



Possibilities of ECO Tourism In Etawah District of Uttar Pradesh, India

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Article Info

Volume 3, Issue 5

Page Number : 345-351

Publication Issue :

September-October-2020

Article History

Accepted : 20 Sep 2020

Published : 30 Sep 2020

Abstract :- Eco Tourism, responsible travel to natural areas that conserve the environment and improve the well being of the local people (TIES, 1991). In simple words eco tourism means a sustainable form of tourism and allows the tourist to see the most pristine form of nature. India the land of varied geography, offers several tourist destinations that not just distress but also rejuvenate the tourist. Etawah district of Uttar Pradesh has peculiar type of physiography. This has caused many natural spots which may be developed for eco tourism in the present study the major natural spots are taken for study. The two of them – Etawah Safari Park (Lion Safari) and National Chambal Wildlife Sanctuary famous for Gharials are included in Agra – Etawah Eco – Circuit formed by Uttar Pradesh government and the third one is Sarsai Nawar Jheel (Lake) a world famous Birdlife Sanctuary mainly has ‘Saras’ (Crane), that is, under Ramsar Convention (UNESCO).

Keywords : Eco Tourism, Sanctuary, Heritage, Wildlife, Culture, Eco – Circuit.

Introduction

Eco tourism (‘Eco’ as in ecological) is a type of tourism that is founded primarily on specific interest in the natural history of a region. According to the ‘International Tourism Eco Tourism Society’, Eco Tourism, responsible travel to natural areas that conserve the environment and improves the well being of local people (TIES, 1991), in the real sense eco tourism deals with living part of natural environment (SADRY, 2009). Since 1980 eco tourism has been considered as a critical endeavour by environmentalists so that future generation may experience destination relatively untouched by human interaction (Honey, 2000). Now the popularity represents a change in tourist perceptions, increased environmental awareness and a desire to explore natural environments.

In simple words, eco tourism means a sustainable form of tourism that allows the tourist to see the most pristine form of Mother Nature. Eco Tourism encourages travelers to spend time in the lack of nature. Local people are benefited. All this together can be called eco tourism.

Eco Tourism in India- The concern for eco tourism nature worship and the conservation ethics have been an inseparable part of Indian thought and traditions. In Ancient Civilisation of India, when people used to admire nature and philosophy of oneness of life. The Indian tradition has always taught that human kind is a

part of nature and one should look upon all creations with the eyes of love and respect. It is tragic that since last few decades, the quest for the material and economic progress in India and abroad has become identical with exploitation of nature in all its appearance. The rich forest area and biological diversities have been relentlessly devastated to erect concrete walls. The continuous denuding by forest reserves has led to global warming and green house effects. But now this has led to some realization and the world has awakened to new beginnings about human responsibility towards nature.

India, the land of varied geography offers several tourist destinations that just not only distress but also rejuvenate the tourists. The Indian topography boasts an abundant source of flora and fauna. India has numerous and rare endangered species in its surroundings. The declaration of several wildlife areas and natural parks has encouraged the growth of wildlife source, which reduced the wildlife hunt by hunters in the past.

