



Business Opportunities of Eco-Tourism in Maharashtra

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Abstract :

Ecotourism (also called sustainable tourism) can be defined by a diversity of travel practices, but it all comes down to a general set of ideas. As an eco-tourism, someone have to decide to travel in a way that shows respect to nature and does not contribute to its degradation.

Moreover, ecotourism is a part of environmental conservation and understanding what the needs of the people are who are local to the area so that we can help to improve their quality of life. Eco-tourism involves learning more about the history of other cities and preserving historical landmarks. This paper focuses on the ecotourism in Maharashtra.

Keywords : *tourism, ecology, sustainable development*

Introduction :

Tourism is a extensive and fastest growing industry and contributes significantly to the world GDP. According to a report published by the World Travel and Tourism Council in 2017, the business accounted for 10.2% of the global GDP. Tourism entails various categories such as –

- Adventure tourism
- Business tourism
- Culinary tourism
- Cultural tourism
- Ecotourism
- Medical tourism
- Religious tourism
- Sports Tourism



This paper focuses on the various aspect of ecotourism.

Eco-Tourism :

As defined by the International Ecotourism Society, ecotourism refers to “responsible travel that conserves the environment and improves the well-being of local people”. Also called “nature tourism”, the objective of ecotourism is to minimize the impact brought about by tourism on the environment. The idea is to focus on hitching conservation, communities and sustainable development through the means of travel.

Benefits of Ecotourism

Ecotourism is one of the most principled ways of traveling. It benefits the traveller, the local, and nature. Here are some specific advantages of ecotourism:

Cultural Enrichment

Ecotourism helps build cultural consciousness by fostering respect for the place you travel to and the community you visit. When tour operators aren't commodifying a destination for the sake of making a buck, an authentic exchange can happen between the guide and the visitor. Not only do the visitors come away with an immersive, memorable experience, but the destination is able to share its culture to the outside world in an abandoned way.

Educational Experiences

Ecotourism is one way to educate the public about a some location, and also about the importance of caring for the environment. Because of the damage of climate change, travellers are becoming increasingly aware of the urgency of action founded in education. What better classroom is there than nature itself? Ecotours aren't just lectures, they are hands-on experiences that give visitors numerous opportunities to learn new skills and information.

Economic Growth

Unlike commercial tours, which are anxious with growing a private company's bottom line, ecotourism operators are necessarily concerned about the welfare of the local community — including the economy. A truly eco-conscious tour will have been planned and accomplished locally, with the consent and involvement of the residents. This not only nurtures good



relationships, but also helps create local jobs. Tour guides, homestay hosts, entertainers, translators, and additional, are a result of the ecotourism industry.

Environmental Conservation

Naturally, ecotourism is focused on the environment protection. Not only do ecotour operators offer experiences that have a low influence on nature, the revenue of legitimate eco-friendly experiences will go towards preserving resources and protecting the environment.

Importance of Ecotourism

People who involve in ecotourism need to abide by certain guidelines. The principles of ecotourism are beneficial for the world as a whole, given the constantly worsening climatic conditions. Given below are the benefits of ecotourism:

- Ecotourism emphasizes on unadulterated, pristine natural environments;
- It builds cultural and environmental consciousness;
- It encourages positive experience for visitors as well as swarms;
- It reduces the impact of tourism on the environment;
- It increases employment and financial opportunities for local people;
- It inspires conservation by providing financial benefits in its favour.

Is ecotourism a good career option?

Are you, more often than not, fascinated by the beauty of nature? Do you strongly feel that the nature should be protected? Well then, this is the career for you! Here are some motives why you should take up ecotourism as a career.

- We will be a part of one of the fastest-growing industries, in terms of size and economy;
- If we are passionate about nature, you will be able to significantly contribute to its well-being;
- We will be responsible for promoting the cultural and economic significance of a tourist destination;
- We will contribute significantly to the increase in employment rate, owing to ecotourism;



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- Since tourism is a global industry, we will get the opportunity of working with international counterparts and acquire global exposure.

