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TOURISM AND ETHICS

Ethical tourism and responsible **tourism** mean thinking about the consequences of your actions as a **tourist** on the environment, local people and local economy. Some places in the world really benefit from **tourism** and for some communities the **tourist** trade is the main source of income and jobs

Ethical tourism is becoming more important in the tourist industry, with campaigns to raise awareness of the benefits of responsible holiday making and treating your area of visit with respect.

Ethical tourism in India

Background

Pilot

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Background

The present development paradigm has resulted in a development that is both jobless and rootless. With the heavy winds of globalisation blowing to promote market economy, we experience more and more unemployment, loss of livelihood and destruction of economies and cultures.

This process invariably dislodges local people in rural communities and pushes them to migrate more and more to the urban centres in search of a job (often in vain). The gap between the periphery and the centre 'the local and the global' keeps growing while the urban centres suffer from their own problems - be it environmental pollution or ethnic conflicts. Thus, this process of a faceless, rootless, jobless development ultimately creates unsustainable societies. This problem is part of the bigger problem of a planet seriously experiencing the limits to growth.

It is therefore very urgently felt that we need to reverse this trend in order to promote a people-centred and culture-based sustainable development. This concern was already reflected, for example, in the Brunt Land Report that we have to learn to live sustainably if we are to survive as a species. World leaders, at the Rio Earth Summit in 1992, expressed a commitment to programmes (focussing on a shift from high consumption lifestyles) that will move humanity to sustainability in the 21st century.

Rationale

Tourism has become a big industry and is, to a large extent, controlled by some of the world's largest multinational corporations. The argument by any government for tourism is obviously that it provides jobs and foreign exchange. But the benefits are not always what they seem. There is hardly any realisation that tourism development seriously damages local cultures, local environment and that the local people find it very hard to fight the problems they experience with tourism. Women in parts of India have to walk for miles to fetch water because hotels siphon off the underground water in order to keep their swimming pools brimful and poor people are not allowed on to their ancestral lands to graze their cattle when a national park is developed to attract tourists.

With 'ethical business' being the new buzzword in the new political arena, 'ethical tourism', 'green tourism', 'alternative tourism' or 'Eco-tourism' is something that is getting more and more attention. Many affluent tourists are now starting to adopt an ethical stance. There is a growing reaction to the uncaring 80s (and early 90s) and an increase in the demand from tourists for holidays that both protect the local environment and benefit the local people more.

Fundamental changes are needed in the way governments plan tourism and support it; the way tour operators operate tourism, and the way local people are involved in and benefit from it. Tourism, as a source of income, has to move away from the commercial corporate world (that threatens local people, culture and the environment so badly) to enhance the local quality of life.

It is proposed to develop an alternative tourism through this project, which is conceptualised in a framework where the local community not only provides tourists with eco-friendly accommodation and subsistence, but also provides them with culture-based recreation and entertainment.

The tourists participate not only in the process of driving the local economy but also in regenerating the local culture. Thus, it is truly participative tourism, where tourists do not come across just as outsiders, but come to be integrated with the local culture and people. The host and the guest are interlocked, as equal partners, in this culture-based development process.

The tourists not only bring a lot of their experiences, skills and expertise to contribute to local growth but also go back home with a lot more experience and satisfaction as cultural ambassadors. It is a project where the global does not destroy the local, but recreates and strengthens the local. The global and the local create a synergy for the total.

The Pilot Project

Interlock integrated ethical-tourism project designed to link rural and urban communities, as well as tourists and existing communities.

The Interlock Millennium Pilot project, is being implemented through a partnership between

village groups in Rajapur taluka of Ratnagiri Dist Maharashtra India and Interlock (UK); and aims to promote such an alternative development strategy that is geared to promote rural development by re-creating sustainable local economies and culture through a culture based ethical-tourism project.

This culture based ethical-tourism project aims to achieve the following broad goals:

- Promoting local economies and local livelihood systems.
- Promoting regeneration of local culture and heritage.
- Creating opportunities in villages for migrants to return to their villages, while at the same time arresting further migration to urban centres.
- Promoting development education, inter-cultural understanding and solidarity between Eco-tourists and the local people, ultimately leading to stronger and healthier people-to-people development co-operation supplementing the government-to-government co-operation.
- Eco-village training centres and outreach programmes which offer the potential of further developing and informing on the shift from high consumption lifestyles to a more satisfying high quality, but low environmental impact lifestyles and social structures.
- Development of sustainable technologies (e.g. recycling, renewable energy, etc.) and fair trade as a prerequisite for the sustainability of the project.
- Youth activities and Ladies Clubs.
- International Farmers Initiatives
- To provide funding for HIV/Aids detection and prevention programmes.
- Linking and networking with the other similar innovative Eco-tourism/Eco-village groups and organisations as a strategy to offer a broad range of choices to the Eco-tourist in the chain of world-wide Eco-tourist points, but also to build up a global Eco-tourist movement through local initiatives.
- The establishment of telecentres – an integrated project

Project Design

The above objectives are being realised by developing important centres on the Konkan coast of the Maharashtra state. One on the coast at Kombe in the Rajapur taluka and two at Kondvadi and Vadad Hasol by the main Bombay Goa trunk road in the Ratnagiri district. (An area surrounded by hills and forests and inhabited mostly by tribal people with their rich cultural/distinct heritage). Two community centres and Guest rooms have been constructed in the sites at Kombe and Kondvadi the buildings include a community hall where local festivals and weddings and other community events can be held, With the guest rooms for visitors and paying guests. The other site at Vadad Hasol is for the Shanti Van Interlock complex. It is estimated that the facilities will provide sufficient income to finance the running costs and maintenance of the project thus enabling it to be self-sufficient and free from outside funds in less

than three years.
See appendix for detail location.