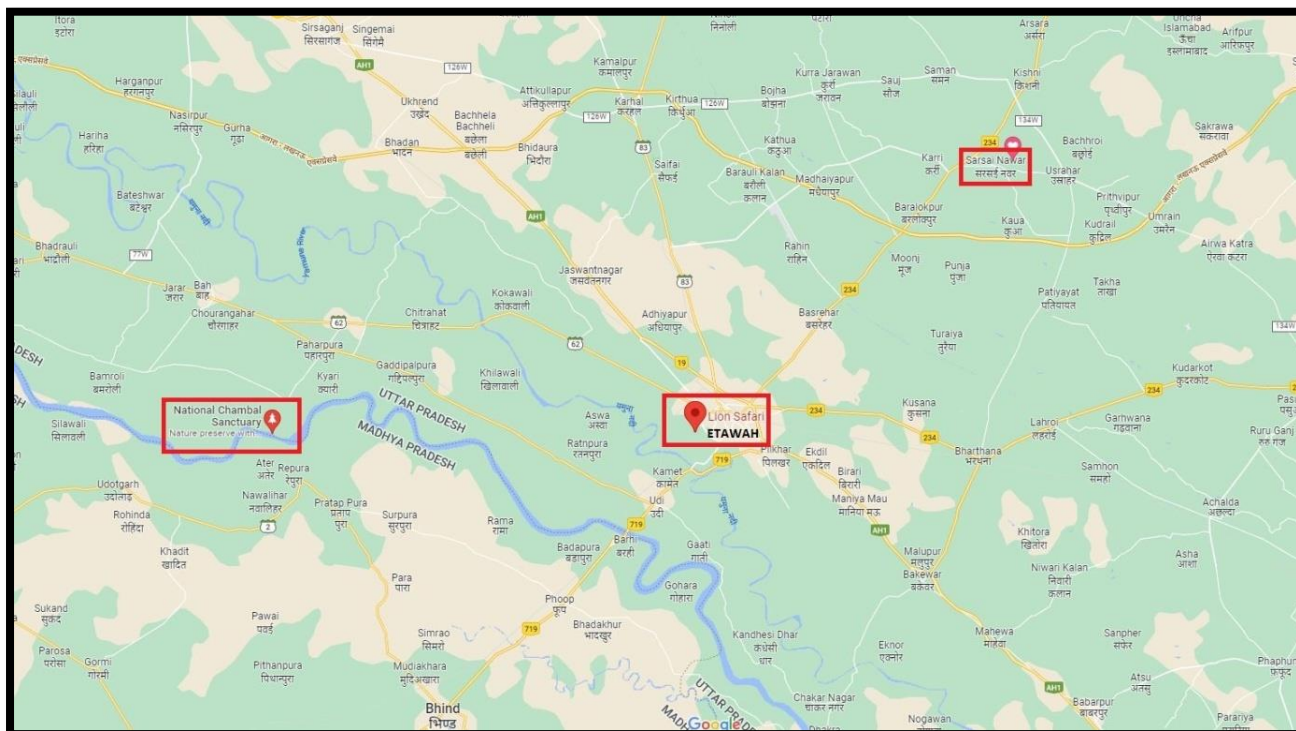
Today India has many wildlife sanctuaries and protection laws. Currently, there are about 106 national parks and 565 sanctuaries (according to Wildlife Institute of India) in India which works for the protection and conservation of wildlife resource in India.

Eco Tourism is environmentally responsible tourism which must incorporate the following key elements which are as follows.

- Nature based
- Ecologically, sociologically, culturally and economically sustainable
- Educational and interpretative
- Locally participatory

In this paper an attempt has been made to find out the possibilities of eco tourism in Etawah district of Uttar Pradesh.

The Study Area:- The Etawah district of Uttar Pradesh is situated in western part of Uttar Pradesh bordering mainly Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan. The global location of Etawah is 26° 47' North Latitude and 72° 20' East Longitude and a part of Kanpur division. Etawah town is the district headquarters. The district covers an area of about 2,311 sq.km with the population of 17,84,774 (estimated 2021).



Etawah has different physiography; it is bounded by river Chambal which meet with Yamuna River at ‘Bareh’ in Etawah. So the South-West part lies in Yamuna-Chambal Interfluve having deep ravines; a peculiar type of landforms. The weather of Etawah is hottest in the month of May (35°C Average) and coldest during January (15°C Average). The annual average rainfall is 599.7 mm (per year). The main forest area in ravines is named as ‘Fisher Forest’. Etawah district is linked by highways to Kanpur, Agra, Delhi and Gwalior and also linked with Agra – Lucknow expressway and is situated on Delhi – Howrah Rail Route.

Objectives:

- To examine eco tourism possibilities in Etawah district.
- To explain the importance of eco tourism in such a small Etawah district.
- To find the solution and remedies for conserving and protecting fragile eco system alongwith sustainable development and improvement in its economy.

Data Base and Methodology:- The study deals with the review of eco tourism spots in Etawah district. Data for the present study were collected from various sources and they include both published and unpublished. The major sources of extensive data for the present study have been collected from the published record of government and private organizations.

The take of UP Government on Eco Tourism:- With the aim of promoting eco tourism to boost employment generation and economy, the state government has identified nine eco tourism circuits for their development and promotion. The government will initially start promotion of the Dudhwa – Lakhimpur Kheri – Pilibhit –

Katarnia Ghat circuit that has Dudhwa Tiger Reserve, Pilibhit Tiger Reserve and Katarnia Ghat Wildlife Sanctuary. Since it is developed and will start development of three others on priority.

