

# THE STORY OF TOURISM

AN ENCHANTING JOURNEY  
THROUGH INDIA'S NORTH-EAST

SHIELA BORA  
M C BORA



**T**his book is one of the first attempts to unfold the yet undiscovered secrets of a land of pristine beauty and a veritable tourist's paradise in north-eastern India comprising the states of Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Sikkim and Tripura. While there is a growing realisation that tourism can kick-start development of this neglected region, a book of this kind was a long-felt necessity. This book provides interesting reading and updated information on all aspects of tourist interest in the region. Anecdotes and mythologies, of which there are many, vividly capture the spirit of the region.

Beginning with the origin of tourism, the book traces the gradual development of tourism industry, national and international, highlights the significance of tourism for the land and its people, and analyses the essential components of successful tourism. Thereafter, it goes on to unravel the mysteries of the north-eastern region and its people through glimpses and accounts of bewitched British, French, Dutch, Portuguese, Chinese and Arab travellers of yore. It covers topics of interest ranging from a mosaic of the ethnic diversity of the people of Aryan, Dravidian, Indo-Burmese, Indo-Tibetan and Mon Khmer origin inhabiting this region, their oral histories and mythologies, their religion and culture, the fascinating arts and crafts, colourful festivals and the richness of biodiversity and wildlife. The book covers Assam at greater length while devoting a sub-section to each of the remaining seven states of the North-East.

It provides necessary information such as modes of travel, entry and exit information, places of accommodation, places of interest, whom to contact and what to see in each of the states. The concluding chapter is an assessment of the prospects and perspectives of tourism in this region and makes an attempt to provide long-term solutions to its problems, suggesting measures to be adopted for tourism to become a vibrant industry in the region.



**D**r. **Shiela Bora** is a Professor of History in Dibrugarh University of Assam. Twice honoured as a Fulbright scholar, she was at Harvard and Yale universities, where she worked for a post-doctoral project on American Baptist Missionaries and Women of North-East India. She has delivered a series of lectures at Yale, Harvard, Vanderbilt and other universities in the United States and elsewhere. In addition to research contributions in national and international journals, she has published her doctoral work as *Student Revolution in Assam, 1916-47*. She is also a member of the International Board of Advisors from India for the *Journal of Women's History* published from the Ohio State University, USA.

Prof. Bora has travelled widely both in India and abroad. Since early childhood she had the opportunity of travelling through the length and breadth of the deepest forests and remote corners of the region with her father, an illustrious forest officer of erstwhile Assam.

**M**. **C. Bora**, a retired Chief General Manager of Coal India Limited, is a Mining Engineer who has spent a greater part of his service career working in the coal-mining industry of the North-East. He has had occasion to visit several interior and remote areas of the region, unknown to many even in the region itself. Besides presentations in national and international symposia, he has several publications to his credit. His love for travel has taken him to several countries, including Russia, USA, England and France.

A passionate photographer, Bora has captured several important features of tourist-related interest in the camera, which tend to make the book stand out for its liveliness. With a deep understanding of the region and its people, he provides a wealth of details relating to tourism in the North-East.



# **The Story of Tourism**

## **An Enchanting Journey Through India's North-east**

**Shiela Bora**  
and  
**Mahesh Chandra Bora**



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## Tourism: Meaning and Significance

### The Origin of Tourism

Tourism is classically regarded as travelling for recreation although this definition has been expanded in recent years to include any travel outside of one's normal working or living area. The tourist is usually interested (among other things) in the destination's climate, culture or its nature.

King George III is widely acknowledged as the first "tourist", who took regular holidays to the seaside town of Weymouth when in poor health. Wealthy people have always travelled to distant parts of the world, not incidentally for some other purpose, but as an end in itself: to see great buildings or other works of art; to learn new languages; to learn about different cultures; or to taste new cuisine.

The tourist in the modern sense of the term originated when large numbers of middle-class people began to join aristocratic travellers. As societies became wealthier, and people lived longer, it became not only possible but probable that lower-middle and middle-class people steadily employed, would retire in good health and with some significant savings.

Organised tourism is now a major industry around the world. Many national economies are now heavily reliant on tourism.

