

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT OF TOURISM IN KARNATAKA: ISSUES AND CHALLENGES

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ABSTRACT

The tourism industry of India is economically important and grows rapidly. The World Travel Tourism Council calculated that tourism generated INR 6.4 trillion or 7.2 percent of the nation's GDP in 2016. It supported 39.5 million jobs, 7.8 percent of its total employment. The sector is predicted to grow at an average annual rate of 7.9 percent from 2013 to 2023. This gives India the third rank among countries with the fastest growing tourism industries over the next decade. India has a large medical tourism sector which is expected to grow at an estimated rate of 30 percent annually to reach about 95 billion by 2015. The Travel and Tourism Competitiveness report 2015 ranks India 65th out of 144 countries overall. The report ranks the price competitiveness of India's tourism sector 20th out of 144 countries. Environmental Impacts Ecotourism in Karnataka has generated several types of negative environmental impacts if the tourism development is not well planned, developed and managed.

Development of mountainous tourist spots has evolved construction and development of Roads and Highways through forest areas. This in turn has increase the vehicular traffic along with the pedestrian in this region. This activity is likely to create environmental disturbances, which will directly have an adverse impact on the surrounding vegetation and mountain ecology. Though road in the hills are not important, they needed to be constructed in coherence with the terrain, nature of geological functions ecotourism industry in Karnataka is growing and it has vast potential for generating employment and earning large amount of foreign exchange besides giving a fillip to the country's overall economic and social development. With regard to tourism development, the state has assumed the high status in order to attract the maximum tourists and large number of tourism development activities is rapidly taking place because of the strategic location of its tourist destinations.

Keywords: Karnataka, Climate, Environment, Tourism, Employment, GDP Destination, GOVT

1.1 Introduction

Tourism has become a thriving global industry with the power to shape developing countries. It has become the fourth largest industry in the global economy in developing countries like India. Tourism has become one of the major sectors of the economy, contributing to a large proportion of the National Income and generating huge employment opportunities. It has become the fastest growing service industry in the country with great potentials for its further expansion and diversification. Tourism is not only a growth engine but also an employment generator. According to economic survey 2015-16, the sector has the capacity to create large scale employment both direct and indirect, for diverse sections in society, from the most specialized to unskilled workforce. It provides 7-8 percent of the World's total jobs directly and millions more indirectly through the multiplier effect as per the UN's World Tourism Organization (UNWTO).

The tourism industry of India is economically important and grows rapidly. The World Travel Tourism Council calculated that tourism generated INR 6.4 trillion or 7.2 percent of the nation's GDP in 2016. It supported 39.5 million jobs, 7.8 percent of its total employment. The sector is predicted to grow at an average annual rate of 7.9 percent from 2013 to 2023. This gives India the third rank among countries with the fastest growing tourism industries over the next decade. India has a large medical tourism sector which is expected to grow at an estimated rate of 30 percent annually to reach about 95 billion by 2015. The Travel and Tourism Competitiveness report 2015 ranks India 65th out of 144 countries overall. The report ranks the price competitiveness of India's tourism sector 20th out of 144 countries. The Ministry of Tourism designs national policies for the development and promotion of tourism. In the process, the Ministry consults and collaborates with other stakeholders in the sector including various Central ministries / agencies, State governments, Union Territories and the representatives of the private sector concerted efforts as being made to promote new forms of tourism such as rural, cruise, medical and econ-tourism.

Tourism industry in Karnataka is growing and it has vast potential for generating employment and earning large amount of foreign exchange besides giving a fillip to the country's overall economic and social development. With regard to tourism development, the state has assumed the high status in order to attract the maximum tourists and large number of tourism development activities is rapidly taking place because of the strategic location of its tourist destinations. The entire region has vast untapped potential in tourist and its allied sectors and there is a lot of scope for its future development and promotion. Eco-tourism needs to be promoted so that tourism in Karnataka helps in preserving and sustaining the diversity of the natural and cultural environments.

1.2 Objectives of the Study

The objective of this paper is to study the potential and prospects for tourism development in Karnataka impact on environment .However the specific objective is to explore an impact assessment of tourism on environmental and the various tourism development initiatives to overcome the problems of macro level.

1.3 Methodology

The present study is based on secondary sources. It is a desk review paper,. The sources were collected from secondary information, concerned websites, journals and government reports

1.4 Eco-tourism in Karnataka

Karnataka is a state in the south-eastern part of the Indian Peninsula. One of the four Dravidian states of India, it has more than 2,000 years of continuous cultural history. Karnataka has some of the most remarkable temple architecture in the country, and a living tradition of music, dance, folk arts and fine arts. A niche segment of tourist population is marked with interest to visit places that are perfected with beauty of nature. Karnataka is a land that offers to quench the interests of these tourists through its abundant natural wealth viz. hill stations, waterfalls, forests, bird sanctuaries, beaches, etc. The state boasts the largest tourism industry in India with an annual growth rate of 16%.