Potential Users

There are a growing number of environmentally and socially aware people of all ages and they would be interested in the projects together with the 50+ group.

At the moment the 50+ age group in Europe in particular and in the North in general, is a vast resource area. People in this age group are part of a socially aware and caring generation, and will certainly feel attracted to this project. Such a vast resource area available to support this initiative is at the moment untapped.

By becoming involved in this project, they would be using their resources for enjoyment, whilst at the same time, making a difference in their lives and those who are less fortunate. In effect, it is tourism with a valuable object - leisure with a purpose.

If the poor and deprived sections in India are marginalized and excluded from the mainstream, the population in this (50+) age group in the Westerners consumerist, disposable society also feels discarded, purposeless and apathetic. The project seeks to bring these two groups together through a process of 'inter-locking' to create enormous possibilities for a development process (with a built-in mechanism for sustainability) based on sharing and caring, linking person-to-person for a value-based and enriched quality of life at both ends. This age group has the potential to become the facilitators for the Interlock program; they can be the living link to the virtual

The Construction Technology

The conventional method of building in urban and semi-urban areas today is a very wasteful system using energy intensive materials and methods of designing which multiply costs unnecessarily. Structures are usually highly over-designed. The Eco-tourist guesthouses are designed to use the minimum amount of material to its maximum effect. Use of locally available material and appropriate technology will greatly reduce on extraneous costs such as transportation, energy, labour and time.

Effort will be made so that the Eco-tourist properties serve as a living example to the surrounding areas and influence people who come to the project on Eco-friendly, energy-conscious yet beautiful designs of architecture. Thus, through a spin-off effect, a large amount of energy and waste of material can be saved. The buildings would all be designed to be comfortable in the hot and humid climate of the area, so that there is a minimum cost on mechanical devices for cooling and lighting the interior. The buildings will be of exposed brick and locally available stone surface so as to reduce costs on finishing. Detailing of each building would be considered in such a way as to allow for minimum and easy maintenance whilst ensuring long life.

The entire design attitude is environment and cost conscious, and seeks to blend the buildings harmoniously with nature, climate and topography of the area with minimum expenditure on energy intensive materials towards the product of low cost, eco-friendly structures.

Potential Benefits of The Project

It is visualised that the project will have a number of short-term and long-term benefits for the local people and communities. The immediate short-term benefits will be the creation of employment opportunities in the areas, beginning with the preparatory construction works of the project. A number of people from the surrounding villages (both men and women) who have migrated to the nearby urban centres in Bombay, Goa and Bangalore are employed in construction work - mostly in the informal sector.

The project will strive towards a return-migration of these people by creating similar opportunities in the locality. It is expected that through different kinds of work (e.g. earthwork, masonry, carpentry, plumbing, mechanics, etc.) the number of people who will migrate back from the urban centres will be around 500. Quite a few of them will subsequently stay on with the project for the maintenance.

Apart from that, the inflow of tourists will give a boost to the local economy, and especially so by promoting rural craft, secondary trade, artisans, etc., as well as by generating income for people who could make a living on performing folk art (folk singers, dancers, theatre artists, painters, etc.) thereby preserving local and folk culture. Many of these people now struggle very hard to make a living in the urban centres especially competing with the mass media. These migrants will find a wonderful opportunity to return back home to their villages and will derive a sense of cultural enrichment and satisfaction by showing their performance to an appreciative audience. Another very important element in this project is the developmental use of the proceeds. The project will reap financial returns as ethical-tourists, and other environmentalists/development activists come and stay in the resorts. The extra profit, beyond the amount needed for the maintenance/running costs of the project, will be used to support the different rural development activities (e.g. projects to promote income generation, natural resources management, literacy, health, drinking water, etc.).

Information Technology

It is visualised that this project will expand in the long run to offer fair trade by linking the local producers in this locality to the local consumers abroad, by establishing telecenters, equipped with internet access, phone and fax, in each village school.

This will avoid the unnecessary intermediates in the long trade channels, which take away the lion's share in the whole business, the local producer will get a fair sum for his products and the consumer will have the satisfaction of buying a product in a trading process that treats the people

and the environment well. This ethical trade will immensely stimulate the local economies which will motivate people to migrate back to their villages for a better and more promising livelihood, while at the same time, prevent any further migration from the neighbouring villages to urban centres.

Innovation is needed to adapt technology to the needs of the world's poorest and remotest communities and regions. These telecentres can be used for training doctors, paramedics, nurses, etc. in rural areas, bringing educational materials to schools, disseminating information on crop management and setting up trade points for the local people to sell products on the internet.

Ways forward must be found to ensure that the telecentres are not mere demonstration projects that collapse when the funds are exhausted or key people depart. To that end, Interlock plans to turn the telecentres into viable business models, which bring affordable mobile telephone facilities to rural communities by providing affordable low-cost facilities.

