

CASE STUDIES ON CONSTRAINTS & PROSPECTS IN SUSTAINABLE TOURISM

Sukla Basu

West Bengal State University, Barasat, India
Corresponding author: dr.basusukla@gmail.com

©Ontario International Development Agency ISSN: 1923-6654 (print)
ISSN 1923-6662 (online). Available at <http://www.ssrn.com/link/OIDA-Intl-Journal-Sustainable-Dev.html>

Abstract: Interventions through international, national & regional conferences; providing frameworks; formulating policies, implementing, monitoring & evaluating them; consequently giving recommendations is a step towards sustainable development. Adopting principles, laying down goals and strategies, enforcing them, ever since the 'call for one earth': is a constructive approach. However, coming down to the grass root level, how far has IT enabled awareness, justified mass participation through decision making and voicing their opinions? Is governance mechanism truly bringing about transparency with respect to tourism? How far applicable has been the global- national- local scale? Can tourism enhance the livelihood opportunities of the marginalized? Well a humble attempt has been made through intensive case studies across the state- nation- transnational boundaries to look into these queries. The geographical approaches in tourism development and the new trends in tourism have been focussed upon in the regional (Eastern India) & national (India) context. A comparative picture on the techniques adopted in the management of resources in the coastal environments of India & Thailand has been stressed upon. This has been done keeping in mind the cultural differences, the vulnerability, the tourism potential of the respective areas, the sharing of responsibilities, the risks undertaken and the rewards gained between the public and private sectors. Tourism is a multi- sectoral activity and focussing on all the varied aspects is beyond the scope of this paper. The findings are based on secondary data accessed and primary data analyzed quantitatively and qualitatively after selecting the potential stakeholders. The coastal environments of India and Thailand have been considered in this paper due to some similar natural phenomena: be it subjecting to cyclones or the limestone caves. The comparative analysis of the two countries reveals that there is scope for further development in accordance with the sustainable development principles. India needs to develop her resources to the fullest keeping

in mind her huge human resource potential and has to raise her earnings through tourism considering her varied natural and socio- cultural aspects. Poverty which is the main barrier (rich-poor gap), the urban-rural divide, corruption and constraints in infra structural development and many other related issues require more stringent measures. This is possible through sincere PPP co-ordination, active people's participation, adopting stricter environmental code of conduct by all: tourists (guests) and the joy givers (hosts). Thailand has a significant amount of its GDP contributed by its tourism sector; the infra structural development is much better. However more active people's participation is required as expressed by some of the respondents.

Keywords: Transitional boundaries, Sustainable tourism, coastal environment, human resources

INTRODUCTION

As per World Travel Organization (WTO), the leading international organization in the field of tourism and a specialized agency of the United Nations, tourism comprises the activity of persons travelling to and staying in places outside their usual environment for not more than one consecutive year for leisure, business and other purposes. It is the collection of activities, services and industries, including transportation, accommodation, eating and drinking establishments, retail shops, entertainment, business and other hospitality services provided for individuals or groups travelling away from home. In the 21st century the global economy will be driven by three major service industries – technology, telecommunications and tourism. International tourism has been performing better than world trade evidenced by tourism receipts registering a higher growth than that of world export in services and merchandise exports. Its status as a major economic activity has been recognized by almost all the nations of the world and consequently there is a general increase in tourism on the global and regional

scale. Tourism, according to experts is expected to capture the global market and become the largest industry in the world with the global tourism boom in recent times. Travel & Tourism continues to be one of the world's largest industries and it is anticipated by the forum for business leaders in the Travel & Tourism, the World Travel & Tourism Council (WTTC,2012), that by 2022 it will account for 328 million jobs, or 1 in every 10 jobs on the planet's industry. Their latest research suggests that, despite political upheaval, economic uncertainty and natural disasters, the industry's direct contribution to world GDP grew besides directly generating a few million new jobs. That world tourism can also be a vital force for world peace besides providing the moral and intellectual basis for international understanding and interdependence was the general consensus of Manila Declaration (1980) on World Tourism. The World Tourism Organization (WTO) defined sustainable tourism development as "that which meets the needs of present tourist and host regions while protecting and enhancing opportunities for the future".