Derived from the Latin word *tornus* meaning a circle or a turner's wheel, the word 'tourist', in the 17th century, denoted an excursion from one place to another or a circular journey touching the important places of a region or a country. The concept of tourism has since changed such that in the 20th century 'tourism' has assumed a definite meaning. A 'tourist' denotes a person who travels either for recreation or for pleasure. The meaning of 'tourism' is further broadened to include all the activities and arrangements associated with tourism.

### **Tourism Defined**

Hermann V. Schulerd, an Austrian economist, was the first to define tourism in 1910. According to him, economic culture was the foundation of tourism. Tourism is an economic exchange, which takes place as a result of a tourist's visit to another city or country, his board and lodging, as well as his travel in and around the city or the country, which he visits.

In 1942 Walter Hunziker of the University of St. Gallen and Kurt Krapf of Berne University defined tourism as a socio-cultural exchange which takes place when people from one country visit another, without any economic motive or without any intention of taking up permanent residence in that country, a definition that was accepted by the International Association of Scientific Experts in Tourism (AIEST). A person may be said to have travelled for the sake of tourism only when he undertakes a journey from one place to another without any commercial, business or economic motive, but to experience or study the depth of the art and culture of its people and its natural beauty.

### **International Tourists**

In 1937, the Committee of Statistical Experts of the League of Nations defined a tourist to be a person who spends more than twenty-four hours in a country other than his own and has the following characteristics:

- Travels for recreation, for domestic purposes or for health reasons.
- Travels as a delegate to a conference.
- Travels for business or commerce.
- Travels by sea even when the stay overseas is for less than twenty-four hours.

Categories of persons visiting another country excluded from the definition include:

- A person who travels without a valid visa or without any valid travel document, or travels in search of a livelihood, or for conducting business or commerce.
- A person who travels for taking up residence in another country.

- Students staying in a hostel.
- Residents of border areas with permission to reside in the neighbouring country.
- A transit passenger who may be required to halt for more than twenty-four hours in a particular country.

This definition of the word *tourist* was accepted by the United Nations in 1945, extending the definition to include persons who stay in a foreign country for more than twenty-four hours and less than six months without moving further. The word 'excursionist' was also linked to the word 'tourist'.

### **Rome Conference of UN and International Travel and Tourism**

At the Rome Conference of 1963, the United Nations deliberated on international travel and tourism and arrived at the following definitions:

A visitor: "any person visiting a country other than that in which he has his usual place of residence, for any reason other than following an occupation, remunerated from within that country."

A tourist: "a person who visits another country for purposes of pleasure, vacation, recuperation of health, pilgrimage, games and sports, business, a family trip, a mission, or for meetings and conferences and resides for at least twenty-four hours in the country of his visit."

An excursionist: "one who spends less than twenty-four hours in the country of his visit".

The government of India has defined a foreign tourist as a person visiting India on a foreign passport, staying at least twenty-four hours in the country, the purpose of whose journey is either leisure, recreation, holiday, health, study, religion and sport or business, family mission and meeting. A domestic tourist is defined by the government as a person who travels within the country to a place other than his usual place of residence and stays at hotels or other accommodation establishments run on commercial basis or *dharamshalas/sarais/musafirkhanas/agra-shalas/choultries*, etc. for a duration not less than twenty-four hours, or one night, and for not more than twelve months at a time for any of the following purposes:

1. Pleasure (holiday, leisure, sports, etc.);
2. Pilgrimage, religious and social functions;
3. Business, conferences and meetings; and
4. Study and health.

### **Significance of Tourism**

Tourism has a wide-ranging impact on society beyond what the literal meaning of the word 'tourism' implies.

A tour can be of a short or a long duration and may include a journey both within and outside one's own country. But whatever the nature of the journey, it provides knowledge about the socio-cultural, political and economic conditions of the country or the place visited. It helps the tourist to compare and contrast the prevailing conditions in different countries. Tourism is a path of discovery—from time immemorial man has been discovering new geographic locations and natural phenomena, besides discovering new facts about human civilisation. Travels also afford an opportunity for people to take a break from the monotony of their daily routine.

During the 1960s tourism came to be recognised as a source of foreign exchange, a catalyst of development, and a security against uncertain fluctuations of commodity prices. With international tourist earnings rising to approximately over 75,000 million US dollars, tourism's status as a major economic activity has come to be recognised. Over 270 million tourists visit foreign countries each year. Although the economic gains arising out of tourism are easily discernible, the true benefits of tourism can be appreciated only when calculations are based not only on the economic aspects of tourism but also on its social-cultural impact.

