

Chapter 11

Mountain Tourism Development: Evaluating Problems and Prospects of Nature-Based Tourism in the Himalayan Region of Darjeeling, India

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ABSTRACT

This study focuses on nature based sustainable tourism development in the Himalayan region of Darjeeling and other surrounding areas of West Bengal, India that affects tourist movement, protection of natural resources, and improves socio-economic conditions of local people. The purpose of nature-based tourism, its significance, and its effects on the tourism industry, local communities, and the environment of the tourism zone in the study area are discussed in detail here. Understanding the varied effects of nature-based tourism on the local economy and society is the paper's main concern. In some cases, it can contribute to conservation, protection of wildlife and economic benefit to the local people. In other cases, lack of proper planning can be detrimental to the environment, flora, fauna, and local people. Nature education, communication, awareness, impact analysis, measuring carrying capacity, visitor management, etc. are essential to reduce negative impact on the environment that affects socio-economic life of the local people, are focused on in this chapter.

1. INTRODUCTION

Any form of tourism that has a direct connection to the natural world is known as nature-based tourism. It includes ecotourism, adventure tourism, wildlife tourism and nature retreats. A prudent tour of

DOI: 10.4018/979-8-3693-0823-3.ch011

a natural region protects the environment and promotes community welfare. Nature based tourism is closely related with the concept of eco-tourism.

This paper explores many forms of natural attractions and how they affect the Darjeeling tourism industry, in turn influencing traveller behaviour and the socioeconomic well-being of the surrounding areas. This article explains the significance of nature-based tourism, its value to the industry, how it affects local communities, and how it affects Darjeeling's natural tourism resources. Understanding the varied effects of nature-based tourism on the local economy is the paper's main concern. In some cases it can contribute to conservation, protection of wildlife and economic benefit to the local people. In other cases lack of proper planning can be detrimental to the environment, flora, fauna and local people. Nature education, communication, awareness, impact analysis and survey, measuring carrying capacity, visitor management etc. are essential to reduce negative impact on the socio-economic life of the local people. Here, it is also highlighted how the government, local communities, and tourism service providers all have responsibilities.

2. OBJECTIVES

The main objective of this study is to evaluate problems and prospects of nature based Tourism in Himalayan region in the study area. However, the objectives in specific are:

1. To understand the concept and importance of nature based Tourism in the Mountain area.
2. To find out the problems and prospects of nature based Tourism in the study area
3. To evaluate the issues and challenges of the destinations in mountain region.

3. METHODOLOGY

Extensive interviews with residents, business owners, and visitors were conducted in order to learn more about the overall makeup of the local community as well as some of the problems with nature based Tourism. These experiences were included because they show a variety of problems in popular tourist areas. Utilizing self-administered questionnaires, this study was carried out. In order to collect information from the primary sources, two sets of structured questionnaires were developed for both tourists and locals, as well as local service providers. In addition, observation, and interview techniques were used for the aforementioned goal.

4. NATURE BASED TOURISM: MEANING AND CONCEPT

Responsible nature-based travel involves visiting natural regions while protecting the environment and promoting the well-being of the local populace. Both the destination and the local indigenous population receive financial incentives for conservation. Tourism related to nature helps the local economy and promotes the preservation of natural resources. Travel to natural area is meant by 'nature-based tourism'. 'Ecotourism', on the other hand, is described as ethical travel to natural regions that preserves the flora,

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