World Travel Organization (WTO) which serves as a global forum for tourism policy issues and practical source of tourism know-how came into existence on 2nd January, 1975. Tourism has been included in the General Agreement on Trade in Services and became operational in January 1995. Other leading international agencies such as the World Bank, the World Travel & Tourism Council (WTTC) have been substantially involved in making tourism a truly global industry. Travel and tourism has emerged as one of the world's most centralized and competitive industries, and hardly any other economic sector illustrates so clearly the global reach of transnational corporations (TNCs).

Tourist Organization of Thailand (TOT) was set up in 1960 to advertise and promote tourism; make laws and public statements on safety and cleanliness, further boosting the sector. Thai governments have boosted tourism by spending about 3 percent of total government budget outlays on it. These expenditures have supported a range of promotional programs; such as "Visit Thailand Year" in 1987, "Thailand: the Gateway to Indochina", "Amazing Thailand" and "Unseen Thailand". From the Sixth National Economic and Social Development Plan (1987-1991), Thailand focussed on the development of tourism by a marketing exercise "Visit Thailand Year" in 1987; the result was a substantial boost to tourism revenue by 34 percent in 1987 and by 58 percent in 1988. The Thailand Development Research Institute on behalf of Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT) had in 1997 prepared a national tourism master plan based on the principles of sustainability: environmental rehabilitation and

protection, expansion of ecotourism infrastructure and income generation for local communities. The TAT to promote natural and cultural conservation through sustainable tourism projects have started to award the companies doing so from 1996. TAT has its own portal site www.tourismthailand.org-which provides both tourism information and online booking. The site contains extensive information on Thailand as a whole, as well as individually on each of Thailand's seventeen regions. The Decentralization Plan and Process Act of 1999 expanded the obligations of Thai local government to provide public services; several tasks and responsibilities being mandated to local government. The Designed Areas for Sustainable Tourism Administration or DASTA is a public organization its mission is to set guidelines for sustainable tourism development and has initiated the idea of a model in the designation of a special economic zone on the principle of co-creation involving local people and related stakeholders from all sectors. The Ministry of Tourism and Sports was established in 2002 to develop, support and promote industrial tourism, sports and recreation. The Thailand National Tourism Development Plan (2012-2016) approved by the cabinet and the national tourism policy committee referred to the inclusion of tourism in the national agenda.

In the arena of international cooperation, India participated in meets of Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN), in several sessions of United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) Executive Council and in several other related events of T-20, G-20 to name a few. The Government's role in tourism development has been redefined from a regulator to a catalyst. Apart from marketing and promotion, the focus of tourism development plans is now on integrated development of enabling infrastructure through effective partnership with various stakeholders. As part of its domestic and global publicity and marketing strategy to promote tourism and create social awareness through the print and electronic media, the Ministry of Tourism launched campaigns on "Clean India", "Atithi Devo Bhava" (Guest is God) and "Hunar Se Rozgaar" through radio channels; "Incredible India" branding on TV in addition to campaigns highlighting the tourism potential of various parts of the country through Doordarshan. In order to promote India more effectively as a convention destination, the travel industry had, under the patronage of the Ministry of Tourism, set up the India Convention Promotion Bureau (ICPB) in 1988, a non-profit organization, with members comprising of national airlines, hotels, travel agents, tour operators, tourist transport operators, conference organizers, etc. At the core of the National Tourism Policy of 2002 is

