

1 An Integrated Framework for Promoting Eco Initiatives: Role of 2 Educational Institutions as Execution Specialists

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7 **Abstract**

8 The basic question before a curriculum planner intending to design an Ecotourism Course is
9 "whether it is to be need based or demand based. A demand based Course needs to have
10 market considerations as its primary objective. It is controlled by supply-demand chain in
11 both the choice and treatment of the curriculum. For instance, a market survey (Nivedita
12 Mukherjee) sequences the required 'skills' of a Tourism Management in the following order:
13 educational qualification, soft skills, aptitude, training and experience. A demand based
14 curriculum planner could make choice of materials to cater to these skills, although a huge
15 variation could arise in the interpretation of each of the 'skills'. The formulation of a need
16 based ecotourism Course is more challenging. It goes beyond the content mapping that is
17 usually done for market oriented curriculum. Planning a need based ecotourism course
18 requires comprehensive understanding of the components ecotourism and their
19 interrelationships. The direct and indirect impacts on natural resources and socio-economic
20 conditions of human settlements at the ecotourism sites point to the requirement of concerted
21 action towards conservation. This conceptual paper addresses the role of Educational
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43 I. Ecotourism courses should it be demand based or need based?

3 THE INSTITUTIONAL REQUIREMENTS IN LAUNCHING ECOTOURISM COURSE

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51 challenging. It goes beyond the content mapping that is usually done for market oriented curriculum. Planning
52 a need based ecotourism course requires comprehensive understanding of the components ecotourism and their
53 interrelationships. The direct and indirect impacts on natural resources and socio-economic conditions of human
54 settlements at the ecotourism sites point to the requirement of concerted action towards conservation. If
55 ecotourism should encompass all what is implicitly and explicitly stated in our Constitution as the duties of
56 the state and of the citizens for environment protection, it has to be a need based Course. Article 48-A, under
57 Directive Principles of State Policy, states that the State shall endeavour to protect and improve the environment
58 and to safeguard the forests and wild life of the country. Article 51-A, under Fundamental duties, mentions that
59 it shall be the duty of every citizen of India.

60 ? to value and preserve the rich heritage of our composite culture ? to protect and improve the natural
61 environment including forests, lakes, rivers and wild life, and to have compassion for living creatures.

62 In a way, Mahatma Gandhi's line "Live simply so that others may simply live" has much relevance to the
63 community considerations that must be associated with any activity, ecotourism included. The same theme has
64 been represented in UNESCO Report of the International Commission on Education for the Twentyfirst Century
65 under the Chairmanship of Jacques Delors.

66 The Jacques Delors Report has been published under the title "Learning: The Treasure Within." The Jacques
67 Delors Report states that education throughout life is based on four pillars: learning to know, learning to do,
68 learning to live together and learning to be.

69 ? Learning to know, by combining a sufficiently broad general knowledge with the opportunity to work in
70 depth on a small number of subjects. This also means learning to learn, so as to benefit from the opportunities
71 education provides throughout life.

72 1 Content Mapping of Ecotourism Course

73 Ecotourism has numerous definitions and our purpose is not to state them. We shall list below some of the
74 features that we could expect out of an Ecotourism Course, although it is not comprehensive.

75 (<http://eu.wikipedia.org/wiki/ecotourism>):

76 ? Biological diversity -importance and conservation ? Possible negative impacts of ill-managed initiatives of eco
77 tourism sites in terms of land use, architectural design, utilization of resources and wastage disposal ? Importance
78 of assessing environmental impacts arising out of unplanned tourism ? Tourism coupled with sustainable
79 development of eco systems ? Socio-economic and cultural concerns and conflicts as well as development of local
80 communities ? Community involvement in running ecotourism initiatives ? Creating environmental awareness
81 among all the stakeholders ? Understanding regulations and restrictions stipulated by the Government related
82 to Coastal Regulation Zones, environmental protection, biological diversity, etc.