UP's Forest Corporation (UPFC) which is nodal agency for Eco Tourism proposed dry runs on three eco tourism circuits: -

- ✓ Agra – Etawah Circuit
- ✓ The Vindhyan Circuit
- ✓ Gorakhpur Circuit

The dry run will be held by local officers of the forest department during the wildlife week which is the first week of October. The department will take its officials on a tour of the circuit to review the existing facilities and identify others that need to be provided to tourists.

Agra – Etawah Circuit:- The Department of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (EFCC) in Uttar Pradesh has on its mind that tapping the potential tourists who visit Taj Mahal at Agra and bringing them to Etawah. Agra – Etawah is one of the nine eco tourism circuits in Uttar Pradesh that has immense potential to attract nature tourists. The circuit has Sur Sarovar Bird Sanctuary (Keethem Lake) in Agra, National Chambal Sanctuary that is Internationally recognized for Gharials and over 300 bird species lying in Agra and Etawah Districts and finally the Lion Safari Park at Etawah.

Eco Tourism Spots at Etawah:

Etawah Safari Park (Lion Safari) – Etawah Safari Park also known as Lion Safari is a drive thru safari park in Etawah, Uttar Pradesh, India. It was opened to the public in November 2019. It includes multiple safaris and Asiatic lion breeding centre and a visitors centre it covers the land area of 350 hectares (864.869 acres) in historical 'Fisher Forest' a part of social forestry division, Etawah and having 165 animals and five species (2019). It is owned by Forest Department, Govt. of UP.



History – Etawah Lion Safari was first proposed in 2006. The work was started in May 2012. The park was designed by a Spanish Company Art Urbà. In 2015 a Deer Safari, and Antelope Safari, Bear Safari and Leopard Safari were added and the Park was renamed as 'Etawah Safari Park'. The Deer Safari was inaugurated on 6th October 2016 and the remaining safaris as well as the park opened for the public on 24th November 2019 without Lion Segment.

The Asiatic Lion Breeding Centre has 12 breeding dens. It was started with 11 Lions that arrived in September 2014 mostly from the Zoos of Gujarat. As of December 2020 centre has 9 cubs that are born here. A visitor facilitation centre includes a multimedia museum with digital signage and large format displays and a 4D education theater for informing and guiding the visitors, this is the only safari of the state of which the entire area is secured by a 7,800 meter long buffer boundary wall and it is filled with variety of flora and fauna.

The safari park is situated almost within the city Etawah so visitors have all facilities for hotels and guest houses and easy transport systems.

The Chambal Gharial Wildlife Sanctuary Etawah – The National Chambal Gharial Wildlife Sanctuary, a part of Agra – Etawah Eco Tourism Circuit formed in Uttar Pradesh covers an area of 635 sq. km. spread over Agra and Etawah districts. The whole area under National Chambal Sanctuary is 5,400 sq. km. in the Northern India. It is a Tri – State protected area but Etawah enjoys only downstream part of Chambal – Yamuna Interfluve.



The National Chambal Sanctuary was formed to protect pristine river Ecosystem of Chambal River originated in Kota, Rajasthan and finally merges into river Yamuna at 'Bareh'. The 180 km (district Etawah) stretch falls in Uttar Pradesh on one side is downstream part. This area spread over the deep ravines, the peculiar type of physiography. Therefore, it is the great interest of tourists who enjoy the Nature as well as Wildlife.

The National Chambal Sanctuary there are 200 crocodiles, 1600 Gharials, 100 dolphins, 6 species of terapines turtles and the fresh water mammals. Dolphin species like Gange, Voto, Bhulenvai are found here this time. This sanctuary (stretching for 400 km the transparent lake) in Uttar Pradesh also houses the smooth coated otters. These are freshwater carnivorous with webbed and clawed feet and thick brown fur.

The National Chambal Wildlife Sanctuary is controlled by Department of Forest. There are many facilities available to the visitors at the National Chambal Sanctuary. Visitors here can go for sighting the photography of Gharials and Dolphins and they can also hire a boat with a driver and guide. A trip on the boat also offers many beautiful places for photography of water and shore birds and landscapes. Walking trails in the ravines and along the river offers opportunities for close observation of wide variety of plants and animals in the sanctuary. The main draws of the sanctuary are of course the flamingos that arrive here in November and stay till May.

