

Emerging Concept of Eco-Resorts: Its Sustainability in India

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Abstract - India is famous for its rich heritage, culture and magnificent environments, making it ideal for a variety of tourism activities. As a developing country, India's economy is more concerned towards its natural resources, heritage and its industries. This results to a position where the country is heavily reliant on development and significant resource use to meet its economic demands and requirements, with little regard for the environment. For the past couple of decades unsustainable types of tourist development have been done on the natural and historical components of the country's heritage. Without giving much importance to the change in environment, several sensitive sites and resources have been lost by these years.

The paper aims to point out the emerging concept of sustainable eco resorts. The studies are conducted to explain the concept of eco-tourism and evaluating sustainable resort development. The paper uses data, which are collected from various research papers, journals, books and websites to show the shift in tourism sector towards eco-friendly development over these years. The boom in tourism sector over the past decades had influenced a set of changes in environment as well as in the local people.

In these times, while designing the immediate surroundings sustainability should be catered. Strategies developed by various state as well as national government to support and promote eco-tourism in their reign. Around the world notable evidence are there, which mark the changing trend from a place of stay to a place which can deliver an overall tropical experience to its guests. By understanding the current scenario modern solutions and specifications in materials and technology are proposed.

The study emphasizes the necessity of adapting and spreading the notion of eco-efficient design in order to support a sustainable eco resort development model.

Key Words: sustainable, tropical experience, eco resort, materials

1. Introduction

The World Commission on Environment and Development (WCED) defined sustainable development in 1987 as "meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of the future generations to meet their own needs."

The study intends to identify basic principles in eco-architecture and sustainable development to improve rural regions, based on the most relevant research and theories from the Indian perspective towards tourism. In these days architects and planners are proposing design which brings financial benefits to the project along with sustainable environment.

The study takes a comprehensive approach and considers the factors that contributed to the shift in paradigms from an industrial consuming culture to one that promotes urban ecological sustainability. The primary objective is to identify the emerging concepts of eco resort in the fields of architecture in order to develop a better staying environment for future.

2. Ecotourism In Indian Context

India is a country of diverse topography and has several tourist sites that will not only de-stress you but will also invigorate you. There are various ways to experience nature in its purest form. From the Himalayan Region, Kerala, northeast India, Andaman & Nicobar Islands to the Lakshadweep Islands the country has a wide range of tourist spots. Thenmala in Kerala is India's first planned ecotourism attraction.



Fig -1: Thenmala Ecotourism

The geography of India is home to a diverse range of flora and wildlife. India's surroundings are home to a plethora of uncommon and endangered species. The designation of various wildlife areas and national parks has aided in the expansion of the wildlife resource, which had previously been depleted owing to the animal hunts conducted by several monarchs. Today, India boasts a plethora of wildlife sanctuaries and conservation regulations. There are now roughly 80 national parks and 441 sanctuaries in India that strive to protect and conserve the country's wildlife resources.

There are various Botanical and Zoological Gardens in India that are attempting to improve the ecosystem. To a considerable extent, poaching has ceased. Poachers, hunters, and illicit traffickers of animals and plants face harsh penalties.

Plantations are a great source of income in the country which can be seen in different parts of India. Several animal and plant rights organizations advocate for the rights of animals and plants. Numerous groups and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) are stepping forward to give environmental education to the general public at the grassroots level.

3. Tourism Economy

Tourism is becoming as an important economic industry in India. After clothes and gems & jewelry, it is now India's third largest foreign exchange earner. The rate of growth in tourism-related foreign exchange revenues is quite rapid. The tourist industry's most significant aspect is its ability to offer large-scale job possibilities, particularly in distant and impoverished areas.

Natural landscape, beaches, mountains, rivers can be utilized for the economic well-being of the people around it. Along with the natural environment the man-made attractions like forts, palaces, monuments around it will also be benefited. The tourism business is large which employs a big number of women and young people in hotels, travel sector, handcrafting, cultural events, and other tourist-related duties.