The number of domestic arrivals the state most popular tourist destination in the country, and foreign arrivals amounted to 3.99 million, the second highest in the country, and the combined aggregated gives it the most popular state for tourism in the country. Karnataka Tourism Department is progressive about ecotourism that an individual Eco-tourism wing is being set up in collaboration with an officer posted from forest Department.

The States vision is to make Karnataka a world renowned destination specializing in sustainable tourism through focused efforts on creating synergy among all stake holders. The management plans are directed towards encouraging capacity building and public private partnerships with revenue generating strategies.

Tourists visit Karnataka only for fun or enjoying their leisure. They usually visit hill stations, beaches, waterfalls, zoological parks, etc. Tourists especially senior citizens are interested only in visiting temples and offering worship to their favorable deity. They move to tourist centers only if time permits and provided the trip is easy on the purse. It requires planning and meticulous follow up. Tourists irrespective of their varied interests, have one thing in common

i.e, they would like to go around heritage monuments which are in plenty in Karnataka, viz. world heritage monuments identified by the UNESCO.

Eco-tourism needs to be on small scale, locally controlled, land sensitive and ecologically oriented; Eco-tourism should be grounded on environmental ethics with a notion of small is beautiful, doing more with less and treated with fostering resource integrity; it is essential for eco-tourism to be sustainable environmentally, socially, culturally and economically; eco-tourism encompasses travel to tranquil and naturally protected area; Eco-tourism minimizes negative impact on the environment, through its conservation practices; it creates a sense of environmental awareness in tourists. Eco-tourism brings Socio-Economic Profits to the local community; it promotes local cultural heritage; it stands by Human Rights and Demographic movements.

1.5 Findings of the Study

15.1 Environmental impact of Tourism:

Environmental Impacts Ecotourism in Karnataka has generated several types of negative environmental impacts if the tourism development is not well planned, developed and managed. Development of mountainous tourist spots has evolved construction and development of Roads and Highways through forest areas. This in turn has increase the vehicular traffic along with the pedestrian in this region. This activity is likely to create environmental disturbances, which will directly have an adverse impact on the surrounding vegetation and mountain ecology. Though road in the hills are not important, they needed to be constructed in coherence with the terrain, nature of geological functions etc.

Development of Tourism indirectly has an impact on the wildlife, which is likely to be affected due to large scale hunting, by the invasion of tourists into natural habitat for photography and filming etc. The impact on large-scale mammals and birds is apparent. If tourism is to be handled on a sustainable basis in Karnataka, attention for the maintenance of tourism infrastructure and protection of the wildlife should be considered. Large-scale invasion of tourists to national parks, wildlife sanctuaries and reserve forests also affects the feeding and breeding habitats of the wild animals. Increased tourist activity has given way for large scale of tourist developments that bring a large number of people together leading to detrimental effect to the eco-system as a whole. The influx of large number of tourists has also increased the piles of litter and garbage, which attracted rodents, which in turn draw bigger animals and birds thereby altering the habitat eco-system. The increase in the number of tourists due to availability of better infrastructure facilities has increased the secondary service and product needs and demands of the tourists. There by there is an increase in the demand of wild life souvenirs, skins, ivory ornaments, horns,

tails, key rings made from hooves, so on and so forth. This has resulting the indiscriminate slaughtering of wild animals along with the birds for the above said purposes.

Water pollution has resulted from improper development of sewage and solid waste disposal systems for hotels and other facilities. There has been severe pollution of river, lake and beaches from sewage out fall lines, and of ground water by seepage of waste material. Sewage disposal is also effected either through septic tanks and absorption pits or as in tourist projects, disposal of waste water through biochemical treatment plants, in to the sea which may have detrimental effects on the maritime fauna in areas of disposal owing to curtain substances that may be contained in the disposed effluent.

Air pollution has resulted from excessive use of internal combustion vehicles (cars, taxis, buses, motorcycles, etc.) in tourism areas. Noise pollution has generated by a concentration of tourists and tourist vehicles. Visual pollution resulting from poorly designed hotels and other tourist facilities, badly planned layout of facilities, inadequate landscaping of facilities, use of argeandugly advertising signs etc. is observed and ecological disruption of natural areas by overuse and misuse by tourists and damage to archaeological and historic sites by overuse or misuse by tourists. Water supply in many tourist destinations across Karnataka, procured from boreholes in the ground. At the same time, in the area, absorption pits are used for disposing off effluent or percolation to the ground in areas irrigated by treated water from biochemical system. This pollutes underground water, and the ground water reservoirs are vulnerable for depletion if such practice is intensified. Garbage disposal seems to be the most acute problem contributing to soil and environmental pollution. Scanty service for collection exists and the reform every hotelier solves the problem by burying the waste in ditches. During them on soon, when sunshine is rather poor, contamination of the adjacent areas as witnessed.

