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SOCIETY AND MANAGEMENT PARTICIPATION IN ECOTOURISM AT YAANA RESERVE FOREST, UTTARA KANNADA DISTRICT, KARNATAKA, INDIA

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ABSTRACT

Ecotourism is the latest buzz in the tourism industry globally. The main concept of ecotourism is to have a balance between development and conservation. In the latest years it has become an eco-selling tool for revenue flows. The four components to be involved in having a balanced ecotourism is Wildlife, Eco tourists, Management and Community. It's very hard to find a well-managed ecotourism sites currently. Thus, an attempt was made to evaluate the balanced ecotourism in Yaana Reserve Forest of Karnataka. Several site visits were made to Yaana Reserve Forest and wildlife diversity was studied to develop the study area as a potential ecotourism site. Interviews were conducted to the Eco tourists visiting the study area, Management of Yaana Reserve Forest and the local communities living in and around the study area using questionnaires. It was observed from the study that ecotourism is in its primitive stage in Yaana Reserve Forest, even after having its own religious and historical importance the study area has not been developed as a potential ecotourism site due to the lack of coordination between society and the management.

Keywords: *Yaana, Ecotourism, Reserve Forest, Wildlife*

INTRODUCTION

The term ecotourism was coined by Ceballos-Lascurain in 1983, and was initially used to describe nature-based travel to relatively undisturbed areas with an emphasis on education. The concept has, however, developed to a scientifically based approach to the planning, management and development of sustainable tourism and activities. Ecotourism planning is the much needed aspect that could contribute to comprehensive development of tourism, ecosystem management, biodiversity conservation and enhancement of economic status of the local participatory communities.

Ecotourism has become one of the fastest-growing sectors of the tourism industry, growing annually by 10-15% worldwide. South Africa is one of the countries that are reaping significant economic benefits from ecotourism, but negative effects-including physical displacement of persons, gross violation of fundamental rights, and environmental hazards - far outweigh the medium-term economic benefits. It has been reported that the isolated desert city of Jaisalmer (Rajasthan, northwest India) now receives over 200, 000 visitors per year, mainly as the result of the promotion of camel safaris to the Thar Desert. Jaisalmer has a camel surplus because of mechanized farming, with animals redeployed into the safari business.

It is generally believed that ecotourism will foster responsible tourist behavior, conservation of important wildlife habitats and ecosystems, appreciation of local cultures and traditional life styles, and provision of sustainable forms of livelihood for people living in remote and communities. It was reported that due to the high avian diversity in Bisle Reserve forest, Karnataka could help in conducting the activities like bird watching and observing which would help ecotourism activity to educate the importance of birds to eco tourists. Major attributes of the green tourism include environmental conservation and education and distribution of income to local people based on strong partnership. Green tourism considers tourism development as an integral part of a national and regional development. When the people were interviewed in Andaman's at airport around 92% of the people were visiting for holidaying purpose and remaining 8% were traveling for miscellaneous and business purpose, this shows that due to the development of ecotourism in Andaman's there is more revenue for the state government. Ecotourism

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sector cannot be built and sustained by only management; it requires support from both Eco tourists and community also to have a balanced ecotourism.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Study Area

The present study was conducted at Yaana Reserve Forest of Uttara Kannada District, Karnataka State, India. It nestles between $14^{\circ} 58' 37.2''$ N latitude and $74^{\circ} 56' 47.6''$ E longitude in central western ghats and known for its unusual rock formation.

