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ECOTOURISM AND ITS ADVANTAGES

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ABSTRACT

Tourism has been a major social phenomenon of the societies all along. It is motivated by the natural urge of every human being for new experience, adventure, education and entertainment. Tourism's importance, as an instrument for economic development and employment generation, particularly in remote and backward areas, has been well recognized the world over. It is the largest service industry globally in terms of gross revenue as well as foreign exchange earnings (The Eleventh Five-Year Plan (2007-2012)).

Key Words: Tourism, Social phenomenon, Societies all along.

INTRODUCTION

Types of Tourism in India

There are several segments within the Tourism in India and some new up-coming tourism segments added recently. The major Kinds of Tourism are as follow:

Heritage Tourism

India has a rich cultural history and reflection of its glorious past is still visible in its numerous places, forts, places of worship of various religions, ancient monuments etc. So, tourism regarding above mentioned kinds known as Heritage tourism. Heritage tourism itself can be further classified as colonial heritage, religious tourism, industrial, heritage, urban renewal and ethnicity. The Indian Government started to preserve the heritage sites from a tourism perspective (Stepanov A *et al.*, 2004).

Adventure Tourism

India has varied geographical and climatic conditions offer excellent environment and opportunities for adventure sports. Adventure sports like – trekking,

snow climbing. Rock climbing, Cuba driving, skins & river rafting can be undertaking in the country and the country offers several location for such tourism, like the trans Himalayan region, Garhwal & Kumaon mountains, western Ghats, desert of Rajasthan, Andaman & Lakshadweep Islands etc. This is most popular destination for adventure tourism. Ecotourism India has abundant Natural wealth. Eco tourism is belonging to natural beauty & diversity. It is relatively new segment in India. India with its natural diversity is one of the pristine places in the world for eco-tourism. The Himalayans region, Kashmir valley, Kerala, Andaman and Nicobar Islands and Lakshadweep Islands, wild life in forest and Western as well as Eastern Ghats are some of the hot spots for ecotourism in India .

Medical Tourism

It is one of the rapid growing segments in India. It's related to health care therapy system. India has been able to leverage on certain advantages it has over other countries like highly skilled doctors, cost effective treatment, improved quality of private health care etc. India provided treatments for which overseas patients are heart surgery, cosmetic surgery, dental care, and knee transplant. India's traditional rejuvenation therapy like Yoga and Ayurvedic therapy are also attracting foreigners to the India. India's health care delivery market is

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estimated at US \$18.7 billion. And growing at about 13% annually. Wellness & Spa tourism also becoming popular today. The India topography boasts an abundant source of flora & fauna. India has numerous rare and endangered species in its surroundings. The declaration of several wildlife areas and national parks has encouraged the growth of the wildlife resource, which reduced due to the wildlife hunt by several kings in the past. Today, India has many wildlife sanctuaries and protection laws. Currently, there are about 80 national parks and 441 sanctuaries in India, which works for the protection and conservation of wildlife resource in India. There are numerous Botanical and Zoological Gardens in India, which are working towards the enhancement of the Ecosystem. Poaching has stopped to large extent. There are severe punishments for poachers, hunters and illegal traders of animals and trees. Tree plantations are taking place in several places. There are several animal & plant rights organization, who fight for the rights of the animals and plants. Numerous organizations and NGOs are coming forward to provide environmental education to the common people at the grass root level (Vainshelboim AL *et al.*, 2005).

Benefits of Ecotourism

Eco-tourism benefits the economy of the local culture and provides jobs and maintenance of what pure lands India has left.

A main benefit is the economic gain and the attraction of local travel agencies. Not only does ecotourism reduce negative impacts on the environment, but it empowers the locals. Keeping India's land clean and sustained allows wildlife to survive in a natural, unpolluted environment.

This requires the locals to preserve the environment for future generations by supporting the International Human Rights and labor agreements. The ecotourism concerns on our participation during the tour in benefiting the environment and the people. As such, an eco-tourist's role is to conserve and improve the environment of the place he or she visits. It is much more than the love for travel and nature. In ecotourism, the focus is more on creating a sustainable future, where man

and nature can coexist peacefully.

Advantages of Ecotourism

It is low impact tourism, where people make a conscious effort to appreciate the environment, conserve the natural resources, and re-invest sufficient amount of revenues in protecting natural habitat. Ecotourism is good for the local community, as it provides employment, services and stimulates the economy.

It helps in energy conservation and protects the plants and animals from the effects of traditional tourism.

Ecotourism offers new opportunities for small-scale investments and increases the national responsibility in protecting biological resources. Especially in developing countries, it is a means of socio-economic and environmental upliftment.

Ecotourism provides recreational and educational travel without disturbing the harmony of the natural environment.

It helps in reaping the benefits by the participation of people in the conservation of the flora and fauna. Visiting a national park or protected area will contribute towards the park maintenance in the form of fees for the staff taking care of it.

You can admire the craftwork made by local artisans and buying these from them will help their economy as well as conserve the local heritage. Ecotourism can bring us closer to nature, open up to new ideas, take you to places less travelled, and give you a wonderful new experience without harming the environment (Korotkov K, 1998).

CONCLUSION

Ecotourism is a rapidly growing business and can provide the best of all the worlds. With the business of ecotourism growing, it will provide employment to the local people and will ensure that fewer people leave for the cities. The local population will gain new skills, so, they will not be totally dependent on the limited natural resources. Ecotourism is becoming very popular nowadays especially in adventure trips such as mountain climbing, white water rafting, bird watching etc. In such travels, the visitors are expected to clean up the mess before leaving and hence natural habitat is kept undisturbed.

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