Village artisans could benefit from being able to check current market prices on the internet, cutting out middlemen who buy at low prices and sell at a large profit to urban populations. The use of digital cameras will enable local craftspeople to use the telecentre as an e-commerce site, to display and sell their products over the internet.

By 'Interlocking' ethical-tourism and the internet, local people and tourists will benefit. New technology will also help to narrow the gap between the 'haves' and 'have nots', giving new purpose and meaning to the lives of people from both divides.

THE IMPORTANCE OF ETHICAL TOURISM

Traveling is one of the greatest gifts you can give to yourself: it is an exhilaration of the senses, a time for curiosity and self-exploration, and an opportunity to open the mind to unique possibilities and perspectives.

When we travel to a new destination, that experience will likely have an invaluable impact on us. Yet we are beginning to understand that we will undoubtedly impact the place as well.

As one of the world's largest industries, tourism has positively affected societies around the globe by promoting cultural awareness, increasing infrastructure, and boosting economies. And at the same time, for many people around the world, the growth of tourism has resulted in an array of harmful effects such as environmental degradation, loss of culture and language, and displacement of local communities.

Defining Ethical Tourism

Ethical tourism simply means keeping in mind the effects of one's actions as a traveler on the environment and local community. Geared towards consumers as well as the industry, ethical tourism aims to avoid participation in activities that contribute to or support negative ethical issues. Traveling ethically varies by region, but there are a few key points to remember when planning your next trip with cultural and environmental respect in mind.

Keeping it local

The tourism industry is considered an effective contributor to socio-economic development around the world. As with anything relating to globalization, development has created complex positive and negative effects on communities at large.

Unfortunately, the increase of foreign investment in chain restaurants and stores have put many local shops out of business. To support the community and preserve the environment, **buy locally-sourced products from locally-owned businesses**. Eating at street stalls and buying souvenirs from local artisans are great ways to promote the regional economy and ensure that traditions are preserved.

When searching for accommodation, it is best to book with family-owned hotels rather than multinational chains. For those who travel light and are interested in gaining a unique insider perspective, try out **Couchsurfing** to live with locals. While it does not support local businesses, couchsurfing allows for incredible cultural exchange and authentic experiences.

Voluntourism

Volunteering while traveling may seem like a great way to give back while immersing yourself in a new culture, but **good intentions can create a lot of problems for communities**.

Something as simple as donating clothes or water filters may seem like a harmless act, but in reality, local markets may suffer as people begin to rely on donations rather than buying goods from community businesses.

Voluntourism can also hurt local economies, as volunteers may take jobs from locals. Particularly in the case of physical labor, it may be more beneficial for a community to employ locals rather than utilize free labor.

There are mixed views throughout academic and tourist communities around whether voluntourism can be effective in aiding global communities or not. In some cases, it can be downright harmful — **orphanage tourism is a prime example of when volunteering causes serious damage to children.** In fact, the majority of the 8 million or more children who live in orphanages are not orphans at all, but are separated from their families due to discrimination, disability, or poverty. Countless “orphanages” in Cambodia have been found to exploit children (many of whom, had parents) in order to make profit from tourists looking to “give back”. In reality, most volunteers do not have the appropriate skills necessary to work with children and their behavior could potentially have serious negative impacts on children’s’ emotional stability.

Even more, forming attachments to volunteers who perpetually leave will surely lead to psychological trauma for the child. Rather than volunteering at an orphanage, support programs with sustainable solutions that are committed to economic development, family strengthening, and the establishment of laws to protect children.

This is not to say that all forms of voluntourism will harm a community; in fact, there are many organizations that are doing good work across the globe. Despite potential consequences of voluntourism, Shannon O’Donnell, author of *The Volunteer Traveler’s Handbook*, argues that **“international volunteering is part of a complex ecosystem that can, when done well, help a community grow in a direction they support.”**

If you are interested in volunteering abroad, be sure to do your research on the organization and the type of volunteering itself. To be certain that your time spent volunteering is generating a positive impact, for a volunteering 10-point checklist to evaluate the ethical implications of your potential volunteer engagement.

Immersion

The purpose of respect as well as safety, it is important to **research cultural norms before you arrive.** Social etiquette will be considerably different depending on the destination. For example, in Spain, it is polite to greet someone by giving two kisses on the right and left cheek, while in Thailand, you should avoid physical touch and instead “wai” the person you are greeting depending on age and rank.

Learning some key phrases in the local language is also a fundamental way to immerse yourself, show respect, and connect with locals. Though many people may speak English in touristic areas or cities, it would be a mistake to assume that everyone can. But even more, as a foreigner it is necessary to make an effort to communicate. A simple “hello” or “thank you” in the local dialect can go a long way.

Say no to plastic

Though this can be harder than it seems while traveling considering that we are constantly on-the-go, there are a few easy ways to minimize waste at home and abroad:

- Takeout inevitably produces waste from containers and disposable bags. Enjoy your meal at a restaurant instead.
- This is also a great habit to bring back home, as switching to a reusable bottle will save around 1,460 plastic bottles per year.
- This may take some getting used to, and you'll have to be quick to tell the server your request, but saying no to straws will make a huge influence on the environment. If you love straws and can't bear to part with them, then consider purchasing a **steel** or **bamboo straw**

Transportation

Traveling can cause a lot of waste for our planet, but it doesn't have to. With a little care and awareness, you can travel anywhere without adding to pollution.

