“Education is a liberating force, and in our age it is also a democratising force, cutting across the barriers of caste and class, smoothing out inequalities imposed by birth and other circumstances.”

– Indira Gandhi
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Some Useful Books for This Block

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In Block 3, we familiarised you with some Products, Operations and Tourist Sites. Here in Block 4, we are extending the same subject to cover Products and Operations that form a related yet separate category. The common theme of the four constituent Units of this Block is nature and natural surroundings as tourist attractions. Different aspects of tourism products emanating from nature have been taken up for a detailed discussion in these Units.

Unit 13 is on Adventure and Sports, a product of tourism currently in great demand. You will get details on various kinds of adventure activities that have today become popular tourist attractions. Also with these activities have come to be associated a few sports. The Unit also deals at length with the nature and organisation of such sports and tells you ways to utilise this information for furthering tourism.

The next Unit 14 is on Beach and Island Resorts. Herein you learn about the development and growth of the concept of beaches and islands as tourist resorts. We have also given two case studies as illustrations viz. Kovalam and Lakshadweep.

Unit 15, Hill Stations of India, is a detailed study of the growth of hills into tourist sites. It traces for you the history of the hill stations as a tourist product. It also provides you with details of different kinds of hill stations in India along with a comment on their potential for tourism purposes.

Finally you have Unit 16 on the Wild Life in India. This Unit has been devised in the form of a narration. This, we hope, will enable you to use the information given here more effectively to the benefit of the tourist groups attracted to such sites.

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UNIT 13  ADVENTURE AND SPORTS

Structure

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13.0 OBJECTIVES

In this Unit we will discuss about adventure and sports in relation to tourism. After going through this Unit you will:

• know how adventure and sports play an important role in tourism.
• know the main sport and adventure activities which attract tourists.
• be able to list the main places in India where such activities are organised, and
• have an idea about which particular sport or adventure activities can be developed in a specific region.

13.1 INTRODUCTION

Sports can be very simply defined as any kind of organised indoor or outdoor activity which people pursue for recreation and physical fitness. Adventure on the other hand is generally an outdoor activity of sport which involves an element of daring and risk. The physical fitness is generally a precondition to participate in adventure activities.

Adventure and sports have always been an integral part of tourism. Throughout history, it has been common for persons having a spirit of adventure to travel great distances for satisfying their hunger for new challenges. In fact, it were the early adventurers who explored most of the new world and opened its gates to people of other civilisations. Again people have been known throughout history to travel to distant lands to pursue their interests in sports whether it was for participating in Olympics in ancient Rome or for game hunting in the African Continent.

In modern times, technological advancement has reduced distances considerably and the growing affluence has made it easier for people to afford travelling. People have also started looking for better quality of life and taking a recreational holiday for pursuing interests in adventure and sports. In countries having a marked degree of affluence, many centres of tourism owe their existence to the facilities and infrastructure offered for adventure and sports. Today centres like Chamonix, Zermatt and Leysin in the European Alps are household names for the adventure lovers due to their being great places for mountaineering and skiing. Similarly administrators in places like Colorado (USA) and Nepal have laid great accent on adventure activities to promote tourism in their areas. Facilities for golf and tennis have always been a tourist attraction in most of the Western countries. In spite of these activities having existed for a long time, India has only recently initiated efforts to use them as tourist attractions. In this Unit we will not be going into the details of such activities but provide only a brief account. We have divided such activities in a few categories and then explained certain adventure activities in each category. An attempt has also been made to familiarise you with the places in India where facilities for such activities are available.
The Unit also analyses the suitability of different types of sports and adventures for various categories of tourists.

As a tourism professional, you should not only be aware of the sports and adventure facilities available at a destination but should acquaint your clients also about them. This knowledge also helps you in identifying the types of such activities to be developed at a destination if you intend to start your own enterprise.

### 13.2 ADVENTURE, SPORTS AND TOURISM

Adventure and sports have tremendous potential towards promotion of tourism. They cater to the craving of humans for recreation, enjoyment and adventure. Let us first see how these activities attract different types of people and give a boost to tourism.

1) Many people pursue some of these activities as full time profession. Such people would like to visit the places where good facilities are available for a particular activity. For example golf professionals staying in hilly regions would like to go to plains during winters as they cannot play golf in the hills because of snowing etc. Similarly severe heat conditions in plains during summer would attract golfers to hilly regions. Besides, different areas provide varying experiences for the same adventure or sports.

2) Some people visit a place for holidaying away from their place of work. They want some recreation and adventure also. A destination offering these facilities thus, has additional attractions for tourists.

3) People who pursue different sports for physical fitness may not like to miss their routine even during holidaying and sightseeing tours. These people are likely to be attracted to such places where good facilities for sports are also available.

4) Many a times important sporting events or competitions play a very important role. A country hosting Olympics, World Cup in Hockey, Football or Cricket or other important sporting events attracts large number of visitors giving a boost to tourist traffic.

5) Many people while visiting a destination get interested in sports or adventures. This enhances enjoyment and it can become a memorable trip.

Thus, we notice that adventure and sports attract tourists of different interests. In other words a sport or adventure activity may attract:

- tourists with high level of attainment as professionals,
- people who have been practising it as a regular hobby,
- people who are novice and would like to try their hand if they get a chance, and
- the spectators (as tourists) who would like to see a competition or a performance.

However, in economic terms, some people would be in a position to spend large amounts of money whereas others would like to pursue these activities with less money to spend. It, therefore, becomes essential to take care of these factors before developing such activities at a destination. In order to be an attractive tourist package and for being commercially viable adventure and sports should fulfil the following criteria:

i) It should **not be so expensive** that it becomes unaffordable for tourists with average paying capacity.

ii) It should **not be very difficult to learn** the skills necessary for participating in the activity at an amateur level.

iii) **Enough experienced professionals should be available** to supervise, train and ensure safety of participants.

iv) It should be possible to complete training and participation in a **reasonably short period** of time.

v) The centres should be **easily accessible** and it should be possible for a reasonably large number of people to take part in the activities.

vi) **Physical fitness standards required should not be so rigorous** that an average person cannot conform to them.

vii) Requirement of infrastructure and equipment should **not be so large** as to make it exhorbitantly expensive and financially unviable.
ix) Certain adventure and sports activities are specific to a destination. For example, skiing can be organised in snowy regions only. Hence, this aspect should also be considered.

The points discussed above are by no means exhaustive. It is just to give you an idea about some important aspects to be borne in mind for developing sports and adventure centres.

Let us now discuss various sports and adventure activities which may attract tourists or provide them recreation at any destination. We will discuss these in two broad categories.

i) Sports and Recreation, and
ii) Adventure Sports

Check Your Progress 1

i) Discuss the relationship between adventure, sports and tourism.

ii) Discuss some of the criteria for developing tourist attractions in adventure and sports.

13.3 SPORTS AND RECREATION

A wide range of sports, leisure and recreation activities are available in India. Some of these need elaborate infrastructure while others can be arranged with limited resources. These may be divided into two: indoor and outdoor.

13.3.1 Indoor

Among indoor activities we can list badminton, table tennis, billiards, squash, skating etc. Some table games like chess, bridge (a game of cards), carrom board etc. may also be included here.

These are quite common games and we therefore will not be describing them here. Let us see what sort of facilities are available for them.

Most of the popular tourist destinations have many of these sports. Generally they are available in established clubs or big hotels. In case of clubs the facilities are available to members only while most of the visitors to the town are non-members. Many such clubs especially in hilly towns have a provision to give temporary membership after charging a short-term-fee. In most of the cases these clubs are managed by the state or affluent sections of the town. Consequently, generally government officials or high budget tourists manage to avail the facilities. The opportunities for general tourists are very limited.

In the case of hotels the sports facilities are available to residents only. In a few cases they allow non residents also but for a fee which is normally very high.
In some places a few entrepreneurs have opened small places where facilities for one or more games are made available after charging a fee. But the number of such places is very few. There is enough scope for opening such enterprises. Table Tennis, and badminton do not need much investment apart from the space. Billiards equipment is expensive. Sports like squash and skating need more initial investment. But chess, carrom board and a table with cards for bridge can be easily provided by small hotels, tourist lodges and even by those who offer paying guest accommodation. The guests can use them during spare time.

13.3.2 Outdoor

Among outdoor sports one can list golf, tennis, horse riding, cycling, boating, swimming, etc. for developing tourism. Here again we will not go into the details of these sports and would confine our discussion to their potential and availability.

i) **Golf** : Golf has for long been a favourite with affluent tourists. The infrastructure required is quite large. A golf course requires a big piece of land with certain natural features (these features can also be created). Maintaining thousands of metres of land area with green lawns and golf holes is a very expensive proposition. Most of the golf courses in the country are maintained by the state or armed forces. A few are with established clubs. *Golf in India*, a publication of the Tourism Department, Govt. of India, mentions:

> What makes golfing in India exciting is the diversity of its courses. Not only does it have the oldest golf club in the world outside Great Britain, but also the highest at Gulmarg (altitude 2,700 metres) in Kashmir. There are golf courses in the mountains, plains, deserts and at beach resorts. The environment of each course is unique in its culture and history, highlighting all that makes India a diverse destination. In fact, it would not be wrong to say that one of the best ways to experience India is through its golf courses.

Realising the potential of golf tourism, most of India’s golf courses are well connected by road, rail, and air, and have excellent accommodation facilities. Unfortunately, India has to still rely on the West for golfing equipment, and visitors are advised to carry their own sets with an ample supply of balls.

There are around 160 golf courses in the country. All of them need a membership. Most of them offer a temporary membership for shorter durations. In many cases golf clubs also have facilities for tennis, table-tennis, billiards, restaurants and bars. A few even offer accommodation to stay. Still the infrastructure needs to be improved. Facilities like flood lit golf courses would be required as temperature in our country is more conducive to sports in the evenings. Some good golf courses are in Bombay, Delhi, Calcutta, Agra, Jaipur, Ranikhet, Lucknow, Allahabad, Varanasi, Patna, Gwalior, Bhopal, Pune, Nagpur, Kodai Kanal, Coimbatore, Cochin, Srinagar, Gulmarg, Shillong, Shimla etc. (Specific information on some golf courses can be found in the small booklet entitled *Golf in India*).

ii) **Tennis** : Almost every large town in India has facilities for playing tennis. Many of the big hotels also have tennis courts. In most of the hill stations and tourist places tennis clubs extend temporary membership after charging a moderate fee.

iii) **Horse Riding** : In most of the hill stations horse riding facilities are available. They provide an excellent part-time-sport. Children enjoy pony rides. They are also of great use in going to difficult heights for sightseeing. In addition they help in transporting people from one place to another.

Generally, these horses/ponies are available on hire for a fee on time basis or the distance to be covered. In most of the cases they are owned by individuals and are registered with local bodies or associations. In some places tracts for horse/pony riding are separately marked. The persons attending these horses also accompany the riders and work as local guides. The rides are generally safe if proper instructions are followed.

iv) **Cycling** : Cycling as a sport is not very popular from the point of view of sports. In a number of towns cycles are available on hire. These can be hired for sightseeing where distances are not much. The advantage for a tourist here is that the journey can be paced as per the tourists requirement enjoying the flora, fauna and scenery on the
The absence of separate cycling tracks makes it unpopular among foreign tourists. There is a lot of potential for developing and popularising it. Offering sports bicycles on hire is one example.

v) Swimming: Swimming is fast emerging as a popular sport in India. All the big hotels have swimming pools. A large number of swimming pools are maintained by sports bodies, local municipal corporations and clubs. Sea beaches extend an excellent natural facility for swimming and fun in water. At many beaches there are marked areas for swimmers with facilities for bathing and changing clothes.

In most of the swimming pools trainers and life guards are also available. The swimming is very popular with tourists but facilities for low budget tourists are not adequate.

vi) Boating: Place with natural or man-made lakes provide an attractive enjoyment through boating. Some dams and seashores also offer boating for pleasure. Here people can avail joy rides in boats driven manually or in motorboats. In the sea people can go in glass bottomed boats to have a view of underwater fauna. Such facility is offered at Bangaram in Lakshadweep and at Port Blair in Andaman & Nicobar Islands.

The limitation of boating is that the place must have a large reservoir of water or a lake. There are innumerable places where the lakes, tanks, rivers and reservoirs are not put to use for attracting tourists or providing additional attraction at popular tourist places.

Places like Srinagar (Kashmir) and Nainital (U.P.) have their lakes as main places of tourist attraction. Haryana Tourism Department has lately developed a number of lake sites for attracting tourists. A number of other State Tourism Development Corporations have also developed such facilities. For example Delhi is providing boating facility around India Gate and Purana Qila. A number of lakes in the South India have also been developed. There is still enough potential to develop such sites keeping in view the popularity—particularly among domestic tourists and week-end excursionists.

vii) Angling: India can offer good facilities for angling or fishing as it is popularly called. Angling activities in India are not organised enough to attract many tourists. The sport has enough potential for tourism in the country due to the variety of fishes available in different regions e.g. Himalayan Trout, Nilgiri Trout, Mahseer etc. An added advantage of the sport is that it also involves some hiking and camping and thus adds to the attractions of trekking at a limited extent. In order that anglers from India and abroad can be attracted to this sport it is essential that commercial overutilisation of fishing is kept under control and areas offering good angling potential be identified.

Angling in India can be conveniently classified into

- Mahseer (Barbur Tor) fishing.
- Trout fishing,
- Sea fishing.

Mahseer is generally found in the rivers of the Terai region of Himalayas, the Shivalik hills in the north and the river Kaveri in the south. Mainly river Jhelum (J & K), Beas (Himachal & Punjab), Ganga (in U.P. Hills), Bhoroli (Arunachal), and Manas (Assam), Kaveri (Karnataka) are good places for Mahseer fishing.

Trout is found in all high altitude streams and lakes. Kashmir is the best place for Trout fishing. Here rivers Sindh, Lidder, streams of Koternag, Verinag and high altitude lakes are ideal sites. Lakes and streams in high altitudes of Nilgiri hills and Himachal Pradesh also offer trout. This is not a costly sport. The equipment required is described below:

EQUIPMENT FOR TROUT FISHING IN KASHMIR

The Brown or Rainbow trout of the Kashmir waters is a good fighter like the Salmon. It makes flashing runs interspersed with repeated leaps from the water. A 2 or 3—pounder on a light fly rod is an unforgettable adventure.

As per the trend in angling in Kashmir, a set of two or three flies in tandem are tied on a cast of about 1 metre length of 8 lb. filament line. Some lead wire is used to ensure sufficient casting weight.
The average weight of trout expected to be landed is around 1/2 lbs. One should not, however, rule out the giant 5-pounder. The little fingerlings must be gently returned to the river without hurting them. As mentioned earlier, the bag is limited to six fish only. Suggested equipment is as follows:

**ROD**: A light fly rod 8 to 10 ft. long.

**REEL**: A medium-sized spool type fly reel should comfortably hold about 25 metres of coated silk line.

**FLIES**: Recommended flies include March Brown, Teal and Green, Coachman, Peacock, Butcher, Watsons Fancy, Coch-y-Bondhu, Zulu etc. Some colour variations from those mentioned could yield good results. Wet (spider) hackle flies, winged wet, dry fly spiders and winged dry flies are all useful. Hook sizes for fly dressing vary between No. 12 and 16. Two hooked tavys or lures are also productive when used as the lead fly at the end of the cast.

**EQUIPMENT FOR MAHSEER FISHING**

**RODS**: Stiff action rods for casting spinners, lures and plugs between 25 to 50gms. Heavy pike fibre glass rods 8 to 10 ft. long are ideal. For light fishing of up to 20lbs, a medium action rod is ideal. Two rods are a must.

**REELS**: Open face spinning reels like ABU Ambassadeur 7000 or 7000 C and ABU 770 or 440 are ideal. Some spares are essential as they are not always locally available.

**LINE**: 10/12 lb. for light fishing and 20/30 lb for larger waters of Nylorfi or Maxima brands or similar quality. Preferred colours are green or brown. There must be 200 metres line on each reel.

**LURES**: Lures up to 1 ounce (28 gms) silver, and combinations of silver/blue/green. Rappala 7" – 9" sinking plugs.

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**Check Your Progress 2**

1) What purpose do horses/ponies serve at a hill station?