Ecotourism is major business, bringing in both direct and indirect money for the government and the locals. Residents, for example, have reaped significant benefits from ecotourism operations in and around Kerala's Periyar Tiger Reserve. The planned and targeted actions have also resulted in an increase in revenue for park administration. Through Eco development initiatives, the locals have been participating in tourism-related activities.

4. Ecotourism towards Sustainability



Fig -2: Sustainable Development Goals

It is critical to guarantee that our ecotourism operations are carried out in a sustainable way. The loss of animals and environment can have an impact on the region's ecotourism potential. Ecotourism may only be considered sustainable if it is carefully organized and adheres to a set of guiding principles.

Incorporating environmental information into planning makes a substantial contribution to sustainable tourist planning. The

approach begins with site selection, followed by site appraisal, alternative development, and suitable implementation.

4.1 Site Selection

While choosing tourist locations there are range of considerations, such as places rich in wildlife or with charismatic animals that might attract tourists, as well as logistical requirements, such as proximity to the nearest road and train. Once tourist zones have been defined, an assessment of the environmental implications of running eco-tourism facilities in that region is required. In order to pick a site, it is necessary to conduct an early assessment of sociological and ecological factors. Unfortunately, many small-scale initiatives are never assessed for their impact on wildlife.

4.2 Site Analysis

Next is to ensure that the site is suitable for the project. The region's carrying capacity, in terms of the number of resorts that may be developed or the number of guests and vehicles that can be present at any given moment, must be determined. The potential consequences on wildlife and the requirements of the local community should also be considered at this phase. The tourism zone should be designed such that it does not encroach on key habitat like as corridors, waterholes, or breeding sites.

4.3 Considering the Alternatives

The following stage is to evaluate the options and ensure that the chosen location is the best available for the project. As a follow-up, prior to site selection, land acquisition concerns must be examined as well.

4.4 Planning and Execution

The last phase is a complete design and implementation strategy. Ecotourism initiatives can be designed by competent agencies with knowledge in environmental planning. With Geographic Information System (GIS) becoming a valuable and dependable planning tool, it has become easier for decision makers and planners to analyses resources and build long-term designs and plans. Ecotourism planning has aided in site selection and site appropriateness assessment.

As part of the construction of sustainable ecotourism strategies, further GIS-based carrying capacity analyses for several protected sites, particularly in China and Southeast Asia, have been carried out. Landscape planning is required, and the entire planning process should involve district administration officials, representatives of the forest department, the tourism department, and tour operators, as well as complete consultation with the local inhabitants of the region.

5. Significant Concerns

- An ecologically conscious resort, hotel, or Eco resort modifies its equipment, policies, and practices to reduce the environmental impact of its presence,

notably in the areas of energy and waste management, water conservation, and buying. However, this widely acknowledged, and highly laudable notion of an Eco resort falls short of extending the resorts' environmental friendliness to the provision of learning and experiencing, which are two crucial components of the Eco product required by the new tourist.

- It does not address the increasing visitor desire for high-quality experiences of the destination's nature and culture. This requirement requires solutions that convert visitor volume into a resource for historic attraction conservation and mediate the pleasure of these sites with low or no attendance. Preventing both the loss of quality in tourist experiences and the negative effects on the location produced by the tourists' unprepared exposure to unfamiliar settings and cultural customs is also important.
- While there are numerous advantages to ecotourism, excessive activity can always be a risk. The IUCN (1992) identifies ecotourism as the second most danger to protected areas, owing to habitat fragmentation caused by road and resort building. The construction of resorts in critical elephant corridors in the Nilgiris biosphere reserve has hampered elephant movement, resulting in an increase in human-wildlife conflict. Road deaths are widespread on highways heading to eco-tourism destinations.
- Excessive eco-tourism is degrading the habitat quality of the region and, most importantly, is becoming a threat to wildlife - there is insufficient attention being paid to the tourist carrying capacity of each protected area (PA) and there is no limit on the number of vehicles or tourists entering a PA per day. Several ecotourism ventures that have previously operated in the Himalayas have proven to be unsustainable. Due to the considerable environmental deterioration caused by tourist operations, places such as Nanda Devi Biosphere Reserve must be closed.
- Ecotourism activities conducted out by private tour operators are often not regulated by the government and are becoming increasingly commercial. Private resorts may not always adhere to operating requirements or fulfil the objective of raising environmental awareness. With private tour operators under no responsibility to incorporate locals, many ecotourism efforts in the region are becoming simply commercial. This causes economic leakage, lowering revenues available for residents and the protected region dramatically.

