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CHAPTER VI-

PLANNING FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF ECO-TOURISM.

The environment means the whole complex of physical, social, cultural, economic and aesthetic factors, which affect individuals and communities and ultimately determine their character, forms of relationship and survival.

Concept of ecotourism means making as little environment impact as possible and helping to sustain the indigenous populace thereby encouraging the preservation of wild life and habitats when visiting a place. This is responsible form of tourism and tourism development, which encourages going back to natural products in every aspects of life. It is also the key to sustainable ecological development.

Ecotourism incorporates adventure travel, cultural exploration and appreciation of nature. It includes education and interpretation of the natural environment and contributes in preservation of ecology. It has environmental and social purpose involved. It is an emerging field and in the phase of development. It is beneficial to people as well as environment.

Today, the 'Green Laws' of conservation are making people aware of how man and the environment can live symbiotically for more time to come and ecotourism is the only way maximize the economic, environmental and social benefits of tourism.

Today, tourism via the concept of ecotourism has viewed perhaps more than any other global industry as a tool for both conservation and local community development. 'Ecotourism embraces the principles of sustainable tourism concerning economic, social and environmental impacts of tourism, states the Quebec declaration, the document approved in 2002 May by delegates to the UN's world ecotourism summit. It goes on to affirm that 'different forms of tourism, especially ecotourism, if managed in a sustainable manner, can represent a valuable economic opportunity for local and sustainable use of nature for future generation.

There are certain findings of the online forum on ecotourism conducted by WTO and UNEP. The important aspects were policy and planning, regulation, certification accreditation, product development, marketing and promotion.

James Mac Gregor of eco-planet, widely recognized for his work in the area of ecotourism and sustainable planning, suggests **three main criteria for Ecotourism:**

1. there must be a direct flow of the reasonable share of the revenue generated by the business to local people and to conservation of the local people environment
2. Ecotourism must follow 'Green Principles'.
3. Tourist must learn about what they are visiting.

The evident problem that surround tourism and the environment have led to the formulation of arrange of management responses to perceived difficulties. This has been mirrored both in the development of site-specific management techniques and more fundamentally, in strategies and approaches aimed at developing sustainable forms of tourism.

There are number management techniques that have been widely applied in areas where protection of environment is a key consideration.

6.1 Key management issues in the planning and development of the ecotourism:

Phase I determine the role of local participation:

Support from community leaders, local peoples, natural habitants of the selected area is necessary in tour planning and implementation. That includes an assessment of how local people can help to achieve set goals through efficiency, increasing project effectiveness, building beneficiary capacity and sharing project cost. In other words, community development is the key factor in developing place as ecotourism spot. It is based on local initiatives, in that it advocates a site- specific approach it finding solution to community problems using community members and community resources.

Phase II-selection of research team:

The team should include abroad multidisciplinary approach and include people in the social science, research and those within the media.

Phase III- Conducting preliminary studies:

This is especially for reconnaissance (recce) of the selected area. It includes political, economical and social conditions of the community in the context of the environment, from existing documents, and by other survey related work.

- Identification and assessment of the following is important:- significance, carrying capacity, needs, local leaders, media, the communities commitment to the project, intersectional involvement, traditional uses of the land, the type of peoples interest and contribution, the role of women, who will manage and he finance the project, land ownership and cultural values and historical importance.

After taking into consideration all these aspects one can take the decision for the future development.

Phase IV- determination of the level of local

involvement:

Tourism should be initiated with the help of broad based community inputs and community should maintain control

of tourism development. Local involvement occurs along a continuum from low intensity to high intensity involvement. In cases where government is not supporting of local government , intermediaries-NGO's can be used to facilitate local participation.

Phase V- Determine an appropriate participation

mechanism:

Here, the study for the development of ecotourism requires the level of intensity of the participation, the nature existing institutions e.g. government, NGO's, citizens group, nature clubs, social groups etc... And the characteristics of the local people. This phase includes information sharing and consultation, which usually takes the form of a citizen advisory committee with representatives from many groups within the community. The government with the help of other groups can set out goals, objectives, action plan and other related aspects.

Phase VI- Initiating dialogues and educational efforts:

The use of the press is important in this phase as a means by which to build consensus through public awareness. Key

community representatives can be used in this process for advertising in school, colleges, universities, study centers, tourist centers, hotels, and food joints etc. The ecotourism team should explain the goals and objectives of the project, how the project will affect the community, the values of the area, any history of threats, and the benefits of the project. Various audiovisual techniques should be used to emphasize these points. Workshops and public meetings can be organized to identify strengths and weaknesses of the project.

