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Programme: M.Sc., Environmental Science and Sustainable
Management

Course Title : **Sustianable Ecotourism**
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Module-IV
Ecotourism and Community

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ECOTOURISM AND COMMUNITY

- ◉ One of the priorities of community-based ecotourism is that generated flows contribute to balance environmental, economic and human development of these sites.
- ◉ Although this is generally a small-scale tourism, it presents many delicate issues that must be carefully managed.
- ◉ The challenges are not only related with nature conservation needs, but more by the socio-economic reality of local communities. In any case, there must be a clear understanding about the relationship that must be established between local communities and conservation and how it can be improved through ecotourism.
- ◉ Before developing this type of tourism should be assessed whether site conditions are suitable and if they meet the essential preconditions for its development. Furthermore, ecotourism projects, to be implemented, must be articulated with other programs for conservation and sustainable development.
- ◉ The type and scale of these projects should conform to the characteristics of natural resources and cultural heritage and should meet the preferences and expectations of communities.
- ◉ For these, and because they have often a total lack of information for tourism demand, it's needed effective structures to allow their intervention and ensure benefits achievement.
- ◉ Also in this field, the communities will need continued access to training, advice and support the development, management and marketing of the product created.

- ◉ All ecotourism products should provide high quality experiences and be subject to a management plan properly structured.
- ◉ Moreover, these experiences must involve media awareness of visitors and tour operators on issues related to conservation and the host community, and should include mechanisms for their support.
- ◉ Finally, and because these projects must be conceived and built within an integrated and long-term strategy, it is essential to engage the various stakeholders.
- ◉ The relationship between residents, government entities and/or local authorities, tour operators, NGOs will identify the role of each of the players, ensure the commitment made by each of them and, especially, in many cases, help the communication process.

- ⦿ Construction of means of accommodation and support infrastructures such as a restaurant
- ⦿ Creation of a museum near the eco hotspot
- ⦿ Awareness of communities to a bigger attention to hygiene and waste treatment, and also for a harmonization of environmental resources and the prominent needs of the population
- ⦿ Training for members of the community in the area of hotels and restaurants (the host service, table service, planning and preparation of meals, cleaning) and tourism (training of nature guides, preparation of content associated with environmental interpretation and environmental routes, technical monitoring and groups management)
- ⦿ Identification of activities which complement the tourism product (traditional activities such as handicraft, production and processing of agricultural products, honey production, fishing, boating and biking, among others)
- ⦿ Preparation of various package tours in order to market this tourism product either directly or through intermediaries (Travel Agencies and Tour Operators).

- Their socio-cultural perspective is characterized by a diversity of ethnic groups, marked by the particularities of each group that are reflected in the forms of social life.
- Contributions in aspects such as
 - planning,
 - construction methods and materials,
 - religious beliefs and rituals,
 - Cuisine
 - handicraft production and
 - other productive activities with economic value

Sustainable tourism

- Aims to maintain a balance between protecting the environment;
- Maintains cultural integrity and establishes social justice;
- Promotes economic benefits;
- Meets the needs of the host population in terms of improving living standards both in the short and long term throughout the globe; and
- Maintains inter and intra-generational equity (Liu., 2003) and viability of the destination for the foreseeable future (Butler, 1993).

Tourism resources

- Tourism consists of two main types of resources, namely attractions and infrastructure or support services.
- Attractions vary and can include natural, cultural and built sites as well as special events and festivals, or be associated with recreational activities (Weaver and Lawton, 2014) (see Fig. 19.1).
- The tourism inventory also includes accommodation, restaurants, transport and other support services.

An inventory of tourist attractions – Natural

Category	Site		Event
Natural	TOPOGRAPHY e.g. mountains, canyons, beaches, volcanoes, caves, fossil sites CLIMATE e.g. temperature, sunshine, precipitation HYDROLOGY e.g. lakes, rivers, waterfalls, hot springs WILDLIFE e.g. mammals, birds, insects, fish LOCATION e.g. centrality, extremity	Protected areas, hiking trails Scenic highways, scenic lookouts, landmarks, wildlife parks	Volcanic eruptions Tides Animal migrations (e.g. caribou, geese)

(Source: Weaver and Lawton, 2006, p.130).