2) What are the advantages for going sightseeing on a bicycle?

3) Mention some sports that are popular with domestic tourists.
As referred earlier India with its geographical diversity, vast territory, rich forests, hills and terrain has a lot to offer to adventure seekers. In recent times a lot of attention is being paid to develop Adventure Tourism in India. In this Section we will discuss some of the more popular types of these activities and their potential. For the convenience of study we will discuss it in three Sub-sections:

i) Aerial Adventure Sports
ii) Water Adventure Sports
iii) Land based Adventure Sports

13.4.1 Aerial Adventure Sports

A number of aerial adventure sports available in India are described below:

i) Parachuting: This sport involves jumping off from an aircraft or balloon and descending by means of a parachute. Though there is evidence to suggest that this sport was practised in elementary form by using very large size umbrellas in China but in its modern form it made its beginning in France in the late 18th century. Better designing of parachutes has made this sport relatively safe than earlier days and the sport has been kept alive and kicking due to its use as a means of transportation by the Armed Forces. Parachutes are deployed by connecting a line (called static line) to the aircraft which when pulled by the weight of a jumper pulls out the parachute automatically. To practise the sport an average amount of fitness and training is essential to reduce the risk of injuries sustained while landing.

As far as tourism is concerned, the sport has limited scope. The infrastructure required includes aircraft, parachutes and a landing zone which has to be large in area as accuracy in landing is not possible due to very limited steerability of these parachutes. These requirements make the sport cost intensive which coupled with the limited thrill offered does not attract too many participants. The advantage however is that relatively larger number of persons can make the descent in one simple flight which does not have to climb very high. This reduces the costs somewhat and also shortens the turnaround time. The sport can also be used for training those who aspire to play Sky Diving and thus can be combined with a skydiving establishment.

ii) Sky Diving: This sport is also known as Free Fall in military terms and is described as “The fastest non-mechanical sport”. The sport differs greatly from “Static Line Parachuting” though it also employs a parachute for descending safely to the ground. A Sky Diver jumps off an aircraft or balloon at a much greater height without deploying his parachute initially and opens it after some interval at a pre-determined height. Initially the rate of descent of the jumper keeps increasing due to gravitational force but after about 11 seconds he reaches his terminal speed which is approximately 200 km per hour for a person falling in stable position. This happens because the resistance of the column of air on the body becomes equal to the gravitational force acting on it. This gives the person a feeling of floating on air and by altering his body position he can do various manoeuvres and can also cover distance in any direction horizontally.

In recent years the skydiving parachutes have gone through a revolutionary design change and almost every one nowadays uses rectangular parachutes having cells which get inflated by air. These parachutes are known as “Ram Air” parachutes or more commonly as just “Squares” and are like gliders which can travel forward at a speed of 25 to 30 km per hour in zero wind condition. This enables the skydivers to land in a small area with much greater accuracy.

The development of Ram Air parachutes has also given birth to “Canopy Relative Work” which means forming a vertical stair of a number of parachutes descending together. In spite of the great attractiveness of this sport it suffers from the drawback of prohibitive costs of aircrafts and parachutes. Since the sport also needs certain level of specialisation, every visiting traveller cannot practise it. In the Indian context it is highly unlikely that it will be ever successful on a mass scale due to its being cost prohibitive and non-availability of most of the equipment indigenously. At present the sport is primarily limited to the defence personnel and hardly any facility exists for an average tourist.
iii) **Hang Gliding**: It is comparatively a cheaper sport which uses a semi-rigid wing made of fabric supported by a light alloy frame. It essentially flies like a glider where the directional control is achieved by a shift in his own weight by the pilot. It does not require any infrastructure except some hilly terrain of reasonable gradient which can offer:

- small sloping patch for a running take off
- relatively obstruction free flight path, and
- a flat area for landing which shall be free of obstructions.

In addition a motorable track between the take off point and landing area is needed to reduce the physical labour involved in recovering the Hang Glider and for shortening the turnaround time.

As far as tourism is concerned, the sport has a reasonable potential in India due to availability of hilly terrain in all parts of the country. Participation in the sport would however be always limited because it requires intensive training as the skills cannot be acquired quickly. The sport is also risky and does demand reasonable amount of fitness which inhibits an average individual from pursuing the sport. Because of these factors the sport will always attract only serious practitioners and not the week-end enthusiasts.

For hang gliding the good places in India are:
- Srinagar valley in Jammu and Kashmir,
- Kangra valley, Dharamsala, Shimla and Kasauli in Himachal,
- Pune and Satara in Maharashtra,
- Nilgiri hills in Tamil Nadu,
- Chamundi hills near Bangalore and Shillong in Meghalaya.

iv) **Para Sailing**: A very simple sport which involves winching or towing a parachutist to a height of few hundred feet in the air and then descending by means of the parachute. This can be practised on the beaches also by using speed boats. It is a safe sport and people of all age groups can practise it without much training.

In the context of tourism in India this sport has a great potential since the infrastructural costs are low and every week-end fun lover or adventure seeker can easily experience it without spending too much time and effort on training.

v) **Bungee Jumping**: A comparatively new sport which has gained wide popularity in the western world in recent years. This sport requires no equipment other than a 'Bungee Chord' made of nylon fibre of enough elasticity to be able to absorb the shock at the end of jump. The only infrastructure required is a bridge, tower or any structure which offers few hundred feet of free fall. The jumper makes a head long jump in the empty space and the resultant rush of adrenalin makes the experience very exhilarating.

This sport too has a fair potential due to almost negligible costs and availability of infrastructure in almost any area. The only inhibiting factor is to get enough people with the courage to jump off in space. It does not require much training to take to this sport except the supervision of an expert. The sport is yet to make an appearance in India.

Most of the places that have airports (small or big) have flying and gliding clubs in India where facilities for some aerial activities are available. Baroda, Srinagar, Amritsar, Hyderabad, Jaipur, Patna, Bombay, Bangalore, Lucknow, Agra, Kanpur, Delhi, Indore, Raipur, Hisar, Madras, Calcutta, Bhubaneswar etc. are some important examples.

### 13.4.2 Water Adventure Sports

Almost all the adventure activity which is water based is white water oriented. White water basically means fast flowing water which due to some obstructions in its path is turbulent at those places which gives it a white appearance due to the surf produced. Adventure sports which are practised on flat water are mainly sea based though very large lakes can also be used for the purpose.

i) **White Water Rafting**: In this sport inflatable raft made of synthetic material is used to negotiate fast flowing rivers. With modern technology providing better material for the construction of rafts, the sport has become much more safe. People with no pre-
vious experience of rafting can very safely negotiate white waters of moderate difficulty under the supervision of a qualified river guide.

The sport is moderately expensive due to the cost of the equipment. It can be practiced in almost any river offering reasonable amount of white water though an easy access to the river by a road makes the carriage of the equipment easier.

The sport does have reasonable tourism potential and enjoys fair amount of patronage by tourists. The main advantage from the point of view of tourism is that it can be experienced by novices too. An ordinary tourist does not have to spend too much time for experiencing the thrills involved in it. The sport is presently practiced in the rivers Ganga, Indus, Zanskar, Chenab, Sutlej, Beas, Yamuna, Sharda, Teesta, etc. A number of tour operators offer packages for White Water Rafting and also conduct them by offering facilities.

ii) White Water Kayaking: Kayak is a small light boat which was used by the Eskimos for seal hunting. It is a highly manoeuvrable boat and being smaller can generally accommodate only one person. It is also very easy for a Kayak to flip over because the very design makes it inherently unstable. Because of these factors, one has to acquire more skill even for practising this sport at an elementary level.

The sport is not very costly as the equipment required is not large. But the tourism potential is not very large because it requires more skill and time to experience this sport. It can also not be experienced offhand without any training which makes it difficult for an ordinary tourist to enjoy the thrills of the sport within a short time. As compared to rafting, physical fitness standards are also more rigorous which again is an inhibiting factor for any individual willing to try his hand in the sport only for the sake of experiencing it.

iii) White Water Canoeing: This sport is similar to Kayaking in nature, the only difference being that instead of a Kayak a Canoe is used. A Canoe is open unlike a Kayak and the paddler executes the strokes on only one side of the canoe rather than like the stroke being used on both sides of the Kayak.

The tourism potential of this sport too is limited like that of Kayaking for similar reasons. The popular places for this sport are in Bhagirathi river from Uttarkashi to Gangotri and another from Uttarkashi to Dheran.

iv) Flat Water Adventure Sports: These sports are practiced either on seas or in large flat water bodies such as lakes or reservoirs. The prominent ones from the point of view of tourism are:

- Water skiing,
- Wind surfing, and
- Surfing.

Water Skiing: This sport is practiced by being towed behind a motor boat on any large water body. The skills required for practising the sport at an elementary level can be acquired in a short time and the cost of equipment is not prohibitive. The potential of the sport, therefore, is good from the point of view of tourism. In India, the only problem being that enough large lakes are not available and the reservoirs along dams are under the control of different government agencies which generally do not permit their exploitation for tourism.

Wind Surfing: A small surf board with an attachment for sails is used for sliding the surf on the seas. Directional control is achieved by shifting the sail position and body weight of the wind surfs.

The sport requires training and more time for acquiring the skills. Since it is practiced by a single person it does not allow any laxity. Advantage from the tourism point of view is that not much equipment is needed though in India all of it is imported. However, the potential for tourism is fair enough as the number of enthusiasts in the western countries is ever increasing and availability of facilities in or around beach resorts will always have many takers.

Surfing: A difficult sport where only a surf board is used for riding the waves and surf on the seas. The control is achieved by sheer body manoeuvre. Obviously the number of practitioners it will attract among ordinary tourists is going to be limited. The sport in India is still at a nascent stage and it will be very long before it catches the fancy of tourists. Yet, at many beaches surf boards are available.
13.4.3 Land Based Adventure Sports

Most of the popular land based adventure sports are mountain oriented. The prominent ones among them are trekking, mountaineering, angling and skiing.

i) Trekking: A very popular sport which can be practised at different levels by both young and old persons who may be either very fit or not so fit. It is generally associated with a journey across forest tracks or in the countryside which is still largely untouched by formal means of transportation. In India trekking in the hill valley is most common and popular with college students in the lead. The number of trekking enthusiasts has been increasing all over the world as it gives most of the modern people an opportunity to get away from the crowds, noise, pollution and stress associated with thickly populated cities. An added attraction is requirement of very little equipment which keeps the costs low. This keeps the trekking trips very affordable and in many cases they work out cheaper than other kinds of urban tourism.

In India, this sport has tremendous amount of tourism potential due to availability of large virgin tracts suitable for trekking in Himalayas, Nilgiris, Sahyadris etc. Since this sport also offers lot of flexibility to the tourists in terms of time, budget and fitness levels required, it is likely to attract more and more of them. There are already a large number of tour operators and travel agencies running financially successful trekking operations for both domestic as well as foreign tourists.

Here we would like to give you a list of some of the popular treks in India. In Jammu and Kashmir the area around Srinagar is rich in forests and lakes. This is a trekker's paradise which merges on ahead with Zanskar and the region of Ladakh. Other treks are Amarnath Cave Trek, Chandanwari, Sheshnag, Pissu Hill, Pissu Ghati, Zojibal, Skin to Markha (in Ladakh), Srinagar to Kishtwar and Pahalgam to Lidderwat.

Kumaon and Garhwal, the two hill regions of U.P., offer excellent treks for trekking. In Garhwal the trek to the source of river Ganga—the Gangotri—is most picturesque. Other treks are Joshimath to Kuari, Valley of Flowers, Dodital in Uttarkashi, Yamnotri—the source of river Yamuna, etc.

Almost every area in Himachal has novel trekking routes. A diversity of terrain offers trekking scope for almost everyone, from novice trekkers to professionals. A few popular ones are— from Shimla, via Luhri (85 km. by bus) — Anikhang — Jalaripan, Jibhit to Banjer, Dharamsala, via Bhagrunath to Tirund, Kulu via Jari (35 km by bus), Malane — Naggor to Kulu/Manali, Manali to Rohtang pass, Dalhousie to Khajjar, Manikaran to Pulga-Sara Umg pass etc.

In Sikkim the popular trek is Yukram — Bakhim — Troka-Dzongri — Thergshing— Zemathang.

In Darjeeling you have Maneybhanjyang — Tonglu — Sandekphu — Phalut — Ramman — Rimbick — Bijanbari as important places for trekking.

For trekking proper clothing, equipment and food is to be carried. This includes a sleeping bag, rucksacks, torches, airpumps, first aid kit, etc. Proper clothing and shoes are also important. The Department of Tourism publication Trekking in the Himalaya provides detailed information in this regard.

ii) Mountaineering: This sport is more specialized and requires more fitness and determination on the part of mountaineers as compared to trekkers. It still offers some flexibility in terms of time budget and the skills required because the nature of climbs differ from each other. Since higher altitudes and more adverse weather conditions are encountered, the requirement of equipment is also much more. This increases the expenses.

In India, the sport is an attractive proposition for tourism purposes because of the large number of climbing challenges available in the Indian Himalaya. It continually attracts both Indian and foreign climbers. In addition, peaks in Himachal are much more easily accessible from roadheads which saves on the time required. Most of the travel agencies dealing with trekking in India also help organize expeditions and do reasonably well financially. A list of some important peaks is provided here. (Source: The Week, Feb. 27, 1994)
iii) Skiing: Skiing is a major tourist attraction in the European Alps and it is quite common for the 'Rich and Famous' to take skiing holidaying in Switzerland and Austria. In fact it is quite fashionable to boast on which trek one has skied. Many businessmen and executives mix pleasure with business at these Ski resorts in Europe. To practise the sport not much equipment is required but the infrastructural costs are very high at the Ski resorts. This is because it is essential to have Ski lifts for reducing the physical effort of climbing up with the skis after every ski run and for shortening the turnaround time.

In India, an additional handicap is high snow line in the Indian Himalaya during summers which limits the ski season to only a few months in winters. The sport is always likely to attract domestic tourists in India but is unlikely that enough foreign tourists would be attracted to this country due to the lack of facilities. The exorbitant cost of infrastructure would also make it financially unviable for private entrepreneurs.

The most well-known places for skiing in India are Auli in Garhwal, Solang Nala in Kullu (Himachal Pradesh), Gulmarg in Kashmir, Narkanda near Shimla and a newly emerging slope at Kufri. Gulmarg in Kashmir is best equipped for all winter sports.

Heli-Skiing is a recent entry in the field of adventure sports. Groups of foreign tourists are taken directly to hotels in the mountain regions like Srinagar in Kashmir and Kulu, Manali and Manikaran in Himachal. From here they are lifted straight to the base of the snow slopes by a large helicopter. Again a small helicopter takes a group of three to four skiers with a guide to top of the slope from where they enjoy skiing. Safety norms are followed strictly and the guides have expertise in the field. Unlike many regions of the world where skiing can be done in selective season only, the Himalayan peaks can be used throughout the year.

You can obtain information on heli-skiing from:
Manager Tourism Cell,
Air India,
5th Floor, Hansalaya,
15 Barakhamba Road,
New Delhi-110 001
Tourist Sites: Products and Operations

iy) Rock Climbing: This is a fast emerging sport in India. The sport involves climbing straight flat rocks under guidance. The activity needs little equipment and can be performed in many areas which have rock formations. This is being undertaken in and around Delhi, on the Western Ghats, around Manali in Himachal Pradesh, on the Bangalore-Mysore highway, Mount Abu in Rajasthan, Garhwal hills and in Sonemarg in Kashmir. Most of the Tourism Departments of the States are promoting this in a big way. Haryana, Chandigarh, Maharashtra, Karnataka are a few examples of this kind. Many students are taking to rock climbing as an adventure sport and hobby.

13.5 RESPONSIBILITIES OF TOUR OPERATORS

Adventure tourism differs from ordinary tourism as it exposes tourists to some risks and generally takes them into regions which offer minimal facilities and comforts. Tour operators in adventure tours have to necessarily shoulder additional responsibilities towards comforts, well being and safety of the tourists. Lack of adequate communication facilities tend to increase the level of responsibilities and makes their job even more difficult. In addition, adventure tours are operated in wilderness or remote areas where ecological balance is fragile and can be disturbed easily by ingress of tourists in large numbers. It is the responsibility of tour operators to ensure that environmental damage is kept to the minimum and the areas are not littered to such an extent so as to make it impossible for other tourists to visit these areas.

