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# Environmental orientation and ecotourism awareness among pilgrims, adventure tourists, and leisure tourists

## Abstract

*For the sustainable development of tourism in destination areas, it is important to have responsible visitors with high pro-environmental orientation and a critical minimum knowledge of ecotourism. Most of the pilgrimage, adventurous, and leisure destinations in India are in ecologically sensitive locations with bountiful environmental resources. Thus, understanding tourists' environmental orientation is critical for destination management. In this context, the present study investigates the environmental orientation and ecotourism awareness of tourists visiting some of the key environmental hotspots of northern India. A comparative analysis of the environmental orientations of pilgrims, adventurers, and leisure tourists is presented. The findings generally reveal that there exist significant differences among these categories in terms of environmental orientation and awareness about ecotourism. Pilgrims and adventurers exhibit superior environmental orientation compared to leisure tourists. Yet, when it comes to the awareness of ecotourism, none of the groups under study show great awareness, except that adventurers stand better compared to the other two groups. Thus, the study implies that the transformation of general environmental orientation in to awareness of ecotourism is not linear and is much more problematic than is expected. The paper is concluded with a discussion of the implications for future research and managerial practice.*

## Keywords:

*ecotourism; environmental orientation; pilgrims; adventurers; leisure tourists; behavioral change; India*

## Introduction

Environmental issues began to gain more ascendancy by the late 1960s. With the rapid growth in tourism experienced in the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, concerns grew about the physical environments of tourism destinations. Following this realization, the concept of sustainable development came up to the forefront of scholarly debates.

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As decision-makers became increasingly aware of the drawbacks of mass tourism, they searched for alternative tourism planning, management and development options. As a result, the notion of sustainable development emerged as an alternative to the traditional neo-classical model of economic development. During this time, the fact that tourism development induces changes which can be negative began to get formal recognition. The term sustainable tourism got wider acceptance by governments, non-governmental organizations, the private sector, and academia in the last decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Due to the evolving nature of the concept of sustainable tourism, it has been equated variously with alternative tourism, ecotourism, appropriate tourism, nature tourism, rural tourism, etc. (Weaver, 1998; Lane, 1990).

It might, however, be questioned as to what extent the growing tourist population is aware of the concerns about the damage that tourism might inflict on environmental resources. There is a need for an in-depth understanding of tourists' environmental concerns and responses. This understanding will help destination planners to design, develop, and position cues for the proper interaction of tourists with the available environmental products and services. The present level of tourists' understanding of eco-ethics is also a vital input in the preparation of "dos and don'ts" guidelines. In addition, it will help to measure the success of any instructional program aimed at fostering positive environmental attitudes of the visitors. Tour operating companies may segment tourists based on their environmental attitudes and choose only those segments with a positive attitude to visit certain ecologically fragile areas. Increased knowledge about the environment is assumed to change environmental attitudes, and both environmental knowledge and attitudes are assumed to influence environmental policy (Arcury, 1990).

Ensued from this need arises the associated question of differences in the environmental attitudes among different categories of tourists. The present study aims to fulfill this need by finding the environmental concerns held by the three important categories of tourists, namely pilgrim, adventure, and leisure tourists. In addition, this study also investigates the awareness of the central concepts of ecotourism among these groups of tourists. These three groups have been identified for two major reasons. Firstly, these three groups constitute the major typologies of tourists visiting the study region. Secondly, at more theoretical level, we wanted to understand the way by which tourist typology is associated with tourists' environmental perception.

## **Environmental orientation**

Environmental attitude is a predictor of ecological behavior (Kaiser, Wölfing, & Fuhrer, 1999). The relationship between cognitive (professed knowledge of environmental issues), affective (environmental concern), and conative (verbal commitment) components of attitudes and pro-environmental behavior has been empirically verified by Cottrell (2003). In another study, respondents with stronger pro-environmental attitudes are found more likely to provide legitimate yes/no responses, while those with weaker attitudes are more likely to give less realistic and concocted responses (Kotchen,

& Reiling, 1999). This study also indicates that pro-environmental attitudes result in higher estimates of the mean willingness to pay. Pooley, and O'Connor (2000) suggest that knowledge of environment is not enough to alter environmental behavior and they call for a holistic educational approach aimed at the change in knowledge, belief and emotions.