83 ? Key elements of a viable ecotourism project

84 2 III. Ecotourism as a vocational Course

85 According to Miomir Despotovic, Iskra Maksimovic and Aleksandra Pejatovic, any vocational or adult (or
86 community) education course needs to have the following components: accessibility, integration and partnership.
87 We can extend this concept to ecotourism education. i) Accessibility -Capacity building at both the personnel
88 level and community level should be one of the objectives of ecotourism education. It must foster the necessary
89 knowledge, skills, competencies and values to all the stakeholders. In this knowledge era, it is an acclaimed fact
90 that access and equity are needed to bring socio-economic development. ii) Integration -The institutions should
91 have an integrated approach of offering Courses, so that it could open up possibilities of widening intellectual,
92 social and professional development of individuals concerned. By integration, we refer to a wide canvass of
93 methods. iii) Partnership -The educational institutions need to play a key role in partnering with different wings
94 of the Government (such as Tourism, Environment & Forests, etc.), ecotourism organizations, tour operators and
95 their employees, NGOs, professional associations, local communities, travelers, etc. The academic activities need
96 to be planned with the active participation of the stakeholders.

97 IV.

98 3 The Institutional Requirements in Launching Ecotourism 99 Course

100 The implications of the characteristics of ecotourism education on the functioning of the higher education
101 institutions are given below: ? The educational institutions need to run extension or community oriented courses

102 and continuing education courses, apart from formal mode. As such, most of the higher education institutions
103 cater to the 18-23 age group of the population. Diversified modes such as distance education and on-line education
104 need to be adopted. ? The facility for life-long learning must be available.

105 This requires a flexible approach on the part of curriculum planning and implementation. ? The stake
106 holders should be involved both in curriculum planning and implementation. The ecotourism curriculum should
107 be dynamic to respond to socio-economic needs and changes. It is evident, once we realise that the word
108 'curriculum' comes from the Latin verb 'currere' meaning to run. It actually denotes a course to be 'run'; it
109 is a metaphor ? The policy documents of the Government need to be incorporated in to the curriculum to
110 provide contextual significance. ? Industry -institution and institution -institution collaboration are vital for
111 optimization of resources.

112 Collaboration will be meaningful, only if individual strengths are established and mutually recognized. ?
113 Innovation needs to be introduced in teachinglearning process. Modularisation of ecotourism content is, for
114 instance, a desirable step.

115 V.

116 **4 Desirable Professional Values of Teachers**

117 The values ascribed to academic profession by the National Commission on Teachers II ??1983) have much
118 significance in running ecotourism courses:

119 ? Acquisition and transmission of knowledge

120 **5 Desirable Traits of an Ecotourism Student**

121 Although choice of a course is the prerogative of a learner, some of the desirable traits of an ecotourism student
122 are mentioned below: ? Spatial intelligence -the ability to form a mental model of a spatial world and to be
123 able to manipulate and operate using that model. ? Emotional intelligence -the ability to know oneself and to
124 use that knowledge to operate effectively in life. This is the ability to motivate oneself and persist in the face of
125 frustration, to delay gratification, to control impulses and to keep distress from swamping the ability to think.
126 ? Inter-personal intelligence-is the ability to understand other people: what motivates them, how they work
127 and how to work co-operatively with them. ? Naturalistic intelligence -Naturalistic intelligence is the ability
128 to understand, relate to, categorize, classify, comprehend, and explain the things encountered in the world of
129 nature.

130 VII.

131 **6 Desirable Features of Ecotourism Course**

132 Modularisation of curriculum needs systematic planning and a willingness to have a paradigm shift from the
133 conventional method of forming curricular contents as an 'indivisible block.' The term paradigm shift was
134 introduced by Thomas Kuhn in his highly influential landmark book, The Structure of Scientific Revolutions.