The responsibilities of tour operators in adventure tourism can be listed as follows:

a) Provision of professionally competent guides who are familiar with local terrain, people and their customs.

b) To provide reliable transportation facilities up to the destination for tourists and equipment whether motorised, animal transport or men to carry these things.

c) Provision of clean, hygienic accommodation with regard for sanitation which can withstand natural weather hazards whether huttet or tented.

d) To ensure that enough care is taken for disposal of waste material and avoidance of littering the camp area.

e) Minimise environmental damage by carrying along provisions which are biodegradable and can be disposed of easily by burning/burial etc.

f) To ensure availability of enough trained manpower for safety and minimising risks to the tourists.

g) Provision of sufficient back up of manpower, equipment, communication etc. to ensure search of any endangered tourist/crew.

Check Your Progress 3

1) Which of the Aerial Adventure Sports have a tourism potential in India and why?

2) What is White Water Rafting?
3) Between Mountaineering and Trekking which is a more popular sport and why?

13.6 LET US SUM UP

Adventure and sports have a tremendous potential in tourism. But not all such sports can be developed. There are financial constraints for infrastructural development and the numbers of takers for all are not many. Some like trekking, rock climbing, boating, horse riding, angling, etc. are gaining more popularity because of low costs and easy access.

The Unit has attempted to familiarise you with basic information. For further details you will have to contact various agencies like: Tourism Department Offices, Mountaineering, Rock Climbing or Trekking Clubs/Associations and Tour Operators who specialise in such areas.

13.7 KEY WORDS

Angling : fishing
Surfing : sport of being carried over surf to shore on boards
Winching : reel of fishing rod

13.8 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS EXERCISES

Check Your Progress 1

1) Adventure sports are attracting large number of tourists and it is a new area in tourism. For details read Sec. 13.2.
2) See Sec. 13.2.

Check Your Progress 2

1) At hill stations horses and ponies are used for joy rides and carrying people and goods to difficult places. See Sub-sec. 13.3.2.
2) Bicycle provides a leisurely sightseeing with pleasures of cycling. See Sub-sec. 13.3.2.
3) See Sub-secs. 13.3.1 and 13.3.2.

Check Your Progress 3

1) Sky diving, hang gliding and para sailing. See Sub-sec. 13.4.1.
2) White Water Rafting is played on lakes etc. See Sub-sec. 13.4.2.
3) Trekking is more popular because it involves less vigorous training and even novices can try it without training. See Sub-sec. 13.4.3.
UNIT 14 BEACH AND ISLAND RESORTS: KOVALAM AND LAKSHADWEEP

Structure

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14.2 Introduction
14.3 Emergence and Growth of Resorts
14.4 Concept of Beach and Island Tourism
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14.8 Key Words
14.9 Answers to Check Your Progress Exercises

14.1 OBJECTIVES

After reading this Unit you will be able to:
• learn about the emergence and growth of resorts,
• understand the concept of beach and island tourism, and
• understand the issues involved in the development of beach and island resorts.

14.2 INTRODUCTION

Sun, Sea and Sand is the kind of tourism in vogue today. You can see that it is coastal zone oriented. The boom in water borne recreation accentuates further the relevance of beach resorts and island resorts in the development of tourism.

This Unit first deals with the emergence and growth of resorts. Then it explains the concepts of beach tourism and island tourism. The issues involved in the development of resorts have also been taken up here in the context of the case studies of Lakshadweep and Kovalam as two samples.

14.3 EMERGENCE AND GROWTH OF RESORTS

The development of specialized resorts in the global context dates back to the 17th and 18th centuries. Mineral water available at particular places and faith in its medicinal property seems to have been the primary reason for the original patronage given to these resorts which were known as Spa resorts. Gradually these places secured additional facilities for pleasure and entertainment for the patients coming there for mineral water. In continental Europe Spa treatment is valued even today and the great Spas of Baden-Baden in Germany and Marianske Lazne (Marienbad) and Karlovy Vary (Carlsbad) in Czechoslovakia are thronged with patients.
By the middle of the 18th century, attention began to be paid to the possible curative effects of seawater and sea bathing and the seaside resort began to appear as an alternative to the inland spa. Both the spas and the seaside resorts were embryonic tourist destinations.

During the 19th century, resorts saw an expansion of accommodation. Rail travel brought within reach the coastal resorts. Not until the latter half of the 19th century did the concept of relaxation begin to appear. The medicinal properties of resorts influenced their development in other ways. The treatment of tuberculosis was a principal factor in the creation of the French Riviera resorts favoured by the British. Later many sanatoriums were established in Switzerland for treatment of tuberculosis.

The factors that have led to changes in the demand for traditional holiday accommodation, particularly increasing motorization, have had an effect on demand for traditional resorts. The curative powers of mineral springs lost some credibility in the mid 20th century and the traditional spa is either disappearing or changing its nature. Improving mobility by car has turned resorts close to large centres of population into dormitory suburbs.

What is a Resort?

A resort is more than a hotel set upon a beach or hill. It must offer a wide range of facilities and qualify as a total development. Resorts are of different types and are located in different characteristic areas of each type—beach resorts, hill resorts, island resorts, ski resorts, etc.

A resort can provide activity oriented leisure for the young group. Resorts are basically seasonal in nature. The trend for resort development is strong in Europe, USA and certain South American countries but not much has been done in Asia to develop and promote resorts. However, resorts are fast becoming popular in our country, especially with the entry of private entrepreneurs into the field.

Check Your Progress 1

1) What is a Spa resort?

2) How did Seaside resorts grow?

3) State the main reason for the creation of French Riviera resorts.
14.4 CONCEPT OF BEACH AND ISLAND TOURISM

In International tourism, beach and island resorts have carved out a niche of their own. Beach tourism and island tourism are two major segments of holiday tourism and are interlinked in some ways. Both have ample scope for water borne recreation. Even today with a greater diversification of holiday types and destinations and with many people enjoying more than one major holiday per year away from home, the coast remains the main recreational focus.

14.4.1 Beach Tourism

Beach tourism has led to an overall development of tourism in many parts of the world. Each year during the months of mellow sunshine and warm winter, thousands of tourists throng the famous beaches of the world.

Beach tourism utilizes the aesthetic and environmental values of the beach. It also combines water and land resources usage. Water usage comprises swimming, surfing, sailing and other water sports. Land use activities incorporate construction of different types of accommodation (hotels, cottages, villas, camping sites, trailer parts), recreational areas (play grounds, club activities, amusement parks), car and bus parking areas, entertainment and shopping access, roads and transportation networks. Other activities may include visits to tourist attractions in the vicinity of beach areas.

The development and management issues of beach tourism are thus several. A beach resort for example needs to be developed as an integrated complex to function as a self contained community. Environmental control also needs to be exercised over the style, form, height, use of construction materials, colour etc. of buildings and structures as related to their surroundings. Environmental management should also ensure the availability of necessary infrastructure in the immediate inland to the coastal region in support of the development of the coast so as to maintain its ecosystem.

To develop a beach into a beach resort it has to meet certain prerequisites. Most of these are applicable in the case of an island resort also.

- The beach and offshore water condition must be of a sufficiently high quality to allow people full use of these resources for sunbathing, bathing, swimming and other forms of water recreation.
- The beach must be of sufficient size to accommodate large numbers of people without congestion and crowding.
- The beach should have sufficient sand which is usually attractive in colour, pleasant to touch and generally clean from rocks, coral and debris.
- The beach should shelf gently into the water to allow safe entry and exit from the surf. The water should be clean warm and free from any strong backflow to offer safe water sports activities, besides swimming and bathing.
- The resort should be attractive e.g. it may have more of rural setting which is conducive for leisure and relaxation than the congested setting of urban centres.
- The resort should have scenic beauty with emphasis on nature and a more natural character.
- The overall environment should express a sense of uniqueness and character that sets it apart from other competitive tourism destinations — particularly leisure tourism activities.
- The climate of beach resort should allow for use the beach and outdoor recreation facilities for a major portion of the year. An ideal resort climate would be characterized by a high portion of sunny days, warm temperature, low humidity and constant breezes.
- The beach resort destination should be conveniently accessible to relatively large number of visitors by air and other modes of transportation.
- The resort should also be preferably connected by direct and scenic road connecting to the airport, population centres and other places of tourist interests.
- The resort should have proper drinking water supply, electricity, sewer system, drainage systems and effective communication systems.
• The resort site must be of adequate size for future development.
• Regular supply of electricity is a must, also maintenance of metal surfaces of electric appliances as they get corroded due to the salt in the air.
• Sufficient number of well trained life guards are a must.

From the available statistics it is found that the beach resorts attract segment of tourists who stay longer, hence the challenging job of sustaining the interests of tourists. There may thus be provision for adventure sports, indoor games, entertainment, a bar sufficiently stocked with variety of drinks, Yoga, Ayurvedic, Naturopathy etc.

A high degree of vigilance is also needed in a resort. A tourist is the resort’s responsibility and his welfare and well being a constant obligation. As there are casual visitors who also drop into the beach resorts, proper security arrangements are needed since the beach can never be fully fenced.

14.4.2 Island Tourism

Tourists have always found islands attractive places to visit. Island’s appeal to the tourists may relate to the feelings of remoteness or seclusion that one can get on an island.

Island tourism helps to relieve the pressure off the mainland to some extent. As the scope for major industrial activities are limited in islands, tourism may offer the right opening for overall island development. Activity oriented tourism is also becoming highly popular and islands have tremendous potential to develop such tourism.

It must be admitted here that the development of island tourism has several constraints. An island resort, for example does not have the ability to handle large number of tourists as it will put severe strain on the local capacity to absorb them. The difficulties are created by the topography of the islands and the limited resource base like availability of drinking water, power etc. As the islands have fragile environment, environmental control needs to be exercised over the construction of infrastructure, waste disposal system, mode of transportation, recreation activities etc. Moreover development activities in islands have a high capital-output ratio. As islands do not have adequate resources for development, infrastructure incurs high cost.

Another significant feature relates to local attitudes and receptiveness to tourists which are critical factors and most critical on small islands. Island people should be given more participatory role which will lead to better local integration and coordination. Some attention has to be given to training in tourism and for upgrading existing skills of local population. Socio-cultural impacts of tourism have to be closely monitored because of the relative isolation and traditional nature of the local population.

Some of the factors to be kept in mind while planning island tourism are:
• geographical characteristics
• historical, cultural, social, legal factors
• environmental constraints — assessment of carrying capacity
• development of infrastructure, i.e. type of accommodation and food, mode of transportation to, within and between islands, and sports and leisure facilities, and
• facilities for drinking water, power, communication, etc.

The issues involved in the development of beach and island resorts are analyzed in the following Sections with help of two case studies — one on Kovalam beach resort and the other on Lakshadweep islands.

Check Your Progress 2

1) List four prerequisites for a beach to be considered for development as a beach resort.

.................................................................
Reaches in India

Photographs Courtesy Hugh Colling Gunzter
2) What are the major constraints faced in the development of island tourism?

3) What are the key factors to be considered while planning an island resort?

14.5 KOVALAM BEACH RESORT

Curving along the Arabian Sea along the South West Coast of India lies the state of Kerala which occupies around 40,000 sq. km of land. Kerala has some of the finest and beautiful beaches in India. Mythically Kerala’s bond with the sea is that of a child and its mother. A fable says that Kerala sprang forth from the sea when Parasurama threw his battle axe into the sea to atone for his sin of killing thousands of Kshatriyas. The sea forgave and receded bringing into existence the fertile green enchanted land of Kerala.

Kovalam is a quiet and small resort, around 16 km from Thiruvananthapuram (formerly known as Trivandrum), a capital city at the southern tip of Kerala. We shall discuss here the development of Kovalam into a famous beach resort.

14.5.1 History

Three decades back Kovalam was an unknown, tiny remote fishing village. Only some fishermen's families lived there. The Maharajah of Travancore handpicked this tiny coastal village and built a delightful retreat for himself. Kovalam came to be known as the Summer Resort of the Maharajah of Travancore. High atop a natural hill overlooking Arabian Sea stands Halcyon Castle that was once the residence of the Travancore Maharajah. Colonel Godavarama Raja, a member of the Travancore Royal family, was the man behind the upliftment of the beach to the present stage.

The first commercialized tourism development started in Kovalam with the inauguration of ITDC's Five Star Kovalam Ashok Beach Resort in 1973. Considering the steady growth of international and domestic tourist arrivals, ITDC further extended the size of its accommodation by adding 72 rooms in the five star category. Private sector also started entering the accommodation industry around the same time. A team of UN experts on tourism who visited India recommended the development of Kovalam as an international seaside resort.

Except for the monsoon stretch from May to August, when rain, high winds and rough waters stop beach activities, Kovalam is an idyllic year round destination. Here the average minimum temperature is 20°C and maximum temperature is around 30°C centigrade.

14.5.2 Attractions

Kovalam consists of five beaches:

1) The beach which bears the name of Kovalam lies just in front of the cottages of ITDC and stretches up to Hotel Samudra of KTDC. Its approximate length is 300 metres.
2) The beach of Panathura is the name given to the remaining stretch of beach up to Valiyathura, near Sankumugham beach in Thiruvananthapuram.

3) The beach of Amballam stretches south-east from the bus stop at Kovalam.

4) The beach of Avaduthura near the light house is also known as light house beach.

5) The beach of Cheriyamannu lies between the Inspection Bungalow and Hotel Rockholm.

Kovalam is regarded as an excellent beach for a number of reasons. There is good surf and the water is ideal for aquatic sports such as snorkeling, sailing and water skiing. Going out too far is not recommended unless you are familiar with the tides. In addition to the facilities for aquatic sports there is a Golf course and a tennis court at the ITDC complex. Because the headlands are so structured, rocky outposts carve out small bays which are fringed by date palms. Each bay thus exudes a quietness and exclusiveness since it is not easily accessible across the beach front.

Going into the interior seas on thin dugouts called ‘Catamarans’ along with the fisherman is there for those who like to have some adventure. This topsy-turvy ride over the racy waters of India’s deep southern seas can be a memorable experience. In the evenings one can also play beach volleyball and frisbee with the local people.

Many fishing enthusiasts swear by the beauty of Kovalam waters. Fishes are in plenty and if you are an experienced angler you can bring in your own fish catch every day and ask the local restaurants to cook it for you. Since sea food is the mainstay of the regional cuisine, a mouthwatering array of preparation await the gourmet.

Visitors can indulge in a spot of yoga on the beach or have traditional oil massage with ayurvedic herbal oils at the health centre. Experts at the Yoga and Health Centre at Kovalam teach yoga and transcendental meditation. The Yoga and ayurvedic massage facilities at Kovalam makes it unique among beach resorts. Spectacular sunsets and marvellous open air Kathakali performance in the dim temple lights round off perfect days at Kovalam.

14.5.3 Ancillary Attractions

After sunset a 20 minute drive takes you back to Thiruvananthapuram city. The attractive state capital is a seaside city. Built over seven rolling hills, Thiruvananthapuram mountains have stately presence, very much in keeping with its past as the capital of the Maharajah of Travancore. A number of palaces till today remain residences of the royal family and are out of bounds for visitors.

There is a unique wooden palace 53 kilometres away. The wooden architecture murals and craftsmanship of Padmanabhapuram Palace are a fascinating study in this medium. The fabulous Zoological and Botanical Gardens of the Napier Museum and Zoo are open by 9 am on all days except Mondays. The visitor is offered a peep into the grand life style of the Maharajahs of Yore at the excellent Napier Museum which has a remarkable collection of art objects, jewelry, bronzes, stone carvings and ancient musical instruments.

Sri Chitra Art Gallery in the museum and zoological complex has an excellent section dedicated to the paintings of Raja Ravi Varma. Old and modern paintings from all over the world are exhibited here. Thiruvananthapuram is famous for a number of traditional handicrafts as well as the ‘Kathakali’ dance form. Bell metal lamps, ivory and wood carvings, handicrafts and paintings from screw pine, leaf and coconut shells are universal buys.

