



## Management of Protected Areas: Advocating Synchronization of Community, Tourism and Conservation

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### ABSTRACT

*Protected areas cannot be secured if they are kept in isolation. Rather synchronization has to be established between community, tourism and conservation. If tourism has to be used as a tool local population has to be involved perceiving them as resource rather than a threat. The present study revolves around the theme and proves that India has been the pioneer in conservation and promotion of protected areas. The concept is not at all western but rather indigenous. The paper analyses the case studies from developing countries and comes out with certain suggestion which can have far reaching effect on protection and conservation plans.*

### Introduction to Protected Areas

A western writes history of protected areas relating it to the incident, which resulted in setting aside of the Yellowstone National Park in USA in 1872. An Orientalist re-writes history of protected areas that perceive nature as humans' own extension. The theme is found subtly woven in mythology, folk culture and the concept of Hindu pantheon. Religious institutions, ashrams and Forest Universities were established to meet this objective. Many centuries before Mahabharat among others 'Kanwa Ashram' was such an institution, where wild animals use to roam freely and strict protection was rendered to them (AbhygyanShakuntalam). The venue has been identified near Kotdwara, Garhwal (Singh and Kandari 1980). This spirit pervaded until 400 B.C. to quote Kautilya from Arthashastra. In *Abhayaranyas* (protected game forest) a code of conduct was laid down for all and laws were enforced by strict supervision. Even animals that turned dangerous, were chased out and killed so that the inhabitants may be disturbed the least. According to the 5<sup>th</sup> Pillar edict of Ashoka, game and fishery laws were introduced in Northern India in 3<sup>rd</sup> B.C. In this description a list of birds, beasts, fishes and insects is given, that were to be strictly prohibited. Moving to a much later modern period the first ever park of India framed within the modern concept of 'National Park' was established in 1935 (under United Province National Park Act, 1934) known as Hailey National Park after the then Governor of the province.

The western concept of PAs has narrowed down our vision of PAs as being untouched and pristine wilderness. But this view was based on ignorance of the historical relationship between people and their habitat, and of the role people play in maintaining biodiversity in forests, wetlands and grasslands. The dominant conservation ideology has erroneously held that people

interference is necessarily damaging to natural eco-systems, and therefore they should be kept away from PAs and excluded from policies deciding the management of PAs. As result, conflicts have been growing and conservation goals have been threatened.

Indigenous people or ethnic people inhabit nearly 20% of the planet, mainly on land where they have lived for thousands of years. Compared with protected area Managers who control about 5% of the world's landmass, indigenous people are the most important stewards of the world. In the Past, the general belief was that Protected Areas (PAs) were places where boundaries of protection were established, and from where people were kept out or removed. Today, as population pressures increase and the rights of indigenous people and local communities gain recognition and respect, an expanded approach to PAs is emerging

These 'Wilderness Areas' or 'Protected Areas' came into limelight with environmental issue. The concept of core and periphery, where tourist chased periphery to an extent, that, at present it reaches the limits outside global domain resulting into space and virtual travels and how can these wilderness remain untouched. The era of industrialization led better to do generation to be anchored to cities. The first experience or sight of wilderness is generally through media. These city couch potatoes are not well equipped to handle outdoors and generally take help of organized agents and agencies. It has led to the formation of NEAT sector- Nature, Eco and Adventure Tourism, which is prevalent in protected areas and of which wildlife tourism is a subset.

The economic consideration has forced to take up issue and attend to make these areas 'tourism- conserved areas'. In USA, NEAT sector is worth about US \$20 billion per year almost half of tourism economy (Mallet, T. 1998).The question no longer remains whether tourism in protected areas or not? Rather it has shifted to how to manage protected area tourism?

#### **Protected Areas And Tourism: The Conflict**

The concept of protected areas focuses more upon conservation rather than management. Whereas other first world nations have accepted modified protected areas in the form of wilderness. According to US wilderness Act of 1964 'wilderness is an area where the earth and its community of life are untrampled by human beings, where humans are but temporary visitors who do not remain.' Such areas are to be forever free of permanent improvements such as roads and built structures. True wilderness should be large in size, have low intensities of use and free of the trappings of the civilization. They have really tapped the orientalist philosophy of nature being extension of man, unlike many third world countries, which restrict man and his caravan totally in such areas. Tourist for solitude and commune with nature seeks it. Introducing tourism to parks is a much debatable topic. With recent examples from India the missing tigers from Sariska would not made news but for the presence of tourist. UK NATIONAL PARK has people as component. As different to common belief, National Parks in UK are not owned by people but are designated living landscaped areas that by their nature have been considered to have outstanding amenity value' (Heslie 1986). These are places where people go about their daily purpose. Thus they satisfy multiple land uses. (Tourism and Recreation Unit,1981). The situation is grim as there is no clearly defined single policy for countryside rather a collection of policies devised by Central Government. Tourism unlike mining or defense causes less upheaval. There is no doubt that tourism needs conservation, but does