### **The Manila Declaration on Tourism**

The issue of the significance of tourism came up for detailed discussion in the Manila Conference on World Tourism held at Manila, the Philippines, in October 1980. The Conference announced that:

...world tourism can contribute to the establishment of a new international economic order that will help to eliminate

the widening economic gap between developed and developing countries and ensure the steady acceleration of economic and social development and progress, in particular of the developing countries.

The right to use of leisure, and in particular the right of access to holidays and to freedom of travel and tourism, a natural consequence of the right to work, is recognised as an aspect of the fulfilment of the human needs by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights as well as by the legislations of many states. It entails for society the duty of providing for its citizens the best practical, effective and non-discriminatory access to this type of activity. Such an effort must be in harmony with the priorities, institutions and traditions of each individual country.

### **TOURISM AND ITS EFFECT ON THE ECONOMY**

In order to assess the importance of the tourism industry and its impact on society, various effects of this industry have to be taken into consideration.

The Manila Conference recognised tourism as a significant factor in world development because it represents a large percentage of the share in national economies and international trade. It recognised tourism's consistent role in national economic activity, in national transactions and in securing balance of payments equilibrium, which makes it one of the main activities affecting the world economy.

The receipts from international tourism provide a valuable source of earning for both developed as well as developing nations. The major economic benefit in promoting tourism is seen in the earning of foreign exchange, which adds to the national income and as an invisible export, often offsets a loss on the visible trading account. Income from tourism has tended to increase at a faster rate than merchandise export in a number of countries and there is now an assured financial flow from the richer countries to the not so rich, developing countries thereby raising the latter's export earnings and the rate of economic growth. Tourism not only offers a more reliable form of income to developing countries which are primarily dependent on a few basic cash crops, but also enables countries with a negative

balance of merchandise trade to pay for imports like food, technology, capital or consumer goods. International tourism can also lead to an increased indigenous demand for new types of goods or services produced by domestic or foreign companies.

Estimates regarding the contribution of tourism to the balance of payments are generally based on direct tourist expenditure. This, however, is a narrow indicator as it excludes indirect transactions. Expenditure incurred in promoting tourism must be taken into consideration. Leakages in the form of importing foreign goods limit and reduce the multiplier effect. The import cost of goods and services used by visitors, foreign exchange costs of capital investment in tourist amenities and promotion and publicity expenditures abroad drastically reduce the net foreign exchange receipts from tourism.

Within each country, domestic tourism contributes to an improved balance of the national economy through redistribution of the national income. Domestic tourism also contributes to the development of activities, which are in turn favourable to the general economy of the country. Hence, development of international tourism should always be accompanied by similar efforts to expand domestic tourism.

As the income generated through tourist spending flows through various sections of the economy it produces a multiplier effect. The money tourists pay against hotel bills is used by the hotel management to provide for the costs incurred in meeting the demands of the tourists, e.g. food, drinks, furnishing, laundering, electricity and entertainment. The recipients, in turn, use the money to meet their financial commitments and so on. In other words, tourist expenditure not only supports the tourist industry but also indirectly supports many other industries, which supply goods and services to the tourist industry.

The benefits arising from investment on infrastructure, like building of airports, roads, water supply and other public utilities, are widely shared and enjoyed by other sectors of the economy as well. Tourist facilities such as hotels, restaurants, museums, clubs, sports complexes, public transport and national parks are used also by domestic tourists, businessmen and residents of the place where the infrastructure is created, even though a significant portion of the costs may have been borne by the international tourists. Thus, tourism leads to a better equilibrium of general economic growth.

Tourism contributes to tax revenue both directly through sales taxes and indirectly through property, profits and income taxes.

The United Nations Conference on International Travel and Tourism held at Rome in 1963 noted that tourism was important not only as a source of foreign exchange but also as a factor in the location of industries and in the development of marginal and backward areas. Tourism is traditionally concentrated in less urbanised areas. Therefore, tourism, by its nature, tends to distribute development away from the industrial centres towards those regions in a country, which have not been developed. Many of the economically backward regions contain areas of high scenic beauty and cultural attraction. A number of countries are now engaged in creating and developing spots for tourist attraction in underdeveloped regions in a bid to generate employment for hundreds of local people. Since tourism can be developed in a short time span with only moderate levels of investment, its impact on a regional economy can be rapid. The contribution of tourism to regional economy is measured in a similar fashion as that for national economy.