Fascinating back waters cruise on country boats rowed by local people is an added attraction. This is available at Thiruvallam and goes round a village where tourists can see coir making, tropical plants and spices.

14.5.4 Accommodation and Catering

The major accommodation unit in Kovalam is the ITDC’s Kovalam Ashok Beach Resort, situated on a natural hill overlooking the Arabian Sea. The Halycon castle in front of the Ashok Hotel has been converted into a deluxe hotel. There are luxurious beach cottages called “The Palm Grove” situated right on the beach front. The main hotel is on the hill which juts out into the sea with 72 double layers built into the hill
side. Every room faces the sea and has its own sun desk. Another unit of 64 rooms is nearing construction which also faces the ocean. During the Eighth Five Year Plan (1992–97), the number of beds in Kovalam is proposed to be increased to 2000.

Kerala Tourism Development Corporation has a two star hotel Samudra. There are quite a few private hotels as well as small paying guest outlets. The details of accommodation units in Kovalam Beach Resort are enclosed in Table-1 and Table-2 and give information about Star hotels and bed capacity in Kerala.

An excellent choice of Indian and Continental food is available at Kovalam, but what seems to be the biggest attraction is the Kerala cuisine with its astonishing variety of coconut flavoured dishes. Fresh sea food coming from the coast is the basic ingredient of a Kerala meal. Hot toddy flavoured pancakes, juicy pineapples, crisp fries made of jack-fruit, tapioca and banana all go to make a mouth watering experience.

Table 1 : Details of Accommodation Units in Kovalam

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Total Capacity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ashok Beach Resort (ITDC)</td>
<td>223</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hotel Samudra</td>
<td>102</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Raja Hotel</td>
<td>88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hotel Neptune</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hotel Neele</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hotel Neelkanta</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hotel Sea Rock</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sreevas House</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sandy Beach Resort</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hotel Palmonova</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apsara Beach Cottages</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hotel Sea Weed</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hotel Samudra Thara</td>
<td>24</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hotel Rockholm</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jeevan House</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sumangali Tourist Home</td>
<td>24</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hotel Palm Garden</td>
<td>24</td>
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<tr>
<td>Moonlight</td>
<td>20</td>
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<tr>
<td>Green Valley Cottage</td>
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<td>Raji Home</td>
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<td>Hotel Thiruvonam</td>
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<td>Hotel Deepak</td>
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<td>Hotel Sea Blue</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dwaraka Lodge</td>
<td>16</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hotel Thushara</td>
<td>16</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wilson Tourist Home</td>
<td>16</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sea Side Cottages</td>
<td>16</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hotel Sunset</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hotel Orion</td>
<td>16</td>
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<tr>
<td>Moon Cottages</td>
<td>15</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hawa Beach Hotel</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shangrila House</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lobster House</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lala Tourist Home</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kavitha Lodge</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hotel Holiday Home</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Achutha Lodge</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White House Hotel</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Syam Nivas</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flora Home</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hotel Idam</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total: 1218

Note: Apart from this there are several paying guest homes and tourist lodges.
Table 2: Accommodation Sector in Kerala: Star Hotels & Bed Capacity

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Star Category</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Bed Capacity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>★★★★</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>223</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>★★★</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>123</td>
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<tr>
<td>★★</td>
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<td>722</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>★</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>2,100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>854</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>43</td>
<td>4,022</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

14.5.5 How to Get There

By Air: Thiruvananthapuram is an international airport with flights from West Asia, Sri Lanka and Maldives. Indian Airlines operates flights from Bombay, Madras, Tiruchirapalli, Cochin, Goa, Delhi and Bangalore. Air Lanka, Gulf Air and East West Airlines also operate regular flights from Thiruvananthapuram.

By Rail: Thiruvananthapuram is well connected with all the major cities of the country.

By Road: Kovalam is easily accessible by road. Kerala State Road Transport Corporation as well as private buses ply between Thiruvananthapuram and Madras, Madurai, Bangalore and Kanyakumari.

Local Transport: Tourist taxis and coaches are available from private operators as well as from Kerala Tourism Development Corporation (KTDC) Transport Division. Public transport—autorickshaws and taxis are also easily available.

14.5.6 Other Facilities

These include:
- **Tourist Information Centre** of Department of Tourism, Govt. of Kerala situated in the ITDC’s Hotel Ashok premises.
- **Central Bank of India** has an office in Kovalam junction and has an extension counter at ITDC Ashok. It deals in foreign exchange.
- **The Telecom Centre (by Government)** started functioning in 1991. It offers STD, ISD, local, trunk, telex and Fax facilities. It is open from 9 am to 5 pm on all days. There are two other private STD booths.
- **Ayurvedic Massage Centres**: There is one established massage centre in ITDC complex and several other private centres in Kovalam.
- **Medical Facilities**: There are no government hospitals in Kovalam. There is a fairly big private hospital, Upasana Clinic and several other small clinics. However, Thiruvananthapuram which is about twenty to thirty minutes drive from Kovalam is well equipped with all modern medical facilities.
- **Post Office**: There is one post office 2 km away from the beach.
- **Tourist Police**: A specially trained police force for assisting the tourists is stationed in the beach till 8.00 pm. There are trained and experienced life guards from 8.00 am to 8.00 pm.
- **Life Guards** are also posted along the beach.

14.5.7 Perspective Plan

Compared to international standards the existing facilities at the beach are found to be inadequate. Kovalam is rather limited in area as it is located in a densely populated area. Most of the drawbacks faced by the beach is the result of the unplanned development of the beach.

The unplanned development of the beach has led to the construction of hotels with poor facilities and sub-standard services and the capacity is far below to absorb even one regular charter operation. Area of the beach has become limited because of the encroachment of restaurants onto the beach.

ITDC Kovalam Ashok Beach Resort is constructing a new hotel block with 64 rooms and a Convention centre with a capacity of 500. Steps have been taken to provide adequate life saving equipments to the trained life guards.
Beaches being one of the main assets of Kerala, the government, has plans to strengthen the ‘beach product’. Kovalam is the only beach resort with minimal facilities and to some extent it is already established on the international market. It is also well situated near an international airport. Plans are afoot to improve the image of Kovalam by:

- upgrading the standard and services of the many small medium priced hotels,
- enforcing greater environmental control,
- improving facilities for water sports,
- safety of tourists,
- proper maintenance of the beach, and
- educating the host population about the importance of providing total quality services to the tourists.

**Check Your Progress 3**

1) Suppose you are a tourist officer or a tour operator. What attractions of Kovalam will you offer to itinerant tourists?

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   ........................................................................................................
   ........................................................................................................
   ........................................................................................................
   ........................................................................................................

2) How can one reach Kovalam?

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   ........................................................................................................
   ........................................................................................................
   ........................................................................................................
   ........................................................................................................
3) What other places a tourist can visit while residing at Kovalam?

14.6 LAKSHADWEEP ISLANDS

Lakshadweep lies in the Arabian Sea, west of the coast of Kerala between 8° and 12° latitude and 71° and 74° longitude. Lakshadweep is the tiniest Union Territory of India and has the country's only coral islands. It is about 220 to 440 km from the coastal city of Cochin in Kerala. These tiny islands have tremendous tourism potential. We shall discuss it below.

14.6.1 Geography

The Lakshadweep Sea separates the ridge from the Malabar shelf and it rises above the sea from a depth of 2,000 to 2,700 metres in the Laccadive Sea and to a height of 4,000 metres from the Arabian Sea bed. But for the proximal islands of Amini and Kadmat and certain small uninhabited islands and islets, most of them lie from 20 to 67 nautical miles from the nearest neighbouring island except in the case of Minicoy, which actually relates geographically to the Maldivian archipelago rather than to the northern Lakshadweep islands. All the islands except Androth are aligned in a north-south direction whereas the latter lies in an east-west alignment. Coral reefs protect the islands on the western side from the fury of the monsoon sea.

Lakshadweep has a tropical climate, with summer temperatures ranging from 35 degrees centigrade to 22° centigrade to 20° centigrade: The monsoon, during which time the islands are closed to tourists, is between 15th May to 15th September. Some effect of the north-east monsoon is felt in October-November in the form of light, transitory showers.

14.6.2 History

Early history of Lakshadweep is unwritten. Local traditions attribute the first settlement on these islands to the period of Cheraman Perumal, the last King of Kerala. It is believed that the first settlers followed Hinduism. Even now unmistakable Hindu social stratification exists in these islands. Legends say that small settlements started in the islands of Amini, Kavaratti, Androth and Kalpeni first and later people from these islands moved to other islands of Agatti, Kiltan, Chetlat and Kadmat.

The advent of Islam dates back to the 7th century. But even after entire conversion to Islam, sovereignty remained in the hands of the Hindu Raja of Chirakkal for some years. From the hand of Chirakkal Raja the administration of the islands passed on to the Muslim House of Arakkal of Cannanore around the middle of the 16th century. The Arakkal rule was oppressive and unbearable. So some time in 1783 some islanders from Amini, took courage and went to Tipu Sultan at Mangalore and requested him to take over the administration of the Amini group of islands.

Tipu Sultan succeeded in this and the islands suzerainty came to be divided as five islands which came under his rule and the rest continued under the Arakkal House. After the battle of Seringapatam in 1799 the islands were annexed to the British East India Company by the Raja of Chirakkal for administration. So came the British rule.

The Union Territory was formed in 1956 and it was named Lakshadweep in 1973. All islands now constitute one District for Administration with four Tehsils. The administrative headquarters is at Kavaratti island. Administrator being the head of the Union Territory. Each island has a democratic setup - Island Council - with elected members. At Union Territory level, there is a Pradesh Council having members elected from each Island Council.
14.6.3 Attractions

i) Kavaratti: Kavaratti has been the headquarters of the Administration since 1964. The beautiful calm lagoon forms an ideal spot for water sports, swimming and basking on warm sandy beaches. Marine life exhibits can be seen at the new marine aquarium and a good collection of specimens at the museum. Glass bottomed boats are available for the exotic under water world. Water sports crafts that are provided on hire are kayaks and sailing yachts. Floating restaurant and tent accommodation are the new added attractions.

ii) Kalpeni: Kalpeni is known for its scenic beauty with the small islets called Tilakkam and Pitti and an uninhabited island on the north called Cheriyam. A huge shallow lagoon encloses all of them. A peculiar feature of Kalpeni atoll is the huge storm bank of coral debris along the eastern and south-eastern shoreline. It is believed that huge boulders were thrown up during a storm in 1847. It is a very progressive island, where girls first went to school at a time when women education was considered a taboo. You can swim, reef walk or indulge in water sports on kayaks, sail boats and pedal boats. Water sports crafts are given on hire. Available are two bathing huts with change rooms, at Koomel Beach Resort. A visit to the Baniyan factory and the light-house is also included in the day’s programme.

iii) Minicoy: Minicoy is about 10.6 kms long and ranks second areawise, first being Andrott. It is the southern most island in Lakshadweep, crescent shaped and has one of the largest lagoons. Minicoy is set apart from the Northern group of islands by way of culture; many men of the islands are employed as seamen in ocean going vessels world over. The island has systematically arranged villages known as ‘Athiris’. Minicoy is an important centre for tuna fishing with a light-house constructed in 1885. One can visit the villages, the tuna canning factory, the lighthouse and go for a long drive through dense coconut groves and winding village roads. There are bathing huts and change rooms; so one can swim and beach walk, Pedal boats, Kayaks and Sailing yachts are provided on hire.

iv) Kadmat: Kadmat is 8 kms long and 550 m wide at the broadest point. In addition to the beautiful shallow lagoon on the west that forms an ideal spot for water sports, there is a narrow lagoon on the east. The best attractions are the long sandy beaches and sand banks on the southern tip for sun baths. Kadmat has been identified for accommodating tourists with its tourists huts aesthetically situated in the coconut palm groves in the beaches facing the lagoon. The place is ideal for a real holiday that brings you away from the maddening crowd, hustle and bustle of the life. Water sports crafts and glass bottomed boats are available on hire.

v) Bangaram: There is something indescribably romantic about the very notion of an uninhabited island and Bangaram justifies that feeling. Tear drop shaped, it is enriched by a continuous halo of creamy sand. Like all the other islands of Lakshadweep, luxuriant plantations of coconut provide coolness even during the hottest part of the day, and the inland lake in the heart of Bangaram reflects the blue sky and graceful palms that surround it. There are three uninhabited islands some distance from Bangaram, perfect for a day’s outing. All the islands share the same lagoon, an enormous bowl of turquoise blue.

The resort offers you a variety of outdoor activities: Kayaks, Catamarans, Sailing, Snorkelling, Deep sea fishing, Scuba Diving etc. A well equipped and professionally manned scuba diving facility is available at the resort. As a diving location the virgin unexplored undersea off the reefs of Bangaram, has been ranked by experienced divers as being among the best anywhere. Recently an ancient shipwreck was discovered. Besides coral the undersea is particularly rich in big fish and turtles. Diving sites are off the reefs and are reached by boat. Diving courses and lagoon diving is offered for beginners. For deep sea big game fishing Bangaram is an ideal location. Record size Barracuda, Sailfish, Yellow fin, Travelly and Wahoo have been landed. Local boats are available for rent with experienced crew.

The resort is open round the year. From November to March and in August there are many tourists. Maximum capacity is 30 couples at a time. From April to September (except August) you will have the island almost to yourself. Casino Hotel, Cochin is the gateway to the Bangaram Island Resort.
14.6.4 Infrastructure

Power: All the ten inhabited Islands and one uninhabited Island namely Bangaram had been electrified by the end of Sixth Five Year Plan. Power supply is round the clock in all the Islands and is mainly through diesel generating sets. A gradual change is being made from the use of vehicles using fossil fuels to those that will work on electricity generated by solar/wind power.

Water Supply: All the inhabited Islands are problem villages as far as drinking water supply is concerned. There is no surface water available in these Islands as a source. The rain water collected under ground is to be tapped. However, since there is no proper organised sewerage disposal system, the ground water table is constantly getting contaminated. As part of investigation for proper utilisation of ground water, piped water supply is provided to the southern part of Kadmat Island covering about 100 families. A solar Distillation Plant having a capacity of 2,000 litres per day was erected at Bitra to feed the entire population on 19th January, 1983. A scheme for providing safe piped water supply to all other islands has been worked out. The scheme combines use of ground water with desalination of brackish water and rain water harvesting. However, bottled mineral water is available for tourists.

Transport and Communication: Till 1958–59, Odams (Sailing Vessels) were the only mode of surface communication between the islands and mainland. Till 1962–63, chartered ships were in service between the islands and between mainland and island. They could not operate during monsoon months (May to September). The major breakthrough came in 1970 with the launching of an all weather ship m.v. Aminidivi, and the dreadful isolation of the Islands during the monsoon was broken. With the increase of the developmental efforts of the Government and increase of population it was found that the two ships were inadequate to cope with the increased traffic. In 1982 another ship m.v. Bharat Seema was acquired by the Administration and put in operation in July, 1982. Inter-island surface communication was also improved to a noticeable extent with the arrival of the new ship. A ferry vessel has been received by the Lakshadweep Administration for inter-island trips. m.v Tipu Sultan with a passenger capacity of 658 which began service in September, 1988.

Although greater achievements were made in surface communication, the loading/unloading facilities from ship to shore and embarkation disembarkation to and fro the ship remain the same. These activities take place in the open sea. The risk involved is such that anything at any time may happen while loading/unloading and during embarkation/disembarkation. Difficulties experienced in time of emergencies have been eased when the Helicopter service, between mainland and island and inter Island was started on 31st January 1987. A new era was opened in the field of communication when the Vayudoot service between mainland and Agatti Island was started on 15th April, 1988. Low power TV transmitters are working in all inhabited Islands except Bitra.

Satellite Earth Stations have already been commissioned in Kavaratti and Minicoy. With the launching of Insat 1 B, Communication facilities with the mainland have improved. The headquarters Island Kavaratti is connected with the rest of the country through the Inter-state Police Wireless and with other Islands through a Microwave Wireless network. Minicoy and Kavaratti have STD facilities. FAX facilities link Kavaratti and Minicoy with Cochin and Delhi. The administration started a daily newspaper in October 1982, published simultaneously in all the Islands which was later changed to a weekly. The news is edited at Kavaratti and sent by postal telegram to all Islands where it is translated and mimeographed.