conservation need tourism? Tourism is both supported by and supportive of conservation. It is feasible that recreation can support conservation through good management. Something similar to heritage hotels, differences being that these protected areas are heritage in terms of geography genes and DNA's. UK provides glaring example of Lake District National Park. The region did not have much choice to generate resources from it. Its geographic position made it a poor choice for base Industries because problems in distribution network. The agricultural options were limited and less profitable and IT and modern technology have reduced labour requirement. The jobs available because of tourism whether direct or indirect were relatively high. Seasonality will be a problem at all such places but slowly will diminish when demand spreads throughout the year. It will further provide opportunity to supplement other sources.

Not first world even third world for that matter has their success stories. Africa has presented models and strategies for community based participation to make its programmes for wildlife management successful.

#### **Community Participation In Protected Areas: Cases From Africa:**

The conservation in Africa at one time was marred by the inactive participation of local people. It was based on the notion that saving wild animals means keeping them as far away from people as possible. Parks would have submerged to the need of lands unless it does not serve or are not completely inimical to the needs of the locals. Reorganization was done, where conservation and development were considered to be a part of one process, rather loggerheads. The parks were integrated into social aesthetics and economic life of the community. Zimbabwe and Zambia were test runs and implementation was followed at Botswana, Cameroon, Malawi, Tanzania and rest of the African lands.

The process was lengthy which deduced the importance of locals. The starting of conservation was by stationing park rangers and game scouts. They camped along the boundaries. It provoked conflicts with locals. Villagers started regarding wildlife as a liability rather than resource. The poachers took advantage, bribed these locals with gifts and poached meats. The failure of scheme led to keeping the human need in center of focus. To have a stake in survival they need to have same level of ownership. ADMADE project was designed. Administrative Management Design for Game Management Areas under which the local villagers were trained for employment. The cost was not a burden on national or state's exchequer rather tourist revenues covered the costs and even development needs of the community. It treated conservation as business and villagers as economic entities. Their intimate knowledge of these lands helped capture poachers by their anticipation. Poaching incident in Lupande and Luangawa Park decreased tenfold. This was a ray of hope and also this small place acted as a test run as roughly 45% of Zimbabwe is community owned and is home to 2/3<sup>rd</sup> of countries people (ADAMS 1993).

To enhance participation of rural people in Zimbabwean conservation CAMPFIRE - Communal Areas Management Programme for Indigenous resources was introduced in eighties. They were made guardians as they were the ones who suffered the wrath of crop damage by wild. They even had the capacity to manage their own resources. The whole community acted as shareholders. The first trial was at Nyaminyam district in Zambezi valley a district, with hot dry climate with shallow soils. A trust was created which within the first year yielded a profit of US \$30,000.

The schemes had its constraints which itself is exemplary for others to learn lessons. The bureaucratic infighting' prevalent in third world also had its impact. It was tough to dismantle the traditional mould of conservation. The programme later became a collaborative project under WWF, Zimbabwe Trust and University of Harare.

The options were little, the target of danger were two--- rural poor who live day to day with wild animals, and animals who were disappearing. Thus collaboration not loggheads was the solution spunned by mutual and collective participation of the local community.

#### *Case of Namibia:*

Namibia, an Africa country gained independence in 1990 but has its share of success stories. The Ongava Game Ranch and the Lianshulu Lodge, (Echtner 1999), combines conservation, tourism, education and research. Excursions are provided to various parts of park. It has a complex with facilities for education for Namibians teaching them about conservation and its aspect. Portions of profits are set aside for conservation. The second example of Lianshulu Lodge located under Midume National Park has a lodge and profits have been used to construct tourist village managed and staffed by local villagers. Admission fees exists even in entry to these place and earnings from here go in for local community projects besides conservation and a (CGS) Community Guard System under which the revenue is used to train game guards from local villages, who help to project and conserve wildlife.