Scope of Ecotourism :

Tourism, as a whole, has adversely pretentious the natural beauty of certain places. This is a consequence of commercializing tourist destinations in order to suit the tourism standards. The constantly worsening climate is a wake-up call for tourism enthusiasts. In the face of this adversity, nature tourism has come as a blessing. The impact of ecotourism is positive and beneficial for hosts, travellers as well as the world, in general. Ecotourism, as a career, presents professionals with the chance of looking at the world with a different perspective and working towards achieving a better environment to live in.

Types of jobs in ecotourism

Ecotourism is catching stride with other forms of tourism and it is happening fast. There are varied types of jobs in ecotourism in dissimilar sections of the sector. Some of the job roles are explained below:

- **Jobs related to assessment and development of locations:**
The job roles that come under this group are – Tourism and Human Resources Advisor, Ecotourism Development Specialist, Sustainable Tourism Development Manager, etc. If we assume a role in this sector of ecotourism, your job responsibilities would include determining if a tourist location has the potential for sustainable tourism, influences of tourism on the biodiversity of the location, and determining how bringing in ecotourism to the location would benefit the local people.
- **Jobs related to sustainable management:**
This sector of ecotourism includes jobs like Ecotourism Project Manager, Sustainable Tourism Operator, Nature Tourism Ranger, etc. If you plan to work in this section, you will be responsible for the day-to-day functioning of the ecotourism business. Our job



role would require supervising operations and projects, allocating budget, building partnerships with local communities and developing local capacity.

- **Jobs related to communications and marketing:**
Like any other sector, marketing is an vital component of the ecotourism industry. The job roles that we can take up under this category are – Protected Areas Communications Officer, Tourism Marketing Manager, Tourism Communications Manager, etc. Our job responsibilities would include promotion of the place or firm we work for, using the media platform for campaigning purposes, strategizing marketing campaigns, and attracting customers.

Ecotourism in Maharashtra :

Maharashtra has large number of eco-tourism places. Following are the best ecotourism destinations in Maharashtra.

Saguna Bagh



For an ecotourism lover, Saguna Bagh is the best place to fall under Maharashtra Ecotourism. It is a place developed by a Gandhian freedom fighter Harikaka Bhadselev, where there is a strong objective of forming a peasant organization that can effectively support a social worker.



Nowadays hundreds of people visit Saguna Bagh to find peace, happiness and to learn the hard work of agriculture. Trekking and numerous adventurous activities can also be done at this place. The best part of the Bau is that they extract whatever they grow from the kitchen and recycle the waste from the kitchen to fertilize the farm. Those who are farming. Nothing is wasted here, everything is properly used. You are not allowed to throw plastic inside the premises.

Karla Caves



Karla Caves are located in the lap of Sahyadri Range, with lots of ancient architecture of caves. Lovers of greenery and waterfalls are most attracted to this place. The view of the moss nearby the caves and the esoteric atmosphere surrounding the caves certainly looks like the perfect place for eco-tourism lovers. We can also see different species of migratory birds during the rainy season. We can also enjoy going to Karla Fort. It is also a famous destination for trekkers. People here are so grounded that they do not believe in ruining and sabotaging the environment.

Bhimashankar



Bhimashankar is situated in the ghat area of Sahyadri hills and it looks like a beautiful green carpet during the rainy season. It looks fresh and pure. It gives a view of nature's biodiversity. With abundant flora and fauna, dazzlingly beautiful, rare animal breeds, this is the place to hang out with family and friends and make them aware that even eco-tourism travel can be so beautiful and admirable. You can easily travel by road from many places in Maharashtra to Bhimashankar and the nearest railway station is Shivaji Nagar railway station in Pune. Proficient in trekking, most trekkers come here and enjoy the activity. New people should avoid it.

Matheran



Matheran is called a hill station and there are about 28 viewpoints scattered around. Matheran is famous for its benign climate and various trekking points. The place is a favorite of many tourists, especially people or students of Mumbai, who love eco-tourism, for them, Matheran is their closest and favorite place during the rainy season. Matheran has various trekking routes, the most famous one being from the Garbert Plateau. The best time to visit Matheran is from March



to May, and it is best to visit Matheran during the rainy season. The rain adds to the impeccable beauty of this place. Roads and lanes get mud, but people do not want sustainable roads because they believe in sustainable tourism. They believe that this is the beauty of Matheran.