outlined the seven pillars of tourism, Swagat (Welcome), Soochana (Information), Suvidha (Facilitation), Suraksha (Safety), Sahyog (Cooperation), Samrachanam (Infrastructure Development) and Safai (cleanliness). As an incentive the Ministry of Tourism is giving 'National Tourism Awards' to State Governments, classified hotels, heritage hotels, approved travel agents, tour operators and tourist transport operators, individuals and other private organizations in recognition of their performances in their respective fields each year. The Federation of Hotel and Restaurant Association of India (FHRAI) which regulates the hotel industry in India was founded in 1954 to cater to various needs of the industry. To develop tourism infrastructure and promote India as a tourist destination the India Tourism Development Corporation (ITDC) was set up in 1966. The major landmark in the history of Indian Tourism was the announcement of the first ever "Tourist Policy" in the Sixth Five Year Plan (1980-85) which specified the development objectives and provided an action plan based on "Travel Circuit" concept to maximize the benefits of tourism. The sector was accorded the status of an industry in the Seventh Five Year Plan (1985-90). The National Committee on Tourism was set up in 1986 to evaluate the economic and social relevance of tourism and to draw up a long term measure for ensuring its accelerated growth. The Tourism Finance Corporation of India (TFCI) was set up in 1989 to finance tourism projects. The development plans for tourism during the Eight Plan (1992-97) was based on the National Action Plan 1992, a major component which was the development of all inclusive Special Tourism Areas and intensive development of selected circuits. The Government of India called for effective coordination of public and private participation (PPP) to achieve synergy in the development of tourism through the policy measures of the Tourism Policy 1982, Tourism Plan of Action 1992 and Tourism Policy 1997. The Department of Tourism also constituted a special Task Force for the promotion of schemes/projects for the development of tourism in the North Eastern States, Sikkim, Jammu & Kashmir, Arunachal Pradesh and hill districts of Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal. State Tourism Development Corporations are looking into the tourism activities at the state/ regional level. With liberalization the government allows direct foreign investment up-to 51% in high priority industries, and hotels and tourism related activities are part of the list. Attempts of restructuring and strengthening the institutional set-up for human resource development include the setting-up of an Advanced Institute of Hotel Management and a Culinary Institute.

OBJECTIVES

An insight into the interventions in tourism at the international & national level, gauging the role of tourism & its trends, salient features of tourism and the geographical approaches in tourism development has been considered in this study. A comparative picture on the techniques adopted in the management of resources in the coastal environments of India & Thailand has been stressed upon. This has been done keeping in mind the cultural differences, the vulnerability, the tourism potential of the respective areas, the sharing of responsibilities, the risks undertaken and the rewards gained between the public and private sectors.

RESEARCH METHODS

The study has reviewed an extensive amount of literature examining the various issues of tourism in general and sustainable tourism in particular. The environmental and socio-cultural approaches on the study of tourism from a geographer's perspective have been incorporated. Analysis of various documents and insights of researchers were consulted. The field research has been conducted at some of the most popular tourist areas of Southern Thailand & Eastern India. The secondary data collection involved library research (mostly online) on materials related to tourism industry in these two countries.

A GEOGRAPHER'S PERSPECTIVES ON THE STUDY OF TOURISM

A geographer has to look into the geographical location of a place, its accessibility, the climate, the physical and cultural landscape, the physical planning and the consequent changes brought about with provision of tourism facilities in an area. Tourism destinations are geographically diverse in nature. There are different geographical sites like beaches, mountains and urban attractions and holidaymakers can be encouraged to travel further, beyond established destinations, which can enhance and diversify their experience of particular environmental, cultural or natural heritage attractions thus spreading the benefits of tourism geographically. Land forms like hills and mountains, gorges and canyons, coral reefs, cliffs; water forms like rivers, waterfalls, geysers, glaciers, lakes; flora and fauna; cultural events like trade fairs, exhibitions, arts and music festivals, games; traditional arts and handicrafts, folklore, study of native life and their customs, etc to name a few are a geographer's interest. A tourist's destination covers one or some of these combined features.

The coastal environments of India and Thailand have been considered in this paper due to some similar natural phenomena. Both the countries have been

victims of tsunami; cyclones, floods, political crisis, the global financial crisis, of some sort or the other, which have a say in the tourism scenario. Regional disparities, erosion of traditional values, increase in the cost of living, unequal income distribution, rising land prices, pollution, and environmental degradation do exist. The coastal landscape, an important element of the aesthetic environment, has in places been changed dramatically in both the cases by anthropogenic forces. Thailand lies at the centre of emerging regional tourism industries of mainland South East Asia. Assessing Thailand's experience with international tourism offers many avenues of policy research and provides clues and warnings for other emerging Asian tourism destinations. The four Ss of tourism-sun, sea, sand and sex-remain significant in Thailand till date besides tourism based on cultural attractions, natural resources and urban based activities such as shopping and entertainment. Tourism is the third largest foreign exchange earner after gems and jewellery and ready-made garments in India. India with its rich and varied natural and cultural landscape provides ample scope and potentiality in the tourism scenario.

