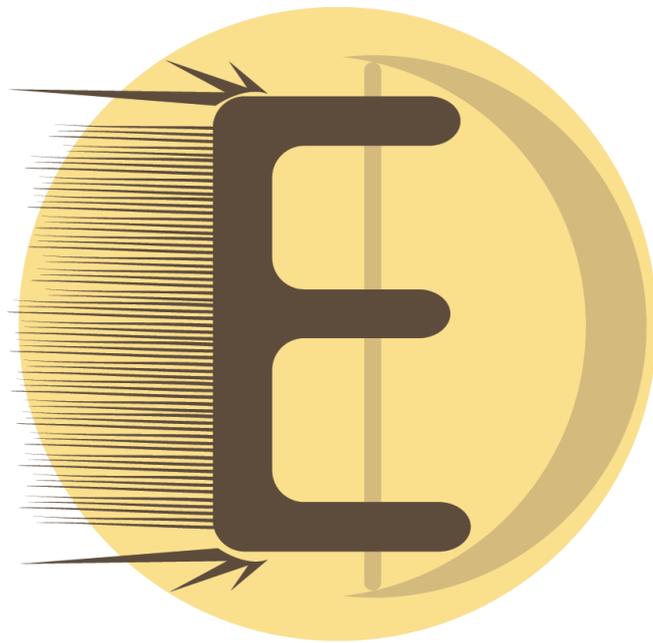
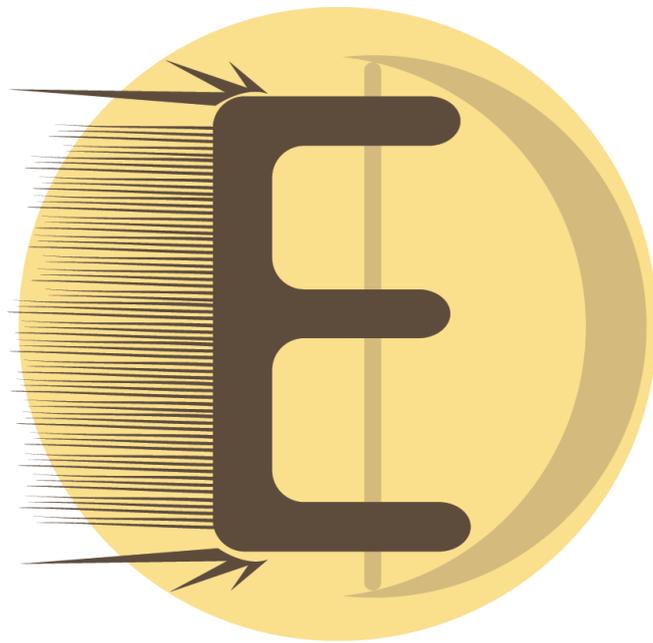


Visitor Management in Sustainable Tourism



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1.0. Introduction

There has been a tremendous growth in the global tourism industry over the last few decades. This resulted in the enhancement of socio-economic progress of local areas due to its establishment as a fast developing economic sector (Theobald, 2012). When compared to other industries like automobiles and food exports, it is observed that the overall volume of business generated was much higher in the tourism industry and is thereby considered as a major source of income for different developing countries (Murphy and Price, 2012). It is to be acknowledged that the growth in global tourism has led to a diversification of the type of tourism products available and has contributed to an increase in competition among various destinations.

It was identified by the World Tourism Organisation that the international tourist arrivals showed a growth of 4% in 2012 because of the rise in global tourist population to 1.03 billion. Since World tourism industry generated USD 1032 billion in export earnings in the year 2011, it is known to be the major contributor to global economy (UNWTO, 2012).

Phillip *et al.*, (2010); McGehee and Kim, (2004); Nickerson *et al.*, (2001); Oram (1995); Embacher (1994) indicate that along with the increased amount of importance given to alternative forms of tourism (*viz* agricultural tourism, farm tourism and eco-tourism), planning of tourism, sustainable tourism and the overall impact of tourism has also been studied in extant literature since the 1990s. Harris *et al.*, (2012) adds that the purpose of the alternative forms of tourism was to encourage economic flow to various sections of the population and also to limit the environmental impact of tourism. According to Miller *et al.*, (2010), there is a humongous impact on the environment and the host community, even with the positive ideology behind the development of world tourism.