While there has long been an interest in the contribution of tourism to the balance of payments, its potential role in generating employment came into focus in the 1980s. The tourist industry employs a large number of people and provides a wide range of jobs extending from the unskilled to the highly specialised worker. Tourism also has the potential for creating employment outside the industry and in this respect all agencies, which supply goods and services, e.g. those engaged in furnishing and equipping a hotel, the souvenir industries, the farming and food processing industries, are all equal beneficiaries from the growth of this industry. In many of the developing countries facing a situation of chronic unemployment, the promotion of tourism can be highly encouraging for economic development, especially for employment generation.

Though tourism undoubtedly contributes to employment generation, there are practical difficulties in calculating the actual economic gain from employment generation. The number and the type of job requirements vary considerably from region to region, depending on the nature of the tourist industry, more

importantly its seasonality. Some of the job opportunities available in places like shops and recreation centres are only partly dependent on tourism. It needs to be considered whether the jobs are full-time or part-time and how the employment in the tourism industry interacts with other household income. It is important to analyse whether tourism wages are supplementary to, or the principal source of income and whether such wages are used only to supplement another enterprise, such as a farm or a small workshop.

Very often the employment effects can be negative and tourism may destroy the basis of other activities. Younger members of the family, lured by easier wages and more glamorous lifestyles of the tourist areas, may turn away from the traditional economy and the traditional society.

Like all other industries tourism also results in migration of labour in case of shortage of local labour. Such migration may be seasonal or permanent, but is bound to leave its impact on the local economy.

At the local level, the development of the tourism industry tends to have a significant effect on land markets. Tourism is generally polarised along the coastline or in a few cities in some picturesque inland areas. The demand for tourism may hike up land prices, providing a windfall for local landowners and farmers. But rising land prices may cause difficulties for those who are in no way connected to the tourist industry and who may yet need to build homes or establish business in these areas. The highly polarised nature of development also generates intense environmental problems such as water and air pollution, water shortage, traffic congestion and destruction of traditional landscapes. This threatens the quality of life for the locals as well as for the tourists and ultimately may threaten the viability of the tourist industry itself.

### **Culture Value of Tourism**

From time immemorial tourism has served as a unique vehicle for cultural propagation, which is highly useful for promoting understanding and tolerance amongst people of various nations and communities. The basic element of movement, which comprises the essential characteristics of a tourist's activities, increases the possibility of communication between different

civilisations. Travel and communication have been the principal instruments for broadening the limits of human knowledge. Even today people travel in large numbers to foreign countries and visit museums only to acquaint themselves with the usages and customs of other countries and to admire their art and culture.

The Manila Conference stated that the economic returns of tourism do not constitute the only criteria for encouraging tourism. To enjoy one's right to holidays, utilise the opportunity for acquainting oneself with environment, develop an awareness of national identity and develop a sense of belonging to a culture and to a people are the major reasons which stimulate the individual's participation in domestic and international tourism through access to holidays.

Since tourism basically remains a cultural phenomenon, its beneficial effects can best be achieved by incorporating the cultural aspect into the economic circuit. This would serve to justify the investments made on tourism at the cost of the community. By exploiting the cultural heritage of a nation, mass tourism can contribute in enhancing an individual's awareness about the nation's culture, both for its own citizens as well as for foreigners, while simultaneously generating national wealth. Thus, the cultural and economic aspects of tourism are complementary in nature.

An ancient civilisation or an original culture can always act as a positive element in promoting tourism in the developing countries. Generally tourists like to visit sites of ancient civilisation and learn about them. Cultural tourism provides the tourist an opportunity to experience the distinct characteristics of varied customs and traditions in their original form. This involves a two-way exchange between the industrialised nations and the developing countries. The industrialised nations act as tourist generators while the developing countries act as the receivers, thus making cultural tourism a significant contributor to the national economy and the balance of payments of developing nations.

According to the Manila Conference,

With a growing respect for international relations and the search for peace, based on justice and respect for individual and national aspirations, tourism stands out as a positive

and omnipotent factor in promoting mutual knowledge and understanding, the main basis for reaching this greater level of respect and confidence among all the peoples of the world.