14.6.5 Accommodation

In order to meet the ever increasing demand for accommodation authorities have constructed a good number of huts. Details regarding the available accommodation facilities is shown in Table 3. No tourist accommodation exists other than the tourist huts on the five islands mentioned earlier. Similarly there are no restaurants and snack bars other than the one at the tourist complex in each island. Each island has a few 'dhaba' type restaurants serving local food only. Packing for the trip should therefore be as comprehensive as possible.

The tourist huts in each island are situated on the beach in ideal locations. Each hut has one or two bedrooms, the bedrooms having twin beds, mosquito nets, overhead
Local cuisines resemble food from Kerala for the spices and the extensive use of coconut. Breakfast could consist of Idlis or poorie-subzi and lunch and dinner of rice with dry vegetables, sambar and fish, chicken or mutton with gravy. Vegetarian meals are readily available on request. Coconut water and tender coconuts are very readily available, more so than aerated drinks. Most items of food supplies rice, vegetables tinned food etc. as well as a whole range of consumer goods have to be transported.

### Table 3: Tourist Accommodation Facilities in Lakshadweep

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Islands</th>
<th>Family huts</th>
<th>Beds</th>
<th>Restaurant for tourists</th>
<th>Honeymoon huts</th>
<th>Beds</th>
<th>Executive huts</th>
<th>Beds</th>
<th>Prefabricated huts</th>
<th>Beds</th>
<th>Private huts</th>
<th>Beds</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kavaratti</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bangaram</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kadmath</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>—</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kalpeni</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>—</td>
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<td>—</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>8</td>
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<td>—</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minicoy</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>—</td>
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<td>—</td>
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<tr>
<td>Agatti</td>
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<td>—</td>
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<td>—</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
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<td>—</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amini</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kiltan</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cheliat</td>
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<td>—</td>
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<td>—</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bitra</td>
<td>—</td>
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<td>—</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Androth</td>
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<td>—</td>
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<td>—</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>45</strong></td>
<td><strong>90</strong></td>
<td><strong>5</strong></td>
<td><strong>2</strong></td>
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<td><strong>12</strong></td>
<td><strong>1</strong></td>
<td><strong>2</strong></td>
<td><strong>7</strong></td>
<td><strong>14</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 14.6.6 How to Get There

Vayudoot had started operating regular flights from Cochin to Agatti island, the closest inhabited island to Bangaram. From Agatti, passengers are transported to Bangaram by fast boats and brought back to Agatti in time for their departure. A helicopter service links Agatti to other islands.

By ship — Two vessels, Bharat Seema and Tipu Sultan plv regularly between Cochin and Lakshadweep. Each has two and four berth air-conditioned cabins, as well as air cooled decks. Rates vary according to the type of accommodation as well as the package chosen. Prices are inclusive of ship fare, meals in the ship and islands, ferrying charges between ship and island (the ship anchors 30-45 minutes away from each island) transport charges in the islands, sightseeing charges, lagoon cruising and accommodation on the islands. Every journey of the ship between Cochin and an island as well as between one island and another takes anything from 3 to 20 hours. Indian meals are served on board. Each cabin is fitted with a wash basin. Bathrooms are common. Bed-linen and towels are provided.

Booking should be made a minimum of two months in advance. As the ship’s programme is subjected to change at the last moment for unforeseen reasons like medical evacuation etc. allow one day’s margin while making onward travel bookings.

### 14.6.7 Tips For Visitors

As mentioned earlier, Lakshadweep are India’s only coral islands. The islands themselves are formed from coral rock, and beautiful formations can be seen all over the lagoons. Tempting as it is to pick one piece up as a souvenir, it is strictly illegal, being punishable with heavy fines. This is because in doing so, you are seriously endangering the environment. Up marked brands of toiletries and cigarettes may not be available, neither would books and periodicals in any language other than Malayalam. Tropical clothes throughout the year will suffice; a waterproof coat during October-November will be useful. Consumption of liquor is permitted on board the ship and at Bangaram only. In all other islands prohibition is in force.
All visitors to Lakshadweep islands require an entry permit. For obtaining the permit, the following information are needed:

**Foreign Nationals**: Name, address, place and date of birth, nationality, passport number, date and place of issue, date of expiry.

**Indian Nationals**: Name, address, place and date of birth.

### 14.7 LET US SUM UP

In this Unit you have learnt about the emergence and growth of resorts from 17th century onwards and the concept of island and beach resorts. Spa resorts were the first specialised resorts that were developed. Later it was followed by seaside resorts. A resort is a vacation site with suitable accommodation, isolated quiet complexes with built-in recreation and sports facilities while retaining and improving the natural beauty of the environment.

Beach tourism and island tourism are two major segments of holiday tourism and they are closely interlinked. There are several issues involved in the development of beach and island resorts. As a resort is an entity by itself the factors to be considered for development are—the area/size of the resort, type and style of infrastructure needed, carrying capacity of the resort, availability of skilled manpower, local involvement and attitude towards tourism and scope for employment for the locals.

### 14.8 KEYWORDS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Definition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Backwater</td>
<td>Water held or pushed back by or as is by a dam or current.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carrying Capacity</td>
<td>Maximum number of people who can use a site without any unacceptable alteration to the quality of the physical environment and without any unacceptable decline to the quality of the experience gained by the visitors.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Catnarab</td>
<td>A raft of logs lashed together.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kayaks</td>
<td>A light weight, canvas covered canoe which is popular for sports.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lagoon</td>
<td>A body of salt water separated from the sea by sand or coral reefs or shingle bars.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resort</td>
<td>A vacation site frequented by visitors, which has facilities for accommodation and food with built-in recreation and sports facilities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sand bank</td>
<td>A bank of sand in a sea or river formed by currents and often exposed at low tide.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sauna</td>
<td>A steam bath treatment or recreation originating in Finland.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Screw pine</td>
<td>The bark of pine cut in the form of a screw.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Snorkelling</td>
<td>To swim underwater using a snorkel, a breathing apparatus consisting of a long tube held in mouth which projects above the surface of the water.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spa</td>
<td>A mineral spring.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 14.9 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS EXERCISES

**Check Your Progress 1**

1) See paragraph 1 and 3 of Sub-sec. 14.3.1.
2) See paragraph 4 of Sub-sec. 14.3.1.
Check Your Progress 2

1) Read Sec. 4.1.
2) See paragraph 3 and 4 of Sec. 4.2.
3) See paragraph 5 of Sec. 4.2.

Check Your Progress 3

1) You should offer the beauty of the beaches, facilities for aquatic sports, yoga etc. Base your answer on Sub-sec. 14.5.2.
2) See Sub-sec 14.5.5.
3) Read Sub-sec. 14.5.3 and base your answer on the sites and attractions mentioned there.
15.0 OBJECTIVES

This Unit covers hill stations as tourist resorts. Here in this Unit we will deal with selected aspects of tourism in general and hill tourism in particular. After reading this Unit you will be able to understand:

- the pull factors in hill tourism,
- the necessary infrastructure for the growth of hill resorts,
- the service opportunities that it generates, and
- finally some common do's and don'ts which tourists have to be made aware of.

15.1 INTRODUCTION

This Unit introduces the subject of hill tourism in India. For centuries the clean cool weather of the hills and their breathtaking beauty have drawn people from the plains of the country to visit hill resorts. Today, holidaying in the hills is no longer the preserve of the rulers or high government officials as it used to be in the recent past. Many ordinary middle class Indians can and do take a vacation in the hills in contrast to earlier times. Many foreign tourists also visit hill stations like Shimla, Darjeeling or Ootacamund. The ever increasing number of tourists coming to India's hill stations compels us to study how to develop this area of tourism keeping in mind the attendant dangers of uncontrolled and unplanned commercialization of hill resorts. This Unit takes into account the various aspects related to hill tourism in India.

15.2 PULL FACTORS IN HILL TOURISM

The phenomenon of movement of people from one place to another for varying periods of time is usually analyzed in terms of pull and push factors. Pull factors refer to the various reasons which attract people to come to one place from another. Push factors are those factors which provide an incentive to leave or go out from a particular place. The strength of pull factors is extremely significant in determining the tourist inflow and consequently the commercial viability and popularity of a hill resort. These pull factors may be classified into the following five categories:

i) Geographical location

ii) Accessibility
iii) Availability of services
iv) Adequate information, and finally
v) A congenial political and social atmosphere.

15.2.1 Geography

One of the most important factors which determines the popularity of a hill resort is its geography and topography. Altitude, the presence of natural features such as rivers, lakes, alpine meadows and proximity or at least a good view of high snow clad peaks considerably add to the charm and the pull of a hill resort. In a country like India the elevation or the altitude of a mountain resort is of crucial significance as it has direct bearing on the climate of the place. A large number of Indian tourists visit the hills in the summer months to escape the enervating heat of the plains. The high elevation of the hill resorts makes them cooler and offers a pleasant change. However, resorts located at high altitudes in the Himalayas tend to be seasonal ones because they become snow bound and very inaccessible in the winter months for the ordinary tourist. Most of the Himalayan hill resorts are thus located within an altitude range of 1900 to 3000 metres (6000 to 10000 feet) above sea level.

The presence of natural features such as lakes, rivers, rapids, rock formations, closeness to high altitude peaks and trekking routes also increase the popularity of a hill resort. For example tourists love to view the snowclad Nanddevi from Ranikhet or at practically every hill station climb up the highest point to have a view of snowclad mountains. Apart from adding to the aesthetic beauty of the resort these features also provide opportunities for the setting up of specialised sports such as river rafting, rock climbing, mountaineering and trekking (See Unit 13). The availability of good snow clad slopes, for instance, permit the organisation of winter sports such as skiing. Hill resorts of the country located outside the Himalayas may not be able to offer the pleasures of snow, ice, and coniferous forests to the visitor from the plains, but they do beckon them with cooler climates.

15.2.2 Accessibility

A large number of places in the hills possess the natural potential for attracting tourists but are frequented rarely by outside visitors because of their remoteness. The most popular hill resorts of the country are located relatively close to major urban centres in the plains. This is so because the major catchment area of potential tourists are to be found in large urban centres. However, with the growth of faster and more efficient transport services and the willingness of entrepreneurs to develop far flung centres as hill resorts this problem is gradually becoming less important. However, it must be noted that air travel and long train or bus journeys mean a drain on the pocket and a less affluent tourist continues to prefer resorts which are within close reach.

This explains why many of the hill resorts located in the lesser Himalayas, in spite of being crowded continue to attract the bulk of the tourist traffic from the major cities of northern and eastern India. The availability of convenient rail or road links greatly stimulate tourist inflow. Air links also facilitate in boosting the number of visitors, but this category is generally limited to the more affluent section of visitors. Similarly, we see that the hill stations of the Western Ghats and the Aravallis such as Ootacamund and Mount Abu are also located very close to large cities.

15.2.3 Services

Most tourists will venture to a hill resort only if they are assured of the availability of adequate services apart from communication such as boarding, lodging, medical aid and recreational facilities. An adequate number of hotels and lodges which cater to tourists from a wide income spectrum is an absolute necessity for attracting large numbers of visitors. The basic requirement for hotels, lodges and eating places, as well as for the resort as a whole is cleanliness. All tourists will look for these attributes.

Once the basic requirements are met, the tourism industry can provide different classes of hotels to cater to its specific clientele. Medical aid, adequate policing to ensure law and order and the efficient supply of information and help are vital prerequisites for the growth of any hill resort.
Check Your Progress 1

1) List five natural features that increase the popularity of a hill resort.

2) Why are hill resorts located in lesser Himalayas becoming popular today?

3) What basic requirements tend to boost tourist traffic at a particular hill station?

15.3 LINKAGE EFFECTS OF HILL TOURISM INDUSTRY

Like other industries, tourism has the capability of exerting strong backward and forward linkage effects with a number of other related areas of the economy.

Backward linkages pertain to the demand exerted by tourism on input sectors namely transport, the demand for specialised equipment (for example, in the case of adventure tourism, mountaineering and trekking equipment, rafts, hang gliders, etc.), services of tour agents and travel companies.
Forward linkages, have a more immediate and direct impact on the local economy of the tourist resort. These include the growth of local hotels, local sightseeing services, the demand for services such as that for tourist guides, porters, entertainment facilities (e.g. horse riding, yatching, boating, skating, skiing etc.). Further, local handicraft industries of the region also receive a tremendous demand stimulus for their products with the growth of a brisk tourist traffic.

Now that we have sketched a general picture of the prerequisites for the growth of a tourist resort and some of its possible positive effects on the economy, let us briefly state a few precautions that have to be kept in mind in the course of the development of hill tourism.

**Do's and Don'ts:**

One crucial factor which motivates the tourist to visit a hill resort is the desire to experience the clean environment of the hills which stands in marked contrast to the pollution and crowding of the city from where he comes.

These days one finds that driven by the highly lucrative nature of hill tourism, this industry is developing in many areas at a very rapid rate in a totally haphazard and unplanned manner. Resorts, such as Manali, which once used to be perfectly quiet and picturesque retreats have in the recent past been transformed into highly commercialized and crowded settlements replete with smoke and noise pollution. The burgeoning expansion of this industry in other hill resorts such as Mussoorie, have led to severe deforestation, and ecological harm. Rapid, unplanned tourist resort expansion might earn the smart investor a fast buck in the short-term, but this leads to a serious decline of the area’s tourist potential in the long run. The tourists must be made aware of the serious harm that they are capable of inflicting on the environment. They should be constantly reminded and educated about the need, for instance, of not littering the countryside with waste or denuding natural flora and fauna. The tourist should realize that though on a short vacation at a hill resort, he or she should not offend the sensibilities of the local population. For example, many hill folk do not like being photographed by strangers. The camera toting visitor in his eagerness to take back home photographic memories of his short holiday should not go around clicking madly and earn the displeasure of the locals. The attempt of the tourist, as an outsider should be to understand the customs of the area and try not to force himself on the local people.

### 15.4 REPRESENTATIVE HILL RESORTS

We shall now study some representative hill resorts from various parts of India to illustrate concretely the points discussed above.

The hill resorts selected here for such study are located in the Himalayas, the Aravallis and the Western Ghats.

#### 15.4.1 The Himalayan Resorts

The Himalayas, in an arc shaped formation, extend 2500 kilometers from west to east and over 250 kilometers from north to south. They are divided into the Main, Middle and Outer or Lesser Himalayas in terms of the altitude of the mountain ranges. It is within the Outer Himalayas that the Sivaliks (in the west) and the Doars (in the east) are located. The Himalayas, vary greatly in their climate from region to region. Tropical climate characterizes the foothills, whereas moderate climate marks the foothills of the outer Himalayas. As one travels further north, the alpine climatic conditions are found in the Central Ranges and a dry continental climate in the valleys and plateaus north of the Main ranges.

The important and popular tourist hill resorts lie within an altitude range of 1600 to 2000 metres in the moderate climatic zone in the Sivaliks, the valleys south of the Central Range and in the eastern Doars. In India, these include the Kashmir Valley, Kulu, Kanghara, Manali, Simla, the middle part of Sikkim and Darjeeling.

i) **Manali**: Manali which is connected by road to major North Indian cities such as Delhi and Chandigarh, has developed into a most popular hill resort in the past few decades. Located in the upper reaches of the Kulu valley at an elevation of 1220 metres, it permits a spectacular view of snow capped mountain peaks both to the north and the south.
The view of high awe inspiring peaks, freshness of its cedar forests, the gurgling of the river Beas which flows through the town, and its use as a base station for mountaineering expeditions attract both the adventurous as well as the most sedate visitor. The geography and topography of Manali have contributed significantly in making the town a major tourist attraction.

Manali is the major take off point for a large number of trekking trails, including those in Lahaul and Spiti. Treks to the Rohtang Pass, Beas Kund, Chandertal and many other places can be accomplished within two to four days of easy walking. Mountaineering expeditions to the Shitidhar Ridge in the north and peaks to the north east such as Deo Tibba and Aliratni Tibba also have to use Manali as their logistics centre. The Mountaineering Institute at Manali organizes courses on rock climbing, high altitude trekking, mountaineering and skiing.