. Outdoor tourism activities which draw a huge number of visitors to a given location is mostly considered as alternative forms of tourism. Natural scenery, international monuments, wildlife and others that actively encourage boating, walking, hiking, cycling and other similar activities may be part of these locations. Since restoring the resources utilized for the implementation of these activities is challenging, it must be preserved cautiously. In addition, Hall (2010) mentioned that in order to enhance sustainable tourism and promote protection of resources, the historical and natural locations need to implement certain principles. The encouragement of visitor management is one such principle that supports the enrichment of sustainable tourism. Murphy and Price (2012) indicate that educating

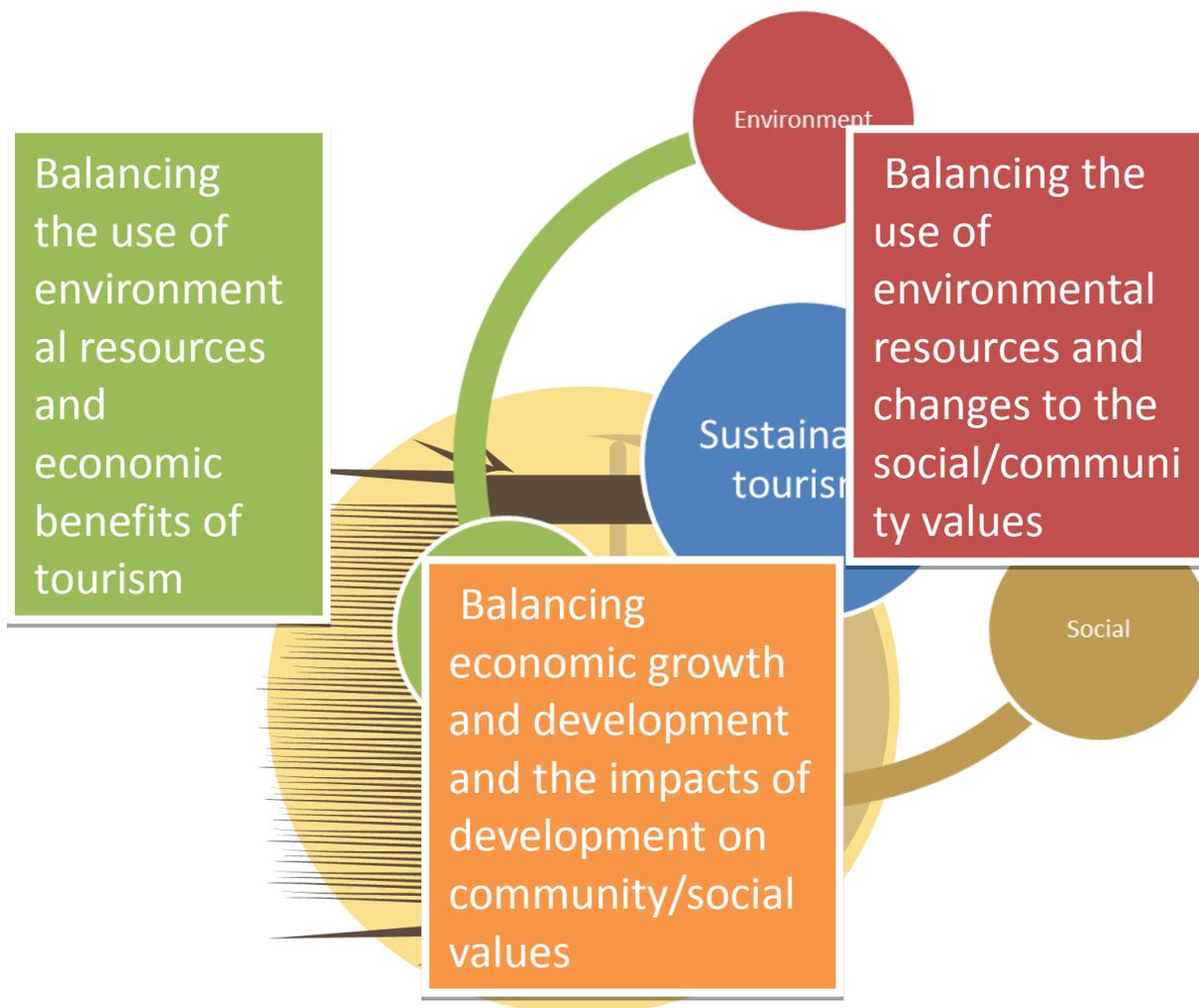
visitors on the activities that can be carried out and the activities and areas that must be avoided is very important. Studying the importance of visitor management as a 'tool' in appreciating sustainable tourism and giving evidence to the same by reviewing two different case studies is the essence of this report.