Uganda famous for Gorillas have devised Gorilla tourism, where not the tourist but Gorillas are acclimatized first by primate Zoologists from International Scientific Communities. Government generally on foreign funding invites them. Government depends on their advice. These gorillas are habituated by scientist's presence and after a lengthy process tourists are introduced, that too within restrictive time frames. When visitation is closed, more of research and control experiments and their results could be analysed. Only officially trained guides are allowed. Visitors are charged US \$ 120 per person. The revenue is redistributed directly into local communities. 20% of the profits are channelled into local development funds and 80% for expenses and scientific research.

#### *The Indian Experience:*

Another glaring example from third world is the study by Singh and Singh (2004). They discuss the case of people and park taking case study of Nanda Devi now a Biosphere Reserve. Geographically situated in the Himalayas, it is a closed ecosystem with peaks covering it. It is 625 sq. km. with exceptional ecosphere of excellence. It covered its protected area status in three major leaps; first as a National Park in 1982, a Biosphere Reserve in 1988 and a World Heritage Site in 1992. This area was twined with the life of local communities of Bhotiyar, Marcchas, Tolcchas and Joharis. Customary to third word practice the park emphasized a policing role excluding local people, displacing them arbitrarily with meager or little compensation for their losses of livelihood (Singh & Singh, 1994). The economics of locals depended upon livestock rearing, agriculture, and medicinal plant collection and of course tourism as being center for expedition and trekking activities and thus, employed several people. The enhanced World Heritage status of the park acted as a blot for locals and indigenous people living in core and buffer zones. They were denied complete access to the park resulting in huge financial losses for the village co-operatives (Nautiyal.S.;Rao, K.S.; NaikHuri, R.K.; and Saxena, K.G.; 2003).The Indigenous people served as tour

guides who lost their employment with ban on tourism and mountaineering activities. The last nail to ignite the wrath and fire in locals were scenes of their own banished land where they were denied access but being visited by scientists and even poachers who could not dare enter when these indigenous communities were unofficial, voluntary conservators and protectors. The forbidden land for locals, rather owners, was a frequently visited land by poachers and smugglers (Karthola, (2001). Within this displaced community was one of the villages known as Lata, home for world's most glorifying example of indigenous conservation movements known as *Chipko* Movement where women hugged the trees to protect them from the forest contractors when they arrived for green felling (Bhatt, C.P.;1983).

The people's antagonism reached peak and with village councils they formed Vanaadhikar group (right to forest') and strategy based on '*CheenoJhaptoo*' (Snap and snatch). Women gheraoed field scholars and men court arrested breaking core zone regulation. A major turn was that the politics led to bifurcation of state and thus this park became a part of newly created state of Uttaranchal. Taking cue from draft tourism policy 1998 on ecotourism development, the chief of village council propagated for rural based community tourism. The irony was that feasibility study conducted by IMF on limited tourism ignored these sons of the soil.

Singh and Singh (2004) in their study proposed ICDP (Intergrated Conservation Development Projects) and of introducing community based rural indigenous tourism. The case study proved that no amount of exogenous expertise could be a substitute for indigenous skills of local communities.

#### ***Conclusion and Suggestions:***

- ✓ Tourism as a Conservation Tool: with NEAT sector becoming major segment tourism's role, as a conservator needs to be strengthened. In most nations only significant land use is permitted inside conservation reserves and protected areas. Tourism could and should make a positive contribution to conservation of nature.
- ✓ Tourism could contribute money to tourism directly as entrance fee permit, licenses etc. Post Administrative and management expenses the excess could be used to enhance conservation.
- ✓ The private sector has to play a vigilant role rather than pressurizing government for lower entrance fee. It should focus on enhancing protected and reserved areas as all governments are not vigilant as Canada's (Auger.D; 2004).
- ✓ The permits could be bid for tour operators every season and may the highest bidder get exclusive operations right. This will get finances as well as more channelised visitors.
- ✓ With volunteering on the rise, volunteer conservation tourist will not be a surprise for the operators.
- ✓ The environmental costs are low with tourism as compared to logging, grazing (Menkhaus and Lober, P.J.;1996).
- ✓ Tourism induced and introduced in such protected areas should follow ethics (Wight (1993) takes an ethics based perspective:
- ✓ It should develop in an environmentally sound manner.
- ✓ It should provide first hand participation and enlightening experience.

