

INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON
“ENVIRONMENT, AGRICULTURE & HUMAN WELFARE: AN OVERVIEW OF
SUSTAINABLE GOALS OF FUTURE”
26TH November, 2023

Blue-Tourism in India –Opportunities & Challenges

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Abstract

India is a country of mountains, rivers, temples, manmade architectures, forests, rich flora and fauna and oceans with different marine ecosystem. Due to these vast diversities, there is wide scope for tourism in India. The current tourism market in India is nearly 20 lakh crore which provides employment to over 42 million people directly and indirectly. Tourism provides employment to nearly 5% of GDP. Blue Tourism is a latest term added in the field of tourism which can be further improved. The present paper aims to study the scope of Blue-Tourism in India and the challenges and opportunities in future. With more than 7500 km of coastal length, India possesses huge scope of Blue Tourism.

Keywords: Blue Economy, Blue Tourism, Snorkelling, kayaking, Sun and Beach tourism

Objectives of study:

- 1) To study the concept of blue economy and blue tourism and its difference.
- 2) To access the future challenges of Blue Tourism.
- 3) To forecast the future prospects of blue tourism in India.

Research Methodology:

The present paper is descriptive and is based on the secondary data i.e., renowned journals and websites.

Introduction:

India is a country of vast diverse dense forest, big and long rivers, deserts, Himalaya, manmade wonders, forts, historical places and huge coastal areas. India is full of dense forest in different parts of country. There are various forest areas i.e., sanctuaries specially made for the protection of wild life. The states where dense forest is situated includes- Madhya Pradesh, Arunachal Pradesh, Odisha, Karnataka and Chhattisgarh. Similarly, India is also a country of rivers – including long rivers like Ganga, Brahmaputra, Narmada and many more. In India the State of Rajasthan is full of desert. There are big mountains like Himalaya, Satpura etc which further adds to total diversity of the nation. With this all varieties there are various man-made wonders like temples, statues monuments etc. which attracts tourist from all over the world. All the aforesaid destinations are traditional tourist spots, but in modern era there is a more popular word and that is ‘Blue Tourism’. Blue tourism is an ecofriendly or sustainable method of marine travel which focuses on enjoying ocean and water environment but at the same time protecting and not harming the marine ecosystem, flora and fauna and local communities.

Blue Tourism and Blue Economy terms are not synonymous. Blue Economy is a broad term which includes blue tourism in it. In other words, blue tourism is a significant part of blue economy. Blue economy is a system of all the economic activities related to oceans or seas or coastal areas which increases the chances of employment and protection of biodiversity at the same time. Blue economy includes fisheries, coastal tourism, aquaculture, marine transport, etc. Blue Tourism is also called as Coastal or Marine Tourism. Blue tourism is a part of blue economy. Blue tourism is travelling into the ocean or sea and inland water and enjoying water environment without destroying the ecosystem. Blue tourism includes beach holiday, sailing, wildlife watching etc.

Blue Tourism in India:

Normally sea shore is considered to be famous for sun and beach tourism. Sun and beach tourism is based on typical ‘3S’ i.e Sun, Sea, and Sand. It is travelling to the coastal areas and enjoys sea and relax in the marine environment. While Sun and beach tourism is restricted to the only traditional activities for enjoyment like sun bathing and swimming to the coastal areas.

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Blue tourism is comparatively broad term which includes marine conservation, sustainability and experiences based on water. Blue Tourism in India is mainly concentrated in coastal areas of Goa, Kerala, Maharashtra, Andaman and Nicobar, Gujrat and Odisha. The total coastal area is more than 7500 km. There is huge scope for blue tourism in India. The activities and attractions in the blue tourism includes-

- Diving
- Fishing villages
- Dolphine and other fish watching
- Backwater
- House boards
- Lagoons watching
- Snorkeling and Scuba Diving
- Kayaking
- Turtle watching
- Traditional boat building and rides
- Maritime festivals

The tourist goes to the coastal areas and enjoys above activities. He or she may enjoy the fish watching, observe the beauty of beaches. The famous among the tourist are diving and lagoons. Similarly kayaking is another famous activity among the young. Kayaking is a kind of water sport where in this activity the person travels over a small boat called kayak with double bladed paddle. Turtle watching is another attraction for nature lovers and tourist. Lagoons are a kind of lake like structure which is separated from sea by sand or rock like structure.

Significance of Blue Tourism in India:

1) Creation of new jobs in coastal areas:

Blue tourism creates new jobs in the coastal areas. Due to the tourist visiting in the coastal areas, there will be more employment opportunities directly or indirectly. The jobs are in restaurant nearby, hotels helping staff, people operating various games, peoples operating boats.