Improving international understanding is an area where tourism has been playing a major role. There is a mingling of cultures as people belonging to different countries, speaking different languages and practising different faiths and lifestyles come together and develop friendship. Tourism helps to break down barriers, prejudices and suspicions that exist between nations. Rigid boundaries and narrow compartments that distance people tend to shrink and give way to better international understanding. In the universal efforts to establish a new international economic order, tourism can, under appropriate conditions, play a positive role in furthering equilibrium, cooperation, mutual understanding and solidarity among all countries.

### **Health and Social Justice**

Modern tourism has resulted from the adoption of today's social policy, which gives to the workers the facility of annual paid holidays in recognition of a human being's fundamental right to rest and leisure. This has become an important factor contributing to social stability and promoting mutual understanding among individuals and peoples, and also promoting means of individual betterment. The Manila Conference considered tourism as a factor, which promotes individual as well as collective well-being through its effects on the mental health of those individuals who proceed on vacations and tours.

### **A New Outlook**

The theme of the World Tourism Day celebrated worldwide on 27 September 2003, was *Tourism: A Driving Force for Poverty Alleviation, Job Creation and Social Harmony*. This theme has special significance for India as it provides an opportunity for the government to recast its priorities and look at tourism as a catalyst to start the much-needed acceleration of economic growth, particularly in the non-urban areas where India's bulk of the economically disadvantaged people live.

Till recently tourism was regarded as a source of leisure and adventure, largely for the benefit of the elite. However, the WTO (World Trade Organisation) and the WTTC (World Travel and Tourism Council) have recently highlighted its economic benefits and tourism is now considered as a global instrument to reduce poverty.

In countries like India tourism has not only become a primary source of foreign exchange but has also provided one of the few options for diversifying the economy from its declining agriculture base. India has close to 100 million people with disposable incomes and mindsets permitting them to travel both within India and outside. Added to this is the annual inflow of 2.7 million foreign visitors. What restricts their movement is lack of safe and adequate infrastructure, convenient airports and air links, comfortable roads, transport, hotels and telecommunication.

Tourism in developing economies is a labour-intensive activity offering small-scale opportunities. Much of our cultural and historical heritage, natural beauty and wildlife are located far away from urban centres. In such a scenario tourism holds tremendous potential for creating jobs not only for skilled and trained manpower but also for unskilled and uneducated populations and indigenous communities. Therefore, tourism can provide a tremendous boost to rural economic growth. According to WTTC, India's investment in the tourism sector is 0.9% of its total budget as compared to Malaysia's 5.1%, China's 3.8 % and Singapore's 9.1%. As far as government expenditure on tourism is concerned, India ranks 150th of the 160 nations studied by the WTTC. Besides putting in a substantial dose of investment and attracting budget tourists, the government needs to attract high-yield market segments and work out strategies for increasing the average length of the tourist's stay. It should also consider developing complementary products, spreading the benefits of tourism geographically and enhancing local management of tourism and partnerships, reducing the seasonality of tourism and increasing employment and training.

### **Sustainable Development and Eco-tourism**

As a concept, eco-tourism has essentially evolved over the past decade. Its specific aims and objectives lay emphasis on tourism

being ecologically friendly. The term 'eco-tourism' originally signified travelling to relatively undisturbed or uncontaminated areas with the specific objective of studying, admiring or enjoying the scenery, its wild plants and animals, as well as any existing cultural manifestations found in these areas. However, the most appropriate definition of eco-tourism appears to be the International Union for the Conservation of Nature's definition, which describes eco-tourism as being an environmentally responsible travel and visitation to relatively undisturbed natural areas in order to enjoy and appreciate nature and any accompanying cultural features, both past and present; that promotes conservation; has low visitor impact; and provides for beneficially active socio-economic involvement of local populations.

The major underlying assumption of eco-tourism is that visitors can provide the necessary economic incentives to achieve local conservation and development. In theory, ecotourism generates revenue that will be used to protect and conserve the existing biodiversity and natural environment that draw visitors to a particular site. Eco-tourism's objectives, therefore, include visitors' education, non-alterations of ecosystems, and local economic benefits.