What shapes an individual's environmental behavior is too complex to be visualized through one single framework. Milfont and Duckitt (2004) propose the dimensions of environmental orientation from various theoretical perspectives. Ecocentrism would imply that environmental orientation is rooted in the concern for all living things and anthropocentrism would imply that it is rooted in the concern for sustainable human wellness. Yet another dimension of environmental orientation is emerged from the study by Guagnano, Dietz, and Stern (1994): egocentrism, the maximization of one's personal gains. Wiseman, and Bogner (2003) conclude that an individual's environmental orientation can be positioned somewhere in the Cartesian plain formed by the two constructs of conservation (an anthropocentric value) and preservation (an ecocentric value). According to Stokols (1990), spiritualism (environment as an end in itself) and instrumentalism (environment is for the fulfillment of human objectives) drive one's environmental concerns.

Many environmental problems can be traced to maladaptive human behavior. Research by Skogen (1999) highlights that people's attitudes toward environmental issues are very much a part of their broader cultural upbringings. Jinyang, Walker, and Swinerton (2006) compared the environmental values of the Chinese in Canada and the Anglo-Canadians and found both similarities and differences. For instance, Chinese were more supportive of social-altruistic values than are Anglo-Canadians where as there existed no noticeable difference in the case of biospheric values. This study also suggests that Chinese in Canada may have adopted a selective acculturation pattern in the matter of environmental attitudes. Personality of individuals can explain most of the remaining variance in the environmental attitude (Fraj, & Martinez, 2006). Yet another pertinent influence comes from situational factors. Environmental behavior depends on personal and situational variables in an interactive way, observes Corraliza, and Berenguer (2000). Their study also indicates that when high conflict level is generated between personal dispositions and situational conditions, the predictive power of attitudes tends to be minimal, whereas in the case of consistency between them it tends to be maximal.

Environmental orientation is vital for the sustained performance of not only the individuals but also the firms. Drawing on the natural-resource-based view of the firm, Menguc, and Ozanne (2003) tested a model of the impact of the higher order construct of natural environmental orientation on firm performance and found that environmental orientation did have a significant impact upon variables like market share and net profit.

## **Critical linkages between tourism and nature**

With increasing numbers of people visiting a spatially diminished and continually degraded natural world, there exists the danger of severe negative impacts (Newsome, & Moore, 2002). The negative environmental consequences of tourism include resource usage (land, water, etc.), irresponsible human behavior towards the destination environment, and pollution (water, noise, air and aesthetic). The impacts of tourism and recreation on the physical environment are important because of the sheer significance of the physical environment for the tourism industry. In the absence of an attractive environment, there would be little tourism (Mathieson, & Wall, 1982).

Ecotourism has emerged as a powerful alternative to the more traditional forms of mass tourism - it takes place in natural areas; it is sustainable in its operations; it should consider ethical aspects; it should increase awareness towards conservation of natural and cultural assets; it should be small-scale, meaning, it should be carried out in small groups respecting the carrying capacity of local areas; it should support local people by providing economic benefits and employment opportunities; and, its participants should be motivated by the sense of admiration and learning it brings about (Fennell, 1999; Goodwin, 1996; UNEP, 2002; Weaver, 2001).

