ECOTOURISM AND THE ECONOMY

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Keywords: ecotourism, economy, rural development, environmental resources

SUMMARY

The government of some countries see ecotourism as having the potential of becoming a moderately useful tool for locally directed and participatory rural development based on a rational utilization of environmental and cultural resources on which tourism is based. We therefore need a better understanding of ecotourism’s impacts, and how those impacts are affected by various development and management strategies. Furthermore, ecotourism not only provides revenue and employment, but also causes undesirable environmental and social change. Unfortunately, these costs of ecotourism development are rarely evaluated in detail. If ecotourism is truly to promote a region’s welfare, it is vital that apart from the economic potential, environmental and social costs also needs to be identified, and that these costs enter into any decisions about ecotourism development. The study examined the relationships between ecotourism and economy with a view to understanding how the benefits if any are utilized within the communities. Tourism in natural and protected areas is economically important to many countries, both developing and developed. Tourism is an important foreign exchange earner, stimulate domestic income, and generate employment in other areas related to tourism. These objectives which were further elaborated and articulated by the subsequent national development plans may be summarised as follows: to increase the contribution of tourism to the growth of the country’s gross domestic product (GDP); to increase foreign exchange earnings from the sector and maximize the retention of foreign exchange in the economy; to create and expand employment opportunities; to improve the quality of service offered by tourism enterprises; and to conserve wildlife and protect the environment. There are two related, but distinct, economic concepts in ecotourism: economic impact and economic value. A common ecotourism goal is the generation of economic benefits, whether they are profits for companies, jobs for communities, or revenues for parks.

REFERENCES