135 Kuhn shows how almost every significant break through in the field of scientific endeavor is first a break
136 with tradition, with old ways of thinking, with old paradigms. Familiar examples are: 1. Copernicus created a
137 paradigm shift by placing the sun at the center of the solar system, as against the theory of Ptolemy according
138 to which the earth was the center of the universe. 2. Monarchy was followed in many countries as a divine right
139 to rule; the advent of democracy caused a paradigm shift; the concept of welfare state arose. 3. Typewriters
140 were used for documentation; computers have revolutionized entire office procedures and have compelled the
141 seniors to catch up at the earliest (not to be left behind due to technology gap). When we do not have any
142 objection to the above paradigm shifts, why don't we think of a paradigm shift in Higher Education scenario?
143 In this context, it is worth extending the views of Tom Peters & Water man Jr. expressed in one of the best
144 sellers -"In Search of Excellence". The book prescribes conditions for excellence in the corporate world. But the
145 parameters mentioned in the book can be contextualized for the curricular processes of an ecotourism course
146 with the following features: As is pertinent to curriculum designing processes, specification of goals and tasks
147 (skills and competences required to function in ecotourism segment as decided by the teachers on the basis of
148 need analysis), mapping the content (in keeping with the these are applicable to Ecotourism as well. It needs
149 to be noted that the curriculum should address cognitive, psychomotor and affective domains. Although the
150 first two are fairly well addressed in educational institutions, ecotourism course requires particular stress on the
151 affective domain. Assessment of a student's affective domain is not easy because it is associated with his/her
152 attitudes, values and feelings that cannot be gauged easily. Personal feelings and beliefs of the student can remain
153 undisclosed.

154 Achievement of instructional objectives in the affective domain is difficult to measure, compared to the cognitive
155 and psychomotor domains. Bloom's Taxonomy of affective domain contains five levels: receiving, responding,
156 valuing, organization and characterization by value.

157 Level 1: Receiving: is the willingness to receive or to attend to particular phenomena or stimuli in the domain
158 of feelings or emotions. Receiving has been actively attending.

159 Level 2: Responding: refers to active participation on the part of the student. The student is sufficiently
160 motivated not to just be willing to attend, but is involved in or committed to a subject, activity, emotion etc.,

161 so as to seek it out and gain satisfaction from working with it or engaging in it. Responding indicates the desire
162 that a student has become sufficiently divided into three subcategories: awareness, willingness to receive, and
163 controlled or selected attention.

164 Level 3: Valuing: is when the student sees worth or value in the subject, activity, assignment, etc. An
165 important element of behavior characterized by valuing is that it is motivated, not by the desire to comply or
166 obey, but by the individual's commitment to the underlying value guiding the behavior. Learning outcomes in
167 this area are concerned with behavior that is consistent and stable enough to make the value clearly identifiable.

168 Level 4: Organization: is the bringing together a complex combination of values, possible disparate values,
169 resolving conflicts between them, and beginning to build an internally consistent value system. The individual
170 sees how the value relates to those already held or to new ones that are coming to be held. The integration
171 of values is less than harmonious; it is a kind of dynamic equilibrium that is dependent upon salient events at
172 a specific point in time. Internalization of values has a place in the individual's value hierarchy. The values
173 have controlled one's behavior for a sufficiently long period of time to develop a characteristic "life style". The
174 behavior is pervasive, consistent, and predictable. Affective domain has particular importance with reference to
175 appreciating socio-economic and cultural parameters, which is a core part of ecotourism.

176 7 IX.

177 8 Structuring the Ecotourism Course

178 The level of an educational programme depends on the intensity to which the contents are pitched. At the
179 specialization level, Ecotourism has a multidisciplinary approach. Apart from traditional tourism related topics,
180 it covers a wide variety of subjects. A few examples are: Ecology and Conservation (to understand the basics
181 of ecosystem function, web of life, habitat, human environment, etc.), taxonomy (to recognize classification and
182 identification of organisms), geology (to appreciate rock and soil formation and classification), marine -, freshwater
183 -and land environments, and government regulations (legal issues regarding environment, coastal regulation zone,
184 Wildlife Protection, etc.). (Australian Correspondence Schools Distance Education).

