

Ecotourism

Ecotourism is the fastest growing segment of the tourism industry, with an annual growth rate between 10% and 30%. The International Ecotourism Society reports that ecotourism currently comprises about 20% of the world travel market. Travelers in ecotourism markets seek a wide range of activities, both land- and water-based. Hiking/trekking, wildlife viewing, and visiting parks and protected areas are the most popular activities.

According to the International Ecotourism Society, a market demand assessment survey of North American tourists commissioned by the Canadian government in 1994 indicates that experienced ecotourists are usually between 35 - 54 years of age, are equally male and female, tend to be more educated, spend more money, have a higher-than-average income, and are more frequent travelers than general tourists. Ecotourism usually involves tourists from developed countries (eg. North America, Europe, Australia) visiting ecotourist destinations in developing countries, although developed countries also have natural areas which draw ecotourists. Well-established ecotourism destinations include Central and South America, Africa, Asia, and the Pacific. Costa Rica was one of the top ecotourism destinations in the world during the 1990s. Nepal has experienced an explosion of ecotourism, with the number of trekkers increasing 255% from 1980 to 1991, according to the International Ecotourism Society's "Ecotourism Statistical Fact Sheet."

Special interest travel / nature travel – outdoor-oriented activities in undeveloped natural areas to enjoy wildlife (visits to national parks, hiking, biking, bird-watching, etc.)

Adventure travel – outdoor-oriented activities in unusual, exotic, remote, wilderness areas that include some element of risk (rock climbing, whitewater kayaking, wilderness survival, wild game hunting, etc.)

Ecotourism – responsible travel to natural areas that conserves the environment and sustains the well-being of local people.

Works Cited:

The International Ecotourism Society website –
http://www.ecotourism.org/webmodules/webarticlesnet/templates/eco_template.aspx?a=12&z=25

Centers for Epidemiology and Animal Health, "Nature Travel and Ecotourism: Animal and Human Health Concerns, October 2001" –
http://www.aphis.usda.gov/vs/ceah/cei/bi/emergingmarketcondition_files/ecotourism.pdf

Nepal

From the CIA World Factbook, “Nepal” (<https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/np.html>):

“Nepal is among the poorest and least developed countries in the world with almost one-third of its population living below the poverty line. Agriculture is the mainstay of the economy, providing a livelihood for three-fourths of the population and accounting for 38% of GDP. Industrial activity mainly involves the processing of agricultural produce including jute, sugarcane, tobacco, and grain. Security concerns relating to the Maoist conflict have led to a decrease in tourism, a key source of foreign exchange. Nepal has considerable scope for exploiting its potential in hydropower and tourism, areas of recent foreign investment interest. Prospects for foreign trade or investment in other sectors will remain poor, however, because of the small size of the economy, its technological backwardness, its remoteness, its landlocked geographic location, its civil strife, and its susceptibility to natural disaster.”

Eight of the world’s ten highest mountains are in Nepal, including Mt. Everest, which stands at 29,000 feet. As a result, Nepal is a popular tourist destination for mountain climbers and hikers. The tourism industry in Nepal, however, has been threatened by political instability and a sluggish global economy. Those who work in tourism in Nepal have been hopeful for an increase in tourist revenue following a peace agreement in November 2006.

Ecotourism

1. Compare and contrast traditional tourism and ecotourism.

Aspects to compare and contrast	Traditional tourism	Ecotourism

2. How does the geography of Nepal lend itself to tourism?

3. What is everyday life like for the people of Nepal?

4. What are some advantages and disadvantages of tourism in South Asia?

Advantages	Disadvantages