

Ecotourism's support for Conserving Biodiversity in a better way in National Zoological Park, New Delhi

Saurabh Vashisth*, Natasha Sethi

Conservation of Biodiversity emerges as one of the important issues due to the globalization process occurring in the world and also for the very survival of the mankind. Various factors and components like soil, water, weather and climatic conditions, forest as well as biodiversity plays an important role in determining the renewable resource flow of an economy. Nowadays, ecotourism is viewed as an effective means for promoting and supporting the conservation of flora and fauna (including endangered species, habitats etc) in the protected areas of developing countries. India is one of the 17 mega diversity countries in the world.



Battery operated trolley in National Zoological Park

India consists of about 8% of global biodiversity and occupies 10 position in terms of plant species and consists of 2 out of 25 hotspots of biodiversity in the world. Recently in India there is a good increase in ecotourism specially in protected areas like biosphere reserves, national parks

and wildlife sanctuaries. This study aims at conserving the biodiversity of National Zoological park (N Z P), New Delhi by suggesting the implementation of ecotourism concept inside N Z P and also explores the potential sites already developed or can be developed for

enhancing ecotourism which can conserve wildlife as well as attract the tourists from various disciplines.

Introduction

India has a rich biological diversity and tourism potential and is categorize under international tourism hotspots. India on the one hand with religious places, historical places, mountaineering etc has raised the number of foreign and national tourists and on the other hand has boosted up the tourism industry with various wildlife sanctuaries, biosphere reserves and national parks. It is now widely acknowledged that the integrity of the protected areas can not be sustained without taking into account the implementation of ecotourism for conserving the biodiversity in those areas.

National Zoological Park (N Z P), New Delhi which is popularly

*Education Assistant, National Zoological Park, New Delhi. Email: vashisth88@gmail.com.



Green location in National Zoological Park

Visitors Data for Last Seven Years

Years	Number of Visitors (in Lakhs)
2005-2006	14.32
2006-2007	16.05
2007-2008	16.70
2008-2009	17.77
2009-2010	17.54
2010-2011	16.42
2011-2012	20.41

Status of Animals

Animals	No. of species	No. of specimens
Mammals	46	569
Birds	49	761
Reptiles	10	63
Total	105	1393*

* including captive pond birds



Koshminar in National Zoological Park (Historical Monument)

known as Delhi Zoo is a subordinate office of Government of India, Ministry of Environment and Forests. NZP is the only Zoo in the country which is being run by the central government. It has a rich floral and faunal diversity which attracts the researchers, various institutions and tourists to stay connected with it. From the tourism point of view NZP appears to be the one of the most successful national park in the recent years with the increasing rate of tourists from all over the country. NZP is having huge potential for ecotourism activities. This

study aims at exploring the potential of ecotourism in NZP and its support on conserving the wildlife or biodiversity as well as in increasing the flow of tourists which will help in generating better revenue for the development of the NZP.

History of National Zoological park, New Delhi

National Zoological park [28° 12` to 28° 53` N and 76° 50` to 77° 23` E] is spread over an area of 176 acres. NZP is situated between the two historical monuments- Purana Quila and Humayun Tomb on Mathura road. In India, at the time of independence there was no zoo in Delhi and there were zoos only in some cities like Madras, Kolkata, Lucknow, Ahmedabad, Jaipur and Mysore. National Board of Wildlife in its first meeting in 1952 decided to establish zoos in larger cities of the country. Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru (the then Prime Minister of India) took interest in establishing a Zoological park in Delhi and a committee was formed to formulate a proposal for the establishment of a Zoological Park at Delhi in 1953 and the park was established and was formally inaugurated on 1 Nov, 1959.

NZP has a pre-dominant species of prosopis, which is an exotic species introduced to cover bare rocky Delhi ridge. It has all categories of plants- herbs, shrubs, climber and trees, water bodies which acts as a potential point for the variety of resident as well as for migratory birds and a number of free ranging animals.

Ecotourism potential in NZP and Biodiversity Conservation

NZP is open for tourists all around year and has seen the peak season in November, December, June , March and lean season in August, January, April and October. It attracts approx. 17 to 18 lakhs visitors every year and even witnessed 15 to 20 thousands of visitors on weekends or during peak season. It attracts visitors from diverse educational, economical and cultural background belonging to all age groups. Some of the area inside the NZP have number of tracks and areas which have huge potential for ecotourism. As NZP witnessed a large number of visitors and have typical diversity of plants and animals therefore some sites can be selected and used for ecotourism purpose for conserving the biodiversity.

Historical places and Bird watching

Many historical places of interest are present in and around the park like Purana Quila, Humayun's tomb, Koshminar, and several other historical remains. Shershah Suri constructed Purana Quila on the site of the Pandava's capital, the old Indraprastha. Lahore-Delhi-Agra highway passed through the park area of

the Mughal times i.e the first Koshminar (milestone) on Delhi-Agra highway is reminiscent of grandiose road network of that time. Nakkarkhana, from where a band of drum beaters announced coming and going of military units, princess and highups exists on the mound inside NZP and several other historical remains exists here. All these should have to be explored better and publicized, which may be helpful in conservation. Proper documentation of such sites have to be ensured and included in management plan which could be helpful in knowing the history of the park. The natural and cultural environment within the park area should form the basis for all the researchers and institutions for better understanding its uses and values.