To reduce carbon emissions, minimize internal flights and **travel overland when possible**. Though buses and trains will take more time, these forms of transportation are much less polluting and a great way to enjoy a country's beautiful scenery. Taking public transportation, bicycling, or walking will also save fuel and give a true perspective into local life.

Seek ethical animal encounters

Animal tourism may be a notable part of a travel experience, but many of these activities involve the harm and exploitation of animals. While in recent years activists from around the world have taken measures to end animal abuse and neglect caused by the tourism industry, there are still many travel organizations that (intentionally or not) continue to mistreat animals. As a matter of fact, a recent study by World Animal Protection found that **75% of wildlife tourist attractions have negative impacts on wild animals**. For wild animals to become so docile and tame, there is often excessive mistreatment involved. As a rule of thumb for seeking ethical animal encounters, look for organizations that promote observation instead of hands-on contact.

It is also important to note that even sanctuaries and nonprofits that claim to be “ethical” may not be ethical at all. In Thailand, most people are aware that **elephant riding is incredibly exploitative**, and many elephant sanctuaries have transitioned from riding to more hands-off activities such as feeding or bathing. Though this is a significant move towards bettering the lives of elephants, there is still much to be done to increase the wellbeing of both elephants and mahouts. The best sanctuaries are ones which have the least amount of human interaction, with plenty of space for the elephants to roam freely. If you are interested in seeing elephants on your next adventure, be sure to read these **5 tips to spot an elephant-friendly venue**. And if you are curious for more information on elephant tourism, check out this **report** by World Animal Protection.

To be an ethical traveler is to explore the world around us responsibly and mindfully, constantly questioning the results of our actions. While this term is distinct and perhaps daunting, it is simply a means to describe the way that we should all act when traveling – with curiosity, compassion, and understanding. In the future, hopefully there will be no term for ethical travel; instead, there will simply be *travel*

Introduction

The tourism industry is one of the biggest industries worldwide. It employs around 67.5 million workers (2.6% of jobs) and if we include indirect employment generated by tourism in other sectors of production, the number amounts to 194.5 million jobs (7.6% of jobs in the whole world). What's more, international tourism associations, such as the World Travel and Tourism Council, estimate that this share will rise to 8.6% in 2012 and 50 million new jobs will be created. In the European Union, around 19.5 persons work in the tourism sector (11.9% of jobs) and this figure is definitely bigger in Greece. Around 20% of the total workforce in Greece works in the tourism industry either directly or indirectly.

Tourism is a globalized business activity, thus facing growing challenges in terms of fairness and ethics. Ethics in tourism is and should be a matter of concern to all stakeholders (supranational and national agents managing tourism development, NGOs, tourism entrepreneurs, tourists, tourism destinations), especially since the negative impacts on the environment, culture and the human beings put at risk its financial health and future. After 1980, people realised the need for long-term planning and general participation in tourism development.

It is argued that the answer to sociocultural and environmental problems is sustainable development, which is directly connected to social responsibility, i.e. the participation of the local communities in any form of tourism intervention. With the view to promoting sustainable development in tourism, the states adopt different policies.

These policies approach tourism development as ecologically accepted, economically sustainable, socially and ethically fair for local societies. Tourism becomes then part of the natural, cultural and human environment with respect to the special features of host places. Since the tourism sector highly contributes to national economy, sustainable tourism development can be achieved through alternative tourism, which is based on the rational use and protection of the national and cultural environment (Moirira & Milonopoulos, 2006:101).

The notion of sustainable tourism refers to a series of international conferences: the Conference on the Human Environment (Stockholm, 1972), the Manila Declaration on World Tourism (1980), the Brundtland Report “Our Common Future” (WCED, 1987) and the Rio De Janeiro Conference on Environment and Development (UN/AGENDA 21, 1992) (Moirira & Milonopoulos, 2006:101).

In the Brundtland Report, drawn up by the World Committee on the Development and the Environment in 1987, sustainability is described as “meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.” By extension sustainable tourism development refers to the form of tourism development, which establishes a suitable balance between the local social economic, cultural and environmental aspects of the structure of each tourism region, creating at the same time the conditions (services, structures and know-how) for its uninterrupted feedback (Kokkosis & Tsartas, 2001:35).

The adoption and promotion of this development model by a growing number of countries and international tourism agents is a positive development and an important indication that sustainable tourism will gradually expand to the international scene.

In 2005 the World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO) and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) identified an agenda of twelve objectives for the promotion of sustainable tourism. Among them there is economic sustainability, prosperity of host regions, social justice, satisfaction of visitor, well-being of local communities, cultural wealth, environmental integrity, biodiversity, energy sufficiency, clean environment (E.U., 2007:42).

Similarly, according to the report under title “Action for more sustainable European tourism” submitted by the Tourism Sustainability Group (TSG) to the European Commission on February 2007, the main objectives of the Sustainable Development Strategy (SDS) of the European Union are economic prosperity, social justice and coherence and protection of the environment and culture.

It has also been stressed that in order to achieve these objectives, the respect of the Global Code of Ethics on Tourism by the European countries as well as the promotion of the principles of the Code at a universal level need to be guaranteed (E.U., 2007:16).

Tourism can be a viable option of development for many countries, provided that its negatives effects are tempered with the appropriate planning and management of tourism development and the rational use of its benefits. The model of sustainable tourism development is now considered to be the sole option we have.