Ecotourism can impact upon the natural environment in either positive or negative ways. Although tourism has brought economic benefits, it has significantly contributed to environmental degradation, negative social and cultural impacts, and habitat fragmentation. Tourism's unplanned growth has damaged the natural and socio-cultural environments of many tourism destinations (Domet, 1991; Frueh, 1986; Hall, & Lew, 1998; Singh, 1989). These undesirable side-effects have led to the growing concern for the conservation of natural resources, human well-being, and the long-term economic viability of communities (Akis, Peristianis, & Warner, 1996; Butler, & Boyd, 2000; Cater, 1993; Haralambopoulos, & Pizam, 1996; Healy, 1994; Mowforth, & Munt, 1998; Place, 1995; Richard, & Hall, 2000).

Some studies on tourists' attitudes show that quality of experience decreases substantially when visitation intensity in natural environments goes beyond a critical maximum level (Weaver, & Lawton, 2004). Also, the stay in natural areas itself is sufficient to raise their environmental concern to some extent. Yet, Firth, and Hing (1999) found that very few backpackers rated eco-friendly practices as an important factor for their choice of hostels. Interestingly, backpackers seemed to behave less environmentally friendly on-site than at home. Studies in which different groups of eco-tourists are compared suggest that tourists' level of concern for the environment might be linked to how much nature is the main focus of the trip. Hvenegaard, and Dearden (1998) analyzed visitors to a national park in Thailand and found that tourists whose primary motivation it was to watch birds were more likely to be members of a conservation or wildlife group. Also, such tourists donated more money to conservation related causes than most other tourists. Similarly, Uysal, Jurowski, Noe, and McDonald (1994) found that national park visitors whose main destination was the park were found to be more concerned about the fragility of nature's balance.

Weaver, and Lawton (2002) found that so-called harder ecotourists (characterized by being physically active, making longer trips, traveling in smaller groups, visiting less accessible destinations, and expecting fewer services) expressed more ecocentric attitudes than softer ecotourists (a group that share more characteristics with mass tourism in terms of volume, purpose of travel, reliance on an infrastructure of services, and expected guidances (Weaver, 2001). The hard ecotourists together with structured ecotourists (a group that could be placed between the hard and the soft extremes) also considered it more important than the softer ecotourists to donate money to the local natural environment and to the local communities (Vabn Liere, 1978). Similar differences have been found between individuals who prefer appreciative outdoor activities such as hiking and those who prefer consumptive activities such as hunting (Hvene-gaard, 1994; Jackson, 1986; Silverberg, Backman, & Backman, 1996; Ziffer, 1989). In view of the above there seems to be a general lack of knowledge of eco-tourism, even in the travel industry and among ecotourism operators (Lew, 1998). Bjork (1997) reported that 39% of general tourists visiting a Finnish island could not answer the question "How would you describe ecotourism?" Seventeen percent said that ecotourism as being environmentally friendly. Fifty-seven percent had never heard about the term ecotourism before. Chirgwin, and Hughes (1997) found that approximately 50% for the visitors to a wetland area considered their trip ecotourism. The reasons mentioned were that they visited a natural and pristine area, observed nature and wildlife with minimal impact, and learned something about nature. No visitor, however, presented more than one reason.

In the light of the discussion above, we have formulated the following hypotheses:

Hypothesis 1: *There exist significant differences in the environmental orientation among pilgrims, adventure tourists, and leisure tourists.*

Hypothesis 2: *There exist significant differences in awareness of ecotourism among the pilgrims, adventure tourists, and leisure tourists.*

## **The study area**

The study area selected for this research is spread across the two mountainous states in the northern India: Uttarakhand and Jammu & Kashmir. Both these states have international borders: Uttarakhand borders Tibet to the north and Nepal to the east; Jammu and Kashmir shares a border with the People's Republic of China to the northeast and with Pakistani controlled territories to the west and northwest. Most part of these states lie across the foothills of the Himalayas. Presently, mountaineering, trekking, skiing, nature visits, and pilgrimages to various shrines spread across the mountains constitute the major tourism product mix for this region. Tourism has a significant impact on the economy as many of the small towns in the region emerged as the tourism service providing centers. Currently, the economy of the region depends to a great extent upon tourism related business activities. But, at the same time, its impact is felt badly on the environment and the same has received severe criticism from various quarters.