NZP has a huge potential for bird watchers as number of migratory birds visits inside the park every year during October and stay upto March. Park releases fish which acts as a main source of food for a number of birds. A number of local, resident and migratory birds find shelter and food here. Due to which they stay here. Various migratory birds from Europe, Northern part of Asia etc come and breeds every year inside NZP. NZP is regarded as a best place for observing birds in natural environment. Some notable resident birds of NZP- Ibis, Little Egret, Cormorant, Painted Stork, Moorhen while few migrants are Pintail Duck, Coot, Common Teals, Shoveller duck etc.

Ecotourism promotion approaches

Ecotourism which is the environment friendly tourism mainly requires the participation and cooperation among various stakeholders i.e. between various departments inside NZP. It is required to formulate an effective and appropriate management plan

for promoting ecotourism for conserving biodiversity in a better way. For promoting ecotourism in NZP the following recommendations have been proposed:-

- Involvement of park managers, authorities, tourists, researchers, institutions, NGOs, media, tourism department is required while making policy or management plan for park.
- All the basic facilities should be given to visitors during their visit along with the basic training about wildlife conservation.
- 3 to 5 instructors should be appointed by park authorities for giving basic training about wildlife conservation to the visitors like about the best timing of watching wildlife/ bird sighting etc.
- Trained guides should be appointed for providing details to interested visitors about the various components of the park like flora, fauna, avian diversity, wildlife etc.
- Some important historical places inside the park, historical background, watch towers, tracks and trails etc should be explored and communicated to visitors.
- Security patrol corridor or trails to be developed.
- Currently the canteen looks to be temporary and at peak visitor season it alone can not provide better hospitality. So it has to be renovate according to the visitors demand.
- Presently the parking space is not sufficient for the visitors specially on weekends and holidays. So there is a need to increase capacity to accommodate more vehicles.
- There is a need to increase the number of battery operated trolley for visitors. So that the visitors does not wait for long time to board the trolley.

Priority interventions for promoting ecotourism

- Appropriate conservation favor policy is needed to ensure the controlled tourism activities.
- Providing information about different issues of ecotourism to visitors, park managers, researchers, planners, educators, NGOs, educational institute/schools, universities etc.
- Implementing and properly monitoring the codes of conduct.
- All the stakeholders to be involved in making and planning of policies which needs to be effective and transparent.
- Active participation of all the departments of park and subject experts for implementing ecotourism.
- Providing contractual employments for guides and instructor.
- Providing accurate information to visitors about the various sites and areas inside the park and also about the opportunities they can enjoy.
- For reducing the traffic pressure, battery operated trolleys should be operated inside the park at an interval of 10-20 minutes.

Some Code of Ethics

Do's- Avoid any kind of noise while visiting through the park, follow rules and regulations of the park area, dress in green/blue/ light color and wear shoes, keep non-biodegradable waste with yourself and deposit it outside the park area, friendly behavior with staff and other visitors, show respect to the nature and animals, pay proper fee while visiting the park etc

Don't- Give any eatable items to animals, tease animals, bring explosive material inside park, throw wrappers and bottles,

smoke and drink inside the park area etc

Conclusion

Looking into the tourist influx it can be concluded that tourism status in NZP is enhancing day by day and has been recognized as an important zoological park for tourist destination. So, we need concerted efforts from all the sections of people for the conservation of biodiversity of this national park by spreading the slogan "Man and nature need each other and by hurting one we wound the other". So the ecotourism zones may be planned inside NZP in such a way so that the visitors, researchers etc can grasp a maximum knowledge on the areas and at the same time the aim of ecotourism can be achieved by creating a healthy environment among all its stakeholders.

Bibliography

Brandon K.E. and Well, M. (1992). Planning for people and parks: design dilemmas. *World Development* 20 (\$), pp 557-570.

Ceballos-Lascurain, H. (1991). Tourism, Ecotourism and protected Areas. *Parks*. 2(3): 31-35.

Ceballos-Lascurain, Hector. (1993). IUCN Ecotourism Consultancy Programme. Mexico, DF. 4pp.

Eagles, P.F.J., Mc Cool, S.F. and Haynes, C.D. (2002). Sustainable tourism in protected areas: guidelines for planning and management. (series Editor: Philips, Adrain), World Commission on Protected Areas, Protected areas guidelines series 08.

Joshi ,R. (2010). Ecotourism as a viable option for Wildlife Conservation: Need for Policy Initiative in Rajaji National park, North-West India. *Global Journal of Human Social Science* 10: 19-30.

Keiter, R.B. (1995). Preserving Nepal's national parks: law and conservation in the developing world. *Ecology Law Quarterly* 22:591-675.

Lee, C., J. Lee, and S. Han. (1998). Measuring the economic value of ecotourism resources: the case of South Korea. *Journal of Travel Research* 36:40-46.

Mainkhuri, R.K., Joshi, R. and Rao, K.S. (2007). Assessment and promotion of ecotourism in Nanda Devi Biosphere Reserve: An option to resolve policy- people conflict. Technical Report, GBPIHED/UNESCO- New Delhi.

Meric, H. J., and J. Hunt (1998). Ecotourists' motivational and demographic characteristics: a case of North Carolina travelers. *Journal of Travel Research* 36:57-61.

P. Fletcher (1997). The lower Kinabatangan: the importance of community consultations in ecotourism development. Proceedings of RECOFTC-FAO.

Tisdell, C. (1996). Ecotourism, economics, and the environment: observations from China. *Journal of Travel Research* 34:11-23.

Western, David (1986). Tourist Capacity in East African Parks. *Industry and Environment* 9(1): 14-16.

Whiteman, J. (1996). Ecotourism promotes, protects environment. *Forum for Applied Research and Public Policy* 11: 96-101.

National Zoological Park located near the old Fort (Purana Quila)

