Chapter 3
Eco–Cultural Tourism for Biodiversity Conservation and Sustainable Development of Remote Ecosystems in the Third World

G. Poyyamoli
Pondicherry University, India

ABSTRACT

Most of the remote areas such as mountains and islands are characterized by the features such as remoteness, fragility, endemism, and upland/lowland or island/mainland linkages, besides richer biodiversity and indigenous knowledge, thus attracting a large number of quality conscious tourists. However, conventional "top-down", reactive and ad-hoc approaches and ill-conceived "development" activities such as infrastructure for mass tourism will destroy the very natural and cultural resource base on which the tourism thrives in these areas. These trends have led to the paradigm shifts towards community-based, participatory, and pro-active management strategies. Appropriate strategies for integrating biodiversity conservation and sustainable livelihoods by regenerating nature and culture for facilitating sustainable development of remote ecosystems in the third world are discussed in this chapter.

INTRODUCTION

Remote ecosystems such as mountains and islands are blessed with higher ecological and cultural diversity, but yet are fragile, as they are highly susceptible to natural disturbances and human impacts. Hence, many such areas are declared as protected areas (PAs). A large majority of these areas are territories of indigenous people and characterized by the features such as remoteness, higher bio-diversity (BD), fragility, endemism and upland –low land / island- mainland linkages. By virtue of their scenic beauty and rich cultural heritage, along with racial, religious and linguistic diver-

sity, ethnic cuisine, traditional dresses, festivals, etc., they attract an increasing number of tourists, thus earning revenue for the tourism industry, the state and the nation at large. Enjoyment of nature, much of it in Protected Areas (PAs), is recognised as the most prominent cultural ecosystem service (Ceballos-Lascurain, 1996; Millennium Ecosystem Assessment, 2005). Yet until recently, we lacked even a rough understanding of its global magnitude and economic significance. The recent pioneering global review by Balmford et al. (2015) indicated that the terrestrial PAS in Asia attract about an average of 1.70,390 visits /year in contrast to that of European region that receives the highest - 3.8 billion visits/year (global figure -8 billion visits/year). Visitors to terrestrial PAs in Asia/Australasia had been estimated to spend about 85 US $ in 2014 (Balmford et al., 2015) .

However, globally, 'the inviolate space' for wildlife has been shrinking rapidly during the recent decades due to the expanding human activities - tourism, power generation, encroachment, political threats, poaching, invasive species, pollution, modified fire regimes, agriculture, industries/mining,, subsistence settlement, or unsanctioned uses (Buckley, 2012). . It is very much true for the third world. The Aichi Targets aim to address these threats by expanding protection to 10 per cent of marine and 17 per cent of terrestrial and freshwater ecosystems. Aichi Targets' identified a series of goals to be attained by 2020 (CBD, 2011), designed to motivate parties to the Convention to accelerate their efforts to protect the world's remaining biological diversity. The targets are organized nto five strategic goals that seek to: 1) address underlying causes of biodiversity loss by mainstreaming biodiversity across government and society; 2) reduce the direct pressures on biodiversity and promote sustainable use; 3) improve the status of biodiversity by safeguarding ecosystems, species, and genetic diversity; 4) enhance the benefits to all from biodiversity and ecosystem services; and 5) enhance implementation through participatory

planning, knowledge management and capacity building. Each strategic goal has a series of 3-6 Targets, for a total of 20 Targets.

Though there are few success stories for the integration of BD and cultural conservation with local livelihoods, especially through Community Based Ecotourism (CBET) (e.g. Albert, 1996; Barbier, 1990; Biggs et al., 2011; Book binder et al., 1998; Christian et al., 1996; Eshetu, 2014; Leitmann, 1998; Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity, 2004; Weinberg et al., 2002) or Community based Eco-cultural tourism (CBECT), there are several avoidable conflicts between development and conservation of PAs in the third world due to the conventional "top-down" bureaucratic, reactive and ad-hock approaches and ill-conceived and unplanned/ unregulated "development" activities such as infrastructure for mass tourism that destroy the very natural / cultural resource base on which tourism thrives (e.g. George & Poyya moli, 2007; McCool, 2006; Roe et al., 1997; Self et al., 2010; Singh, et al., 1989). In Srilanka, Wickramasinghe (2009) points out that lack of awareness and understanding on the ecotourism concept, inadequate coordination, non-compliance to principles and poor interpretation services were the key constraints and challenges. Several workers have pointed out the problems caused by ill-conceived and poorly regulated ecotourism such as the rise in the production of wastes, the alteration of ecosystems, the introduction of exotic species of animals and plants, the loss of traditional habits (hard work to idleness), the increase in prostitution (sex tourism), the narcotic traffic, more forest fires and the increase in the prices of goods and services (e.g. houses, labour around tourist destination). (Belsoy et al., 2012).

In general, CBET / CBECT is culturally and ecologically sensitive and responsible tourism that is managed by the community for the tourist destinations. With general tourism, tourist visits are often marketed and organised by private travel

Related Content

Tea Tourism and the Importance of Tea Tourists' Guidance in India
Birsen Bulut Solakand Sakib Bin Amin (2020). *Cases on Tour Guide Practices for Alternative Tourism (pp. 119-131).*
www.irma-international.org/chapter/tea-tourism-and-the-importance-of-tea-tourists-guidance-in-india/258156

Tourism and Encroachment Activities at the Lame Bura Game Reserve, Bauchi State, Nigeria
Timothy K. Gontul, Tina Odinakachi Iirmdu, Mantau Maisamari, Timchang Nimnan Maikanu, Istifanus G. Kassamand Mary Onyinyechi Uchenna (2019). *International Journal of Tourism and Hospitality Management in the Digital Age (pp. 44-62).*
www.irma-international.org/article/tourism-and-encroachment-activities-at-the-lame-bura-game-reserve-bauchi-state-nigeria/231524

Tourism and Encroachment Activities at the Lame Bura Game Reserve, Bauchi State, Nigeria
Timothy K. Gontul, Tina Odinakachi Iirmdu, Mantau Maisamari, Timchang Nimnan Maikanu, Istifanus G. Kassamand Mary Onyinyechi Uchenna (2019). *International Journal of Tourism and Hospitality Management in the Digital Age (pp. 44-62).*
www.irma-international.org/article/tourism-and-encroachment-activities-at-the-lame-bura-game-reserve-bauchi-state-nigeria/231524

Enlivening the Effect of Tourists' Knowledge and Involvement on Malaysian Heritage Food (MHF) Towards Food Tourism Image in Malaysia
Siti Radhiah Omar, Shahrim Ab Karim, Siti Suriawati Isaand Siti Nazirah Omar (2019). *International Journal of Tourism and Hospitality Management in the Digital Age (pp. 23-42).*
www.irma-international.org/article/enlivening-the-effect-of-tourists-knowledge-and-involvement-on-malaysian-heritage-food-mhf-towards-food-tourism-image-in-malaysia/218907

Airbnb or Hotel?: A Comparative Study on the Sentiment of Airbnb Guests in Sydney – Text Analysis Based on Big Data
Zhiyong Li, Honglin Chenand Xia Huang (2020). *International Journal of Tourism and Hospitality Management in the Digital Age (pp. 1-10).*
www.irma-international.org/article/airbnb-or-hotel/259003