LIMITATIONS

Tourism is a multi-sectoral activity and focussing on all the varied aspects is beyond the scope of this paper. Due to time constraint the study has been limited both in the spatial context and in the temporal aspect.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Of the existing special economic groups India is a member of G20, the (Brazil, Russia, India & China (BRIC) & Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) while Thailand that of APEC. Despite the increase in foreign tourists India's share of international tourist arrivals continues to be about 0.64% in the world with smaller countries in South East Asia attracting far more tourists (Source: TNN June 17th, 2013). The Ministry of Tourism has taken up the initiative of identifying, diversifying, developing and promoting the niche products of the tourism industry and central financial assistance is being extended to State Governments/Union Territory for development of tourism infrastructure in several destinations in India. It has also started the scheme of Rural Tourism in 2002-03 with the objective of highlighting rural life, art, culture and heritage at rural locations and in villages which have core competence in art, craft, handloom, textiles and natural environment. The intention was also to benefit the local community economically, socially and enabling interaction between tourists and local population for a mutually enriching experience.

Thailand happens to be the most popular tourist destination in South East Asia. The trajectory of growth and development of this industry reveals that international tourist arrivals remained low until 1960s when in accordance with the World Bank inspired development policies, the country was opened to foreign investment and encouraged tourism growth. The government invested heavily in infrastructure resulting in vast improvement in road construction, water and electric power supply, banking, trading communications and government services. The Vietnam War brought American troops and with it the western culture of bars, night clubs and shaped the international image of Thailand. The increasing ease and low price of travelling to and within Thailand has led to a major increase in the number of tourists flocking here annually. The economy benefitted from a surge in tourist arrivals and increased state spending in spite of a weaker GDP in the third quarter of 2013. "In 2014, the Thai economy is expected to grow in the range of 4.0-5.0 percent," on the back of a global economic recovery and massive state spending on infrastructure quoted the National Economic and Social Development Board (NESDB).

Case study of **Phuket** and **Pattaya** tourist destinations had been taken up for an in-depth study of tourism scenario in Thailand: the former a destination sought after by the wealthy, the latter the common man. Almost four decades back in 1974 **Phuket** was identified as a potential mass tourism destination, marketed as the "Pearl of the Andaman"; as a tourism destination in 1976 in the National Plan of Tourism Development, followed by a feasibility study carried out by the Pacific Consultants International in 1978. In 1979 a Comprehensive Tourism Plan was drafted by the Tourism Authority and an international airport was built. During 1980s Phuket stepped onto the international tourism stage from a little known tin mining and rubber region and tourism became an integral part of local life. The local economy graduated and diversified with a rise in residents employed in the service sector by an increase of 133% between 1980 & 1990. Hotels and restaurants employed nearly one-fifth of the island's total workforce. As per Phuket Provincial Statistical Office in 1995, tourism at the local scale produced 4.9 times the value of agriculture and 2.6 times the value of secondary sector activities. Plans to shift from beach tourism to nature based excursions and business travel have diversified it further. Well all that glitters is not gold! The island is becoming overdeveloped, pushing more tourists on to new, less developed islands such as Krabi Beach, Koh Tao and Koh Phi Phi. Development was neither carefully planned nor monitored; consequently the beautiful beaches and picturesque villages of the island of

Phuket have been overrun by concrete bungalows and hotels, video and 'girlie' bars, shooting ranges and golf courses. Land is becoming scarce and its price escalating. The peak tourist season is during the time of little rainfall and since Phuket lacks in abundant sources of fresh water its shortage is aggravated. Due to the infrastructural deficiencies raw sewerage flow directly into the Gulf of Thailand via open storm drains. Sewerage treatment difficulties and water pollution thus afflicts Phuket.