1.1. Sustainable tourism:

Description of the term sustainability is essential to interpret the concept of sustainable tourism. The definition of sustainability contained in the Brundtland Report is the one which is studied in this report. In 1987, World Commission of Environmental Development defined Sustainability as the measure which needs to be followed to meet the current needs and at the same time ensure that the future **generational** needs are left untouched. A broader view of this definition, describes sustainability in tourism approach as the management of strategies in tourism consumption. The capacity of the host community (people and natural resources) to cater to the needs of future visitors to the destination must not be disturbed by these strategies implemented by the current trends in tourism consumption.

According to Hall (2010), the outlook of tourism industry is unique. Along with a few other sectors, in the tourism sector, production always accompanies consumption. Tourism requires the consumer (i.e., the visitor) to go the product (i.e., the destination) to accomplish the activity. In this case, promotion of sustainability should always go hand in hand with management of tourism destination. Promotion of management measures which enable limited impact on the natural environment (Bramwell and Lane, 1993), promotion of conservation and protection of natural resources (Ham and Weiler, 2012), promoting sustainable patterns of product and consumption which involves the participation of the concerned stakeholders (McDonald *et al.*, 2009), creation of employment for local communities and thereby meeting the needs of the local population (Archer *et al.*, 2012) and ensuring that international laws which promote environmental protection are upheld by the tourism industry (Miller *et al.*, 2010) are a few principles that leads to the promotion of sustainable tourism. A simple model of sustainable tourism (Figure 1) given by Dredge (2008) encapsulates all of the above views. Environmental factors, social factors and economic factors are the three main functions studied in this model.

Figure 1: Sustainable tourism model (Adopted from Dredge, 2008)



1.2. Importance of Visitor Management in Sustainable Tourism:

Leask (2010) indicates that cultivating civic responsibility among the tourists along with the understanding of resource protection is the aim of visitor management. Ritchie et al., (2010) indicated that since the plan for resource and visitor management is often designed and put to practice by two different teams, it leads to lack of cohesion and sustainable tourism development.

An increased understanding and appreciation of the resources by the general public, assists in an easy realisation of a tourism resource management tool which promotes long term use. In addition, Murphy and Price (2012) indicate that the responsibility of people towards the protection of natural resources must be notified along with the promotion of this tourism management tool. In relation to this, the promotion of visitor management can be considered the most crucial tool in sustainable tourism management. Leask (2010) adds that, this

attribute concerns about promoting high quality experience by visitors and also reducing the degradation of destination by making sure that the visitors adopt a suitable behaviour.

Candrea and Ispas (2009); Leask (2010); Lloyd and Mullany (1994), in their existing literature, indicated the limited acceptance of the integration of visitor management in the complete tourism development plan. Eagles et al., (2002) indicated that, a measure which can be added to the tourism development plan at a later stage is visitor management. Limited knowledge and importance given to tourism planners was the reason behind this indication. In addition to this, Candreas and Ispas (2009) claimed that resource management was preferred over long term planning of visitor services, by the tourism planners and tourism destination managers. According to McArthur (1994), this view was due to lack of

- realising the factors which link visitors and sustainable tourism
- easy management of resources in comparison to tourists and
- absence of proper support from management in developing visitor management strategies and the absence of social background of destination managers who are usually from a natural science background.

This brief study on the importance of visitor management is followed by two case studies on the topic. The first case study is talks about a direct hands on approach to visitor management which supports the education of visitors. The second case study talks about the responsibility undertaken by the local population to promote sustainability.