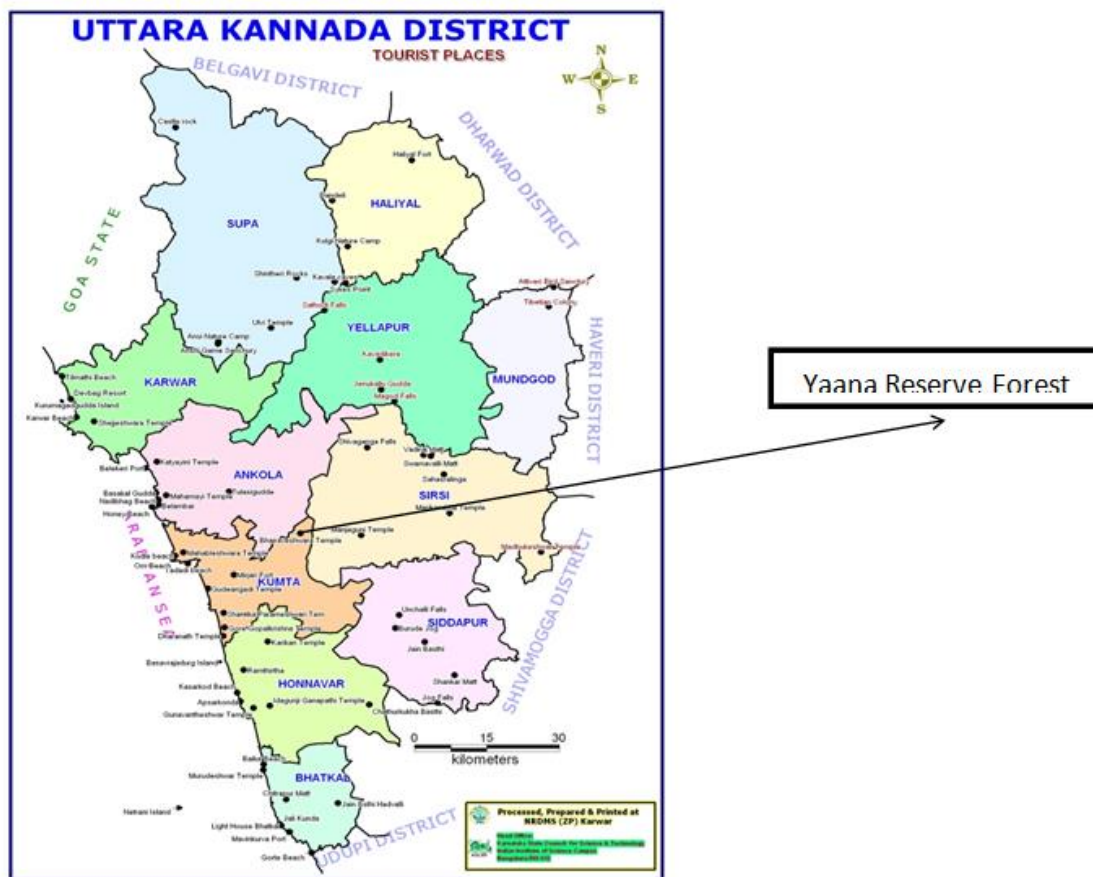


Figure 1: Map Showing the Study Area

Sampling and Analysis

Six sampling sites were selected randomly and 1 Km belt transect study was conducted in each site to know the density of fauna inside the Reserve Forest. Only mammals and birds were recorded. Permanently marked 6 Km transect was obtained from the study area.

Questionnaire Survey

A questionnaire survey was conducted to collect information on the management of Ecotourism. Three questionnaires were designed separately as mentioned below;

- Eco tourists visiting the Reserve Forest - 60 tourists of different age groups (young-middle and old, both male and female separately to get proper views unbiased) were interviewed
- Management people based on their ranks - Interviewing the Karnataka Forest Department regarding the status of Ecotourism and the management of the same.

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c. Community people living in and around the Reserve Forest –20 local community people were interviewed regarding the benefits from tourism activities and for their suggestions if any.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Transect Studies