Today, ecotourism is universally recognised as defining a very specific type of nature-based tourism, in which small groups of people are taken to experience various aspects of nature and participate in wildlife viewing, nature trekking, educational tours, and so on. Special care is taken to prevent negative impact on the ecosystem, and tourist education in matters related to the environment is given high priority. The concept of eco-tourism has undergone much change and has been developed with a scientific approach that includes planning, management and development of sustainable tourism products with an emphasis on promoting education and development. While nature-based tourism implies just the visit of a tourist to a place to see its natural beauty, flora, fauna or natural phenomena, eco-tourism lays emphasis on local benefits—environmentally, culturally and economically. A nature-based tourist may just go bird-watching; an eco-tourist goes bird-watching with a local guide, stays in a locally operated eco-lodge and contributes to the local economy.

The distinguishing feature of ecotourism is that it emphasises the ecological fragility, carrying capacity and biodiversity conservation of the region, while acting as a liaison between local communities and the tourism industry.

Thus eco-tourism has two broad dimensions, of *preservation and promotion*. It can also be described as a *sub-category of sustainable tourism*, or a part of the nature tourism market. The fact that most of the popular eco-travel destinations have fragile ecosystems makes it imperative to maintain a careful balance between preservation and promotion in order to ensure the long-term health of both, the ecosystem as well as the tourism economy. Sustainable eco-tourism, in its purest sense, is an industry, which attempts to achieve the following criteria:

- Have a minimum impact on the environment and local culture.
- Benefit residents inhabiting tourist destinations and help to generate income and employment. Travel businesses should make every effort to employ and train local people, buy local supplies and use local services. Tourism should be initiated with the help of broad based community inputs and the community should maintain control of tourism development.
- Conserve the local ecosystem and resources available in the destination and only promote tourism that is ecologically and culturally sensitive. Care should be taken to preserve the entire local ecosystem, not just individual species, vistas or sites. Tourists should always be motivated and encouraged to favour business that minimises pollution, waste, energy consumption, water usage, landscaping chemicals and unnecessary night-time lighting. Hospitality providers must be trained to initiate measures like recycling, promoting energy efficiency, introducing water reuse, and creating economic opportunities for local communities as an integral part of eco-tourism.
- Eco-tourism must aim to promote respect for local culture and traditions and provide foreign visitors an opportunity to learn and observe local etiquette, including the use of a few polite words of courtesy in the local language. Besides learning about the destination to which they are travelling,

travellers and tourists should help sustain its character while enriching their own travel experiences. Simultaneously the local residents should have an opportunity to learn that the ordinary and familiar things of daily life may be of interest and value to outsiders. They should also learn how to deal with the expectations of foreign travellers that often differ from their own. Education and training programmes to improve and manage heritage and natural resources should be established.

- A code of conduct should be established for tourism at all levels—national, regional and local—based on internationally accepted standards. Guidelines for tourism operation, impact assessment, monitoring of cumulative impact and limits to acceptable change should be established.
- Eco-tourism must be economically viable in order to attract financing and be sustainable. This will only be possible if tourism is well planned, financed, managed and marketed in a manner that can meet the stringent environmental and recreational demands of true ecotourism.
- The aim of eco-tourism should be to strive for quality. Communities measure tourism success not by sheer number of tourists, but by the length of their stay, the amount of money spent, and the quality of experience acquired during the visit. Eco-tourism should enable satisfied and excited tourists to bring home new knowledge and inspire friends to experience similar trips. This will provide continuing business for the destination.
- Most of the places of attraction for eco-tourism are generally scattered over a wide area and are located in remote areas within highly fragile environments. These attractions, together with the people of the region, constitute the tourism resources at large. The flora and fauna cannot be separated from the people inhabiting these areas through centuries and developing a lifestyle based on nature. Eco-tourism should therefore be planned and implemented as a partnership venture with local citizens, right from the initial stages of resource mapping and planning to action and even participatory monitoring. The citizens will have to be in the forefront for such a development to be beneficial and

the priority of such developmental projects must be the conservation of the natural wealth.

Managing tourism destinations is an important part of controlling tourism's environmental impacts. The term 'destination' refers broadly to an area where tourism is a relatively important activity and where the economy may be significantly influenced by tourism revenues. Destination management can include land use planning, business permits and zoning controls, environmental and other regulations, business association initiatives and a host of other techniques to shape the development and daily operation of tourism-related activities. Destination management is complicated by the fact that a single, recognisable destination may include several municipalities, provinces or other government entities.

