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Point for discussion this month

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Eternal Words

I would feel more optimistic about a bright future for man if he spent less time proving that he can outwit Nature and more time tasting her sweetness and respecting her seniority.
~Elwyn Brooks White, Essays of E.B. White, 1977

The magnificence of mountains, the serenity of nature - nothing is safe from the idiot marks of man's passing.

~Loudon Wainwright

Dear Readers,

This is first issue of the seventh volume of SERI news. From last six years we are discussing various initiatives, innovations, concepts, and actions for better environmental quality and pollution management. We got very encouraging responses from our readers. We are very grateful to all of you for being with us to celebrate each milestone.

In June 2012 issue, we have discussed about the Western Ghats report and its impact on the state economy. Protection and conservation of the rich biodiversity of Western Ghats should be of prime importance but at the same time it should not derail the economy. Eco-tourism can be one of the options we must think on to replace the current environmental hazardous activities. We cannot refute the right to development to the people residing in these areas.

Eco-tourism will generate employment to the local people at the same time it will reduce the migration of the native people to the nearby cities in search of livelihood. It will help to endorse tribal skills and culture.

Government participation and scope should be thoroughly worked upon and restricted, if required, for sustainability of such projects.

It's a proud moment for SERI as the physical neutralization process developed by SERI around 15 years back is still serving the cause in one of the electroplating industries.

SERI is always committed to deliver best of the services from last 17 years and has strong bonding with the clients for years together. We always give top most priority to environmental concerns of each and every sincere, committed client who believe in us to provide solutions and we cherish the relation to make it sustainable. We are always by the side of our clients for any trouble shooting or advice for the environment management. In this issue, one such success story is given for the interested readers. It's an achievement for the sustainable solution and will be useful for the concerned innovative managers and industrialists to protect environmental quality by optimizing the use of resources.

Thank you,
Chief Editor

From SERI Desk

Savings in Pollution Treatment help by Innovation!

A coveted feather in SERI's cap is that a physical-mixing unit designed and implemented by SERI gave dividend more than of Rs. 150 lakhs in term of energy and mechanical savings to our esteemed client Bosch chassis System India Ltd., Pune. In conventional neutralization process requires an agitator which consumes electricity 0.6 kw/min. which amounts to approximately Rs. 2.5 Crores (USD 462963) of electricity expenses for 15 years.



A physical - mixing unit was designed by Sandeep Joshi, Environment Technologist, and implemented in 1997 at Chakan Unit. It was a very innovative and design of conventional physicochemical process of ETP to save electricity accepted and supported by then management of then Kalyani Brakes Ltd.. This neutralization unit does not use any mechanical stirrer or mixer or any mechanical agitator which needs electricity for mixing of neutralizing chemical and acidic effluents. Zero electricity physical process of stream cascading is used for neutralization and the system never failed in last 15 years!! This is very *encouraging and delightful* achievement of operational success of neutralization system.

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Will eco-tourism be a conservation tool?

-Pradnyesh Agre

It is known that Indian economy is largely agro-based being over 70% of the population is dependent on agriculture as a source of livelihood. Of late, a growing trend of urbanization made the industrial sector as key player in the economy as 1991 afterwards the industrial and services components have grown faster and contributing 46% of the GDP today.

Being fourth largest economy in the world, it is necessary to see the important socio-economic issues that India facing.

Poverty, social and gender inequalities, illiteracy, inadequate health facilities, unplanned urbanization, underdevelopment of some areas, environment degradation, and pollution of rivers and lakes are catching the attention of the Indian Government and civil society. They are committed to better life through the conservation of nature.

As the new millennium unfolds, we are becoming increasingly aware of the finite, and precious natural resources of our home planet. Tourism is becoming an increasingly popular expression of this awareness. With advances in transportation and information technology, even more remote areas of the earth are coming within the reach of traveller. In fact, now tourism and hospitality has become the world's largest industry, having nature trails and tourism as most sought after segment.

According to the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) with an annual growth rate of 5% worldwide and representing 6% of the world GDP; Eco-tourism is considered the fastest growing market in the tourism industry with 11.4% of all consumers spending -definitely promising. Foreign Tourist Arrival (FTA) is increasing every year in India from 5.78 million in 2010 to about 8 million in 2012.

India: the tourism destination

More than 5000-year-old cultural heritage having thousands of monumental marvels and archaeological sites with picturesque natural beauty made India a favourite tourism destination. These historical sites and ancient monuments of architectural grandeur elaborate the chronicles of the cultural diversity of their creators.

Diversified geography, topography, natural resources and climate are assets to outdoor and adventure sports activities of India for all tastes and interests to experience. Being land of folk lore, fairs and festivals with a kaleidoscope of cultural diversity and traditions, in mountainous regions, lush valleys and plains, arid desert regions, white sandy beaches and islands with variety of food specialities and arts (dance) of each region with its own saga, Tourism in India is always compelling.

Ecotourism Resources of India

Geographical diversity of India makes it home to valuable ecosystems which are well protected and preserved. These ecosystems can become the major resources for ecotourism.

