

Forum: Special Conference on Environmental Sustainability

Issue: Increasing sustainable ecotourism in developing nation

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Introduction

With the Earth being under the pressures of rapid growth in the human population, the natural environment has been shrinking rapidly, due to the expansion of agriculture, urbanization, constructions, deforestation, and land degradation. Therefore, the establishment of ecotourism, focusing on local cultures, nature environment and the wilderness, not only respects local culture, but also optimizes benefits to local people, minimizes environmental impacts, maximizes visitor satisfaction, promotes the conservation of the nature and supports local economies. Ecotourism also provides an education in which tourists work with local scientists and explore the secrets of a natural ecosystem such as a tropical rain forest. This may also convince and influence the tourists to have stronger pro-environment attitudes which may affect their thoughts and doings in their lives. In developing nations such as Nepal, tourists would take an opportunity to hike in one of the remaining wilderness regions on the planet, however, wastes were dumped, remained and pollution erupted. This destroys the nature ecosystem which affects future visitors as well as the dying of species.

Definition of Key Terms

Sustainable

The use of natural products and energy in ways that do not harm the environment.

Ecotourism

A type of tourism that focuses on local cultures, observes wildlife and help preserve nature through a travel-learn experience.

Developing Nation

Nation that has a low level of well being, low standards of living, poor economy, unstable politics and governments, low GDP, human development index.. etc. and is still seeking to develop its resources by industrialization.

General Overview

The Objectives of Ecotourism

In developing nations, ecotourism has been viewed as an opportunity to boost their economy and earn money with little exploitation and extraction of resources. However, the objectives of ecotourism are to provide the tourists with a natural environment education experiences and to keep this ongoing with a sustainable manner.

Limitation – Human activities versus objectives of ecotourism

With forests becoming logged, streams being polluted while the human activities still continue to expand, the objectives of ecotourism may be difficult to fulfill. In order to solve this problem, the focus on educational aspects of the experience will be compensated. For example, tourists will have an opportunity to work with local scientists in a wildlife environment as well as travel with naturalists to explore the secrets of the nature wildlife. Therefore, special trips and programs have been established to open this opportunity to tourists. Furthermore, environmental education provides information relating to natural history and culture of a particular site and may also influence the thoughts and doings of the tourists through stronger pro-environmental attitudes.

Popularity of Ecotourism

Ecotourism is becoming one of the most popular forms of traveling. Nations have been promoting their natural resources as a way to attract tourists and boost the nation's economy. With the help of business companies, camps and eco-lodges are created, as well as tours and trails for tourists. Although most of the popular eco-travel destinations are very fragile, the maintenance of a careful balance between preservation and promotion becomes very important - ensuring the long-term health of the ecosystems and the tourism economies within nations.

The rate of the people who enjoy organized tours has continued to increase.. The international appeal stands an important role of the growth of ecotourism. Not only has the costs decreased, mass media have also promoted ecotourism which helped popularized nature traveling, especially through education television channels such as Discovery and National Geographic. Many tourists who have experienced nature traveling may not have necessarily contributed to the conservation effort, but have mainly wanted to participate in the education of a new culture.

Case Studies – Costa Rica

In Costa Rica, forests are being destroyed in a rapid rate due to banana cultivators, lumber harvesters and farmers. Therefore, scientific research was brought out to study the canopy in a forest. However, due to the need for easy transportation, and aerial tram was built. This tram was later

developed for ecotourism – it could hold around 70 people per hour, giving a number of around 40,000 visitors per year. The considerable income from these trams has been used to invest in education in local schools, and invested in displays meant to educate the visitors about the rain forest and its inhabitants. Currently, more aerial trams are being developed in various nations such as Australia, Peru and the United States.

Timeline of Events

Date	Description of event
May 19, 2002	Opening of the World Ecotourism Summit in Quebec
May 14, 2007	Global Ecotourism Conference in Norway
May 1, 2008	Ecotourism Gala and Auction organized by The International Ecotourism Society
September 8, 2010	Ecotourism and Sustainable Tourism Conference begins in Portland

UN Involvement, Relevant Resolutions, Treaties and Events

Conferences and events have been held in various countries in order to promote ecotourism. For example, the Ecotourism Gala and Auction event was held in 2008 for travelers, travel professionals and other people to know the best practice examples in ecotourism around the world. Furthermore, competitions were held to promote ecotourism such as ecoTravel 360degrees.

- Global Code of Ethics for Tourism, 28 February,2002 (**A/RES/56/212**)

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