The eastern sea side resort of **Pattaya** grew from a fishing village with 1 hotel in 1970 to an "ecological disaster area" housing 266 hotels in 1990. Many local fishermen and their families had been forcibly removed from coastal areas to make room for new hotels and restaurants. The overflow of tourists to the town of Pattaya, which received three million visitors in 1989, led to a faecal contamination increase of 87% from 1977 to 1987. This pushed the Thai government to suspend tourist development in nineteen national parks, and to construct artificial coral reefs to counteract marine damage by tourists and fishermen using explosives. It was learnt from an article that most tourism business owners were outsiders who arrived here after tourism boomed. Being outsiders they little realize the importance of environment conservation, their motive is to make profit, they do not have vested interest in the long term condition of the locality "as they are freer to get up and move when the tourists leave".

Proper sewerage treatment & adequate access to fresh water did not receive sufficient attention from planners in the incipient stages of tourism development in Phuket of Thailand thus fostering unchecked tourism growth & an absence of pollution controls. "The fragile coastal, marine and small island environment upon which tourism has been built has come under increasing pressure as a result of the largely uncontrolled, and hardly anticipated, tourism boom". Recognizing the vital role played by tourism industry in economic development, each local administration (Provincial administrative or PAO, Municipality or Tassaban Authority Administration TAO or Tambon or village administration organization) has allocated budget for promoting tourism, e. g. up-grading facilities and infrastructure, marketing and advertising; expanding the services sector base in the country's production structure by increasing the diversity of service businesses, adding value, enhancing competitiveness, improving skilled labor in terms of both quality and linguistic skills; and linking service, industrial and agricultural businesses into product clusters, e.g. healthcare, food and tourism business, including creative services products based on culture and Thai wisdom linked with modern technology. To develop standards for tourism services, it has set up standards

for tourism related businesses such as tourist guides, travel, souvenir shops, hotels and accommodations; to develop standards for human resources in tourism-related sectors such as hotel staff, tour company workers, tourist guides, restaurant workers, tour bus drivers, etc.; and improve the service standards of tourism-related government agencies regarding traveller's safety, fees and charges. The Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT) to promote natural and cultural conservation through sustainable tourism projects have started to award the companies doing so from 1996. The key factors contributing to the success of Thailand tourism are both the public-private partnership (PPP) and the cooperation of the TAT with the public sector. To inculcate the tourism culture amongst the local youth the Government has introduced tourism as a core subject in local universities as well as in the school curriculum. The attempts of the public and private sectors to stimulate markets and restore the attractions affected by the disaster of tsunami of December 2004 (which affected the west coast in particular), as fast as possible was really appreciable; the slowdown was not as severe as it could have been. Dispersion from highly centralized origins in Bangkok to a north-south tourism axis stretching from Phuket in the south to Chiang Mai in the north has been attempted to bring about a regional balance. Integrating several features/ aspects of tourism in one destination through well planned packages was noticed by me. The receptionist/manager of the resort where I had sheltered provided me with several brochures, gave valuable suggestions and arranged for travel; food and beverages (food provided to me was according to my request); adventure, recreation and entertainment according to my time and budget, providing me with a unique experience of leisure-cum-adventure-cum-entertainment. In Pattaya I got acquainted with the local traditions, local lifestyle, local food, folkdance and music through cultural programme hosted which was followed by an elephant show within the premises of a well planned garden-the Nongnooch. Within the complex all important amenities included coffee shops, restaurants, souvenir shops, shopping arcade and local ride. The tourist products covered the complete experience of a visit to this particular place and were based on natural resources and man-made resources. In Phuket water based tourism was well co-ordinated with boating experience through limestone caves in an island, several kilometres drive by road and waterway from Phuket. It was also associated with elephant safari and river rafting, food and beverages were such that it could appeal to varied tourists across several trans-national boundaries. Along the Patong beach paragliding adventure could be experienced. The beach was full of tourists but it was devoid of any waste materials/litter. The aesthetic needs were adhered to by placing dustbins

at some points and some persons immediately picking up the waste materials thrown carelessly by any tourist. It is not just enough for government organisations to work towards sustainable tourism development. Every individual and every community has to contribute in every way possible to get close to the goal. Noise levels were also under control as I didn't come across any loud horn honking along the roads but air-conditioning instead of natural cross ventilation adds to pollution.