Population of the study was defined as all the pilgrims, adventure tourists, and leisure tourists that have visited the areas of Nainital (Uttarakhand) and Jammu (J&K), India, during the period of January-May 2008. The sample was stratified according to the type of tourists based on the screening question: "which of the following best describes your motivation to visit this place - pilgrimage, adventure, or leisure?" In fact, the above screening question was meant only an additional layer of assurance for proper stratification since data was mostly collected from attraction centers that could easily be classified in to one of the above categories. After the potential respondent was approached by the interviewer and agreed to participate in the study, the self-administered questionnaire, available in both English and Hindi, was handed over and collected back upon completion. The sample size was 300 of which 100 each was for pilgrims, adventure tourists, and leisure tourists. Overall, 67 percent of the respondents were males and the remaining were females. Wherever possible, we avoided asking personally identifying information since the pilot questionnaire that contained a few questions seeking such information led to resentment among the respondents.

The questionnaire contained two sections. The first section included a set of questions pertaining to the demographic profile. The second part comprised of the RNEP Scale (Revised New Ecological Paradigm Scale). This is a fifteen item, five point Likert scale instrument with scores ranging from 1 to 5. The score 1 stands for strongly disagree, 2 stands for mildly disagree, 3 means unsure, 4 means mildly agree and 5 means strongly agree. The purpose of this scale is to collect information related to the levels of concern of respondents towards the environment. It is a widely accepted scale for the studies related to the determination of environmental concerns. The face validity of the instrument was judged to be good by a group of three academic colleagues of the present researchers who have got sufficient domain expertise in the area of ecology and / or ecotourism. At the suggestion of these experts, a few of the statements were rephrased to make them easier for domestic tourists to understand.

## Results and discussion

Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) has been used to test whether there exist statistically significant differences in the mean scores of item statements rated by the three categories of tourists under study. The results of ANOVA summarized in table 1 show items wherever p-values are less than 0.05. This result provides substantial evidence of at least one significant difference in the means of each statement among the three categories of tourists.

Later, tukey post-hoc test has been used to compare all pairs of groups without increasing the risk of making a type 1 error. This revealed that pilgrims and adventure tourists represented no significant difference whereas leisure tourists differed from both adventure and pilgrims categories in case of the statement numbers 2, 3, 4, 5, 8, 11, 12, and 13. There is only a single statement (14<sup>th</sup>) of NEP scale - "Humans will eventually learn enough about how nature works to be able to control it" which shows that there exists differences between pilgrims and adventure tourists; pilgrims and leisure

tourists; but, not between leisure and adventure tourists. In case of the statement numbers 1, 6, 7, 9, 10, and 15 there exists differences of opinions among pilgrims, adventure tourists, and leisure tourists among each other in groups of two categories in all cases.

