process is marked by the formation of a GP team and a walk-through survey to gain base-line information and identify problem areas. At this stage it is vital to get the support of senior management to ensure that adequate manpower and resources are available for successful GP implementation.

2. Planning

Using the information gained in the walk-through survey along with a number of analytical tools such as material balance, benchmarking, eco-mapping and Ishikawa diagrams, problems and their causes are identified. Following this, objectives and targets are set to address the problem areas. Performance indicators are also identified.

3. Generation and Evaluation of GP Options

This stage involves the development of options to meet the objectives and targets formulated in the planning stage. It involves both a review of pollution prevention and control procedures that have already been devised or implemented and the development of new options. Options are screened and prioritized in terms of their economic and technical feasibility and their potential benefits. They are then synthesized into an implementation plan.



4. Implementation of GP Options

The implementation of the selected GP options involves two steps: preparation and execution. Preparatory steps include training, awareness building and competence development. This is followed by the installation of equipment and systems along with operator instruction and hands-on training.

5. Monitoring and Review

Once the selected GP options have been implemented it is vital to check whether they are producing the desired results. This involves monitoring the overall GP system to ensure that it is proceeding in the right direction and that targets are being achieved as per the implementation plan. Findings are reported for management review.

6. Sustaining GP

In light of the findings of the GP evaluation, corrective actions can be taken to keep the GP program on target. In some cases targets and objectives themselves will have to be modified.

As the program progresses a feedback system should be implemented so that new problems and challenges will be highlighted and dealt with. In this way the GP cycle will loop back to the relevant step to implement a process of continuous improvement and ensure the continuing relevance and effectiveness of the GP process.

GP Tools and Techniques

Implementing the GP methodology requires integrating and applying a number of key environmental management and productivity improvement tools and techniques. GP tools and techniques provide clues and directions for the generation of options and enable their systematic implementation. Different tools and techniques are used at different steps of the GP implementation process (see Table 1).

Tools

Starting Out

At the start of the GP process, flowcharts and process flow diagrams provide a graphical method of representing activities, processes and material flows. A material balance — based on a process flow diagram — allows for the quantitative assessment of material inputs and outputs.

Highlighting Problems

Benchmarking is often used to identify gaps in performance by comparing the current achievements of a department or company against what others have done. Brainstorming and concentration diagrams help in the identification of the possible root causes of problems and for data collection. Ishikawa cause and effect analysis is another problem-solving tool used to uncover the reasons behind problems. It gives a graphical representation of cause and effects, so allowing a problem to be fully analyzed.

Environmental problems can be identified using eco-mapping — a simple and practical visual tool that provides a bird's eye view of a company's operations and thus a quick inventory of practices and problems. Pareto analysis is another graphical tool used to isolate key problems that are causing the most significant impact. Check sheets are used for collecting data over time to show trends and recurring problems and control charts are used to show deviations and variability in performance.

Finding Solutions

GP options are generated and assessed using techniques such as brainstorming and cost-benefit analysis which facilitates the comparison of alternatives in terms of the monetary costs involved and the benefits that can be obtained. Typically the tool is used in feasibility studies — often in conjunction with audits — for the selection of alternative options. As options are implemented spider web diagrams provide a visual way of showing progress and performance against several targets at once.

Techniques

GP techniques are used to bring about the changes that will result in better environmental performance and improved productivity. They range from simple housekeeping techniques to designing 'green' products.

Good Housekeeping

GP techniques include awareness programs and the 5S management techniques which focus on keeping processes, equipment, workplaces and work forces organized, neat, clean, standardized and disciplined. Other good housekeeping techniques relate to measures that prevent the loss of materials, minimize waste, conserve and save energy and improve operational and organizational procedures.

Design Change

The environmental impact of a product is to a large extent determined by its design. By taking environmental considerations into account during product planning, design and development — and so designing environmentally-compatible products — a company can minimize the negative impact of its products and process on the environment.

Process Modification

Process modification is a key GP technique which encompasses both simple and more complex changes — from replacing inefficient or old processes with new technology to totally changing the production process used. Such alterations can also involve energy conservation techniques such as the use of efficient appliances and the re-use and recycling of heat.

Waste Management

TABLE 1: GP STEPS, TASKS AND TOOLS

Waste stream segregatio and the promotio of recycling, reus and recovery ar two broad tech niques used t reduce the amount of waste a compan produces and t improve wast disposal. Off-sit recycling is ofte implemented on-site recover and reuse o resources is no feasible. Often sub stantial improve ments can be mad in the nature an quantity of wast produced by th substitution o purification of som material inputs.

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on	STEPS	TASKS	TOOLS			
on se hto iny to e e if y o t e e d d e e d d e e h o e e d d e e n e	STEP I: GETTING STARTED	 Form a GP Team Walkthrough survey and information collection 	 Brain storming Attribute analysis Needs analysis Responsibility matrix Checklists, tally charts Flowcharts and process flow diagram Material balance Benchmarking 			
	STEP II: PLANNING	 Identification of problems and causes Setting objectives and targets 	 Brainstorming Cause and effect analysis (Ishikawa) Critical path analysis Eco-mapping Gantt chart Force field analysis 			
	STEP III: GENERATION AND EVALUATION OF GP OPTIONS	 Generation of GP options Screening and evaluation of GP options Preparation of implementation plan 	 Brainstorming Cost benefit analysis Eco-mapping Failure mode and effect analysis Pareto charts Program Evaluation Review Technique (PERT) 			
	STEP IV: IMPLEMENTATION OF GP OPTIONS	 Implementation of selected options Training, awareness building and developing competence 	 Training need analysis Team briefing Responsibility matrix Critical path analysis Gantt chart Spider web diagrams 			
	STEP V: MONITORING AND REVIEW	Monitoring and evaluation of resultsManagement review	 Solution effect analysis Eco-mapping Failure mode and effect and analysis Charts (control, tally etc)/spider web diagram 			
	STEP VI: SUSTAINING GP	 Incorporate changes Identify new/additional problem areas for continuous improvement 	 The tools are repeated here, since the activities are looped back to the previous steps 			