There is then the question whether tourism is “responsible” or politically correct.

The study of ethical issues in tourism sheds light on its negative impacts and everything that is considered to be immoral, illegal or harmful. It deals with issues of 1987) and the Rio De Janeiro Conference on Environment and Development (UN/AGENDA 21, 1992) (Moira & Milonopoulos, 2006:101).

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The study of ethical issues in tourism sheds light on its negative impacts and everything that is considered to be immoral, illegal or harmful. It deals with issues of environmental destruction, alteration of the social and cultural character of host societies, displacement of people from land for development, exploitation of workers in the tourism industry, development of forms of tourism of dubious morality (e.g. sex tourism, dark tourism) etc.

These problems are often due to the excessive and unplanned tourism development and to the domination of organised mass tourism at a universal level during the past 30 years. Mass tourism exercises great pressure on the local social, economic, cultural and environmental structure of tourism regions, creating conditions of tourism development that do not correspond to the carrying capacity² of each region.

This leads to the alteration of the cultural identity of these regions, the creation of social tensions, the change of the locals’ values and morals, the exploitation in working and human relations, the degradation of the environment and the exhaustion of natural resources.

However, one is justified to raise the question whether mass tourism and ethics can coexist or are incompatible, since mass tourism is dominated by the reason of profit, which is completely alien to that of ethics. Can the tourism industry take the challenge of ethical tourism? Is it possible to put ethics into action?

In the following pages we will try to analyze the most important environmental, social and cultural impacts of tourism development, which raise ethical issues and need to be taken into account by all stakeholders (supranational and national agents exercising the tourism policy, NGOs, tourism entrepreneurs, tourists, tourism destinations), each one bearing his own share of responsibility.

Tourism development and natural environment

Tourism development can exercise great pressure on natural resources (water, land, air) and the ecosystems and endanger the natural balance of the planet. Water, and especially fresh water, is one of the most critical natural resources. Tourism increases demand in water both for the personal use of tourists and for the maintenance of gardens and other facilities (e.g. swimming pools, golf courses, aqua parks). The average use of water is 450 liters per tourist in luxury hotels

and around 280 liters in most others lodgings (Kokkosis&Tsartas, 2001:149). Still, the greater waste of water comes from the golf course maintenance. The annual consumption of water for golf

corresponds to the consumption of a city of 12,000 inhabitants (Tourism Concern, 2006). The scarcity of water resources often creates rivalries between the tourism industry and local populations. Pumping of ground water becomes then necessary. However, this practice undermines the groundwater table, what affects the overall development of the region. The example of seaside tourist resorts in Goa, India is illustrative. In these resorts there is round-the-clock water supply. But the supplying pump passes through neighboring villages, which are denied water supply, even for one to two hours a day. As a result, the locals need to cover many miles under the hot sun to draw water from the existing wells, which are very few in the area. A hotel consumes 28 times more power than one inhabitant of the area (Burns & Holden, 1995:162).

It is obvious that while the locals are deprived of resources that are crucial for their survival, tourism proves to be a “wasteful” activity. Important land resources include minerals, fossil fuels, fertile soil, forests, wetland and wildlife. The construction of infrastructure (roads, ports, jetties, culverts), shore supporting works, the creation of lots of tourism facilities, tourist activities and entertainment on coast exert pressure on these resources and alter the natural landscape. For example, the increase in the number of winter sport stations, especially on the French Alps, has raised ecological issues directly related to deforestation or disappearance of grasslands, landscape alteration and degradation of natural

landscapes due to the expansion of the constructed areas (Lozato-Giotart, 1996:214-215). Often enough, there arise rivalries related to traditional use of land, particularly in coastal areas, when the construction of hotels and tourism infrastructure on the coastline obstructs the recreational or other use of the land by locals.

Transportation related to tourism (road, maritime, air transport) consumes 3% of the total energy consumed in Europe and is responsible for 50% of nitrogen oxide emissions, which contribute to the creation of photo smog, and for 70% of total carbon dioxide emissions causing health problems, mainly to the respiratory system and the heart (Kokkosis&Tsartas, 2001:151). Among all means of transportation, air transport is rated as the most polluting one because it emits not only carbon dioxide but also greenhouse gases causing great disturbances to the planet’s balance.

According to the existing data³, flights emit 10 times more greenhouse gases than trains and 190 times more than ships. Gas emissions in high altitude affect the environment 2.7 times more than gas emissions on the ground.

In Great Britain greenhouse gas emitted by flights has doubled within the last years, from 20.1 million tones in 1990 to 39.5 million tones in 2004. Tourism is responsible for more than 60% of air transport and consequently for a significant part of these emissions. Along with this, the

increased demand for travelling by plane, particularly from India and China, has given rise to discussions and activists stress the need to limit pleasure, and especially long-distance trips.

Although energy is not a natural resource, its production usually requires the consumption of a non-renewable natural resource, such as hydrocarbons. Tourism development leads to an increase in energy consumption and, consequently, in energy production with serious repercussions on the environment. The example of Dubai is illustrative.

Dubai has always been one of the most inhospitable places in the world with its temperature rising above 45° C. However, due to rational planning it has achieved a 228% raise in tourist arrivals within the past 15 years. But the demand in power for the construction and operation of the huge buildings literally drains the planet of its resources, since the resources possessed by the emirate are not sufficient and the emirate seeks outside its boundaries to cover its needs.

