

ECOTOURISM AND WILD LIFE MANAGEMENT

- **CHAPTER ONE**
- **THE CONCEPT OF ECOTOURISM**
- **Meaning and Nature of Ecotourism**
- The origin of ecotourism as a concern can be traced back to the 1960s when ecologists and environmentalists became **concerned over the inappropriate use of natural resources.**
- The term was 1st introduced in **1965** by the Mexican ecologist named **Hetzer**

- According to Hetzer, ecotourism should have: **minimum environmental impact, and maximum respect for host cultures, maximum economic benefits to the host country's grassroots, and Maximum 'recreational' satisfaction to participating tourists**
- Ecotourism is an **environmentally responsible travel** & visitation to **relatively undisturbed natural areas**, in order to enjoy and appreciate nature

- It promotes conservation, has low visitor negative impact and provides for beneficially active socio- economic involvement of local populations
- **Laarman** and **Durst** (1987), defined it as a nature tourism in which the 'traveler is drawn to a destination because of his or her interest in **one or more features of that destination's** natural history.
- The visit **combines** education, recreation, and often adventure.

- Ziffer (1989) defined ecotourism as a form of tourism inspired **primarily by the natural history of an area**, including its indigenous cultures
- The eco-tourist practices a **non-consumptive use of wildlife** and **natural resources** and contributes to the visited area through **labor or financial means** aimed at directly benefiting the conservation of the site and the economic well-being of the local residents.

Boo 1990 defined Ecotourism as, travelling to relatively undisturbed natural areas with the specific objective of: studying, admiring, enjoying the scenery and its wild plants and animals

- The Ecotourism Society defines ecotourism as purposeful travel to *natural areas* to: Understand the culture and the natural history of the environment

- **Characteristics and principles of ecotourism**
- Kutay (1993) argued that real ecotourism is more than travel to enjoy or appreciate nature.
- It also includes minimization of environmental and cultural consequences, contribution to conservation & communities, and environmental education.
- Honey suggested that **real ecotourism has seven characteristics**

- In general, there are **five** core principles that are fundamental to ecotourism.
- They are that ecotourism is nature based, ecologically sustainable, environmentally educative, locally beneficial and generates tourist satisfaction.

1. Nature based /should involve travel to natural areas

- Ecotourism is based on the natural environment with a focus on its biological, physical & cultural features.
- The conservation of the natural resources is essential to the planning, development & management of ecotourism

2. Environmentally educative/should builds environmental awareness for tourists and the residents

- . The educative characteristic of ecotourism is a key element that distinguishes it from other forms of nature based tourism
- Ecotourism education can influence tourist, community & industry behavior & assist in the long term sustainability of tourist activity in natural areas
- Eco-tourists expect high levels of ecological information.

3. Ecologically sustainable/ minimum impacts, maximum respect for culture and funds for conservation

- The very incorporation of 'eco' in its title suggests that ecotourism should be an ecologically sustainable form of tourism. This broadly defined travel oriented towards the natural setting is generally expected to respect & protect the environment & culture of the host country/ region.

4. Locally beneficial in financial, culture and human rights

Local communities can become involved in ecotourism operation, & in the provision of knowledge, services, facilities & products

- . Ecotourism provides **alternative income** and employment for local communities.
- . In addition to social and cultural benefits, ecotourism can also **generate income for resource conservation and management.**