Manali has in the last few decades also developed as a centre for winter sports. Solang, located just 12 kilometers to the north of the town has excellent slopes suited to both the beginner and the expert.

Apart from trekking and mountaineering, the Beas is famous for trout fishing. A license for this can be obtained from the Tourist Office.

For the less adventurous, the hot sulphur bath at Vashist, located only 3 kilometers from the town, the medieval temple of Hidamba Devi, a Tibetan monastery and the market would be of interest.

Manali is well connected by long distance buses to Delhi, Chandigarh and Simla. The tourist can choose between the more plebeian ordinary bus or the deluxe coaches run both by the Government as well as private operators. Taxi cabs can also be hired from Delhi, Chandigarh and other places to Manali. The resort is also accessible by air. Indian Airlines and private air taxis ferry passengers from Delhi to Bhuntar, which is located in Kulu.

Manali caters very well to all the needs of a wide variety of tourists with different interests and budgets. The Government runs hotels and restaurants which range from the relatively cheap but comfortable to the extremely luxurious up market ones. In addition to State run tourism services private entrepreneurs are increasingly setting up similar establishments. The Tourism Office provides a wealth of information to the new visitor ranging from the names of tariffs of hotels to detailed trekking maps of the region.

With the marked increase in the popularity of trekking and mountaineering a good number of companies have been set up in Manali which hire camping gear and make arrangements for porters, pack animals and high altitude guides. The Manali Mountaineering Institute provides trained mountaineers to help in rescue work in emergencies. The rapid growth of Manali as a hill resort has led to a proliferation of tour operators and travel companies who undertake to make arrangements for tourists from big metropolitan cities like Delhi. Communications with this resort have also been upgraded in response to increased tourist demand.

The resort’s marked growth has greatly stimulated local building industry in the region and has provided a large number of local youth an opportunity to get employment in the local hospitality industry.

However, while Manali’s exponential growth graph augurs well for short-term profitability, it is vital to safeguard the town from the dangers of ecological degradation and the forcing out the genuine people by profit hungry entrepreneurs.

ii) Darjeeling : Darjeeling, nestling among in the Kanchenjunga ranges, is the major hill resort of eastern India. Like Shimla and Mussoorie in the north west, Darjeeling too owes its origins as a hill resort to the colonial government. During British rule it was the summer capital of the Bengal Government. The town was planned and established by Lord Napier of the Royal Engineers and separated from Sikkim in 1835.

Its cool and fresh climate, combined with its connection to the plains by rail and the development of tea plantations in the area, stimulate its growth as a hill resort.

After Tenzing and Hillary scaled the Everest, the Himalayan Mountaineering Institute was set up in Darjeeling. This Institute, while being a premier training institution is also a place of tourist interest. Compared to the hill resorts of North India, Darjee-
Tourist Sites: Products and Operations

Trekking and the Toy Train

Trekking is still much less crowded. One area of tourism which has tremendous potential, but is as yet relatively untapped in this region is that of trekking. While nearby Nepal is synonymous with hiking and trekking, this activity is still to be exploited fully in Darjeeling. The area's rich flora and fauna makes trekking a most rewarding experience. The toy train is a great attraction for the tourists.

15.4.2 Non Himalayan Hill Resorts

It must be kept in mind that hill resorts are not always located nestling in the lap of high snow clad mountains. Apart from the Himalayan hill resorts, the other hill stations of the country are found in the Aravallis of western India, the Western Ghats and the hill ranges of central India. These resorts, such as Mount Abu, Matheran, Ootacamund, Kodaikanal, Ponmudi and Pachmarhi, have the advantage of a cooler climate and lower population density compared to the major urban settlements in the vicinity, as they are located at relatively high elevations.

Amongst the more popular and well known hill resorts which lie outside the Himalayas are Mount Abu in Rajasthan, Pachmarhi in Madhya Pradesh and Ootacamund or Ooty in Tamilnadu.

i) Mount Abu : Mount Abu is the only hill resort of Rajasthan. It caters mainly to Indian tourists. The cooler climate of this 1220 metre granite plateau in the Aravallis attracted the attention of the British. In 1845 it was leased for the British Resident of Rajputana as a summer resort from its native ruler. The history of Mount Abu, however, goes back by about a thousand years, not as a hill resort but as a Jain temple town. The bulk of tourists visiting Mount Abu come from the cities of Rajasthan and Gujarat. Some visitors from Delhi can also be found frequenting this resort, which is open the year round.

Mount Abu is located just 27 kilometers away from the Abu Road which serves as the rail head and 185 kilometers from the nearest airport, which is at Udaipur. Long distance buses also connect the resort to the major cities of northern and western India.

Its cooler climate, its picturesque craggy outcrops, the central Nakki Lake and the plethora of marvelous Hindu and Jain marble temples are the major tourist attractions. The steep granite rock formations which surround Mt. Abu make excellent rock pitches. These range from slopes for scrambling to climbs of great heights. This potential of the resort has been recognized by the State government which has established a training establishment for rock climbers. However, with adventure sports fast becoming very popular, adequate publicity and necessary infrastructural facilities such as accident relief units, maps and supply of equipment will go a long way in attracting many more rock climbers to Mt. Abu.

A relative advantage which Mt. Abu has, in spite of not possessing many of the climatic and geographical features of the Himalayan hill resorts, is its ability to attract those tourists from the neighbouring states, who prefer not to venture too far to enjoy the comforts of the hills. Many such, hill resorts are to be found in a number of non-Himalayan Indian states which include Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Rajasthan, Tamilnadu and Kerala. In terms of tourist inflow many of these may not match the Himalayan hill resorts, but are locally significant nevertheless.

ii) Ootacamund : Ootacamund or Ooty as it more popularly referred to is another major non Himalayan hill resort. Once again we see that it was developed as a hill station by the colonial rulers. Discovered by accident by some British officers, Sullivan, the Collector of Coimbatore immediately set about establishing a new station here. What drew the immediate attention of the British was the areas similarity with the landscape and the climate of their homeland. Stephen Lushington, the Governor of Madras took a great deal of interest in developing Ooty as a hill station. One British official remarked, “It will be the glory of Mr. Lushington's government without any extravagant hyperbole that he has introduced Europe into Asia or such are his improvements in the Neilghirires.” Located at 2240 metres Ooty offers a pleasant climate, with temperature ranging from 25°C to nearly 0°C in winter. Apart from its coniferous flora and comfortable weather, this hill resort is in many ways a living monument of a British colonial summer resort. Imported names, architectural forms and even some of the idiosyncrasies of the English have been carefully preserved here. The Wesleyan Church, the Collectorate, the Ootacamund Club, the fox (the poor jackal being substituted for the more exotic fox in the colony) Hunt and Snookers all bear...
testimony to this. Thus Ooty is in more than one way a good example of a typical Raj period summer retreat. Ooty is well connected by road, rail and air to the major cities of South India.

Other than the above discussed few major hill resorts most of the northern States of India as well as the peninsular states can boast of a number of hill resorts. These may not be as well known and lucrative in terms of tourists turnover, but they do meet the minimum requirements of a hill resort. These include Ponmudi and Munnar in Kerala, Madikeri in Karnataka, Pacmarhi in Madhya Pradesh, Kalimpong and Gangtok in the north east, and a large number of relatively unknown mountain resorts in Garhwal, Kumaon land Kashmir.

Check Your Progress 2

1) Which are the important trekking trails for which Manali is the take off point?

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2) Who established the town of Darjeeling? When was it separated from Sikkim?

3) What is the location of Mount Abu?

SOME TIPS FOR YOU

1) Familiarise yourself with the geographical locations, flora, fauna and attractions offered at various hill stations and their best seasons.

2) You should know the modes of transport and link transport. For example Ooty, Shimla and Darjeeling are three such hill stations where journey by toy train is an added attraction and unique experience. This you must highlight to the would be tourist.

3) You should be aware about the crowded hill stations and the lonely ones to be suggested accordingly to the tourist. Write ups in newspapers offer you regular information in this regard.

4) You should be able to advise the tourist where to stay as per the budget and the type of accommodation available.

15.5 NEED FOR NEW HILL RESORTS

In the interests of equitable development of the tourism industry and to prevent irreversible environmental degradation it is crucial that the tourism industry makes a concerted effort to develop new hill resorts. Most of India’s hill resorts were developed as summer retreats and sanatoria for colonial bureaucrats and soldiers. These hill stations were thus not planned for accommodating highly seasonal and heavy tourist inflows. The increase in vehicular traffic has led to atmospheric pollution. Similarly, the cutting down of forests to construct potentially lucrative hotels have resulted in considerable deforestation. Deforestation in the hill areas poses a great threat to the fragile ecosystem of the hills. In many places such as Mussoorie and the Donn Valley excessive quarrying to supply the increasing demands for building materials in the expanding hill resorts have led to deforestation and consequent landslips and landslides. Unplanned municipal expansion of hill resorts located on rivers and lakes have led to the possibility of these water bodies getting polluted. The case of the Dal lake in Srinagar is a case to point.
While regulating the flow of tourist traffic to hill resorts which seem to be on the brink of environmental collapse by administrative fiat may not be received well, it would be a good idea to develop newer hill resorts. These will provide the visitor with the welcome features that he or she is in search of like uncrowded environs, a sense of distance from the bustle and din of the cities, in short, a refreshing change. While allowing the visitor to be closer to nature and the hills, the developing of a number of hill resorts will ease the mounting pressure on the existing high profile hill stations.

The development of the lucrative tourist industry is increasingly becoming more capital intensive. The emphasis is to attract the upmarket end of the tourist clientele and provide them with the most up to date and expensive facilities. These, in turn, have meant that the hospitality industry has become more and more capital intensive. An increase in capital intensity consequently emasculates the potential of small local entrepreneurs in entering this field. One impact of the increasing flow of tourists into a concentrated geographical zone is to widen the economic gulf between the visitors and the local population. While tourists must be told how not to insult local customary practices, it is also important that the local population should look on the tourist as a beneficial visitor and the tourism industry as not antithetical to their daily welfare and interests. For such an attitude to develop in the long run it is necessary that the local people have substantial stake in the industry and are empowered to take long-term policy decisions.

Check Your Progress 3

1) What is the argument in favour of developing new hill resorts?

2) Why is hill tourism becoming more capital intensive?

15.6 LET US SUM UP

We introduced you to the importance of hill stations for tourism purpose in this Unit. You also noted the significance of pull factor in the growth of a hill station. The advantages which a particular hill station enjoyed over others in terms of its geography
Tourist Sites: Products and Operations—2

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gave it a superior developmental thrust. The other important factors deserving consideration are the accessibility and the quality of services available at different hill stations. These variables were finally checked in specific cases pertaining to the Himalayan and non-Himalayan Hill Stations.

15.7 KEYWORDS

Altitude: Height of a hill station
Breathtaking: Without suspicion
Meadow: Piece of Grassland
Pull Factor: Reasons for inbound attraction
Push Factor: Reasons for outbound attraction

15.8 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS EXERCISES

Check Your Progress 1
1) See Sub-sec. 15.2.1.
2) Because of their easy accessibility. For details see Sub-sec. 15.2.2.
3) Good and plentiful accommodation. For details see Sub-section 15.2.3.

Check Your Progress 2
1) See Sub-sec. 15.4.1 — Manali
2) See Sub-sec. 15.4.1 — Darjeeling
3) See Sub-sec. 15.4.2 — Mount Abu

Check Your Progress 3
1) In the interest of equitable development and for preventing environmental degradation. For details see Sec. 15.5.
2) See Sec. 15.5.

ANNEXURE

List of Important Hill Stations in India

KASHMIR:
1) Srinagar
2) Pahalgam
3) Gulmarg
4) Leh (Ladakh)

HIMACHAL PRADESH:
1) Dalhousie
2) Chamba
3) Dharamsala
4) Kulu
5) Manali
6) Shimla
7) Kasauli
8) Lahaul & Spiti
9) Chail

UTTAR PRADESH:
1) Pauri Garhwal
2) Mussorie
3) Rishikesh
4) Nainital
5) Ranikhet
6) Almora

WEST BENGAL:
1) Darjeeling

SIKKIM:
1) Gangtok
2) Kalimpong

MEGHALAYA:
1) Shillong

MADHYA PRADESH:
1) Pachmarhi

RAJASTHAN:
1) Mount Abu

MAHARASHTRA:
1) Matheran
2) Lonavala
3) Khandala
4) Panchgani
5) Mahabaleshwar

TAMIL NADU:
1) Ootacamund
2) Kodaikanal

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Note: Detailed information on these hill stations about the facilities and the accommodation available there, may be had from the Tourism Departments of the respective states.
UNIT 16 WILDLIFE: JIM CORBETT AND GIR NATIONAL PARKS

Structure
16.0 Objectives
16.1 Introduction
16.2 Experiencing Wildlife
16.3 Network of Wildlife Preserves
16.4 Renewing Bonds With Nature
16.5 Wildlife Attractions
16.6 National Parks
16.6.1 Corbett
16.6.2 Gir
16.7 Let Us Sum Up
16.8 Key Words
16.9 Answers to Check Your Progress Exercises

16.0 OBJECTIVES

This Unit deals with the wildlife of India as it pertains to the tourism industry. After reading it you will get to know the:
- utility of wildlife for tourism purposes,
- summary details of India's wildlife preserves, and

16.1 INTRODUCTION

The world of Indian wildlife is quite fascinating. In fact this subject has such endless possibilities that any attempt to cover one or more of its facets obviously looks inadequate. We have, therefore, decided to approach the subject of wildlife in a slightly different manner. In this Unit the wildlife of India has been seen through the eyes of an avowed wildlife enthusiast. The first hand experience of this lover of nature forms the earlier half of this Unit. You enter a wildlife presence with this person and see, feel and interact with the flora and fauna of the Indian jungle with him. You empathise with nature, you react just as this person does, you appreciate, and you despair. This unison is what, we hope, will eventually make a true connoisseur of you.

In the latter half of this Unit we have given you two case studies — that of the Jim Corbett National Park and the Gir National Park. The details provided there will help you in planning a tourist itinerary to a wildlife sanctuary. You will also be able to appreciate the problems encountered by preservationists and get to know the efforts made to overcome them.

A list of India's Wildlife Sanctuaries and National Parks has been given at the end of the Unit as an annexure. A map appended here gives you the locations of these places in the country.

16.2 EXPERIENCING WILDLIFE

I was woken just before dawn by the persistent calls of warblers and sunbirds. On emerging sleepily from the confines of the ancient forest bungalow, built during the British Raj at Dhimbhum in Kerala's Satyamagalam forest block, the first sight to greet me through the light mist was a bevy of small minivets adorning the compound trees like so many scarlet and yellow christmas decorations. I was shaken from my reverie by a bird which flew low over my head from behind me to settle on a nearby banyan...
tree. Through my binoculars I saw its flaming-orange and black coloration and leafed through Salim Ali’s Guide to the Birds of the Indian Subcontinent to discover its flycatcher identity. I quickly added another ‘tick’ to my lifetime tally of 210 species of birds and settled down in the short grass, a steaming flask of tea for company, to observe the bird from a distance of less than 20 metres.

After making some cursory field notes I began to head back to the bungalow where breakfast in the form of steaming idlis, dosas and strong coffee awaited me. A rustling sound from a nearby leaf-littered flower bed drew my attention to slow-moving brown form which turned out to be a rat snake which I had obviously disturbed. As it moved sluggishly away I smiled inwardly at the ability of these creatures to survive in this new and strangely aggressive India.

In India there is a lot of wildlife to be seen and more nature to be experienced in the raw than almost any other country in the world. It is, of course, the wild animals themselves that ensure that the Indian subcontinent remains productive, in spite of the fact that human beings mismanage this garden of plenty with such irresponsible abandon.

The conservation movement in India is attempting to rekindle the love and respect for nature in the citizenry of India and most environmentalists agree that there can be few better ways to convey the worth and fragility of our natural heritage to citizens than to encourage them to experience nature first hand. This naturally involves the setting up of some facilities including transport roads, clean and safe places in which to stay, orientation centres and literature which tells of the history, sociology, geography and wildlife of the area. Of such ingredients should wildlife tourism be composed.