The most popular destinations for international tourists in India (as in 2010) included Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu and Delhi, while most domestic tourists visited the states of Andhra Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh and Tamil Nadu, according to the Indian Ministry of Tourism. However, to widen the arena several efforts are being made elsewhere. In Eastern India in West Bengal a total of 34 projects (out of 875 for India) had been sanctioned an amount of Rs 120.32 crores in the Eleventh Five Year Plan & in Orissa 32 projects (amount of Rs 102.70 crores). In West Bengal the Ganga Heritage River Cruise Circuit was sanctioned in 2008-09 & the Kolkata Heritage and River-Front Mega Tourism Project had been identified in 2011-12 as a mega destination. In Orissa the Bhubaneswar-Puri-Chilka Circuit was sanctioned in 2008-09 (Source: India, Ministry of Tourism, Annual Report 2012-13 pp.14-16).

Case study from India includes that of Bakkhali & Gangasagar falling within the Sundarban area, a unique bio-climatic zone of Gangetic delta, and enlisted in the World Heritage in 1985 and declared as a biosphere reserve way back in 1989. It falls within the Coastal Regulation Zone-I category of the Coastal Zone Management Plan. It has been recognized as an 'ecologically sensitive area' by both the international agencies and the local state government. Vulnerability of the residential coastal communities to natural disasters is common. The Aila of May 2009 had drastic effect in many parts of the Sundarban area. **Bakkhali** is emerging as a prospective tourist spot while Gangasagar is a national pilgrimage spot. Bakkhali is basically dominated by the fishing communities (it is less than 10 kms from the Fresergunj landing center in Namkhana Block of the district of South 24 Parganas, West Bengal). The Fresergunj landing center was formally recognized by the State Government in 1995 to promote fishing, create employment and raise the GDP. The region is undergoing rapid changes due to recent development in transport, communication and economic links with the urban centres. Connection with Kolkata has improved (NH117, rail link up to Namkhana). With the tourist friendly approach of the local people, tourism is picking up fast resulting in increase in hotels (Basu 2011). Thus there is scope of an increase in alternative livelihood opportunities for

the local people but the question arises whether these ignorant illiterate localities are given the opportunities considering the fact that most hotel owners are outsiders. **Gangasagar** is the popular name given to the point where the Ganges drains out into the Bay of Bengal; located on the western edge of the Sunderban Delta on Sagar Island. The *Gangasagar Mela* (fair) is organised in mid January on *Makar/Poush Sankranti* attracting millions of Hindu pilgrims from across the country to the island, to the temple of Kapil Muni and to take a dip where Ganges meets the Bay of Bengal. During the mela (this type of tourism is temporary) the number of accommodation increases with temporary camps/ huts arranged by many commercial and non-commercial organizations. Steps taken by the state government towards meeting demands of the pilgrims during this peak season have improved the situation. Special measures are taken to ensure security by concerted efforts of both the central and state authorities. Arrangement of stay, toilet and drinking water facilities is provided but this is insufficient said the local people. Their income no doubt increases but so also does pollution, frequency of thefts and accidents. In spite of the environmental impact, people want the *mela* to continue supported by more active participation of the government. Government should take more steps towards garbage disposal and sanitation was the opinion of the majority.

Beach tourism is very popular among the tourists of all age groups, backgrounds, cultures and countries. The land use has multi facets like sunbathing, recreational areas for tourist (parks, playgrounds, clubs, theatre, amusement parks, casinos, cultural museums, etc.), accommodation facilities (hotels, cottages, villas, camping sites, etc.), car and bus parking areas, entertainment and shopping complexes, access roads and transportation network. Earlier people travelled mainly for commercial and religious reasons and leisure travel was for the rich. Today people travel for a variety of motivations, including business, leisure, religion, culture, visiting friends and relatives, education and health. The means of transportation have become varied and faster and as the transport becomes faster, new travellers emerge and people travel greater distances. The growth and expansion of the middle class and an increase in their disposable income has also boosted it. **Digha** in West Bengal and **Puri** in Odisha happen to be the most favoured tourist spots for those who wish to make out of a quick and short span of weekend holidaying in eastern India: both catering to local/ domestic visitors. Rapid and unplanned haphazard extension of accommodation facilities soon was beyond the carrying capacity in Digha now renamed as Old Digha with its extended part named as New Digha. Puri besides being noted for beach