185 The recent trend in organising the curriculum is to pitch the Programme as a combination of modules. A
186 module is a set of functionally connected knowledge, skills and competences necessary for the performance of a
187 particular job or task. The instructional design through fragmental modularisation -? provides flexibility to the
188 learners to choose their pace of study ? could help an institution achieve economic efficiency as instruction for
189 common subjects can be combined ? enables learners to have the option to choose the modules depending on
190 their skill deficit and line; while devising academic programmes for continuing education for employees in the
191 tourism sector, specification of goals and tasks as also the content could be decided by seeing the skill deficit
192 between the skills possessed and the skills required.) ? facilitates comprehensive certification through stagewise
193 completion of module.

194 X.

195 9 Community Oriented Ecotourism Studies

196 Particular importance in ecotourism is community development.

197 The higher education institutions, teachers and students have an important role to play with respect to
198 community development as part of national development. Traditionally, the higher education institutions use
199 to concentrate only on teaching and research. The third dimension, namely extension or community centred
200 activities has been added by UGC in its policy frame work. The community initiative needs to be built in such a
201 way that it becomes self sustaining, even if external inputs are no more available. It amounts to capacity building
202 with a sense of self reliance. The extension activities are the nuclei of institution -community interaction. The
203 extension education provides ample opportunity for the students to apply their knowledge. Significant results
204 have been achieved through community -institution interactions in the areas of agriculture, adult literacy, child
205 nutrition, plantation and social forestry, etc. (Indira Gandhi National Open University, New Delhi; Raza Moonis
206 and Fernandes .M). The ecotourism area provides a suitable platform for extension activities: the communities
207 offer natural and manmade resources, the flora, fauna, local artisans and local unemployed manpower, etc., while
208 the institutions can provide expertise, planned activities, awareness level and enabling programmes. Organising
209 extension work can be of use in understanding the socio-economic and cultural concerns and conflicts as well as
210 issues related to development of local communities. It could also sensitise the students against negative effects
211 of ill-managed systems like physical displacement of persons, violation of human rights, conflicts in control of
212 land-use, damage to the environment etc, such as the ones stated below:

213 The pressure on Andaman and Nicobar islands is evident from the fact that as per 2001 census, the population
214 is around four lakhs but more than one lakh tourists have visited during 2005; with much less accommodation
215 available, the upcoming resorts pose problems in the light of Coastal Regulation Zone (CRZ) rules, which apply
216 for coastal stretches of sea, bays, estuaries, creeks, rivers, backwaters -2. Goa, for instance has a 105 km long
217 coastal line and much of it comes under the purview of CRZ rules; environmentalists have raised the issue that
218 construction activity has proceeded in violation of CRZ rules in order to have a sea view. (R. Venugopalan
219 Nair). Another report mentions that in some of the localities, the local people express concern over illegal
220 land conversions, since their claim to natural resources is eroded. The planning of extension activities based

221 on ecotourism requires need assessment in the form of socio-economic information regarding population, age
222 distribution, sex ratio, occupations, income levels, etc. Potential community leaders are also to be identified.
223 A resource inventory based on natural resources, cultural events and other specialties are to be gathered.
224 Identification of ecotourism activities should harp on the combination of available local resources, manpower
225 and expertise. In order to ensure success in the extension activities, the components are to be identified in
226 terms of planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation and, teams are to be formed to carry out the
227 work. These activities could help in spreading the messages regarding rights and duties of citizens, legal methods
228 of redress, human rights, etc. Some of the success stories of community run ecotourism initiatives are to be
229 brought to the notice of students. Examples are available from Sikkim (Dzongu Ecotourism Committee managing
230 trekking), West Bengal (local villagers running Community Tourism at Sundarbans) and Kerala (local adivasis
231 with traditional knowledge of forest and wildlife participating in ecotourism programme in Periyar Tiger Reserve).
232 (Ashish Kothari)¹

233 [Australian Correspondence Schools Distance Education] , <http://www.acs.edu.au> *Australian Correspondence Schools Distance Education*

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