We would stress that the sole purpose of inviting people to visit India, or to move from one to the other destination in India should not be to extract the maximum possible money from them in the shortest possible time. Rather, it should be to offer them an insight into a life filled with inner peace and philosophy and to share with them the ambience of the real India which had led ours to become one of the world’s most ancient and respected civilisations.

The rampant freshness and the sounds and the ethereal ambience created in their account of nature would enthrall inevitably wildlife enthusiasts. Such is its charm that they are enveloped with the desire to experience all of it personally. An equally charming account of the rich Indian wildlife has been aimed at in this Unit. The magic woven thus, we are hopeful, would be of immense help to you in tourism profession.

### 16.3 NETWORK OF WILDLIFE PRESERVES

In the closing moments of the 20th century we see that India’s natural wealth has been defiled. Most of what remains can now be found largely in protected areas from which commerce has been excluded. These are our wildlife havens. It must be said to the credit of the Indian government that from 10 national parks and 127 sanctuaries occupying about 25,000 sq. km. in 1970, the total protected area network in 1991 went up to 1,32,000 sq. km. with 66 national parks and 421 sanctuaries. Proposals mooted a couple of years ago exist on file today to increase this area to 1,83,000 sq. km, that is around 5.6 per cent of the country’s land area, comprising 147 national parks and 633 sanctuaries. The Wildlife (Protection) Act 1972 protects such areas from the forces of commerce and industry, and from exploitation by all other sources which might harm their fragile natural processes.

The prime purpose of these delicate areas is to hold, forever, the precious biodiversity which evolved on earth over several ages. No doubt elephants and tigers will benefit from enhanced protection, but, as we have seen, such areas also supply humans, particularly India’s 60 million tribal people, with uncounted goods and services, such as water, fuel, fodder, fibre and food. Quite literally, without these pristine wildernesses life on earth would become unlivable — even for humans living far from such natural areas in cities. There is great need, therefore, to transport people from afar to these wildernesses so that the appreciation of nature is rooted within their consciousness.

Each reserve has its own particular charm and its geographical characteristics determine the best way to view it. Most often, real appreciation can only emerge when the tourist spends a few days at the site to allow the city to seep out of his or her system, while the wilderness seeps in. Transport is a major limiting factor for most reserves,
but in most of the larger complexes a combination of buses, elephants, private cars and even cycles and trekking, allows visitors to see the reserves at their own pace.

It must be admitted here that while tourism can and should play a positive role in ensuring the long-term survival of our wilds, we should not forget the dark side. Certain quick operators searching to squeeze fast money by cramming too many visitors into fragile wildernesses bring a bad name to tourism. Most often the adverse effects emerge where commerce replaces education as the prime motivating factor. Luxury tourism is particularly prone to abuse, as is mass tourism. Certain tourists unknowingly or knowingly, become participants in activities that have adverse effects of wild life. For example, in the case of well-to-do travellers seeking adventure, we have seen that most choose to visit remote areas to be one with nature but that they invariably demand the comforts of urbania. this causes problems of waste disposal, fuel-wood consumption and also social tensions when villagers, prevented from accessing forest wealth themselves, see outsiders enter freely as latter-day maharajas. This has been a particularly vexing factor around Indian wilderness areas. At times the park authorities, who are routinely ruthless in their treatment of locals, offer red carpet treatment to VIPs. Cases of underhand transactions, encroachments and poaching are also there.

Unchecked, such policies eventually destroy the very assets that attract people from distant places in the first place. Discerning tourists, of course, stop frequenting ruined destinations long before they die. Nowhere can this be better seen in India than the Ranthsor Ghar Tiger Reserve which is a haven in decline. Some years ago a rash of high and low class hotels cropped up like unfettered mush-rooms as thousands flocked to catch weekend glimpses of its famous tigers. The forest became a free-for-all which even drew the entrance of tiger poachers for the first time in decades. Over 20 tigers are suspected to have died in the process and a court-appointed committee was formed to inquire into the whole mess. Whatever be the outcome of such post-mortems, the coup de grace for such unfortunate habitats is normally administered by smaller-time black-sheep money-grabbers who move into the void created when the equally irresponsible ‘high class’ operators move out. At times luring the burgeoning middle class with cut-throat rates to destinations associated with the rich and famous, some businessmen run amok searching for quick profits, caring little for pristine forests, or local sensibilities.

We must understand that we cannot even create, or look after, or repair, a single square kilometre of natural forest, or swamp, or grassland in the terai belt of Uttar Pradesh or Bihar without the aid of wild animals—butterflies, birds, bees, tigers and turtles. Their conservation is currently accorded such far too low a priority.

16.4 RENEWING BONDS WITH NATURE

I have travelled the length and breadth of this diverse and wonderful nation and in my meanderings I have learned from our people that the fount of our civilisation was the forest. Not so much for its ‘giving’ nature, but more on account of our god-like respect born of the realisation that it is impossible to improve on nature.

If there is one central theme which should guide all tourism efforts in India, it should be to educate the tourist and waken him or her to the wonders inherent in India’s civilisation. Trying to compete with, or out-do, industrial nations by offering ‘plastic’ and sanitised five-star luxuries to their citizens at wildlife destinations will leave us the worse for our efforts. Not merely will we damage our environment, but we will almost certainly not be able to sustain these as destinations.

Tourism policy planners within the government of India, as also tourism promoters in the private sector, should recognise that the conservation of nature presents our nation with its best hope to uplift the quality of life of our people. This is the only realistic way to work towards health and nutrition for all and equity for those who are a part of the market system. Nature can provide clean water, food, shelter and dignity as no man-made enterprise could ever hope to. The conservation movement must in fact be recognised for what it is, a strong bond between two very powerful streams which have joined issue — the environment, and human rights. It is in this context that plans should be made for tourism into fragile areas which are the life-blood of millions of people through the length and breadth of India.
The very first communication from India, to all potential overseas wildlife-tourists, should be that India is distinctly different from Africa. If we fail to do this, preferring instead to ‘lure’ rich tourists to our country by billing our wilds as ‘competitive’ destinations to Africa, we will be obliged to offer all the trapings—hot air ballons, champagne breakfasts, air-conditioned Land Rovers and flush-toilet-equipped tents. While it is certainly within our capacity (but against the interests of the wilds) to cater to such luxuries for a handful of tourists, it is inconceivable that we would be able to create such infrastructure for the vast majority. This will lead to short cuts, tacky imitations and frustrated tourists. If, on the other hand, we concentrate on offering wholesome, meaningful value-for-money, and typically Indian experiences, we will reap the harvest of sustained tourism. By comparing ourselves to Africa we will inevitably come off second-best on the big-game viewing experience. For example, in Africa a spotter with a pair of binoculars can easily locate a pride of lions, a herd of wildbeast or giraffe, up to two kilometres away and then drive tourists to the spot in five minutes. In India you could be ten feet from a tiger and not even see the animal.

There is a kind of magic to be felt in the Indian jungle, with its dappled gloom and unearthly sounds. Clearly, the Indian wildlife experience must be sold differently. But to do this the seller must have awareness to wildlife and imagination. Similarly persons who have real knowledge of the jungle must be allowed to participate in the ‘teaching venture’. Without a shadow of doubt the Kipling-esque ambience of our leafy jungles and the friendliness of our people is a major selling point. The bald truth, in any event, is that Indian forests are more dense and actual wildlife viewing is consequently more difficult than it is in Africa. Those who promise, therefore, to ‘guarantee’ a tiger sighting, or even an elephant sighting, will either end up breaking or bending rules to ‘satisfy’ their customer, or lose such a customer altogether. Vastly preferable would be a policy which relies on the proper orientation of tourists, avoiding the pitfalls of over-promising ‘goodies’, or offering super-luxuries which cannot be delivered.

Tourists respect honesty. And when they return to their homes they are more likely to carry memories of the ambiance of the forest than the colour of tiled bathrooms or programmes beamed on satellite television. Tourism promoters would therefore be well advised to build up on the total ecological experience of their customers. Towards this end they could involve individuals, from well respected institutions such as the Bombay Natural History Society (BNHS), who can accompany groups and help bring the jungle alive for a modest fee.

To help create awe and respect for the Indian jungle in the mind of the tourist, the tour operator must first posses such respect. When the Indian monsoon breaks over this magnificent tangle of green, for instance, it can take as long as an hour for the first drops to reach the forest floor. Several layers of umbrella-like vegetation first trap the rain, holding it, using it, and then, almost reluctantly, passing it downward. I have often watched the process long after a cloudburst has passed, as drops trickle downwards along creepers, lianas and ferns, to ultimately reach the leaf-littered forest floor. From here it seeps gently into the rich humous to dribble eventually into underground aquifers which feed our lakes and rivers. At every step the waters nurture life forms of unique diversity, including insects, amphibians, reptiles, birds and mammals, some of which have probably not yet been recorded by science. In exchange, these very creatures contrive to plant and maintain their green mansion. Without the mantle of natural cover, the rain would quickly wash away, the top soil, thus depriving these tall trees of their major source of nutrition. Desertification would soon follow. This connection, between forests and water, so well known to our ancients, has completely escaped modern man who simply does not possess the technology to plant forests as miraculously effective as those that clothe the Himalaya, or even the dry scrub of Rajasthan.

Understanding is the key to appreciation. Tourists must be made to understand the processes of nature, if we are to expect them to avoid abusing it. So how did this remarkable natural wealth come about? A short audio visual programme to orient all tourists who come to the national parks and sanctuaries could show that life began in the sea and moved to the land only as a result of major upheavals around 435 million years ago. At first, even when plants colonised the land, virtually the only colour present on Earth, apart from that of rock, soil, sky and water, was green. Plants propa-
Tourist Sites: Products and Operations—2.

gated themselves by haphazardly casting spores and seeds. It was a very expensive way to multiply for cycads, conifers and these ferns. There were then no flowers on earth.

The first flower that bloomed on Earth was born in response to an evolutionary miracle. The creatures which followed the plants from the sea to the land, learned first to crawl then glide and, ultimately, to fly. Mysterious evolutionary urges led plants to discover that the flying creatures could provide a most useful ‘courier’ service. Why scatter million of seeds through air and water in the hope of random success, if flying insects could be enticed to carry a single seed for perfect positioning directly on another suitable plant? The process of pollination was refined to near-perfection by the evolution of insect flight. And the Earth was coloured by a million blooms. More than biology lesson, bees and flowers teach us lesson in development ethics and responsibility. Consider for a moment what the state of our world would be, if every single flower visited by a bee were to shrivel the Earth within a week. Insects, fortunately, are incapable of undertaking such a deadly task. They do not possess the technology to destroy Earth’s resource base. Only humans own this lethal talent.

16.6 NATIONAL PARKS

As mentioned earlier it is impossible for tourists to come to India and be assured of ‘big game’ sighting within the span of a day or two. Nevertheless, they can be assured of deep inspiration from the lesser known creatures of nature—spiders, termites, lizards, amphibians, and, of course, birds. Properly oriented, every tourist can be given a holistic experience, even in a short span of time, provided they are encouraged to ‘lose themselves’ in nature’s wonderland. Consider for a moment the humble moth, which most people do not pay second thought to, but which is among nature’s most remarkable animals. Male and female moths can locate each other from a distance of over two kilometres by following each other’s scent trails. The secret lies in chemical receptors which can detect pheromones secreted by a partner. If a human being were to be able to perform the same feat we would call it extra-sensory perception. In order to survive, nature has given every creature unique abilities and gifts. We have not even begun to document these natural phenomenon, yet we have embarked on a mission to destroy them. Like bees, moths are pollinators too, but they choose to be active at night. They therefore prefer light coloured flowers which are easily visible in the dark and are thus able to sustain themselves with little or no competition from their near relatives, the butterflies.

While big game may be difficult to spot, almost every leaf in the wilderness hides well-camouflaged creatures such as the helmeted grasshopper, or the chameleon that preys on it. Tourists could bask in voyages of wonder, searching more closely for the ‘lesser’ life forms. The grasshopper is a vital part of the greater scheme, which biology students know of as the food chain. Plants use the energy from the sun to build body tissues. The grasshopper uses such plants to build its own body tissues. It ultimately becomes prey for innumerable smaller predators including lizards, frogs, jungle cats and even jackals. Such miracles of discovery await every tourist who comes to the wild provided enough curiosity has been packed along with his or her travel kit. Such tourists have the potential to become life-time ambassadors for nature.

16.6.1 Corbett

Walking out from under the gloom of the sal jungle, I squinted as I took in the vista that stretched brightly out before me. It was high summer. And save for an occasional pool of water, the river bed was sandy and dry. As I gingerly made my way down the steep bank I could see a heat shimmer rise gently from the baking yellow sands. Walking northwards along the tree-fringed river, sand crunching softly underfoot, I was acutely aware of the jungle symphony around me. Doves, coppersmiths, mynas, flycatchers and thrushes worked laboriously at their respective songs and calls, announcing territorial rights to whom it may concern.

Occasionally, a whitebreasted kingfisher would screech dominance over the forest, his call carrying for hundreds of metres in all directions. Langurs, chital and the occasional peacock completed the philharmonic performance, their whoops, screams and cries supplementing the jungle’s audio-offerings to perfection.
Apart from the awe and wonder that untamed places so easily inspire in those with open minds, wildernesses also have a way of instilling a sense of proportion into egos numbed by the illusionary power of big city life. The evolutionary forces responsible for the equilibrium between plant, animal and climate are, after all, way beyond our knowledge. Most of the processes, communication techniques, checks and balances in nature would easily put our most sophisticated scientific endeavours to shame. Scientists, for instance, can continue to dissect and document the chain of events leading up to the blossoming of a simple flower till they are blue in the face; yet will be unable to replicate the chemical and physical processes required to recreate even one bloom in their laboratories.

There is a peace to be experienced in the Indian jungle which is quite indescribable. The variety, complexity and beauty of the wilderness combines to create an imposing atmosphere which injects one with a deep sense of humility. In my head the thought flashed: “We were not responsible for the creation of this miracle, this incredible conglomerate of living forms. How can we possibly justify its senseless destruction?”

The year was 1983. And I was in the Corbett Tiger Reserve situated in the foothills of the ancient Shiwalik range. Exactly ten years earlier, Project Tiger had been launched here amidst much fanfare. Ironically, within a year, in 1974, the infamous Kalagarh dam across the Ramganga began to drown some of the finest chaurs (grasslands) and sheeshum-clothed forests of Patlidun in the very heart of Corbett. Predictably, as the waters rose, chital, wild boar, hog deer and monkeys fled to the safety of higher or outer reaches. Carnivores soon followed suit. And in the buffer zone they began to come into conflict with humans whose domestic animals fell easy prey to tigers and leopards. The migratory routes of elephants were also disrupted and this merely added to the chaos that prevailed within Corbett for a while. Additionally, an uncounted number of animals and plants perished under the swirling waters of the damned Ramganga. In those early days, wildlife conservation was considered to be little more than the pastime of the rich.

I had read much about this ‘land of roar and trumpet’, named after the legendary hunter-conservationist Jim Corbett, but this was my first visit to the fabled forests. With me was Idu, a mahout (elephant handler) and my guide for the day. As we walked, Idu spoke of his jungle, his respect for its ways and his almost religious belief in nature’s supremacy over man’s will and ambition. He knew his forest like the back of his hand and he shared his intimate knowledge with me as he led me surely across his exquisite domain.

The Corbett jungle throbbed with life and the river bed told the story. I knelt to inspect a deeply etched set of pugmarks which Idu had discovered — a large set, followed by two distinctly smaller ones.

Some hours earlier a tigress with two cubs had passed, just below the secluded Paterpani forest rest house. Following the tigress trail along the sandy bed for several hundred metres, I saw where she had pushed to cool herself in a shaded, grass-lined pool at the river’s edge. Further down she had explored a large, twisted piece of drift wood, while her cubs playfully pulled at a clump of wild flowers. Probably grateful for the respite from their hot march, the young ones had gambolled about, splashing through a tiny pool and leaving behind tell-tale scuff marks on the moistened sand. Idu, born and brought up in the wilds I so adored, smiled at my absorption with the nature of things. “Look sahib, these are barking deer hoof marks and these belong to a chital” he would point out. “This large print was made by a male sambar and these smaller ones by the three females in his harem.” I listened attentively, as I invariably do to those who live in the womb of nature. From Idu I found myself learning more about the earth than I ever could from the hundreds of natural history tomes that lined the book shelves of my urban home.