tourism is also visited for its famous Jagannath temple – hence a religious spot as well. Since 1993 each year the government of Odisha organizes Puri beach festival. Beach tourism activities include water and land resource use. Due to its multidimensional requirements the beach product needs special care. A beach resort needs to be developed as an integrated complex to function as a self-contained community. In a sea-side resort, facilities like swimming, boating, yachting, surf-riding along with dancing, recreation and other amusements are important for every tourist centre. Excellent sandy beaches, sheltered from sunshine with palm and coconut trees and offering good bathing conditions form very good tourist attractions. However these features of beach tourism are conspicuously absent in these two areas. Instead encroachment of buildings, lodges and hotels towards the beach area giving impression of a shabby landscape was a universal phenomenon. Water based adventure sports include water rafting, canoeing and kayaking, yachting, waterskiing, water scootering, etc. also offer thrilling activities to the tourists, again lacking out here.

CONCLUSION

Tourism is Thailand's leading source of foreign exchange and thus has a positive impact on the country's economy. However being concentrated in small, specific areas intense exploitation of the resources within these regions has resulted. Regional disparities have also resulted with focus on developmental activities on Bangkok and a few pockets. The marine environment has suffered equally, from the destruction of coral by anchors and scuba divers- water activities, as well as pollution from the motor boats and the continuous dumping of untreated waste that is pumped into the sea by the resorts along the shore. The glowing neon of 'girlie' bars, tattoo parlours, tourist shops, restaurants remaining open from 10am to 2am (the next day), discotheques playing loud music even beyond midnight signify the night life culture of the West which Thailand's local people have adopted to. The negative aspects of tourism also include prostitution, drug addiction, AIDS, and erosion of traditional values. Many local fishermen and their families have been forcibly removed from coastal areas to make room for new hotels and restaurants, thus being marginalized and further pushed towards poverty. Local landowners and the elite have benefitted marginalizing the less land holding owners. There is also an increase in floating population and in vehicular traffic in comparison to the road capacity causing accidents. Tourist drowning has also occurred. High rise hotels and condominiums began to dominate the architectural landscape, turning the popular beaches into small urban areas. The country was affected by political uncertainty and the global

financial crisis in 2008; many antigovernment demonstrations led to the Bangkok's international airport shutting down for two weeks in 2011. The same year in December Thailand suffered from the worst floods ever in last fifty years.

Spending in India by foreign tourists is cheaper than in cities of developed countries. Yet India's percentage of world tourism receipts/arrivals is still far below the world standards as well as that of our neighbouring countries. India has a heterogeneous society with its varied cultures, traditions and customs, as well as varied scenic beauty; yoga and pilgrimage centres are added attractions. India has proved to be a happening destination in SAARC Region. Things are improving since mid 2004. International Cooperation through multilateral and bilateral agreements with different groups of countries like Association of South-East Asian Nations(ASEAN), Bangladesh-India-Myanmar-Sri Lanka- Thailand-Economic Co-operation (BIMSTEC), and South Asian Association for Regional Co-operation (SAARC), etc. are efforts taken up to boost the economy. The Travel and Tourism Competitiveness Report 2009 by the World Economic Forum credited India with 11th place in the Asia Pacific regions and 62nd overall, moving up three places on the list of the world's attractive destinations. It is ranked the 14th best tourist destination for its natural resources and 24th for its cultural resources, with many World Heritage Sites, rich in natural and cultural, flora and fauna, and strong creative industries in the country. India also bagged 37th rank for its air transport network. The India travel and tourism industry stood 5th in the long-term (10-year) growth. Country Brand Index (CBI) survey conducted by Future Brand, a leading global brand consultancy credited India with the "best country brand for value-for-money". India was also accorded the second place in CBIs "best country brand for history", as well as appears among the top 5 in the best country brand for authenticity and art & culture, and the fourth best new country for business. India is in the list of "rising stars" or the countries that are likely to become major tourist destinations in the next five years, led by the United Arab Emirates, China, and Vietnam [www.ibef.org/industry/tourismhospitality.aspx.]