Table 1

**DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS AND ANOVA OF ENVIRONMENTAL ORIENTATION**

S. no.	Statements	Pilgrims (Mean)	Adventure tourists (Mean)	Leisure tourists (Mean)	F value (Only items significant at $p < 0.05$ are listed)
1	We are approaching the limit of the number of people the earth can support.	3.52	4.28	2.71	72.735
2	Humans have the right to modify the natural environment to suit their needs.	1.50	1.20	3.60	178.200
3	When humans interfere with nature, it often produces disastrous consequences.	4.50	4.40	2.88	117.926
4	Human ingenuity will insure that we do not make the earth unlivable.	2.40	2.25	3.80	83.887
5	Humans are severely abusing the earth.	4.00	4.00	1.90	208.895
6	The earth has plenty of natural resources if we just learn how to develop them.	3.30	2.20	3.90	107.170
7	Plants and animals have as much right as humans to exist.	4.10	4.65	3.20	107.711
8	The balance of nature is strong enough to cope with the impacts of modern industrial nations.	2.00	2.20	4.10	135.244
9	Despite our special abilities, humans are still subject to the laws of nature.	4.50	1.45	3.97	516.653
10	The so-called 'ecological crisis' facing human kind has been greatly exaggerated.	2.25	4.45	3.52	141.243
11	The earth is like a spaceship with very limited room and resources.	3.90	4.00	2.80	71.173
12	Humans were meant to rule over the rest of nature.	1.30	1.15	2.40	177.945
13	The balance of nature is very delicate and easily upset.	4.20	4.25	3.20	114.818
14	Humans will eventually learn enough about how nature works to be able to control it.	3.10	3.50	3.50	7.960
15	If things continue on their present course, we will soon experience a major environmental catastrophe.	4.25	4.55	3.70	44.331

The environmental concerns of the pilgrims, adventurers and leisure tourists are apparent by their agreement or disagreement with the various statements of the NEP scale. Among the 15 statements, the environmental concern is represented if there is agreement to the following statements, namely: we are approaching the limit of the

number of people the earth can support (1), when humans interfere with nature, it often produces disastrous consequences (3), Human ingenuity will ensure that we do not make the earth unlivable (4), humans are severely abusing the earth (5), the earth has plenty of natural resources if we just learn how to develop them (6), plants and animals have as much right as humans to exist (7), Despite our special abilities humans are still subject to the laws of nature (9), the earth is like a spaceship with very limited room and resources (11), the balance of nature is very delicate and easily upset (13), if things continue on their present course, we will soon experience a major environmental catastrophe (15).

The analysis shows that both adventurers and pilgrims agree to statements 1, 3, 5, 13 and 15 where as leisure tourists do not agree to these statements. This shows relatively homogenous pro-environmental orientation of adventurers and pilgrims and the relative lack of pro-environmental orientation of the leisure tourists.

The response on the statement 4, i.e., human ingenuity will insure that we do not make the earth unlivable, shows that pilgrims and adventurers disagree to this. Such results for pilgrims and adventurers who are otherwise concerned for environment may be due to the fact that they do not trust human race to come up with some applied solution for the condition our nature is currently undergoing.

The environmental concern of adventurers and pilgrims is again expressed by the statement 7, i.e., plants and animals have as much right as humans to exist, as they agree to it but the leisure tourist category is unsure. Leisure tourists are again unsure in case of the statement 9 “Despite our special abilities, humans are still subject to the laws of nature”. In this case pilgrims are agreeing and adventurers are not agreeing. The statement 11 is again showing the lack of concern of leisure tourist; and the environmental orientation temperament of adventurers; pilgrims are also almost agreeing like adventurers. For the statement 6, the earth has plenty of natural resources if we just learn how to develop them both pilgrims and leisure categories hold common view; i.e., they are not sure where as the adventurers disagree to it.

In the 10<sup>th</sup> statement pilgrims are disagreeing and expressing their environmental concern but adventurers are agreeing. This may be due to the reason that adventurers are nearer to nature and have not been experiencing any ecological crisis. Leisure tourists’ category is just unsure about this. It is only the 12<sup>th</sup> statement in which all the categories have the same opinion as each category under study disagree to the statement “humans were meant to rule over the rest of nature”. This descriptive result gives information that pilgrims and adventurers are environmentally oriented and the leisure tourists are lacking in environmental orientation.

The result of ANOVA clearly shows that each category differs from the other in a very significant manner. The ANOVA results are not sufficient enough to tell which category is more environmentally oriented than the other. It is the post-hoc test which gives this relevant information. The results of the test shows that out of the 15 statements,

it is adventurers who are more environmentally oriented than pilgrims as pilgrims have a positive mean difference in 5 cases (3,4,9,8,6) and adventurers have in six cases (1,7,11,13,14,15) in case of agreeing statements (1,3,4,5,6,7,9,11,13,14, and 15). In case of the 5<sup>th</sup> statement which is to be agreed statement for environmental orientation, both adventurers and pilgrims are agreeing with equal mean value.