An inventory of tourist attractions – Cultural

<p>Cultural</p>	<p>PREHISTORICAL e.g. Aboriginal sites</p> <p>HISTORICAL e.g. battlefields, old buildings, museums, ancient monuments, graveyards, statues</p> <p>CONTEMPORARY CULTURE e.g. architecture, ethnic neighbourhoods, modern technology</p> <p>ECONOMIC e.g. farms, mines, factories</p> <p>RECREATIONAL e.g. integrated resorts, golf courses, ski hills, theme parks, casinos</p> <p>RETAIL e.g. mega-malls, shopping districts</p>		<p>Battle re-enactments, commemorations, festivals, world fairs</p> <p>Sporting events, Olympics</p> <p>Markets</p>
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(Source: Weaver and Lawton, 2006, p.130).

Sustainable tourism - difficult to define

- ◉ ‘To the tourist industry, it means that development is appropriate; to the conservationist, it means that principles articulated a century ago are once again in vogue; to the environmentalist, it provides a justification for the preservation of significant environments from development; and to the politician, it provides an opportunity to use words rather than actions’ (Butler, 1999, p. 11).
- ◉ The World Tourism Organisation (WTO) defined sustainable tourism development as meeting:

‘...the needs of present tourists and host regions while protecting and enhancing opportunities for the future. It is envisaged as leading to management of all resources in such a way that economic, social and aesthetic needs can be fulfilled while maintaining cultural integrity, essential ecological processes, biological diversity and life support systems’ (WTO, 2001, cited in Liu, 2003, p.460).

Sustainable tourism in developing countries

- Found in the form of ecotourism or community-based tourism.
- Provides employment, income-generating opportunities, and financing for community projects, which help preserve social ties and prevent out-migration from rural communities.
- Benefits may accrue to elite factions of the community, with limited benefits to the poor.
- Where tourism entrepreneurs interested in implementing initiatives that help alleviate poverty, government support and commitment to welfare of citizens essential success (Harrison, 2009).

Ecotourism and Community based tourism (CBT)

- In developing countries, e.g. Fiji, ecotourism and community-based tourism developed as complementary to more conventional mass tourism products,
- Found in the form of activities, e.g. village visits, cultural performances, and nature treks.
- Recently indigenous entrepreneurs and communities have developed budget resorts and village stays, catering for backpackers and independent travellers (see case study).

Tools of sustainability

1. Area protection
 2. Industry regulation
 3. Visitor management techniques
 4. Environmental impact assessment (EIA)
 5. Carrying capacity calculations
- Consultation/ participation techniques
 - Codes of conduct (tourist, industry and hosts)
 - Sustainability indicators
 - Footprinting
 - Certification
 - Sustainable livelihoods framework

(Source: Mowforth and Munt, 2016, pp. 114-115).

Ecotourism can

- Has the 'potential to aid in protecting endemic species, and to provide alternative or supplementary livelihoods and potentially alleviate poverty' (Farrelly, 2009, p.2);
- Can empower local communities (Scheyvens, 2000; Sofield, 2003).
- Can contribute to conservation and revival of endangered cultures, but can also damage local cultures, economies, and environments (de Kadt, 1979; Weaver, 1998); and
- With suitable planning and management, ecotourism can be used as a tool to promote conservation and sustainable development in poor, remote rural areas.

Community based tourism (CBT)

- CBT aims to improve the quality of life of the community residents by:
 - maximizing local economic benefits;
 - conserving the natural and built environment; and
 - providing visitors a high quality, value for money experience (Park and Yoon, 2009; Park *et al.*, 2008).
- More sustainable forms of tourism have concentrated on a community development approach (Goodwin and Santilli, 2009).
- ‘Community’ refers to people who share a sense of purpose and common goals (Joppe, 1996). These may be geographical, or based on heritage and cultural values.