2) Less Migration from coastal areas to other cities:

As it is known that due to blue tourism the local people get job in their respective localities nearby. Hence there is no need to migrate from their homeland to the cities in search of jobs. If coastal tourism was not there then they will have to migrate to the cities for jobs.

3) It will help in boosting economy:

Tourism provides employment to thousands of people. This increases the income of the coastal people. This increases the demand for various commodities and ultimately helps in increasing industrial production and ultimately helps in employment generation indirectly in these industries too.

4) It will help in attracting foreign tourist:

Blue tourism is a new concept different from traditional tourism. Blue tourism attracts those tourists from foreign countries who are fascinated towards beaches and marine beauty. In recent days the more and more tourists from different countries are attracted towards blue tourism i.e., marine tourism.

5) Marine sports activities can be encouraged:

There are various sports activities which can be played on sea which can be encouraged. The youth is attracted towards thrill and new activities or sports such sports activities attracts the youth which can give them new experience. This can also improve their physical and mental health to some extent.

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6) Local culture can be preserved and popularized globally:

All the coastal areas have their own custom and tradition which need to be preserved for future generation. For example, Goa have their own tradition, Gujarat have their own, similarly Keral and Odisha also their own. Due to blue tourism this tradition may be studied and popularized. This will help to preserve such tradition for future generation.

Opportunities of Blue Tourism in India:

1) Blue tourism has the immense potential of employment generation:

Due to blue tourism, there is immense chances of employment generation in the coastal areas. It will benefit the local community to a great extent as these people do not have much employment opportunities except fishing. Directly or indirectly, there are different kind of jobs can be created in restaurant, local handicrafts, drivers, works at resorts, sports and many more. The local talent may get an opportunity to present their art for example singing dancing painting etc.

2) Infrastructural development:

Due to blue tourism more tourist will come to coastal areas. This will increase the development of local infrastructural development like construction of roads, proper drainage system, electricity, drinking water, banks and insurance services etc. Thus, blue tourism will help and urge the proper infrastructural development. Proper infrastructural development will automatically be constructed for the tourists which benefits the local communities too.

3) Foreign exchange earnings:

The blue tourism attracts the foreign tourist from all over the world. This will ultimately increase the foreign exchange earnings of India. It is not only important for economically but also for exchange of culture.

4) Local food can be popularized:

The coastal areas are famous for their local food cuisine specially sea foods. The tourist from all over the nation and world visit the costal areas and enjoys the marine environment and food. Blue tourism helps the tourist to enjoy the local food but at the same it helps to popularize the local coastal food.

5) The local tradition can be popularized:

In every local coastal area, there are some traditions followed by the people residing in such areas. The tourist from different location and countries came and came to know the local tradition of coastal areas. This helps in popularizing the custom and tradition of the coastal areas.

6) Boost to the economy:

Blue Tourism helps in boosting the economy. The economy is benefited due to the infrastructural development, foreign tourists, employment generation etc. All these together helps in improving the economy.

Challenges of Blue Tourism in India:

Blue tourism is extreme useful for the country like India due to its large coastal line. But at the same time there are many challenges for blue tourism in India, some of them are as follow: -

1) Overcrowding may result in marine pollution:

Excess tourists to the coastal areas may result in marine pollution. The crowd in the marine areas may result in more wastage in the form of plastic wrappers of chips, empty water bottles etc.

2) Lack of safety and security or protection to the tourist:

The tourist came from all different countries where they enjoy different kind of rights. If such tourist came to our country, they expect such treatment. Indian Govt and local

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authorities should make sure that the tourist are safe and treated well in the coastal areas. Incidents like theft, misbehavior, cheating and such incidents negatively affects the image of the country. The Govt should take strict action against the guilty.

The frequent climate change in the coastal areas is a big challenge for the blue tourism. The routine high tides, storm, and other climate changes affects the blue economy to a great extent.

Another challenge for blue tourism is the lack of training and skills of local communities. Different kind of activities requires special skills and training for example in kayaking, scuba diving and like other sports activities at sea or coastal areas. But there is no such formal training centers or schools where practical training is giving to the local people.

There are some other safety issues related to the blue tourism. Normally the coastal areas are near the international borders with the neighboring countries. This may create serious security threats as spying is very easy in such areas by the enemy countries by taking the help of blue tourism

Tourism plays an important role in the overall economy of India. With traditional economy, marine tourism contributes a lot in the employment generation. Blue tourism is a part of the blue economy which contributes to about 4% of GDP. Blue tourism can really boost the Indian economy. For this Govt should take care of safety and security of the tourists and special skill enhancement training programme should be implemented in the coastal areas.

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