Table 1: Geological Co-Ordinates of Transect Studies

Transect No.	Location	Altitude (m.asl)	Longitude	Latitude
1	Starting point	135	74° 32' 33.8" E	14° 33' 07.9" N
	Ending point	113	74° 32' 50.1" E	14° 33' 29.9" N
2	Starting point	113	74° 32' 59.6" E	14° 34' 00.3" N
	Ending point	145	74° 33' 19.8" E	14° 34' 10.1" N
3	Starting point	167	74° 33' 30.9" E	14° 34' 43.1" N
	Ending point	156	74° 33' 39.6" E	14° 34' 49.1" N
4	Starting point	312	74° 33' 59.3" E	14° 35' 23.6" N
	Ending point	300	74° 33' 47.3" E	14° 35' 33.1" N
5	Starting point	154	74° 33' 22.3" E	14° 34' 06.0" N
	Ending point	156	74° 33' 15.8" E	14° 33' 47.3" N
6	Starting point	157	74° 33' 07.2" E	14° 33' 36.4" N
	Ending point	126	74° 32' 56.1" E	14° 33' 14.0" N

Each transect study covered 1 km, a total of 6 Km transect study observation was done for the entire study area.

Table 2: List of Birds and Animals Sighted in Yaana Reserve Forest

Sl. No	Common Name	Scientific Name
1	Asian Paradise Flycatcher	<i>Terpsiphoneparadisi</i>
2	Common Iora	<i>Aegithinatiphia</i>
3	Common Langur	<i>Semnopithecusdussumieri</i>
4	Drongo Cuckoo	<i>Surniculustugubris</i>
5	Indian jungle nightjar	<i>Caprimulgusindicus</i>
6	Indian pitta	<i>Pitta brachyura</i>
7	Indian scimitar babbler	<i>Pomatorhinushorsefieldii</i>
8	Malabar Parakeet	<i>Psittacula columboides</i>
9	Malabar whistling thrush	<i>Myiophonushorsfieldii</i>
10	Paddyfield Pipit	<i>Anthusrufulus</i>
11	Pale billed flower pecker	<i>Cicaeumerythrorhynchos</i>
12	Spotted Dove	<i>Streptopeliachinensis</i>
13	Stone curlew	<i>Burhinusoedicnemus</i>
14	Yellow Browed Bulbul	<i>Loleindica</i>
15	Yellow throated sparrow	<i>Petroniaxanthocollis</i>

Faunal diversity is one of the main factors to encourage ecotourism. Fifteen kinds of different species of fauna were spotted for a total of 6 km transect study. Bird diversity was found to be high compared to mammal diversity.

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Questionnaire Survey

a. *Eco Tourist Interviewees* – Questionnaire was designed to know about the personal details of the tourists, their age group, and frequency of visits, sources of information, their expectations, age composition, and occupational structure of the tourists, incomes and moneyspent by the tourists, finally the visitors' satisfaction about the tour/visit episodes. Also a detailed analysis of the different tourism products such as conservation levels, satisfaction levels and infrastructure services and the nature of visitor services, hospitality services were made in order to understand the responses and the perceptions of the tourists to the study area. Finally, as per the views and suggestions expressed by the tourists, tourism planning and development was also dealt with in some detail.

Table 3: Age Composition of Tourists

Age (in years)	Percentage (%)
Up to 20	5
20 - 29	55
30 - 39	25
40 - 49	0
49 and above	15

Table 4: Occupational Structures

Occupation	Percentage (%)
Government	20
Business	10
Home maker	10
Corporate (IT and others)	55
Defence	0
Others	5

Of the samples surveyed, 55% of tourists were belonging to the age group of 20 – 29 years, 55% of the tourists were employed by corporate companies.

Table 5: Information Sources for Tourists about the Destination

Source	Percentage (%)
Internet	10
Media (Movies/Television)	55
Friend/Family	35
Information center (Tourism office)	0
Others	0

Table 6: Frequency of Visits of Tourists

Frequency	Percentage (%)
First time	70
Second time	10
Third time	15
Fourth time or more	5

The information source of the destination for tourists was more from the media and most of the tourists visited the place for the first time and there were very few members who visited the place repeatedly.

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Table 7: Evaluation of the Price Spent by the Tourists

Evaluation Level	Percentage (%)
Expensive	5
Moderate	60
Cheap	35

Table 8: Evaluation of the Conservation of the Reserve Forest

Evaluation Level	Percentage (%)
Excellent	75
Good	25
Fair	0
Poor	0

Majority of the tourists opined that the price spent to reach the destination and spent there was moderate and not so expensive and also opined that the conservation level of nature inside the Reserve Forest is excellent and remaining people told well.