- ✓ Ramsar lakes and meandering rivers
- ✓ Ecological hotspots, heritage, and Biosphere Reserves
- ✓ Coastlines, Mangroves, Coral Reefs
- ✓ Hot and Cold Deserts
- ✓ Mountains and Forests

Forest land about 75.23 million hectares of the country has classified as reserved and protected. These are multi-purpose protected areas, for preservation of the genetic diversity and the integrity of plants, animals and micro-organisms in representative ecosystems. India has a great variety of flora and fauna with about 45,000 species of plants, 1228 bird, 428 reptiles, 372 mammals, 204 amphibians 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. Himalayan Region, Western Ghats, Northeast India, Andaman & Nicobar Islands and Lakshdweep islands have become most sought after attractions for eco-tourists. Places such as coastal and inland waterfronts at many places such as Arabian Sea, Indian Ocean, Bay of Bengal, several rivers and lakes serve as attractive ground for water sports. This treasure trove offers several tourist destinations that not just de-stress but also rejuvenate the souls.

Ecotourism

In response to this increasing appreciation of nature experiences, a new travel ethic has arisen which is now called ecotourism. This term has become increasingly popular in both conservation and travel circles, defined as "Environmentally responsible travel to natural areas, in order to enjoy and

appreciate nature (accompanying cultural features, both past and present) that promote conservation and have a low visitor impact and provide for beneficially active socio-economic involvement of local peoples."

Most tourism in natural areas today is not ecotourism and is not therefore, sustainable. Ecotourism can be distinguished from nature tourism by its emphasis on conservation, education, traveller responsibility, sustainable travel and active community participation.

Specifically, ecotourism possesses the following characteristics:

- Environmental Sustainability Practice
- Build and cultural awareness and respect
- Positive experiences of nature for both visitors and hosts in ways that lead to better understanding, admiration and pleasure
- Financial support for conservation
- Financial benefits and empowerment for local people
- Educational components for both the traveler and local communities

In order to maximize the conservation benefits and success of an ecotourism activity, it is necessary to define fundamental roles of all stakeholders in its planning and management.

The Concern for Ecotourism

Nature adoration, adulation and conservation ethics have been an inseparable part of Indian thought and traditions since ancient civilizations of India, when people used to nurture the philosophy of the oneness of life. The Indian tradition has always taught that, humankind is a part of nature and one should look upon all creation with a love and respect.

The envy quest for economic progress since last few decades trashes an entire world in deep crisis and danger of being doomed that has become tragedy with the exploitation of nature in all its appearances. The rich forest areas and biological diversities have been relentlessly denuding to erect concrete walls has led to Global Warming and Greenhouse Effects. Fortunately, now the world has awakened for new beginnings about human responsibility towards nature.

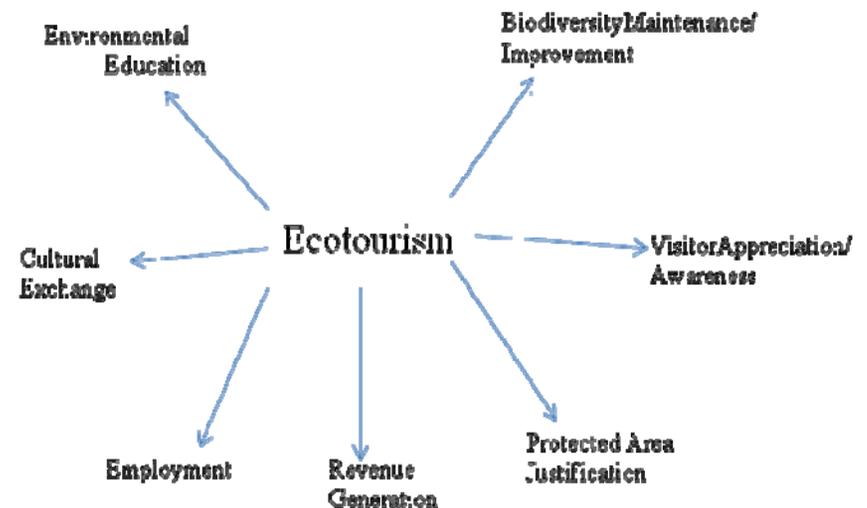
Role and responsibility

Key players in ecotourism business are local governments, local authorities, developers, operators, visitors, and 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, NGO 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 professionals in consultation with the local community, ecologists as well as others directly concerned stake holders. Integrated planning should be adopted to avoid inter-sectoral and cross-sectoral conflict. The infrastructural program for ecotourism should include controlled access points, roads, self-guided nature trails, transportation options, interpretation centres, signs, observation towers and adequate but natural 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.

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

Factors to be considered



Environmental Impact

Infrastructure and other settlements created for the tourism purpose should not have adverse impact on the surroundings or some corrective measures to be taken to reduce the severity of impacts. The modern amenities provided should not impede, destroy naturalness of the place.