- ✓ It should involve education among all parties, local communities, government, NGO's, industry, tourist (before, during and after the trip).
- ✓ It should encourage all party recognition of intrinsic values of the resources.
- ✓ It should involve acceptance of the resource on its own terms and in recognition of its limit, which involves supply-oriented management.
- ✓ It should promote understanding and partnership between many players which include government, NGO's, industry, scientists and locals (both before and during operations)
- ✓ It should promote moral and ethical responsibilities and behavior towards the natural and cultural environment by all players.
- ✓ It should provide long-term benefits of the resource to the local community and to industry (benefits as conservation, scientific, social, cultural or economic).
- ✓ Ecotourism operation should ensure that the underlying ethics of responsible environmental practices are applied not only to the external (natural and cultural resource which attract the tourist) but also to their internal operations.

It has to be recognized that economic goals are a parameter when tourism is introduced at protected areas. Thus how these merge with environmental goals and social goals. Saddler provides a model, which could guide and focuses indigenous or local community participation and how the social, economic and cultural goals are related to each other.

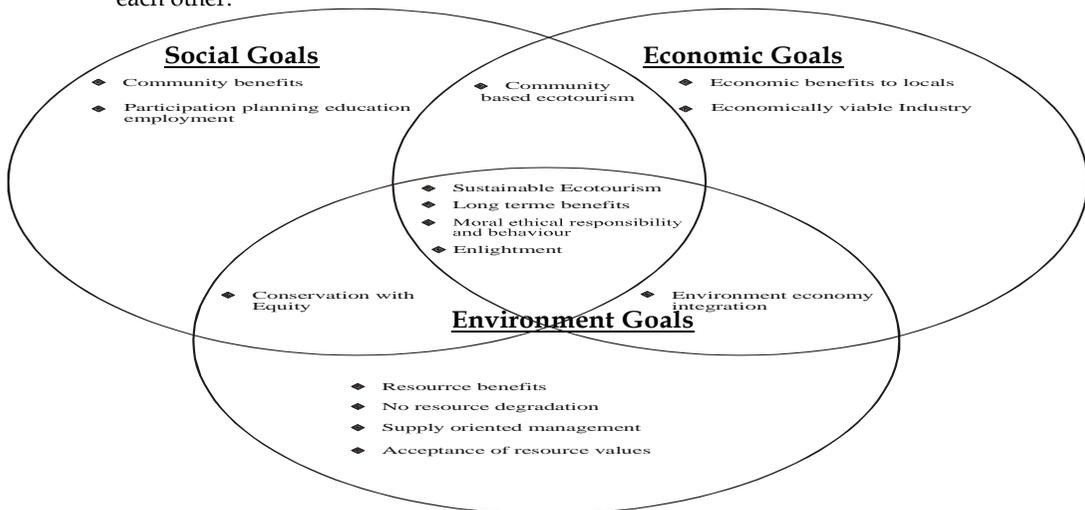


Fig.: Sustainable Ecotourism Values and principal Saddler (1990)

This model could be modified to fit in for tourism in protected areas where community based tourism is being recommended and basic social economic and environmental goals have to be aligned. The model represents three areas, which must be given equal weightage in striving for conservational tourism. All three spheres must get goals fulfilled for there has to be balance, which is, must for sustainability (Wight, A.P. 1993a).

Studies have widely supported and established tourism as a force for establishing protected areas for example The Costa Rican example, Ecuador's

example, State of Bahia etc. (Oliveira, J.A.P. 2005). Researches have noted symbiotic characteristics, conservation as aesthetics plays directly into the hands of recreation and tourism. Tourism, conservation and recreation have reached a point where they have a synergistic character (GUNN A.C. 1980).

The Fourth World Congress on National Parks and Protected Areas organized by the World Conservation Union (IUCN) also gave special attention to resolving conflicts in Protected areas (CNPPA 1993). It concluded that the most important step is to identify the stakeholders involved in the conflicts and their interests. The congress also called for community participation and equality in decision-making process, together for mutual respect among cultures.

Some of IUNC's experiences that need to be prolonged to other project are to gain people's acceptance of the National Park and its boundaries and to develop a good working relationship between stakeholders.

- To allow swift regeneration of the areas encroached in the Past and now under core zone.
- Joint responsibility and monitoring to be taken by the researchers, environmentalists, NGOs, governmental bodies and control forest use access.
- To reduce people's direct dependence on some of the resources from these parks and environmentally sensitive areas, alongwith to gain people's commitment to growing substitutes on their own farms.

Despite synergetic characters the policy-making remains polarized. Polarizing agents beings custom, law roles bound by function etc. A synergy among the policy makers is need of the hour so as rather than alienating the community and tourism from protection and conservation, they be made a tool for betterment in protection and conservation of wilderness areas.

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