Table 8: Demands of Tourists for Infrastructure Development

Demands	Percentage (%)
Information center/Visitor center/Museum of nature	20
Hotels	10
Camping site	20
Toilets/Trash cans	50

There was little demand from the tourists towards the infrastructure development for tourists to visit the place more frequently and to contribute towards conservation. 50% of the tourists demanded for the construction of toilets and to lay trash cans all over for waste disposal. 20% of the tourists suggested to open few hotels for food and other basic needs, also there was a suggestion to open an information center or visitor center and to construct a museum of nature to educate the tourists about the ecology and forest resources.

b. Management Interviewees - Inputs of the activities undertaken for tourists, local's involvement, facilities to be created for tourists and further actions to be made for a balanced ecotourism was captured by questionnaire survey of the management people based on their ranks.

Table 9: Activities Undertaken for Tourists

Activities	Percentage (%)
Viewing historical and cultural sites	0
Camping site	100
Trekking	0
Nature education	0

Table 10: Facilities Planned for the Development of Ecotourism

Planned facilities	Percentage (%)
Improvement of existing roads	30
Public transport	30
Visitor center/Information center/Museum of nature	30
Hotels	10

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Table 11: Involvement of Local Community in Conservation and other Activities

Option	Percentage (%)
Yes	80
No	20

Activity undertaken under ecotourism is only the camping site just for accommodating the eco tourists, there are no other activities undertaken for tourists in the study area. Management is planning to improve the existing roads and to construct visitor center or museum of nature for the tourists visiting the Reserve Forest. 80% of the management interviewees told that they involve local communities and volunteers in ecotourism activities and 20% of the people said no. Management is planning to conduct training programs about the importance of forests and to collaborate with local community residing in and around the Reserve Forest.

c. Local Community Interviewees - Based on the survey details of personal data of the individuals their income details from tourism activities, the kinds of goods they sell, their expectation from tourists and management were captured.

Table 12: Daily Income from Tourism Activities

Income Range (INR)	Percentage (%)
0 - 100	0
100 - 200	50
200 - 500	40
500 - 1000	10
1000 and above	0

Table 13: Kind of Goods Sold

Income Range (INR)	Percentage (%)
Food/Eatables	40
Ayurveda products	50
Handicrafts	10
Others	0

Table 14: Expectations of Local Community

Expectations	Percentage (%)
More forest cover	40
More tourists and income from tourists	50
Local conservation groups	10
More support from management	0

Table 15: Support from Management in Promoting Ecotourism Activities

Option	Percentage (%)
Yes	90
No	10

Of the samples surveyed 50% of the people earn around 100 – 200 INR per day, 40% earn around 200 – 500 INR per day. Maximum numbers of tourists buy Ayurveda products, 40% of them buy food products and 10% of handicrafts are being purchased by tourists. 90% of the interviewees opined that they are not getting any support from the Management in promoting ecotourism activity. Also, suggested that they need support from the management to contribute for conservation and other developmental activities.

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Conclusion

Bird diversity inside the Reserve Forest was found to be high; this could help to plan new ecotourism ventures like bird watching. Most of the tourist's interviewed belongs to the age group between 20 - 29, this shows that the new generation is having more interest on forest related tourism. 70% of the tourists visited the Reserve forest for the first time, there was very less number of repeated visitors, this may be due to the lack of facilities for the tourists. Maximum tourists were corporates; this can be used to encash the revenue for ecotourism by developing the site as an ideal ecotourism site. Most of the tourists were happy about the management and the quality of Reserve forest. The place needs an improvement on the basic facilities to be developed by the management. There is a huge gap between local community and the management in coordination on promoting ecotourism. The income sources for the community from the tourists in not so encouraging their daily life. Management should involve the community in new ventures of the Reserve Forest and should help them in their betterment of life by promoting ecotourism and also should educate them on conservation of the Reserve Forest.

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