Ecotourism Experience

Tourism is dependent on a subject's quality time, discretion of expenditure and satisfaction. Any change in these factors results in serious consequences for tourism economics. Ecotourism attractions must find a way to provide the means for a fun, revitalization without harming the environment.

Socio-Political Factors

Ecotourism is the opportunity to experience and interact with people of diverse cultural backgrounds. The operator should educate travelers on the subtleties of the local culture and political situation to avoid conflicts.

Infrastructure

Insensitive infrastructure development can have a negative impact on local ecosystems. Implementing impact management in developing stages or mitigating environmental damage from tourist activities in developed area can be helpful.

Economic Impact

Though Ecotourism poses the potential to grab a needed influx of capital and revenue into a local economy, fair distribution of that money is a defining factor of true ecotourism. Positive business practice with a well-planned and managed ecotourism site will reinvest some of the profits in local conservation efforts that recognize sustainability;

Aspects

Environmental Aspects

Ecotourism varies greatly from "eco-resorts," located in exotic locations, to reforestation projects in environmentally sensitive regions of the world, from recreation to helping to build sustainable homes in impoverished countries. Although many organizations are improving environmental conditions, use the ecotourism label only for financial gain causes more ruining than they alleviate.

Experiential Aspects

Due to Behavioral influence on each other, a fine balance exists between benefit and loss to communities affected by ecotourism.

Economic Aspects

Environmental, social and economic goals are often in conflict with one another.

Socio cultural Aspects

Care must be taken not to create socio cultural problems as Ecotourism increases the interaction between people of different cultures and social norms.

Conservation

Ecotourism is the practice of bringing together sustainable travel practices that promote the conservation of protected natural areas while also benefiting local economies.

Impact on Local Economies

Local economies benefit from ecotourism when tourist-related industries build up in support of these activities.

Social and Cultural Awareness

Ecotourism aims to expose tourists to the realities of social and economic climates in an area.

Educational Opportunities

Ecotourism works to combine travel with educational opportunities on sustainability and conversation. It educates travelers on the value of protecting natural areas and resources including concepts of sustainability within local communities and economies.

Economic significance

Ecotourism, usually a form of nature-based tourism, is often claimed to be one of the fastest growing segments of the tourism market globally. It is India's third largest foreign exchange earner having capacity to generate large-scale employment opportunities, particularly in remote and underdeveloped areas. The direct employment about 2.4% of the total labor force and about 22 million indirect employments show that notable section of persons derive their livelihood from tourism. The average employment for the whole tourism sector was 47.5 jobs.

Conservation tool

Ecotourism offers a unique opportunity for tourists to contribute to the conservation of protected habitats, wildlife refuges and parks. "Where areas have been officially reserved for nature conservation, many developing-country governments lack sufficient funds to manage and protect them" The money spent by tourists to visit protected natural areas helps raise funds to continue to protect those areas for future generations.

Ecotourism can be economic key for supporting nature conservation. Being careful on the environment, it should help to conserve nature and thereby contribute to the sustainability of wildlife. It can make tourists more aware of nature and more supportive of its conservation via changes in their personal behaviour, greater political support and larger financial contributions for such conservation (Tisdell and Wilson, 2002a).

Ecotourism can provide much needed revenues for the protection of national parks and other natural areas additionally; ecotourism can provide a viable economic development alternative for local communities with few other income-generating options. Moreover, ecotourism can increase the level of education and activism among travellers, making them more enthusiastic and effective agents of conservation.

So can tourism be a conservation tool?

Ecotourism can be a boon for conservation of endangered species. The passive viewing provides them protection. Tourism attracts revenue which motivates the investor to maintain quality and preserve uniqueness. The constant vigil and attention from conservationists, naturalist visitors will ensure the safety and conservation of the wild life. It can be a very successful project for the humanity

and nature when communication, integration and cooperation between all the stakeholders are maintained.

Communities living next to or within forests should have a greater stake holding in their management and the resultant economic benefits.

Conclusion

Tourism has been growth engine for many economies in the world. It provides income, wealth and employment for generations and helps in the sustainable development of remote areas. In India, tourism provides direct and indirect employment and livelihood to 22 million persons. It contributes an estimated 2.4% of the gross national product. Although having great potential for development in India, tourism still remains a sector that needs serious attention to overcome its negative impacts. It is criticized for deteriorating indigenous culture.

It may have adverse impact on social values such as drug addiction, child prostitution, etc. Can such side effects of such interactions avoidable with social value-based ecotourism? A far more widespread negative impact is caused by mass tourism in environmentally fragile areas like mountains, hills, and deserts and coastal regions. Due to heavy tourist traffic in some areas, the cultural and environmental assets of the community are under threat. Although mitigation measures can be taken and irreparable loss avoided. Ecotourism is 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.

Only ecotourism where the tourists, stakeholders, are well informed and prepared to harness tourism as an engine of growth can yield sustainable results. So with strict regulation and devotion with love for Mother Nature helps economic growth with conservation which proves that ecology is the best economy for sustainable society.

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