Professionals should be involved in formulating and developing new policies that could meet the needs of ecotourism. Participatory governance structures known as Destination Management Organisations (DMOs) led by local authorities need to be formed. Set up with the cooperation of local NGOs, such organisations should include professionals belonging to various disciplines ranging from geographic information systems, wildlife management, wildlife photography, marine biology and oceanography, national and state park management, environmental sciences, women in development, historians and archaeologists. The network of local tourism businesses such as hotels, transportation services and service providers such as guides and equipment rentals, restaurants, etc. are also a significant part of a destination management organisation.

The needs, expectations and anticipated benefits of tourism vary greatly from one destination to the next. Once the local communities living in regions with tourism potential develop a vision regarding the type of tourism they want to facilitate, a comprehensive planning framework can be used. Promoting sustainable tourism is a way to strengthen local stewardship of the environment. The communities living in the fringe of such tourism areas should be involved in the developmental process, both at the grass roots level as well as in the stages of decision-making. It is imperative that before advocating a policy for

change, there must be a fringe community, which is already aware and prepared for the change, with a strong sense of ownership towards the surrounding resources and the environment.

### **Code of Ethics for Sustainable Ecotourism**

The resolutions adopted at the International Conference of Environment Ministers on Biodiversity and Tourism held on 6–8 March 1997, at Berlin, laid down certain ethics for the development of ecotourism in a draft declaration known as the Berlin Declaration on Biological Diversity and Sustainable Tourism. The salient features of the Code of Ethics for Tourism as declared are briefly described below:

*[Article 1] Tourism's contribution to mutual understanding and respect between peoples and societies*

The understanding and promotion of the ethical values common to humanity, with an attitude of tolerance and respect for the diversity of religious, philosophical and moral beliefs, are both the foundation and the consequence of responsible tourism; stakeholders in tourism development and tourists themselves should observe the social and cultural traditions and practices of all peoples, including those of minorities and indigenous peoples and recognise their worth. Tourism activities should be conducted in harmony with the attributes and traditions of the host regions and countries and with respect for their laws, practices and customs.

The host communities and local professionals should acquaint themselves with and respect the tourists who visit them and find out about their lifestyles, tastes and expectations; the education and training imparted to professionals should be such as to contribute to a hospitable welcome.

It is the task of the public authorities to provide protection for tourists and pay particular attention to the safety of foreign tourists owing to their vulnerability. They should facilitate the introduction of specific means of information, prevention, security, insurance and assistance consistent with their needs. Any attacks, assaults, kidnappings or threats against tourists or workers in the tourism industry, as well as the wilful destruction of tourism facilities or of elements of cultural or

natural heritage should be severely condemned and punished in accordance with respective national laws.

When travelling, tourists and visitors should not commit any criminal act or any act considered criminal by the laws of the country visited and abstain from any conduct felt to be offensive or injurious by the local populations, or likely to damage the local environment. They should refrain from all trafficking in illicit drugs, arms, antiques, protected species and products and substances that are dangerous or prohibited by national regulations.

[Article 2] *Tourism as a vehicle for individual and collective fulfilment*

Tourism, the activity most frequently associated with rest and relaxation, sport and access to culture and nature, should be planned and practised as a privileged means of individual and collective fulfilment. It is an important means for achieving self-education, mutual tolerance and for learning about the legitimate differences between peoples and cultures and their diversity.

Tourism activities should respect the equality of men and women; they should promote human rights and more particularly, the individual rights of the most vulnerable groups, notably children, the elderly, the handicapped, ethnic minorities and indigenous peoples.

The exploitation of human beings in any form, particularly sexual, especially when applied to children, conflicts with the fundamental aim of tourism and is a negation of tourism. As such, it should be energetically combated and penalised by the national legislation of both the countries visited and the countries of the perpetrators of these acts, even when they are carried out abroad.

Travel for purposes of religion, health, education and cultural or linguistic exchanges are particularly beneficial forms of tourism, which deserve encouragement.

The introduction into curricula of education about the value of tourist exchanges, their economic, social and cultural benefits and also their risks, should be encouraged.

[Article 3] *Tourism, a factor of sustainable development*

All the stakeholders in tourism development should safeguard the natural environment with a view to achieving sound, continuous and sustainable economic growth geared to satisfying equitably the needs and aspirations of present and future generations.

All forms of tourism development that are conducive to saving rare and precious resources, in particular water and energy, as well as avoiding as far as possible waste production, should be given priority and encouraged by national, regional and local public authorities.