For this reason, the emirate was recently ranked 1st among the countries with the highest ecological footprint⁴, leaving even the USA behind (Stefanides, 2007:130).

The natural ecosystems are affected by construction activities related to the construction and operation of tourism units, ports, marinas, transport service installations (e.g. airports, roads), as well as the physical planning of these works (in a short distance from the coast). This leads to the interruption of the movement and communication of the species and the delimitation of their natural space, the alteration of the biocenosis composition both in land and marine ecosystems – the phenomenon of eutrophication is illustrative here, the change in the behaviour and habits of the animals, the disturbance of their reproduction procedures and, therefore, the reduction of the population of rare species etc.

This degradation of the natural environment is imputed from the one hand to the nature of the tourism phenomenon and from the other hand to the tourism policy adopted by the government (Komilis&Vagionis, 1999:134).

Tourism activity is characterised by time and place concentrations. This means that tourism zones often host a greater number of tourists and infrastructure than they can hold with disastrous impacts on the local environment.

The government endeavours to channel the investment into certain areas suffering from overexploitation of tourism resources, environmental degradation, scarcity of infrastructure and faulty use of land, the coastal zones included, thus allowing the perpetuation of problems. At the same time, the lack of the appropriate legislation to regulate tourism development and the inadequate control from the government, encourage tourism enterprises to violate the law by adopting practices that are harmful for the environment.

Achieving a harmonious relation between tourism and the environment is, despite the contradiction, what we are looking for in modern tourism. The interest of science and technology as well as the concern of the enterprises and the government moves towards this direction, for everyone is now aware of the fact that the economic health of tourism is mainly based on its ecological health that has to be the common objective of all efforts for tourism development worldwide.

Tourism development and culture

The transformation of culture into a tourism resource entails changes in the culture of the host society. These changes are related to the commercialisation and refutation of the meaning of the local cultural tradition, the distortion of morals and, finally, the decay and degradation of the built environment as far as it constitutes an element of culture.

The transformation of culture into a commodity is apparent in several cultural manifestations, even in those related to religious traditions and local manners and customs, since they are adapted by the tourism agents and the local officials in order to meet the expectations, the need for entertainment and, often enough, the lack of time of tourists. As a result, they risk losing their significance and meaning for the locals (McKercher & Du Cros, 2002:61). For example, in Indonesia they sell tickets to those tourists who are willing to attend customs related to the burial of the dead (Tsartas, 1996:299).

These developments are related to the domination of organized mass tourism and are particularly apparent in the regions of the developing world considered culturally and environmentally “traditional” and “clear”, thus satisfying tourists’ pursuit of authentic experiences. An illustrative example is the giraffe women of the Padaung tribe in Birma or Myanmar.

Many years ago the women of the tribe began to wear big coils of bronze or copper around their neck to protect themselves against tiger bite and at the same time become unattractive to slave trade. As a result their neck seemed to be elongated at about 25 cm, because of the pressure exerted on the clavicle and the ribcage, and the muscles of the neck ceased to develop, which made the coils absolutely necessary for supporting the head.

Despite the fact that nowadays there is no reason for these deformations, the Padaung women keep preserving the custom because they earn their living from tourists who pay to take pictures of them and, by the way, buy their textiles (Bozaninou, 1999: 120).

The commercial exploitation of cultural heritage is related to the transformation of material forms of art, e.g. handicrafts that the tourists buy as souvenirs into tourism objects. However, mass tourism brought about changes in these creations of popular art both in their production procedure and in the final products which end up most of the times being cheap imitations of the traditional objects. In other cases, the new tourism products lose their initial value as symbols or objects of usage and are used as decorative objects, one more tourism service of organized mass tourism. The

selling of molas by Kuna women in Panama is a good example. Molas are blouses worn by the women of the tribe and their designs reflected the conception of the world, of nature and of the spiritual life of the Kuna nation. Nowadays, the art of creating molas is transformed into a commercial trade and the designs of the molas are changing according to the interests of the tourists, while the Kuna women are losing the knowledge of the old designs and their interpretations and meanings (Eco-Index 2001).

The commercialisation and standardisation of the elements of cultural heritage as well as the urgent need to diversify the tourism product is also related to changes in consumer morals of tourists who believe that they have seen everything and are now attracted by strange, wired or even hideous sights, uninterested in the foreign places and the authentic local culture.

An example is the tourism valorisation of places where criminal acts were committed and freedom was denied, such as the Gestapo cells in Berlin and the prison of Alcatraz in New York, or even the highly confidential base of China, where atomic and later on nuclear bombs were produced until 1987. There are travel agencies in Kenya offering safari not in the pure and exotic savanna but in the poverty-stricken and socially wretched neighbourhoods of the African continent.

Finally, the massive continuous influx and the tight squeeze of visitors at the monuments, the religious and archeological sites, the traditional settlements and the historic city centers, which cause damage to the monuments (Costa, 1988) and are often accompanied by pollution, illegal removal of items of cultural heritage or even vandalisms, as well as the arbitrary interventions on the traditional architecture of the local structure caused by the works of tourism infrastructure and superstructure, alter and degrade the cultural landscape putting in danger its intergenerational conservation and survival.