In the case of disagreeing statements (2, 8, 10 and 12) both adventurers and pilgrims have 2 cases each i.e. 2 and 12; 8 and 10 for adventurers and pilgrims respectively. This shows adventurers are more disagreeing in case of 2 and 12; and pilgrims are more disagreeing in case of 8 and 10. As regards to the knowledge of ecotourism, the table 5 depicts that tourists from each category mentioned only about the three components of ecotourism namely conservation, nature based and admiring thus depicting incomplete knowledge about what ecotourism is. The percentage of those who did not mention anything was higher in case of pilgrims (61%) and leisure (69%) than those in adventure (29%). These results show the poor knowledge base about ecotourism among the tourists.

A content analysis of the responses to an open ended question on the awareness of ecotourism showed that, out of the 8 components identified from the definition of ecotourism, only 3 components, namely conservation, nature based, and admiring were identified by the respondents. Table 2 summarizes this result.

Table 2  
**PROPORTION OF TOURISTS WHO MENTIONED THE DIFFERENT COMPONENTS OF KNOWLEDGE ABOUT ECOTOURISM**

S. no.	Components	Pilgrims	Adventure tourists	Leisure tourists
1	Conservation	11	16	1
2	Nature based	25	55	30
3	Local people	0	0	0
4	Culture	0	0	0
5	Ethics	0	0	0
6	Small scale	0	0	0
7	Learning	0	0	0
8	Admiring	3	0	0
9	No component	61	29	69

The other main components of ecotourism such as local people, ethics, small scale, learning and culture were not at all mentioned by the respondents. Out of the 100 respondents from each of the three categories, people having no knowledge of ecotourism were 61, 29, and 69 from pilgrims, adventurers, and leisure tourists respectively. The average knowledge score was 1.7067 (standard deviation = .8264). The average values for the groups were as follows: Pilgrims =1.47 (standard deviation = .6428); Adventurers =2.33 (standard deviation = .8996); Leisure tourists =1.32 (standard deviation = .4899). ANOVA for the mean values of knowledge is presented below in table 3. This implies a significant difference in the knowledge scores.

Table 3

**ANOVA FOR KNOWLEDGE SCORE MEANS**

	Sum of squares	df	Mean square	F	Sig.
Between groups	59.407	2	29.703	60.933	0.000
Within groups	144.78	297	0.487		
Total	204.187	299			

The post-hoc test conducted later showed that there existed significant differences in the knowledge scores between pilgrims and adventure tourists; adventure tourists and leisure tourists; but not between pilgrims and leisure tourists. These results further give the information that adventure tourists expressed a significantly higher level of knowledge of ecotourism than the pilgrims or leisure tourists.

The knowledge score means for pilgrims, adventurers, and leisure tourists are found to be 1.47, 2.33 and 1.32 respectively. Thus both pilgrims and leisure tourists indicate almost no knowledge about ecotourism and the adventure tourist category indicates a little knowledge. The ANOVA treatment to these mean values shows that there exists a significant difference in mean in at least one group. The post hoc result shows that the pilgrims and leisure categories are not significantly different from each other but adventurers are different from both.

The result about knowledge of ecotourism is quite different from what is expected. In this case, in addition to leisure tourists, even pilgrims and adventure tourists hold no significant knowledge about ecotourism. Recall that adventurers and pilgrims showed high degrees of environmental orientation. Pilgrims might be environmentally oriented but do not possess knowledge about ecotourism. It might also be the difference between explicit and tacit knowledge: pilgrims know in subjective ways what ecotourism is, but they cannot express the same as 'etic' knowledge. This could also be due to the fact that the knowledge base for what ecotourism is not readily available there.