Phase VII- collective efforts and decision-making:

With strong government's support the ecotourism project team present the findings of their research to the community together with the possible and resulting a forum through which the team and local people negotiate to reach a final consensus based on the impacts of the project. Later on there will be employment of good and reliable supervisors, contractors for the job and the selection of efficient staff for management and administration purposes.

Phase VIII- development of an action plan and implementation scheme:

In this phase, the team and community develop an action plan for implementing solutions to identified problems. For this, funds will be collected from the all-available resources including governmental funds too. Development of an action plan and implementation will include- the need to increase the community is slandered of living, eco-product shops, research position, park management position and private sector participation, plantation / rearranged of botanical garden construction of fencing around the selected area, approaching higher authority for better connectivity of the spot with the big cities/ world. Moreover, making environment friendly atmosphere around the spot by using of solar energy, by saying no to plythene, pollution etc...

This local action plan then will be integrated into the broader master plan of the project.

Phase IX -Monitoring and evaluation:

Monitoring and evaluation, although often neglected, should occur frequently and over the long term. The key to

evaluation is to discover whether goals and objectives set out early in the project's life cycle have been accomplished or not. For the development of ecotourism, enforcement of guidelines, principles and significance of ecotourism are essential. And for the effective implementation of plan and policies for long term success of this new modern development ideology, enforcement and monitoring policies and evaluation is important.

Phase x- tourist, travel motive, marketing and management:

By increasing awareness of nature, encouraging cultural sensitivity, maximizing economic benefit for local people and minimizing negative impact on the environment are the key's for tourist travel motive. For the marketing and management the two things are important- firstly, attraction for travelers that is biodiversity and the second is ecotourism oriented development infrastructure.

Phase XI- management of environmental quality:

A requirement for the better sustainable ecotourism development in future is EIA-environmental impact

assessment. This is the process of evaluating the impact of development program on environment.

6.2 Key principles of environmental impact assessment:

- Assessment should identify the nature of the proposed and induced activities that are likely to be generated by the project.
- It should identify the elements of the environment that will be significantly affected.
- Assessment will evaluate the nature extent of initial impacts and those that are likely to be generated via secondary effects.
- Assessment will propose management strategies to control impacts and ensure maximum benefits from the project.

Now a days the importance of policies and plans are increasingly recognized, but are proving difficult to implement them because of institutional, political and technical problems. Consequently, most EIAs are undertaken for major projects in which a number of alternatives are assessed. EIA produced to a uniform

standard in accordance with establishes mechanism and procedures.

Ecotourism promoted by single organization with single objectives, without involving all groups leads to poorly balanced strategies. The private sector, academics, and local communities need to work jointly towards the development of effective ecotourism policies. The government's role is to provide the overall policy environment to permit development to produced along an orderly path. This framework needs to clearly involve and welcome participation of other sectors. Ecotourism plans should be widely circulated among community members, NGOs, government agencies, travel companies and other...

There is a need for cooperation among authorities at difficult levels. Local authorities play a key role. Development plans need to identify financial sources and financing mechanism for local, regional and national programmers and cultivate these resources for long term investment. Ecotourism projects rarely succeed as quickly



at profitably as other sectors. So ecotourism requires long term financial commitment.

Educating consumers is key to raising awareness and stimulating demand for socially and environmentally friendly products and services. Once people have a chances to stay in an eco-lodge and to use guided services they are likely to become loyal customers.

The principle / aim of an ecotourism business should be achieveing high level of satisfaction among it's clients by providing quality services and contributing to the conservation of the natural and cultural resources.

6.3 Ways to develop ecotourism:

1. Responsible organization for enlightening nature, wild life, cultural travel to particular place.
2. Provide significant benefit for local residents, involvement of local community in tour planning and implementation.
3. Community support from community leaders and the natural habitants of that area.
4. Identification of site, specific conditions, transforming it into an ecotourism spot.

5. Environmental education.
6. Sustainable garbage management is the only way to overcome the massive problem of waste management.
7. Biodiversity management committee is important to regulate access to the diverse plant and animal genetic resources in a particular place. Others would take adequate safeguards against any misuse of the law, step would be taken to enhance capacity at grassroots level through the BMC to ensure true empowerment to the people. Besides protecting knowledge of local community related to the biodiversity, it is necessary to conserve and develop area important from the standpoint of biological diversity by declaring them as important sites.
8. Plan for lake conservation and cleaning.
9. Civilization still depends on the natural development not only for energy and material but also for vital life support system such as air and water cycles. The survival of the human race depends on knowledge and intelligent action to preserve and enhance environmental quality by means of harmonious rather than disruptive technology.