“What should one do if a wild elephant makes an appearance?” I asked Idu, as I had never before walked in an elephant jungle. “Don’t hide. Let him see you,” he replied. “If you surprise him he might be frightened and could then attack. But if he knows you are there, yet mean no harm, he will ignore you.” Quiet and soft-spoken, Idu knew his turf. I had received the same advice about Himalayan black bears from old Qasim Wani and his protege Abdul Rehman, both foresters in Dachigam, Kashmir. Brave Badia, a trekker who died recently under mysterious circumstances in Ranthambhor, had virtually the same advice to offer me about tigers. And in Bandhavgarh,
Kuttapan, the legendary mahaut spoke with equal facility about spiders as he did of tigers and bears. It was from such people that I had developed both, trust and a deep love for the Indian jungle. To date I am inspired by such simple souls, the true patriots of India, who risk their lives each day in defence of the forests under their charge. These repositories of knowledge are little appreciated, little used and barely appreciated by those who wish to promote wildlife tourism in India. Those who wish to really experience the jungle in a short duration should seek out the Idus, Qasim Wanis, Abdul Rehmans and Kuttapans and spend at least as much time with them, as they might with the high-flying guides who generally project themselves as experts for the benefit of unsuspecting tourists.

Nature is a self-repairing machine. In time a new set of animals and plants began to colonise the edges of the vast 45 km reservoir created by the Kalagadh dam. Migratory birds began to frequent its shores and ospreys began to fish in its waters. Today as visitors look down at the reservoir from Dhikala, they would not even be aware of the brutalisation which took place decades earlier. But the events around Corbett have begun to reveal the folly of our ways. Unmindful of the phenomenal water harvesting job being done by the Tiger Reserve which sponges the rain and thus staunces the swift flow of water, petty politicians have begun to dismantle the areas surrounding Corbett. Poaching, illicit tree felling and politically supported land usurpation are quickly becoming the order of the day in the outer fringes. As was to be expected, nature has begun to strike back with increased incidents of cattle lifting and even man killing. Idu himself was attacked by a tiger, though he lived to tell the tale. Though he later succumbed to cancer, Idu lives on in my mind and heart as the true guardian of Corbett. I marvel at the wisdom of the Idus of the world who, like the tiger and deer of their jungles, leave little more than shallow tracks in the sands of time when they pass. Left to them the forests, wildlife and magic of India would remain a precious heritage to be passed on, intact, to our children.

More than 40,000 visitors enter the Corbett Tiger Reserve each year. Around a quarter stay within the park at night, the rest prefer to make day trips from outside. Many tourists do genuinely seek (and get) to commune with nature, but to many more the outing is merely a different kind of picnic. From such tourists the park suffers litter, noise and fire risks. The park generally gets a bad name from such tourists who complain that “They did not even show us a tiger”. If all tourists were obliged first to pass through even a ten minute orientation centre, they might enhance their own experience and also appreciate that the actual purpose of the park is to protect a vital national heritage (which indeed belongs to the tourist), not cater to the human desire for an ‘outing’.

It would be safe to say that few tourists processed through the ‘usual’ route, would be able to experience Corbett, or come to understand its problems as I did when I visited it. The reason is straightforward. First of all, most tourists do not have the time to truly savour wild places. The, tourists are not adequately informed of the possibility of an ‘alternative experience’. Virtually all they are promised, in fact, is “We will show you a wild tiger (or elephant, or lion or rhino, as the case may be.)”. This faulty orientation, married to the genuine shortage of time (“We simply must see the Taj Mahal, Jaipur, Agra — and Corbett all within a week.”) leads them to race through the forest, missing woodpeckers, giant wood spiders, partridge and quail as they try to grab their money’s worth of fun on the wilderness trail.

My advice to tour operators who wish to use the wilderness would be to “slow down” their pace, arrange for tourists to gather in New Delhi or any other major town where they can meet with conservationists, say at the Natural History Museum or another suitable location, and prepare their clients for a visit to Corbett. Also, do not over-promise the experience. Instead, encourage your clients to spend time talking to forest guards, villagers and locals (through interpreters) so that they are able to go home with a more holistic, warm memory of a visit to a natural wonderland.
It was a cool morning. A slight mist hovered over the grasslands and the nearby hills were hidden from view. Ever since the Gujarat Forest Department had stopped the 'lion show' for tourists who were too lazy to drive around the jungle for a glimpse of the great predators, looking for lions had once again become an exciting, adventurous affair. More than an hour had passed since we had entered the forest. There was no sign of lions. A white-eyed buzzard flew low overhead to settle on a nearby tree top. Together with crested serpent eagles, hawk eagles and sparrow hawks, these were the predators of Gir's sky ways. Gir is a bird watcher's delight. Herds of chital lent an atmosphere of peace and tranquillity of the forest as they grazed the rich golden grasses of their jungle home. It was clear as light that in this, the core area, the forest was rich and undisturbed. Quite correctly, the core area is out of bounds to tourists as this is the only undisturbed forest on earth in which the Asiatic lion can be found. As a member of the Indian Board for Wildlife I had been invited to inspect the core but even I never stayed longer than two hours. The grass here grew to a height of over two metres and the ground vegetation was thick. The protectors of Gir had done a good job.

As we made our way back, the driver stopped our vehicle suddenly. Towards the left we could see the grass move. The sun was shining right into our eyes and it was impossible to make out anything more than a shadowy outline of a large cat. A lioness, I thought. Then it moved. What I saw was no lion it was a magnificent leopard, striding confidently across the rocky landscape. A rare and heart-stopping sight. For around a minute or so it strode in front of our Jeep as though guiding us through 'its' jungle, before stepping off the road to vanish from sight. If not for the fact that lions were so endangered, and famous, Gir might well have become one of India's finest leopard sanctuaries! I was told by those who managed the Reserve that leopards could now be seen quite easily here during the day, though in most jungles they only emerge at night.

Less than three minutes after driving off from the place where I saw the leopard, a pair of lions materialised from the dense scrub. They were a courting pair and we did not disturb them for too long. It was a fairly straightforward sighting. No drama. No hunt. Just a sideways glance from the 'king' to acknowledge our presence! This is true picture of the Indian jungle and the true character of its wards. I smiled inwardly at the many fanciful tales of bravado written by imaginative shikaris. In truth the jungle is not a dangerous place. In fact it is far safer than the streets of Bombay or Delhi!

In spite of the long list of man-created problems faced by the species, it is a miracle that the lions of Gir are still alive. But a cloud does hang over their future. According to experts the near extinction of the Asiatic lion was probably caused by the introduction of firearms. In fact, as per available records, by the year 1848 they had already been wiped out from the whole of India except for their last refuge — Gir. It is said that there were only around 20 lions left alive in 1913. The Nawab of Junagadh, fortunately, took some timely action and by 1920 their numbers had risen to 100. By 1955 the population had risen to around 290 lions. By all estimates extinction had been warded off.

It was only in 1965 that a 1265 Sq. Km. area in Gir was declared a Wildlife Sanctuary, in the heart of the Kathiawar peninsula. This area was handed over to the forest department of Gujarat, but, outside this protected area, the land continued to be abused and today a situation has arisen where the pressure on the last home of the Asiatic lion, has increased so considerably that fears for its extinction have once again arisen. Today the Sanctuary area is 115.42 Kms., with an additional 258.71 Sq. Kms. declared as a national park which also serves as the core. Exact figures are difficult to quote, but today there are less than 250 lions left alive in Gir. These animals are sometimes poisoned by local graziers; their claws are much sought after by poacher who sell them for fancy prices; because of bad land management outside Gir there is no fodder available, so outsiders send their cows and buffaloes into the forest. This leaves the jungle so disturbed that natural prey like sambar and chital are difficult for the lions to hunt. The problems are really quite severe and no one seems able to do very much to ease them.
On the way back to the Sasan guest house (most tourists stay here or in the Gujarat Tourism Lodge over the Hiran River) we stopped over at the Kamleshwar Dam, which was overflowing thanks to a good monsoon. I saw little grebes and some cormorants fishing along the far edge of the lake which also harbours a good population of crocodiles. For the next three years Gir would suffer no water shortage because even its small water bodies were full and the jungle had soaked up all the rain which it would release slowly over the months. Outside Gir, I knew the situation would be different. Because the trees had all been cut the sun would dry up the land in a few short months and soon the people of Gujarat would have to face the torture of drought. Why, I wonder is it so difficult for planners and developers to make the connection between the health of forests and water availability?

Such issues may not be the prime concern of the ‘average’ tourist, but the more they know about the problems of wild places, the more they will appreciate the imperatives of protected area managers. Besides, involvement with a problem invariably leads to concern and understanding, both of which are crucial if tourists are expected to appreciate the imperatives of those whose job it is to protect areas like Gir.

Before leaving Gir I spent some time talking to the Maldharis (buffalo herders) who had lived in Gir for many years. Some of these peaceable people had been shifted out of the forest, but they were not happy there. Those who remained were anxious that the same fate would befall them. Over the years these life-loving people had learned to get along with the lions quite well and even though they lost a few animals to lions each year, they managed to keep ahead of the game. In recent years, however, they too had been disturbed to see that lions had begun to attack humans, particularly outside the forest. They now fear for their children’s lives and ask why the lions behaviour has changed. One young Maldhari even suggested to me that too many tourists and pilgrims had started entering the forest and that this must be the reason for the lions losing their normal fear of humans.

A visit to a Maldhari ness (coral) is highly recommended for all those who visit Gir. From such people visitors will be able to learn a lot about the history of Gir and will also glean knowledge about the behaviour of lions which is born of a lifetime association with the great cats. Some Maldhari families will also be glad to sell a container of ghee (clarified butter) to tourists. This is their major source of income and is among the purest dairy products available anywhere in India.

The prime reason for Gir’s existence is to save the Asiatic lion. Every other priority, tourism, fodder, fuel wood etc., must be subservient to the survival of the species. By and large, though it does have major trouble now and then, Gir is a well managed forest and tourists generally come away satisfied. Problems generally crop up when the old or very young lions leave the forest in search of new territories. When they come into contact with villagers who throw stones, or otherwise react aggressively, the cats strike with tragic consequences. This further erodes conservation support. Another time when trouble rears its head is when some stubborn tourists refuse to obey park rules and insist on walking in the forest. If such people were made to visit the orientation centre before entering the forest and persuaded to cooperate with the authorities, it would make the task of ensuring their comfort and safety much easier.

Gir badly needs public support. Its forested corridor link with adjoining forests has been damanged. Politicians seek to gain cheap popularity by encouraging locals to invade the forest to claim timber and grass in exchange for votes. It would be a very good idea for conservation oriented tour operators to routinely ask their clients to write letters to the Chief Minister of Gujarat, praising his government for the steps it is taking to save the lion. It would also help a great deal if they brought violations by irresponsible tourists to the notice of the authorities. Though small, such steps would contribute to the efforts to save the forest and its charismatic lions.

Check Your Progress

1) How was Project Tiger launched in the Corbett Park?
2) a) What is the name of the river that flows past Corbett Park?

b) What is the annual aggregate of visitors to Corbett Park?

3) Discuss the relationship between wildlife and tourism.

4) What is the special fauna of Gir National Park?

5) What problem do Maldharis face in the Gir National Park?

6) What advice will you give to tourists to help conservation efforts?
16.7 LET US SUM UP

Wildlife in India is an exhilarating experience. You walked with our unit writer along the dense of the Indian jungle. The nature whispers through your ears the chant of love. Conservation of nature therefore becomes your prime responsibility.

We also gave you details of the two important national parks of India — Corbett and Gir. This will help you in organizing the tours to wildlife preserves in a better manner and make tourists aware of the importance of conservation.

16.8 KEY WORDS

Conservation: To preserve the flora and fauna.
Desertification: Extension of desert into green areas.
Kiplingesque: Rudyard Kipling’s interests
Meandering: Walking along pathways
Poaching: Killing animals illegally
Sanctuary: Forested area where wildlife is preserved.

16.9 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

EXERCISES

Check Your Progress

1) It was launched in the year 1973 to protect the African lion. For details see Sub-sec. 16.6.1.
2) a) The name of the river is Ramganga. See Sub-sec. 16.6.1.
   b) Nearly 40,000 visitors. See Sub-sec. 16.6.1.
3) The rich wildlife fludic offers simple attractions to the tourists. See Section 16.5.
4) It is home to Asiatic Lion - See Sub-sec. 16.6.2.
5) Manis. See Sub-Section 16.6.2.
6) Sensitize the tourists towards preserving wildlife. See Sub-sec. 16.6.2.
SOME USEFUL BOOKS FOR THIS BLOCK


ACTIVITIES FOR THIS BLOCK

*Note*: Discuss the activities with your counsellors at the Study Centre.

**Activity 1**

Prepare a list of places in your state where facilities for adventure sports for tourists are available. Write brief notes of about 50 words on each one of these.

**Activity 2**

Make a list of the important hill stations of your state/nearby state.
Add the following information to each entry in your list:

a) Road distance from your town of residence.
b) Mode of travel from your town and the time taken in such travel
c) Kinds of accommodation available there for tourists

**Activity 3**

Write the name of the nearest Wild Life Sanctuary/National Park from your town.
Collect the following additional information:

a) Road distance from your town.
b) Mode of travel and the time taken
c) Best season to visit the place
d) Kinds of accommodation available there for tourists
e) Important Wild Life attractions to be seen by tourists.

**Activity 4**

Draw a map of India. Mark the beaches on the East and west coasts.
WILDLIFE

DO'S AND DON'TS

IN A SANCTUARY!

VISIT WILDPACES TO
UNDERSTAND AND APPRECIATE
OUR NATURAL
HERITAGE, BUT
ALWAYS
FOLLOW
THESE
SIMPLE
DO'S AND
DON'TS.

* GET PERMISSION BEFORE ENTERING A
  PARK OR SANCTUARY.
* KEEP YOUR EYES & EARS OPEN AND
  YOUR MOUTH SHUT.
* DO NOT TRAMPLE UPON FLOWERS, SMALL
  BUSHES AND UGDERGROWTH. THESE MAY
  BE NESTING OR RESTING SITES FOR
  WILDLIFE. IN ANY CASE, IN MOST PARKS AND
  SANCTUARIES WALKING ABOUT ON FOOT IS UNSAFE
  AND THEREFORE NOT ALLOWED.
* USE HIDES & OBSERVATION POSTS CREATED BY
  THE AUTHORITIES TO ENHANCE YOUR WILDLIFE
  EXPERIENCE.

* DO NOT SMOKE
  "FIRE IS THE FOREST'S
  PRIME ENEMY."

* DO NOT LITTER

DANGER! QUICKSAND

USE ME
* Observe animals without interfering with them in any way. Don't throw stones, shout or blow your car horn unnecessarily. Silence is golden, listen to the jungle orchestra instead of transistors, tape recorders, TV or even city gossip. Guns strictly not allowed!!

* Use the transport arranged by the authorities - jeeps and elephants for jungle cuttings. If you take your own vehicle make sure an authorised guide accompanies you.

* The forest is not a picnic spot. It is a hallowed temple of life. Respect it, revere it, love it.

* The magic is sharing the jungle with all forms of wild animals - don't be disappointed if you do not see too many large animals. There is an undiscovered world of plants, insects and birds that await you.

Always carry a field guide to help you understand and identify what you see.

* Use camera and binoculars if possible. If not, at least maintain a nature diary to remember magic moments.

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Map of Kinnaur, Spiti & Lahaul
Adventure Tourism in Maharashtra

RENT A TENT
Rs. 15/- per tent
(capacity 3 persons)
Rs. 5/- extra for a carry mat, sleeping bag, camping stool etc.
Tents which can be carried in backpacks are available at all MTDC offices and at the Kaira Resort.