Codes of ethics in tourism

Codes of ethics have been developed in recent years as a response to the ethical transgressions of the tourism industry, the tourists and the government in order to enhance the ethical aspect of tourism both as business activity and as practice. Several international tourism organisations and professional associations have developed codes of ethics. They provide guidelines, which have to comply with specific moral standards. Their variety reflects the diversity and the dimensions of the tourism industry what makes it impossible to create a code of ethics that is common to all aspects of tourism activity. It is, however, commonplace in every code of ethics that, first, the tourism industry is mostly based on a limited resource, the natural environment. Therefore, sustainable development requires setting limits to growth. Second, the tourism industry is community-based and greater consideration needs must be given to the sociocultural costs of tourism development. Third, the tourism industry is service-oriented and must ethically treat both the employees and the customers (Fleckenstein & Huebsch, 1999:141).

The Global Code of Ethics for Tourism (GCET) adopted by the World Tourism Organisation during the San Diego conference in 1999¹ seems to be in accordance with these principles. The Code sets a frame of reference for the responsible and sustainable development of world tourism. There are codes of ethics of shorter range such as the Code of Ethics for Tourists of the Universal League of the Third World Nations, the Code of Conduct for the Protection of Children and Adolescents from Commercial Sexual Exploitation in Tourism² of the ECPAT (End Child Prostitution, Child Pornography and Trafficking of Children for Sexual Purposes) network, a project financed by UNICEF and supported by the World Tourism Organisation, the Ten Commandments on Ecotourism of ASTA³ (American Society of Travel Agents), WWF's Codes of

United Nations Environmental Programme) Principles on Sustainable Tourism⁴, the Cultural Tourism Charter of ICOMOS⁵ (International Council on Monuments and Sites) etc. In addition, the tourism industry creates its own codes of conduct in an effort to promote responsible tourism policies.

Conclusions

Defying sustainable tourism can be difficult given the lack of consensus over what constitutes sustainability and which ethical values are utilised or discarded in the decision-making process. Societies do not share the same ethical values. Problems arise when two or more cultures with different ethical values interact. Whose values will be followed? It is the values of western societies that mostly prevail. Western codes of ethics and development processes are implemented, while local interests are subsumed. The key problem of ethics seems to be that of understanding the "Other". Planners and developers of tourism policies should understand that their interpreting of the needs of Others may not correspond to reality (Smith & Duffee, 2003). This will be the first step towards the solution of ethical problems in tourism.

Every country has got best tourist places. India, with its massive diversity has got uncountable tourist hotspots. However there are some of them that are considered valuable from the standpoint of popularity.

It is not to say that these very destinations are the only **places to visit in India** but yes they are the **Most Visited Tourist Places in India** in the list of Indian hotspots.

1. Delhi

One of the historic spots in India, Delhi is home to some of the spectacular scenes. This the capital city of India and the most visited by tourist as it is the first destination which tourists visit ever. With some of the choicest places you can explore

1

⁴ United Nations Environmental Program (UNEP). UNEP Principles on Sustainable Tourism. Available at <http://www.unep.fr/pc/tourism/policy/principles.htm> (accessed on 27/02/2008).

⁵ ICOMOS (1976). *Cultural Tourism Charter*. Available at http://www.icomos.org/tourism/tourism_charter.html (accessed on 27/02/2008).

historical monuments, temples, museums and the most popular markets. Such as [India Gate](#), the [Lotus Temple](#), [Jama Masjid](#), [QutubMinar](#), there is no dearth of other hotspots in the vicinities.

Tourist Attractions : India Gate, Lotus Temple, [Red Fort](#), ChandniChowk, Jama Masjid, QutubMinar, [AkshardhamTemple](#), [Rajghat](#), [Connaught Place](#), [JantarMantar](#), [Humayun's Tomb](#), [DilliHaat](#) etc.



2. Agra

Agra stands atop. As it homes the world's most beautiful monument, **Taj Mahal**, it reigns supreme in the list of famous tourist places in India. This white falls in the list of Seven Wonders of the World. **Agra** city also includes places such as FatehpurSikri, **Agra Fort**, **Akbar's tomb**, **Ram Bagh** and Sikandra Fort. Must see the sunset and sunrise view of Taj Mahal. Know more **about Agra**so that you can explore its places beautifully.

Tourist Attractions : Taj Mahal, Agra Fort, **FatehpurSikri**, Ram Bagh, Akbar's Tomb, **ItimadudDaulah**, **Akbar's Mausoleum**, **Agra Museum**, **MehtabBagh** etc.



3. Jaipur and Udaipur

Anyone who wishes to unearth the traditional Indian Diaspora must refer to **Jaipur** and **Udaipur**. The charming story does not end here as there is no dearth of other fascinating features including geographical locations, **Jal Mahal**, **Hawa Mahal** or 'Palace of Winds'. One gets wonder struck to witness gorgeous forts and palaces turning into heritage hotels. **City Palace** and the **Lake Place of Udaipur** are inevitable stops. There are a number of **cities in Rajasthan** to visit but the Jaipur, Udaipur and **Jaisalmer** are the first choice of everyone.

Tourist Attractions in Jaipur : Jal Mahal, Hawa Mahal, City Palace, **Nahargarh Fort**, **Jaigarh Fort**, **JantarMantar**, **Local Markets**, **ChokhiDhani**, Raj Mandir, **Sisodia Rani Garden**, **Galta Ji Temple** etc.