CBT defined...

‘Tourism development, which considers the needs and interests of the popular majority, alongside the benefit of economic growth. Community-based tourism development would seek to promote the economic, social, and cultural well-being of the popular majority. It would also seek to strike a balanced and harmonious approach to development that would stress considerations such as the compatibility of various forms of tourism with other components of the local economy: the quality of development, both culturally and environmentally; and the divergent needs, interests, and potentials of the community and its inhabitants’ (Brohman, 1996, p.60).

Pro-poor tourism (PPT)

- PPT is an approach to tourism development, which asserts:

‘...that greater benefits from tourism can be spread to the poor by encouraging a wide range of players (community, private sector, civil society, government) working at a range of scales (local, national, regional) to spread the benefits of tourism more widely and unlock livelihood opportunities for the poor within tourism and connected sectors. This can lead to improvements, for example, in policy, in labour practices of hotels and resorts, and better linkages between related sectors such as agriculture and fisheries’ (Scheyvens and Russell, 2010, p.1).

Pro-poor tourism benefits (see Table 19.2)

Increase economic benefits	Enhance non-financial livelihood impacts	Enhance participation and partnerships
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased local employment, wages, commitments to local jobs, training of local people. • Expand local enterprise opportunities – including those that provide services to tourism operations, e.g. food suppliers, and those that sell to tourists, e.g. handicraft makers, guides, cultural performers. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Capacity building – training • Minimize environmental impacts • Monitor use of natural resources • Improve social and cultural impacts • Increase local access to infrastructure and services provided for tourists, e.g. roads, communications, healthcare and transport 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create more supportive policies and planning framework that enables participation by the poor • Increase participation of the poor in government and private sector decision making • Build pro-poor partnerships with the private sector • Increase flow of information and communication between stakeholders

EX PPT benefits in Fiji

- Different scales of tourism development in Fiji can greatly contribute to three determinants of poverty alleviation as identified by Zhao and Ritchie (2007) – opportunity, empowerment and security.
- Opportunities can provide direct and indirect benefits to the poor.
- Examples include: lease money; employment; contributions to community development, e.g. housing, power, water; payment of church tithes; traditional obligations and education.
- Untapped opportunities can increase tourism benefits and expand backward linkages between tourism and local economy and reduce heavy reliance on imported goods, especially amongst large-scale properties, e.g. increase linkages to local agriculture, farmers and fishermen (Scheyvens and Russell, 2012).

Policy and implementation

- Tendency to view tourism as a private sector industry which is determined by market forces
- Recent attention paid to role of government and public sector if tourism development is to be sustainable and contribute to poverty alleviation (Harrison, 2008; Scheyvens and Russell, 2012).
- Harrison (2008) argues: for poverty alleviation to be of any significance it must be supported by state or governments.
- ‘...the impacts of any pro-poor tourism project, even if on a large scale, are likely to be limited unless a state’s entire tourism strategy is constructed around poverty alleviation’ (2008, p.71).
- Sustainable pro-poor policies need ‘strong institutions capable of proactively intervening in market forces and redistributing financial resources’ (Schilcher, 2007, p.71).

Assignment progress ?

ADD A MAP

1. Inventory of conventional tourism attractions and resources in your region.
2. Identify the different types of resource management initiatives that can be used : a National park, the development of a new resort; a wildlife sanctuary and a heritage town.
3. Develop criterion and indicators for your ecotourism sites
4. Discuss the initiatives that could be implemented to make the conventional tourism more sustainable.
5. Discuss the economic benefits obtained from local resources/ development of value products from local resources.
6. Are there any ethnic communities in your ecotourism location
7. Explain the difference between sustainable tourism and pro-poor tourism.