Tourism contributes to overall socio-economic development through the provision of roads, telephones, and electricity, piped and treated water supplies, waste disposal and recycling and sewage treatment. It is possible to maximize the planning gains through appropriate policies by government and tourism planners. Domestic tourism market in India is mostly local or regional in nature and hence leisure and recreation facilities can be enhanced particularly in rural areas as India has an increasing share of the

prospective urbanites. However the low priority been given to the tourism sector has culminated in a marginal role being played by it in the development of the country which includes the poor infrastructure (in comparison to international standards). India has a variety of traditional cuisine which is increasingly becoming popular worldwide. 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 endeavour to attain sustainable growth in tourism if India is to become a world player in the tourist industry. Eco- Tourism in India is still at a very nascent stage and hence a great potentiality in future lies ahead of us.

In the 21st century the global economy will be driven by three major service industries – Technology, Telecommunications and Tourism. WTTC is inviting tourism businesses, organisations, and destinations worldwide to apply for its prestigious Tourism for Tomorrow Awards. Each year, the Awards distinguish global leaders in sustainable tourism. Both the countries are following suit at the national level. The Internet has fuelled the growth of the travel industry by providing online booking facilities, giving opportunity to people to explore destinations from their home personal computers and finalizing travel plans after being fully informed. With its immense information resources, the Internet allows tourists to scrutinize hotels, check weather forecasts, read up on local food and also talk to other tourists around the world about their travel experiences for a chosen destination. Hence digital technology requires to be integrated with all the subsystems of the tourism system. To promote tourism into the future, greater efforts to implement environmentally sustainable tourist policies and programs are required by both the nations. Greater consideration needs to be given to the impact of free trade on traditional culture and the local community. Tourism being an umbrella industry with strong linkages with many other industries will help in poverty alleviation. Thailand government forecasts that by 2019, one job in every 8.3 jobs in Thailand will be related to tourism (Thephuketinside). India is projected to become the fifth fastest growing business travel destination from 2010-2019 with an estimated real growth rate of 7.6 per cent.

The study reveals that there is scope for further development in accordance with the sustainable development principles. India needs to develop her resources to the fullest keeping in mind her huge human resource potential and has to raise her earnings through tourism considering her varied natural and socio- cultural aspects. Poverty which is the main barrier (rich-poor gap), the urban-rural

divide, corruption and constraints in infra structural development and many other related issues require more stringent measures. This is possible through sincere PPP co-ordination, active people's participation, adopting stricter environmental code of conduct by all: tourists (guests) and the joy givers (hosts). Quality tourist literature, decent upkeep of monuments, amusements parks, multi cuisine food plazas, shopping malls, all these are needed for successful tourism. In India the local community must be convinced of the need to support regulations in the interest of long term sustainability. Other constraints include inadequate quantity and quality of facilities and services, limited availability of tourism related information, restrictive land use policies; failure to adopt and implement sustainable development and management principles and practices at tourism sites are some of the constraints facing India. There is an urgent need for understanding basics of tourism, development of personality and communication skills particularly in English and Hindi; need for basic computer knowledge; successful imparting of tourism education in the curriculum; more of local community participation and direct involvement. Thailand has a significant amount of its GDP contributed by its tourism sector; the infra structural development is much better. However, Thailand also happens to be one of the best documented sex tourism destinations in the world. A comparative study of the phenomenon of beach tourism across the two countries reveals that India with its varied culture has yet to come up to international standards especially in the eastern region –that of West Bengal, not forgetting the potential economic development through services rendered to the domestic ones as well. Due to its multidimensional requirements the beach resort needs to be developed as an integrated complex to function as a self-contained community. Environmental management should also ensure the availability of necessary infrastructure in the immediate hinterland to the coastal region in support of the development on the coast to maintain its ecosystem. The carrying capacity is the central principle in environmental protection and sustainable tourism development. It determines the maximum use of any place without causing negative effects on resources on community, economy and culture. Thus tourism has to be environmentally sustainable in both natural and cultural environment. Integrated planning should be adopted to avoid into sectoral and cross-sectoral conflicts. It is through participation by these local community people whose traditional and local knowledge can be utilized for empowering them. This will also help in maintaining the environmental, social and cultural integrity of destination.

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