Environmental hazards and use problems resulting from poor planning, sitting and engineering of tourist attractions and facilities are also predicted due to vulnerable infrastructures. Erosion of the soil and disfigurement of the terrain are witnessed because protective walls have been erected along few catchment areas. Uncertain cases buildings have been erected close to the water front. Some erosion of the fertile soil is also observed at the points where small lakes meet the rivers where, during the excess river water flow, flooding in land may take place. The illegal extraction of sand and stones, though under control by the authorities, may still exist in remote areas, which has resulted in erosion and disfigurement of the terrain. It is also observed that boom of tourist traffic in to those areas where there is poor planning, the tourist traffic, has become counterproductive to the tourist industry. Whereas on the contrary it can be seen that, through the increase in tourism is a boom for the economic development of a nation, it cannot survive on its own. Tourism economic development and environment should go hand in hand and a symbiotic

relationship should exist between these three aspects. Tourism when seen affecting the eco system has proved degenerative for the site, making it less attractive for future prospects of tourists.

1.5.2 The effects of loss of Biodiversity and Loss of Biological Diversity

Biological diversity is the term given to the variety of life on Earth. It threatens our food supplies, opportunities for recreation and tourism, and sources of wood, medicines and energy. It interferes with essential ecological functions such as species balance, soil formation, and greenhouse gas absorption. It reduces the productivity of ecosystems, thereby shrinking nature's basket of goods and services, from which we constantly draw. It destabilizes ecosystems and weakens their ability to deal with natural disasters such as floods, droughts, and hurricanes, and with human-caused stresses, such as pollution and climate change. Tourism, especially nature tourism, is closely linked to biodiversity and the attraction created by a rich and varied environment. It can also cause loss of biodiversity when land and resources are strained by excessive use, and when impacts on vegetation, wildlife, mountain, marine and coastal environments and water resources exceed the carrying capacity. This loss of biodiversity in fact means loss of biodiversity in fact means loss of tourism potential.

1.5.3 Introduction of exotic species

Tourists and suppliers – often unwittingly – can bring in species (insects, wild and cultivated plants and diseases) that are not native to the local environment and that can cause enormous disruption and even destruction of ecosystems.

1.5.4 Depletion of the Ozone Layer

The ozone layer, which is situated in the upper atmosphere (or stratosphere) at an altitude of 12-50 kilometers, protects life on earth by absorbing the harmful wavelengths of the sun's ultraviolet (UV) radiation, which in high doses is dangerous to humans and animals. For instance, one of the reasons scientists have put amphibian populations is increased exposure to UV radiation. Ozone depleting substances (ODSs) such as CFCs (chlorofluorocarbon) and halo shave contributed to the destruction of this layer. The tourism industry may be part of the problem;

1.5.5 Climate Change and Its impact on Tourism

Climate scientists now generally agree that the Earth's surface temperatures have risen steadily in recent years because of an increase in the so called greenhouse gases in the atmosphere, which trap heat from the sun. One of the most significant of these gases is carbon dioxide (CO₂), which

is generated when fossil fuels, such as coal, oil and natural gas are burned (e.g. in industry, electricity generation, and automobiles) and when there are changes in land use, such as deforestation. Tourism involves the movement of people from their homes to other destinations and accounts for about 50% of traffic movements; rapidly expanding air traffic contributes about 2.5% of the production of CO₂. Tourism is thus a significant contributor to the increasing concentrations of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere. Air travel itself is a major contributor to the greenhouse effect. Passenger jets are the fastest growing source of greenhouse gas emissions. The number of international travelers is expected to increase from 594 million in 1996 to 1.6 billion by 2020m adding greatly to the problem unless steps are taken to reduce emissions.

1.6 Suggestions

The various measures could be taken for effectively controlling pollution caused due to high tourist's inflow:

1. Enforcing legal measures to stop dumping wastes on tourist sites or environment surrounding the site.
2. Controlled dumping of excess catch by large trawlers on the estuaries and creeks near rivers, lakes, dams and other catchment areas.
3. Removal of shacks and hotels constructed near water bodies (Dams, Rivers) violating existing Coastal Zone Regulations.
4. Banning sand removal from dunes for reaffirming proper land ecology for Karnataka.
5. Plantation of trees, mainly palm and coconut, at 50m from the high tide line (HTL) mark and beyond for a depth of minimum 100 m towards hinterland.
6. Diversion of tourists towards hinterland from ecologically sensitive areas for controlling excessive concentration of tourists in areas around endangered species (Flora & Fauna).
7. Banning of use of plastic bags and disposable items on all tourists sites of Karnataka.
8. Encouraging the use of Cloth made carry bag, by commercial vendors across tourists destinations of Karnataka.
9. Banning cooking and eating food items on Tourist.
10. Delineating a zone exclusive for consuming food, so to keep the actual tourist arena free from organic garbage.
11. Crating provisions for controlled disposing of solid wastes and garbage, through adequate waste collection bins governed by local zonal corporations of the tourist site.
12. Strict enforcement of the bans and introduction of penalty for violating pollution controlling measures.

1.7 Conclusion

Tourism in Karnataka should be developed in such a way that it accommodates and entertains visitors in a way that is minimally intrusive or destructive to the environment and sustains and supports the native cultures in the locations it is operating in. moreover, since tourism is a multi-dimensional activity, and basically a service industry, it would be necessary that all wings of the Central and State governments, private sector and voluntary organizations become active partners in the endeavor to attain sustainable growth in tourism.

1.8 Reference

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