Tourism infrastructure should be designed and tourism activities programmed in such a way as to protect the natural heritage composed of ecosystems and biodiversity and to preserve endangered species of wildlife.

[Article 4] *Tourism, a user of the cultural heritage of mankind and contributor to its enhancement*

Tourism resources belong to the common heritage of mankind. The communities in whose territories they are situated have particular rights and obligations to them.

Tourism policies and activities should be conducted with respect for the artistic, archaeological and cultural heritage, which they should protect and pass on to future generations.

Tourism activity should be planned in such a way as to allow traditional cultural products, crafts and folklore to survive and flourish, rather than causing them to degenerate and become standardised.

[Article 5] *Tourism, a beneficial activity for host countries and communities*

Local populations should be associated with tourism activities and share equitably the economic, social and cultural benefits they generate, particularly in the creation of direct and indirect jobs resulting from them.

Tourism policies should be applied in such a way as to help to raise the standard of living of the populations of the regions visited and meet their needs. The planning and architectural approach to and operation of tourism resorts and accommodation should aim to integrate them, to the extent possible, in the local economic and social fabric.

Tourism professionals and investors should carry out studies of the impact of their development projects on the environment and natural surroundings and disseminate information on their future programmes and their foreseeable repercussions and foster dialogue on their contents with the populations concerned.

[Article 6] *Obligations of stakeholders in tourism development*

Tourism professionals have an obligation to provide tourists with objective and honest information on their places of destination and on the conditions of travel, hospitality and stays.

Tourism professionals, in so far as it depends on them, should show concern, in cooperation with the public authorities, for the security and safety, accident prevention, health protection and food safety of those who seek their services. Likewise, they should ensure the existence of suitable systems of insurance and assistance.

Governments have the duty to inform their nationals of the difficult circumstances, or even the dangers they may encounter during their travels abroad. The contents of travel advisories should be discussed beforehand with the host countries and the professionals concerned.

The press, particularly the specialised travel press and the other media should issue honest and balanced information on events and situations that could influence the flow of tourists. They should also provide accurate and reliable information to the consumers of tourism services. The media should not in any way promote sex tourism.

[Article 7] *Right to tourism*

The prospect of direct and personal access to the discovery and enjoyment of the planet's resources constitutes a right equally open to all the world's inhabitants.

The universal right to tourism must be regarded as the corollary of the right to rest and leisure, including reasonable limitation of working hours and periodic holidays with pay, guaranteed by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights.

Family, youth, student and senior tourism and tourism for people with disabilities should be encouraged and facilitated.

[Article 8] *Liberty of tourist movements*

Tourists and visitors should benefit, in compliance with international law and national legislation, from the liberty to move within their countries and from one state to another, in accordance with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. They should have access to places of transit and stay and to tourism and cultural sites without being subject to excessive formalities or discrimination.

Tourists and visitors should benefit from the same rights as the citizens of the country visited concerning the confidentiality of the personal data and information concerning them, especially when these are stored electronically.

Administrative procedures relating to border crossings, such as visas or health and customs formalities should facilitate the maximum freedom of travel and widespread access to international tourism.

So far as the economic situation of the countries from which they come permits, travellers should have access to allowances of convertible currencies needed for their travels.

[Article 9] *Rights of the workers and entrepreneurs in the tourism industry*

The fundamental rights of salaried and self-employed workers in the tourism industry and related activities should be guaranteed under the supervision of the national and local administrations, both of their states of origin and of the host countries.

Entrepreneurs and investors—especially in the area of small and medium-sized enterprises—should be entitled to free access to the tourism sector with a minimum of legal or administrative restrictions.

As an irreplaceable factor of solidarity in the development and dynamic growth of international exchanges, multinational enterprises of the tourism industry should not exploit the dominant positions they sometimes occupy. In exchange for their freedom to invest and trade, which should be fully recognised, they should involve themselves in local development, avoiding,

by the excessive repatriation of their profits or their induced imports, a reduction of their contribution to the economies in which they are established.

Partnership and the establishment of balanced relations between enterprises of generating and receiving countries contribute to the sustainable development of tourism and an equitable distribution of the benefits of its growth.

[Article 10] *Implementation of the principles of the Global Code of Ethics for Tourism*

The public and private stakeholders in tourism development should cooperate in the implementation of these principles and monitor their effective application.