1.3. Case study One: Eco Tourism in Vietnam

Con Dao Islands of Vietnam is the first case study reviewed in this report. A limited usage of the measures of visitor management is realised in this case study. Tuan et al (2005) indicates that Con Dao is an archipelago situated close to Ho Chi Minh City of Vietnam. Marine biodiversity including species like cetaceans, marine turtles, giant clams etc., is the speciality of the Con Dao Islands. Eco-tourism (Figure 3) is a well-known activity in these islands. According to Mitsuguchi (2008), a National Park in 1993, was advocated to be the natural reserves of Con Dao. The Con Dao tourism development plan concentrated on improving tourism, since the early 2000s. SEA (2007) says that the aim of the Con Dao tourism development plan was to each 1-1.5 million visitors by the year 2020. Tourism management or resultant impact of tourist on natural resources were some of the aspects ignored by this plan. A check on the visitor management strategy is considered to be crucial

the Con Dao islands, which are now well-known locations for diving and snorkelling activities, hold protected coral species. At present, a single ranger officer controls all the activities in this area.

ITMEM (2006) indicates that, as this approach leads to an imbalance in the eco system, this can be treated as “green washing.” Sustainable tourism calls for limited interference by man on nature. Enlightening the visitors about the benefits of marine conservation is considered to be an important step to promote visitor management in this area. Furthermore, Can Dao must take steps to keep the visitors informed of the monitoring and relocation of marine turtles. On the whole, better visitor management as well as improved sustainability is a by-product of direct involvement of tourists in coral reef preservation and marine turtle relocation and monitoring.

It is suggested that Park managers in Con Duo base their categorisation of the different tourist activities on Cleverdone’s (1999) categorisation of visitors on the level of environmental interest (Figure 4). This assists the park managers to arrive at suitable tourist education programs.

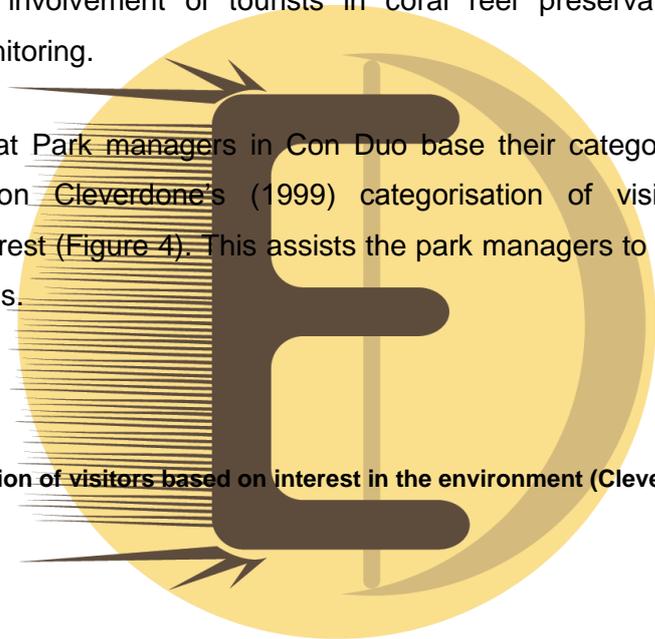
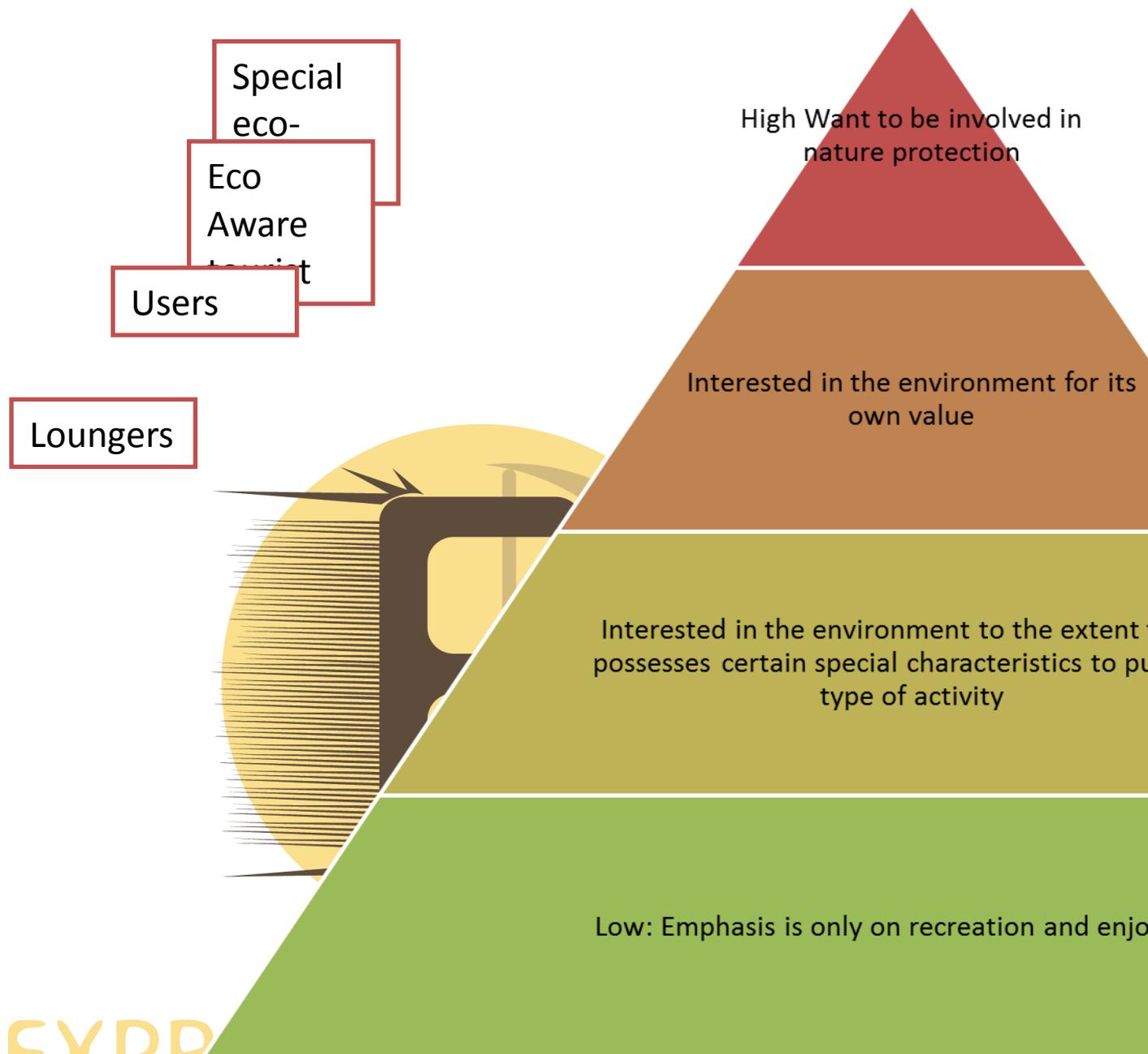