5.1 Economic concerns

In terms of economic aspects, hotel owners place the greatest focus on available capital, costs, profitability, business revenue, value creation, and income distribution. Thailand's tourist business is critical to the country's and local communities' cash generation. The sector creates jobs, strengthens the local

economy, and provides provinces with security. The industry's earnings contribute to the Gross Provincial Product (GPP). The financial benefits of the development of hotels and other types pose questions about stakeholder paybacks and investments in human resources and environmental development.

5.2 Environmental concerns

Hotel operators must deal with issues such as efficient land and energy usage in their operations. The construction of resorts and hotels in local regions can have negative environmental consequences, such as catastrophic climate change and massive biodiversity loss. According to the Sufficiency Economy idea, land use modification is critical to the biosphere's operations since it protects the region from biodiversity loss and supports sustainable economic practices.

5.3 Social concerns

These vary from employee well-being to the well-being of communities and society. Hotel owners must address equal employment opportunities, human rights, and workplace satisfaction, which primarily include the safety and security of all employees. These elements are related to the betterment of local communities and workers in the sector.

key sustainability issues for resorts		
Economic factors	Environmental factors	Social factors
1. GPP 2. Capital, sales and profits 3. Investment - Finance - Human Resources - Environment and renewable energy 4. Value creation	1. Loss of biodiversity 2. Land management (based on philosophy of Sufficiency Economy) 3. Carbon emission into the air 4. Use of renewable energy 5. Energy use 6. Climate change	1. Bribery/Fraud 2. Employment rights/Security 3. Development of Human Resources 4. Equality of labour 5. Health and safety 6. Human rights/Business ethics 7. Management of workers 8. Building relationship with communities 9. Local participation in organization 10. Development of local communities

Fig -3: Key sustainability issues for resorts

CONCLUSIONS

Eco-resorts are gaining relevance in the face of the new paradigm, and it appears to be appearing in camping leisure, two distinct and opposing forms in evolution. For a significant portion of the population with low earnings, provisory housing has become a type of permanent habitation. Tourist is on the move, responding to new ecological and environmental

concerns as well as a significant challenge produced by the growth of mass tourism.

The resort in eco-tourism is most likely a progression in the direction of complexity and comfort, both in terms of physical and architectural kind of lodging, as well as the number and quality of recreational equipment.

The trend toward ecotourism is both a threat and an opportunity to create more sustainable tourism by diverting tourist traffic to ensure that any destination's carrying capacity is not exceeded; planning for natural resource regeneration; and raising awareness in the host community so that they are prepared and forearmed to deal with the negative impact of mass tourism.

A medium route, as in most circumstances, is the most innovative method to maximise tourism's economic potential while reducing negative social consequences and environmental dangers. A medium route, as in most circumstances, is the most innovative method to maximise the economic potential of tourism while reducing negative social consequences and environmental dangers.

The concept of "luxury" is evolving, and one of the greatest luxuries today is a strong connection to nature, which is associated with unpolluted locations and a harmonious natural environment. The concepts of "economic" and "efficacy" will coexist with energy efficiency, comfort, and human well-being, as well as with environmental preservation. Eco-camping-resort looks to be a viable alternative to the establishment of a new traditional tourism industry and the creation of permanent jobs. Changes in society produce new human and physical conditions on the built environment, defining evolving concepts for eco-sustainable resorts.

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