## Concluding remarks

The present study revealed the differences in environmental orientation and awareness of ecotourism among three categories of tourists: adventure tourists, pilgrims, and leisure tourists. It highlights that there exists a great deal of positive environmental concern among pilgrims and adventurers. It also implies that leisure tourists seriously lack in pro-environmental values. This is in line with the established wisdom in tourism literature which suggests that leisure tourists are irresponsible parasites upon natural and cultural resources (MacCannell, 1989). However, when it comes to the more specific question of awareness of ecotourism, the above pattern is not fully transported: none of the three groups show a great deal of awareness of ecotourism. Nevertheless, adventure tourists seem to be standing in a better position than the other two categories. In the light of the literature we presented in this paper, it was compelling to think that a high degree of pro-environmental orientation would result in a more favorable attitude towards ecotourism. Our analysis above makes such a line of thinking problematic.

Note that the interrelationship between an individual's environmental orientation and his or her attitude towards ecotourism has not been statistically tested by us in this study. Partially due to an oversight and partially due to the time and resource scarcity, the present researchers could not gather pertinent data in this regard. Thus, this hypothesis may be empirically examined as part of a future research agenda.

As discussed elsewhere in this paper, positive environmental orientation is vital for the sustainable development of destinations. This study is a pointer to the variables constituting environmental orientation and ecotourism awareness: some of these variables are known to some sections of tourists, some others are unknown, some are considered important, and some others are considered unimportant. If certain types of tourists are not aware of the benefits of ecotourism, the same highlights the importance of having an awareness creation campaign tailored to them. Likewise, wherever environmental awareness is low, managerial attention should be focused on increasing the same. The identification of leisure tourists as the group that is least in environmental orientation and is least aware of ecotourism is especially troubling since the leisure tourists constitute the vast majority of mass tourists (Gössling, Peeters, Ceron, Dubois, Patterson, & Richardson, 2005).

Managerial attention to these issues makes sense even from a strictly economic angle since it results in increased profit and market share (Stabler, & Goodall, 1997). Public authorities too have a role here: to convince businesses about their benefits in promoting environmentalism. Businesses are more likely to incorporate environmental objectives and practices if it can be demonstrated that these benefits them in the form of lower costs, higher revenues, and profits. In the context of India, where the present study was conducted, environmental enforcement historically has by and large been done by means of forced sanctions up on enterprises and customers (Dasgupta, 2000). This strategy remains successful only so long as the concerned parties are afraid of being policed and often they invent means to escape the scrutiny of the enforcement agencies.

Persuasive messages constitute the first step in the efforts to motivate people to change a specific behavior. Public concern about environmental issues has grown substantially in the last two decades and, as a consequence, the promotion of environmentally conscious behaviors that are integrated in people's lifestyle has become an ongoing and important challenge (Pelletier, & Sharp, 2008). Any effective strategy ought to combine natural and human dimensions, so that it will make people aware of the interrelationships between biotopes and sociotopes, so that conflicts of goals between human and natural environmental demands become apparent and an evaluation of risks becomes possible (Schleicher, 2004). It is high time public policy intervention move from this mode to a more participatory mode with built-in rewards for pro-environmental initiatives and behaviors among tourists and tourism related businesses.

Despite the pathetic state of the current environmental enforcement in India, this should not be a herculean task if the broader spiritual meanings that Indians hold

about the ecosystem are somehow brought to bear upon the need for responsible practice. The Indian understanding of ecosystem is an integrated epistemology that is less cartesian, less reductionistic, and less fragmented. Indians do know what it means to live in harmony with nature, but they are unclear how this deep understanding should be translated in to operational terms when it comes to tourism practice. Thus, the solution lies in bringing forth and interconnecting this deep science of spirituality held at a subconscious level with the analytical prescriptions for pro-environmental behavior.

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Submitted: 02/19/2009

Accepted: 04/04/2009