10 Cleaner production techniques can be important tools for planning and operating tourism facilities in a way that minimizes their environment impacts e.g.- green building using energy efficient and nonpolluting construction material, sewage system and energy sources.

With this water treatment and disposal, waste minimization techniques are also important.

6.4 Ecotourism attractions:

In ecotourism, when we think of attracting tourists to the wilderness, we must consider various aspects, separately, so that people interested in topics of their choice or liking can be entertained, such as –

- Wild life viewing
- Bird watching
- Boating
- Trekking and hiking
- Nature interpretation
- Nature camping
- Observing flora diversity
- Landscape and scenery

We must however, ensure, that we have qualified guides for each of these fields.

6.5 Some basic do's and don'ts of ecotourism that we promote in the Kolhapur are listed below:

Do's:

- Carry back all degradable litter such as empty bottles, tins, plastic bags etc.. These must not litter the environment / be buried. They must be disposed in municipal dustbins only.
- Observe the sanctity holy sites, temples and local cultures
- Cut noise pollution. Do not be blaring a loud radio, tape recorders or other electronic entertainment equipment in nature resorts, sanctuaries and wildlife parks.
- In case temporary toilets are set up near, campsites, after defection, cover with mud or sand. Make sure that the spot is at least 30 meters away from the water source.

- **Respect people's privacy while taking photographs.**
Ask for prior permission before taking a photograph.
- **Ecotourism development could focus on action plan.**

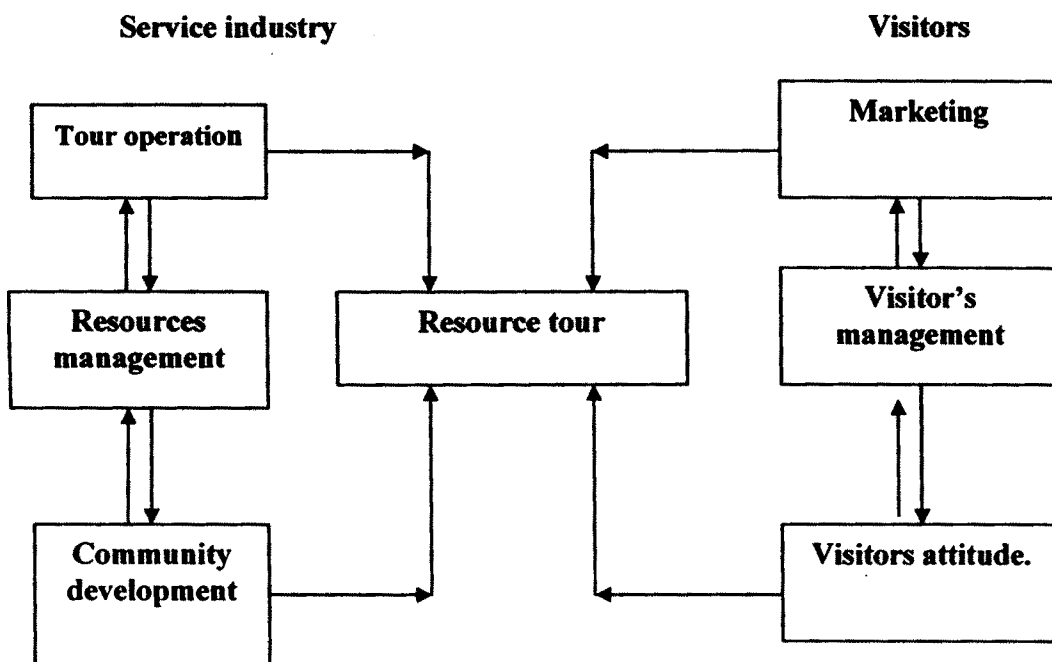
Don'ts:

- **Do not away flora and fauna in the forms of cutting seeds or roots. It is illegal, especially in the biodiversity of the region has to be protected at all costs.**
- **Do not use pollutants such as detergent, in streams or spring while washing and bathing.**
- **Do not use wood as fuel to cook food at the composite**
- **Do not leave cigarettes butts or make open fire in the forests.**
- **Do not consume aerated drinks, alcohol, drugs, or any other intoxicant and throw bottles in the wild.**

- Do not tempt the locals, especially children by offering them foodstuffs or sweets. Respect local tradition.
- Polythene and plastic are non biodegradable and unhealthy for the environment and must not be used and littered

The ecotourism brings valuable foreign exchange which is very much essential for any developing countries at the same time the flow of tourism should not affect the environment . proper act should be enacted and enforced strictly in the national interest.

iv - ECOTOURISM FRAMEWORK.



(source: fennell and eagles 1990)