Figure 3: Categorisation of visitors based on interest in the environment (Cleverdone 1999)

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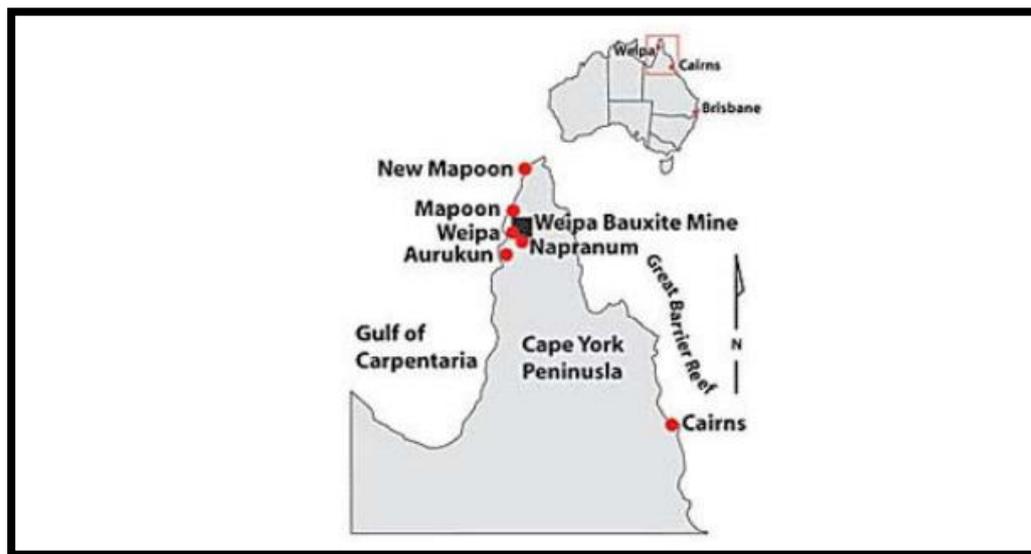


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1.4. Case study Two: Indigenous Tourism in Northern Australia

The mining town of Weipa and the Napranum Aboriginal community located in Northern Australia (Figure 5) is the second case study stated in the report. Natural beauty and an in depth exploration of the indigenous culture is considered to be the main attraction of this region.

