

Module VI. Impact of tourism on ecology and landscape changes

Impact of tourism on ecology and landscape changes

- Tourism developed from travel.
- Trade & commerce - motivations behind travel in the past.
- Later transformed into leisure travel –
 - people burdened with heavy work longed for leisure travel
- Developed into the concept of paid holidays by the beginning of last century
 - which we now call **‘tourism’**.
- **Tourism** received acceptance in all classes of society in view of the advantages like
 - education,
 - cultural integration
 - relaxation for mind and body.

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- Tourism destinations - religious places, hill stations, beach resorts , cities - overcrowded by **mass tourism**
 - Resultant problems include:
 - Insufficient accommodation
 - Poor hygiene conditions
 - Cultural errors
 - Landscape changes
 - Deterioration of ecological status.
- Negative impacts from tourism occur when the level of visitor use is greater than the environment's ability to cope with this use within the acceptable limits of change.
- Uncontrolled conventional tourism poses potential threats to many natural areas around the world.

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- It can put enormous pressure on an area and lead to impacts such as:
 - Soil erosion
 - Increased pollution
 - Discharges into the sea
 - Natural habitat loss
 - Increased pressure on endangered species
 - Increased vulnerability to forest fires etc
- Impact of tourism on ecology and landscape changes can be discussed under the following categories:
 1. Impact on Natural Resources
 2. Impact on Air Quality
 3. Impact on Natural Environment
 4. Impact on water quality
 5. Impact on Landscape and Land Resources

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Impact of Tourism on Natural Resources:

- Tourism can put pressure on natural resources when it increases consumption in areas where resources are already scarce.
- It can force local populations to compete for the use of critical resources.
- E.g. Water, especially fresh water, is one of the most critical natural resources.
 - Tourism industry generally overuses water resources for hotels, swimming pools, golf courses and personal use of water by tourists.
 - This can result in water shortages , degradation of water supplies, generation of greater volume of waste water etc

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Impact of Tourism on Natural Resources:

- Tourism can create great pressure on local resources - energy, food & other raw materials.
 - Because of the seasonal character of the industry, many destinations have 10 times more inhabitants in the high season as in the low season.
 - A high demand is placed upon these resources to meet the high expectations of tourists

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Impact of Tourism on Air Quality:

- Transport emissions & emissions from energy production and use are linked to acid rain, global warming, photochemical pollution etc.
- Air pollution from tourist transportation has impacts on the global level, especially from CO₂ emissions related to transportation energy use.
 - It can contribute to severe local air pollution.
- Some of these impacts are quite specific to tourist activities.
- Eg. Tour buses leave their motors running for hours while the tourists go out for an excursion because they want to return to a comfortably air-conditioned bus.

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Impact of Tourism on Natural Environment:

- In areas with high concentrations of tourist activities and appealing natural attractions, waste disposal is a serious problem
 - Improper disposal can be a major despoiler of the natural environment - rivers, scenic areas, and roadsides.
- Solid waste and littering can degrade the physical appearance of the water and shoreline and cause death of marine animals.
- In mountains, trekking tourists generate a great deal of waste
 - They leave behind their garbage, oxygen cylinders, camping equipment
- In remote areas such practices degrade the environment typical of the developed world

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Impact of Tourism on Quality of Water:

- Construction of hotels, recreation and other facilities often leads to increased **sewage pollution**.
- Wastewater pollutes seas, lakes & surrounding tourist attractions; damages the flora and fauna.
- Sewage runoff causes serious damage to coral reefs
 - It stimulates the growth of algae, which cover the filter-feeding corals, hindering their ability to survive.
- Changes in salinity and siltation can have wide-ranging impacts on coastal environments.
- Sewage pollution can threaten the health of humans and animals.

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Impact of Tourism on Landscapes and land resources:

- Topography - height and shape of the land, etc- play an important part in the distribution of organisms.
- Likewise, minerals, fossil fuels, fertile soil, wildlife are the important **land resources**.
- Increased construction of tourism & recreational facilities has increased the pressure on these resources and on scenic landscapes.
- Development of tourism facilities - accommodation, water supplies, restaurants and recreation facilities - involve sand mining, beach and sand dune erosion, soil erosion and extensive paving



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Impact of Tourism on Landscapes and land resources:

- Development of marinas and breakwaters can cause changes in currents and coastlines.
- Furthermore, extraction of building materials such as sand affects coral reefs, mangroves & forests, leading to erosion and destruction of habitats.
- Eg. In the Philippines and the Maldives, dynamiting and mining of coral for resort building materials has damaged fragile coral reefs and depleted the fisheries that sustain local people and attract tourists

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Impact of Tourism on Landscapes and land resources:

- Direct impact on natural resources -both renewable and nonrenewable - can be caused by the use of **land for accommodation and other infrastructure provision**, and the **use of building materials**.
- Forests often suffer negative impacts of tourism in the form of **deforestation** caused by:
 - Fuel wood collection
 - Land clearing
 - Various kinds of landscape changes.