The National Chambal Sanctuary is a popular weekend destination to relax and gain knowledge at the same time it is also not far from Etawah city (about 46 km) so it is comfortable to stay at Etawah city which is

formally joined with Highways, expressways and Train routes. It is a very significant for eco tourism point of view.

Sarsai Nawar Jheel – Sarsai Nawar Lake is geographically situated 36° 58' North and 79° 15' East in Takha tehsil of Etawah district of Uttar Pradesh, this is a typical wetland of the Indo –Gangetic Flood Plain is fed by precipitation run off from the south west monsoon rains. It is an example of cohabitation of human and wildlife. The farming practices across most of the site play an important role in sustaining the water birds habitats.



The Particular beneficiary is the vulnerable 'Saras' (Crane) (*Grus antigone*) with a population of 400 individuals making up to large flock in the region. The site's name is derived from this large non migratory crane. Other threatened species present include the critically endangered white rumped vulture (*Gyps bengalensis*) and endangered woolly – necked stork (*Ciconia episcopus*). The wetland is also a site of spiritual and religious significance with the nearby 'Hazari Mahadev Temple' visited by thousands of Pilgrims every year.

Drought along with drainage has the potential to threaten the site's ecological character. It is recognized as Birdlife international as an important bird area. The Sarsai Nawar Bird Sanctuary aims to conserve water birds, notably the Saras Crane. It has been designated as a protected Ramsar Site since 2019.

The Ramsar Convention on wetland of International Importance especially as waterfowl habitat is an international treaty for the conservation and sustainable use of wetlands. It is named after the city of Ramsar in Iran where the convention was signed in 1971 and effective from 21st December 1975. 171 parties were signatories and depository was Director – General of UNESCO.

The Sarsai Nawar Jheel is about 30 km from Etawah city it is a great attraction for Birdlife lovers.

Apart from the above mentioned spots for eco tourism in Etawah district also have some historical, religious and spiritual places to visit which are – Historical Sumer Singh Fort, Kali Baanh Temple, Tixi Temple, Neelkanth Temple and many others most of them are located near Yamuna river. There is another attraction for tourists, the deep ravines area with gullbeds and natural forests.

Characteristics of Eco Tourism:- The above all spots of tourism tries its utmost to maintain the local culture and tradition. Eco Tourism is informatory as it doesn't only let tourists know about the attractions but it helps locals knowing about the culture and civilization of tourists. This kind of tourism is aim to conserve national

beauty and resources of the area. Eco Tourism seeks the deeper involvement of locals and opportunity to make their living.

Principles of Eco Tourism:- Tourism ought to be initiated at any location with the help of local community. The involvement of local community helps maintaining the appropriate tourism development. The local community has to meet the direct benefit of flourishing tourism in the study area. Link between local business and tourism enable local people gain economically as well. In order to heighten the importance of heritage and natural resources and manage them better, training and education program should be instituted.

Suggestions for adopting codes of ethics for Eco Tourism:

- The Eco tour must be well guided. A knowledgeable tour guide is necessary to provide utmost education to tourists about topography, culture, special attractions of the area, protection of the environment, restricted the danger zone as well as peace and order situation of the area and the necessary precautions. The tour guide is responsible for an enjoyable, safe and non destructive nature tour.
- Eco Tourism organizers should provide an adequate and continuous program for resource management. Tour organizers should pay a lead role in maintaining the natural resources in the form of trail maintenance and signs, information on the endemic endangered and extinct species, research and education, trainings and provision of basic facilities.
- Tour destination should be appropriate for the need of the tourists. The destination must be first assessed for a better itinerary of the trip and be equipped with necessary logistical requirements, e.g. map, compass, etc.

Conclusion:- Sustainable Eco Tourism is a future of tourism. The district like Etawah which is not a big district and having a B class city but it has big possibility of developing eco tourism. It has a peculiar type of physiography that is ravines through which two rivers are flowing and making natural 'doab' region or interfluvium where the National Chambal Wildlife Sanctuary and Safari Park (Lion Safari) situated. Sarsai Nawar Jheel is another natural wetland. All the three eco – destinations are well known worldwide. So the eco tourism is possible. The UP government understands its potential for eco tourism and includes these natural spots in eco tourism circuit. This will give a good strength to economy of this area and economical support to the local people. They can exchange this culture and heritage with tourists too. This area has become very much suitable for eco tourism and its development in near future which is bright.

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