Morachi Chincholi



Morachi Chincholi, the name itself indicates the place. It is basically a village of tamarind trees and a city of peacocks dancing all around. It is an auspicious day for fun and nature lovers. Nature has always blessed this place. The place is located near Pune and is well connected by road transport. The main attraction of this place is its unmatched natural beauty and the impeccable fresh color of nature. It is also a center for various recreational activities. Many activities such as puppet shows, magic shows are organized there especially for children. This place is best for those who are looking for a break from daily life and who are looking for peace and love from nature. Locals earn through available natural resources and do not sell sugar or technical things around the place.

Igatpuri



One of the famous tourist destinations of Maharashtra, Igatpuri is located near Nashik. This place will be built round survival during the monsoon. It gives a true symbol of natural beauty with filled freshness in the air. It is a place surrounded by many springs, surrounded by greenery and lakes. The Bhatsa River Valley and Camel Valley are the two main attractions of this place. Once visiting this place you will get to see about nature and various species of flora and fauna.

Kolad



If you are planning to make your trip memorable as well as an adventure then Collard is an ideal place to visit. It is said to be a attractive destination in Maharashtra, with a picture-perfect household, huge camps, and many adventure activities. White-water rafting is the most well-known activity to perform in the waters of the Kolad. Zip lining, canoeing, and trekking are some other well-known activities in Kola. Some of the nearest places for nature lovers to visit are Tamini Falls, Bhira Dam and Kuda Caves, turquoise waters and lush greenery, making it an exciting place for eco-tourism lovers to visit.



Tapola



Tapola is known as Mini Kashmir. It is basically a small village about 25 km from Mahabaleshwar. The place is famous for boating and its rare scenery and natural landscape. If you are planning to travel to Mahabaleshwar, Tapola is a beautiful place that no one should miss. A God-tourism lover in Tapola, which turns into a bed of flowers during the monsoon, would love to visit Kas Pathar. A nature lover would love the view of Koyna Dam whereas if you are an adventure lover then enjoy many activities at Sivasagar Lake. If it is, it would be best for them. The aroma of strawberry farms will touch your heart during the strawberry season.

Opportunities of Ecotourism

Joining the ecotourism cause is a tactic of guaranteeing the tourism industry will continue prospering and providing social and economic benefits to destinations and communities throughout the globe. Ecotourism provides the opportunity for immersion into the natural world in an enjoyable and actual manner, resulting in greater compassion and better stewardship of the world's remaining natural wonders.

India is 10th on the list of plant variety and 4th in Asia. The Indian subcontinent offers diverse variety of flora and fauna as described by Botanical Survey of India. With a network of around 668 protected area covering 1,61,221 sq km (4.90% of total geographic area) which comprises 102 National parks, 512 wildlife sanctuaries, 46 conservation reserves, 4 community reserves and 5 UNESCO designated heritage sites. Ecotourism in India increased importance when UNWTO designated the year 2002 as international year of Ecotourism. In terms of resources available



there are number of Botanical Park, zoological garden, biosphere reserves, wildlife reserves which pays to its flora and fauna. Ministry of tourism has identified 8 different categories of resources which can serve as potential ecotourism destinations. Maharashtra has massive potential of tourism. Maharashtra includes many eco-tourism destinations including cas-pathar, Mahabaleshwar, Chikhaldara, TAdoba, Gadchiroli, etc. Along with these Maharashtra has huge number of forts. The forts in Maharashtra are famous and rich in architecture. It also has opportunities in adventure sports counting trekking.

CONCLUSION

It is evident that global tourism sector is expected to grow worldwide creating economic benefit through its multiplier effect on Indian economy. In such a case a market based sustainable tourism model through advancement of ecotourism could act as ‘development paradigm’ and a major engine of sustainable economic growth which could help in reducing problem of huge income disparity in the company. Presently ecotourism is a highly unregulated market in India with its major challenge being lack of uniform definition. For ecotourism to be developed India must develop a constant national level ecotourism or a broader level sustainable tourism strategy like other countries. Maharashtra has rich tradition of ecology, adventure and forests. Maharashtra has potential to develop eco-tourism as main stream business with proper planning and implementation. The political will is essential to develop the eco-tourism in Maharashtra.

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