Chapter 1
An Overview of Community and Ecotourism

ABSTRACT

This chapter introduces community intervention strategies in the protected area (PA)-based ecotourism destinations and delineates the scope and relevance of the research included in this book. An outline of ecotourism development initiatives in India, considering ecotourism as a common property resource (CPR) management strategy has been presented. The interlinkages between community and ecotourism has been introduced along with an orientation of grassroots-level institutional framework of ecotourism in India for the better understanding of the research study.

BACKGROUND OF THE WORK

Human development is to be directed in a manner in which support both inter-generational and intra-generational equity through its continuum (Norgaard, 1991). As Garrod & Fyall, (1998) had suggested, the existence of constant capital should be the basis of all human development initiatives. In turn, it is argued that the human development should meet not only the requirement of the current or intra-generational equity but also to meet the future inter-generational equity particularly in the case of anthropocentric development arena (Richardson, 1997). In the resource appropriation parlance, materialism and economic growth are the inevitable component of anthropocentric view.

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(IUCN), United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and World Wildlife Fund (WWF) underlined the importance of quality of human life through the quality, diversity and quantity of the ecosystem in the process of sustainable development construed under anthropocentric approach (IUCN, UNEP & WWF, 1991). In other words, human well being is the end and the conservation of the nature’s diversity and quality is the means.

As a developmental strategy meant for sustainable development, ecotourism is centered around natural resource diversities, host community and the visitors. Tool for mitigating the negative impact of mass tourism and to approach the destination development in a off beaten way the concept of ecotourism is widely used. Both in demand and supply side, different resource appropriation strategies were explored. Many pro environment like reducing the consumptive behavior or modifying the ‘tourist syndrome’ (Frankiln, 2003; Carlisle & Pastor-Alfonso, 2016), actions like travel lighter, encouragement to low emitters and provision to identify footprint on immediate environment etc., were practiced in demand side. Similarly, the supply side initiatives consists of polluter pays principles, conservation and management of natural resources, adoption of various visitor management strategies like routing, zonation, charging fees and fines, regulatory and voluntary measures etc., at the destinations (Hammer, Kamal-Chaoui, & Plouin, 2011; Bittar-Rodrigues & Prideaux, 2017).

Environmental and social planning is considered as the criteria for successful ecotourism destinations. Over-emphasis on ecological/environmental issues can be reduced through a prudent approach of clubbing the ecosystems with the fabric of social life. As local culture and environment are the integral part of ecotourism, it cannot be developed out of every type of conventional tourism as an alternative to mass tourism. World Conservation Strategy stated that interdependencies between environmental, economic and social issues in the tourism require an strong emphasis on eco development. (Dowling & Fennel, 2003). The critical success of ecotourism depends on: (a) inclusive and equity approach to share socio-economic benefits, (b) conservation of biological and cultural diversity as well as livelihood, (c) nature-culture experience, (d) enhanced conservation, economic development and cultural revival, (e) respect of physical, natural, and socio cultural resources of the destination, (f) minimal impact on resource under appropriation (Weaver, 2001; Wearing & Neil, 2009; Bittar-Rodrigues & Prideaux, 2017).

In the context of sustainability, it imperative to have a detailed analysis on the responsibility for management of ecotourism resources. Empirical and literary evidence (Lindberg & Hawkins, 1993; Page & Dowling, 2002;
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