Figure 4: Map showing location of Weipa and the Napranum Aboriginal community (Source Comalco Ltd (2005))



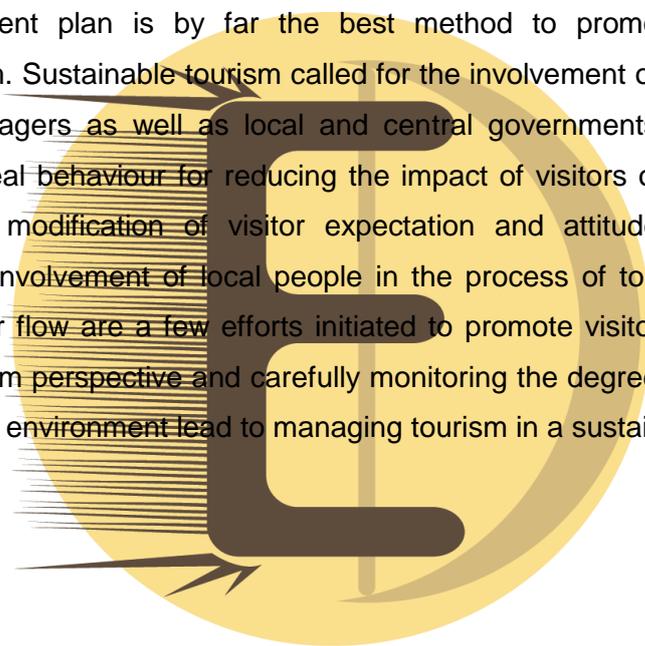
Fuller et al (2003) indicates that efforts undertaken towards improving visitor management is negligible, regardless of the efforts put forth in promoting sustainable tourism management among the indigenous population. Though the number of indigenous people surpasses the non indigenous people in this region, the non indigenous population largely control the tourism sector. Culture camps which educate the visitors about the local arts and gallery which possesses artwork contributed by the locals are some of the popular tourist attractions of this region. According to Bennet (2004), big corporations show negligence towards the local artists and their artwork by buying their products at a very low margin. Furthermore, it is observed that hunting, which is a popular tourist activity, is neglected and needs better management. There is a strong belief amongst the aborigines of the land that killing must be supported only for food and not for recreational purposes. They were strictly against hunting as a sport. In addition to this, Mulloin et al., (2001) claims that uncontrollable hunting activities are recognised in this area, despite the strong belief of the aborigines. The consequence of these activities is the lack of involvement of the indigenous population.

It is told that the indigenous population is strongly involved in tourism and visitor management. This is done to boost tourism management in the area. According to Crawshaw (2005), the indigenous people teach the local arts and crafts to the visitors and they also sell their products directly to the visitors. This leads to an improvement in the local economy. Strict enforcement of these activities is the responsibility of the destination managers. Furthermore, indigenous population in these areas can also teach their hunting style to the visitors. Satisfaction of the sentiments of the local people and preservation of the

local wildlife are an outcome of this interaction between the visitors and the indigenous people. Monitoring of visitor flow in these areas can also ensure sustainability. A brief summary of the optimal parameters of tourist motivation can be obtained by examining the visitor segmentation and the visitor flow to the area. This snapshot can be used for promoting sustainable tourism.

1.5. Conclusion:

Negligible impact of tourists on the tourist areas, to ensure its protection is one of the greatest challenges for sustainable tourism. It is also important to promote leisure activities to satisfy the recreational needs of the visitors. Including visitor management as a part of the tourism management plan is by far the best method to promote such measures of sustainable tourism. Sustainable tourism called for the involvement of destination managers, national park managers as well as local and central governments to spread awareness about the most ideal behaviour for reducing the impact of visitors on the natural resource. Visitor education, modification of visitor expectation and attitude, rehabilitation of the resource, greater involvement of local people in the process of tourism development and regulation of visitor flow are a few efforts initiated to promote visitor management. Hence, adopting a long term perspective and carefully monitoring the degree of interaction between the visitors and the environment lead to managing tourism in a sustainable manner.



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