Tourist Attractions in Udaipur : City Palace, Lake Pichola, Fatehsagar Lake, Vintage Car Museum, **Jagdish Temple**, **Eklingji Temple**, Jaisamand Lake, Saheliyonki Bari, Local Markets etc.



5. Varanasi

Varanasi is the spiritual capital of the country. If you have a weird imagination of India, Varanasi is the right place to make it a reality. Varanasi is one of the oldest inhabited cities, which is still in use.

The River Ganges plays an important role in imparting spirituality to the region. The alleys and streets of the place are packed with numerous types of temples. Varanasi is the place where religious magic takes place.

You can find Aghori sadhus smearing ashes over their bodies, and pandits teaching young minds along the ghats of River Ganges. From the reality of religion to the purity of death, this is the city to see everything.

Tourist Attractions : Ganga Aarti at DashashwamedhGhat, New Vishwanath Temple, Kashi Vishwanath Temple, SankatMochan Hanuman, Durga Temple, Tibetan Temple, Ramnagar Fort, TulsiManas Temple, Sarnath, ManikarnikaGhat, and other.



6. Jaisalmer

Those who love to relish in an Arabian Nights' styled vacation should try **Jaisalmer** during peak winter. The city of Jaisalmer might be small and fringed with the famous Thar Desert, but the land is breathtaking and lush with culture. The sandy plains of the land stand as a reminder of the bygone luxury era of India.

This city is the best place to enjoy desert-infused activities like camel safari, camping, belly dance, fire dance, barbeque, puppet show, moon-lit romantic desert dinner, and others. Beside this mystic desert region, you can find the massive **Golden Fort of Jaisalmer**, still standing as an emblem of royal rule in the country. Take a walk through the narrow street of this enchanted fort to explore ancient residence, culture, and others.

Tourist Attractions : Gadisar Lake, Jaisalmer Fort, Desert National Park, Sam sand dunes, Kuldhara Village, Tazia tower, Patwonki Haveli, Salam Singh ki Haveli, Nathmalkihaveli, BadaBagh, Thar heritage museum, and others.



7. Kashmir

It is considered to be one of the indomitably **beautiful destinations** in the Indian context. With lush green mountainous views, there are snow clad peaks along with amazing waterfalls, flower gardens etc. Indeed, Kashmir is a destination worth millions and its beauty enhances during the winters. The boat ride on Dal Lake is simply unforgettable. **Gulmarg**, Nagin Lake, **Srinagar**, Sonmarg, Pari Mahal, Shankracharya shrine and Pehalgam are to name a few of the hotspots in Kashmir.



8. Ladakh

Ladakh has the tourist advantage of the Himalayan landscape. This jagged magical mountain kingdom gets its spectrum of colors from the Buddhist culture. Distinguished stupas and mountain passes are just the beginning of the beauty of Ladakh. Ladakh takes tourists closer to raw, untouched nature, allowing people to rejuvenate within the embrace of nature. Nature and culture go hand in hand, allowing you to enjoy an unforgettable vacation.

Tourist Attractions : **Nubra Valley, Thiksay Monastery**, Tso Moriri, Tso **Pangong**, Khardung La, Kargil, Leh City, Drass, Diskit Village, Zaskar Valley, **Hemis National Park**, Chadar Trek route, and others.



9. Darjeeling

Popularly considered to be the "**Queen of the Hills**", Darjeeling is at an altitude of 2134 meters above sea level. With the rolling mountains, the audacity of this place is amazing. One can find ample of tea plantations as Darjeeling produces the best teas in the world. There are many resorts making Darjeeling one of the most inviting and worthwhile.

Tourist Attractions : Tiger Hill, Batasia Loop, Toy Train, Japanese Peace Pagoda, Rock Garden, Padmaja Naidu Himalayan Zoological Park, Singalila National Park, Happy Valley Tea Estate etc



10. Jim Corbett National Park

While other destinations in this list are major cities or states, the **Jim Corbett park** is just 1,318 square kilometers-covering national park. Despite its small geographical coverage, the Jim Corbett National Park is capable of providing a holistic vacation with international class. The park gets its name after the legendary British writer and hunter, Jim Corbett. This **national park** is famous for holding the maximum number of tigers in the country. Apart from this striped mammal, the land is famous for kaleidoscopes of nature like grassland, forest, hilly region, riverine, and others, lush with different types of flora and unique fauna, like elephant, deer, bear, Himalayan black bear, leopard, primates, and others.

Tourist Attractions : Corbett Falls, Bijrani Zone, Garjiya Devi Temple, River rafting, elephant safari, Ram Ganga reservoir, Corbett Museum, and others.

Also Read : [10 Best Wildlife Safaris in North India](#)

11. Kasol

Located along the serene banks of Parvati River, Kasol is a forest-rich mountain famous for solitude beauty. Geographically speaking, it is a lonely mountain village. However, with the arrival of summer, the land transfers into a romantic magnet. Guesthouses of the land become a welcoming nest for honeymooners. If you are looking for something more than just mainstream **romantic vacation**, Kasol is the right destination. Kasol is one of the few hidden beauties of India attracting the new generation crowd.

Tourist Attractions : Grahan Street, Hot Water Spring, Gurudwara Shri Manikaran Sahib, Chalal trekking trail, Malana, Tosh Village, Parvati River, Kheer Ganga trek, and others.

