
UNIT 3 DESTINATION DESIGNING: ISSUES, PRIORITIES AND CONCERNS

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3.0 OBJECTIVES

After studying this Unit you will be able to understand the:

- significance of destinations in providing tourists satisfaction and value for their money;
- emergence of specific or event based destinations;
- stages or critical points of developments involved in the development of destinations;
- issues and priorities as well as concerns to be considered at planning and execution stages; and
- need for establishing evaluation standards.

3.1 INTRODUCTION

Tourist flows have always moved towards destinations. However, destinations designing and planning is a new phenomena. Earlier, the tourists moved to destinations of their choice (beaches, ancient cities, pilgrimage tours, hill stations, etc.) that had emerged over the years and become tourist attractions because of their specific characteristics. They were not developed specifically for tourism purposes. In recent years, however, vast stretches of lands, townships, beaches or hilly areas have been studied and improved upon to create new tourist destinations. Initially, the trend for such development was in areas where mild or sub-tropical weather prevailed, for instance, Mediterranean, the Caribbean, Hawaii and the American Southwest. But in recent past, the focus of such development has shifted to Asia-Pacific region for specific reasons. In this process of shift, planners have adopted a professional approach by recommending overall community development. In this after scrutinising an entire area, a healthy relationship is established with the environment. Along these efforts of the planners, economies of the communities having the potentials of becoming attractive destinations also grew rapidly. These activities were not just real estate developments, because real estate developments are normally undertaken for the profit of a few individuals. When a destination is designed and planned it benefits the entire community. Today destinations are being developed keeping in view the specific tourist interests, business tourism, events and special interest tourism, etc. This Unit aims at bringing forward various issues, concerns and priorities which you must set forth before designing, developing and marketing any tourist destination.

3.2 DEVELOPMENT OF A DESTINATION

Over the years the motivation for the development of new tourist destinations has many a times come from philanthropic-minded individuals or sometimes from state or national governments. This was

because of the interest in improving the economy as well as solving the unemployment problem of their region or the country. At large this aimed at regional development as well as improving the way of life of a large group of people. In fact, the results are beneficial to everyone concerned. In its broader sense, we use the term 'land development' for this type of planning. It is different from real estate development in the sense that land development is likely to deal with unused or agricultural land as compared to real estate development which handles existing residential, business or industrial land. In such cases of land development the proposal may include a resort as part of the total plan or the resort may be the central feature. In fact, the highest and best possible use of real estate has usually meant the best profit for the developer but in case of land development planning in its best sense is intended to be beneficial not only to developer but also to the user and community at large. In other words, land development or rather destination development takes into consideration the welfare of the people who will be employed in these newly developed facilities, i.e., their lifestyle and economic welfare, as well as the satisfaction of the visitors and the owner.

Land development may include long range plans for all the facilities needed for a tourist destination like water supply, roads, electricity, sewage, police protection, health care, postal or telecommunication, tourist reception and accommodation, tourist attraction and other social activities, like, schools, recreation centres, religious places, community clubs and green belts as well as markets, hotels and other facilities having tourist value.

Tourist destinations are developed for a number of reasons. Some of them are as following:

- 1) For immediate gain to the developer, the developer assembles a package and sells pieces of it to other entrepreneurs, acquiring a profit in the process,
- 2) For long term appreciation of the land profit from the land sale is taxed as capital gains at less than the maximum rate that is charged for ordinary income,
- 3) To increase the value of property around the development. A hotel, e.g., may be the "frosting on the cake", the lever for appreciating surrounding land. Its value as an operating hotel may be small,
- 4) To increase employment in an economically stunted section,
- 5) From political perspective, an area may be built up as a means of granting aid to a region, paying political debts and redistributing income within a region or a country,
- 6) To create a lasting tribute. A resort may be viewed as a monument to someone's ability or pride, an opportunity to build something beautiful and enduring,
- 7) To express national pride. In some of the smaller places or even in smaller countries, new hotel is a showplace, perhaps the most imposing building in the country and an official government facility to house distinguished visitors,
- 8) To meet a challenge. Some areas have been developed because an individual or a group thinks of a resort as a challenging business. In India many resorts have come up in Himachal region like at Mukteswar, as a result of challenge been accepted by individuals or families, and
- 9) To earn foreign capital. Many developing countries and even some developed European countries like Spain or Bulgaria needs foreign exchange to buy improved technology and manufacture individual products.

Tourism is viewed as the easiest means of earning foreign exchange and this is why today across the world tourism has been acknowledged as most preferred prioritised industry. Hence, tourist destinations are also developed for special interest tourism like a wildlife sanctuary, water sports, etc.

3.3 PRINCIPLES OF DESTINATION DEVELOPMENT

For successful designing and developing of a destination you shall follow five guiding principles which would help you in ensuring that quality of life of the people and environment is not

compromised and the region/area/country under consideration for development, experiences growth and controlled expansion. These principles can be viewed as beliefs and codes of conduct. And while all the principles are related to activities undertaken within vision opportunities, there should be an emphasis on activities undertaken at the level of first principle.

1) **There shall be a regional focus and approach to economic development:**

Keeping in view the regional perspective, the representatives from regional industry, utilities, transportation, government and community stakeholders shall focus on identifying opportunities and barriers and shall provide viable solutions or shall recommend actions to the government. This group shall meet consistently at frequent intervals to discuss problems and their possible alternative solutions related to the destination.

2) **All regional development shall occur in an environmentally sensitive manner:**

All regional developments should be for a minimum of ten-year term covering environmental approval processes for all the developments as certain opportunity for all the issues shall be brought forward by stakeholders giving prior project approvals to environmental mitigation strategies.

This can lead to active Land Resource Management Planning (LRMP) processes and practices more particularly related to available land and water use. LRMP process also helps in identifying all environmental, ecological, biological and economic values and management practices related to them.

3) **You must develop positive Labour-Management Relation:**

You shall constitute labour and industry committees for encouraging the bargaining and in consequent create healthy labour-management relations. Both labour and management shall initiate joint processes to be applied to the day-to-day operations for achieving the desired results in stipulated time frame.

4) **You must have positive working relationships with first nation:**

This indicates at partnerships with first nations. Local government, community groups and entrepreneurs shall have proper involvement and interchanges of support to each other. For example, community groups shall be provided with information on various industrial developments involved in land development in their area/region. To encourage local investments an enterprise centre must be set up which shall assist and support local entrepreneurs. This enterprise centre shall first assess community support for the centre – if found successful, study shall continue with the development of a business plan. In MTM-8, you have already learnt about Business Plan but here you must know that while preparing business plan for destination development efforts shall be directed at lobbying for additional funding programme support via provincial “Community Growth Bonds” for small business projects.

5) **You shall encourage commitment to lifelong learning and access to education:**

All institutions in the region under consideration for development should assertively promote education to all ages and professionals. Advanced education shall become more and more accessible on a local level, allowing for more seamless lifelong learning for the average resident. Not only this, technical skills and training shall also be made accessible to all. The education agencies shall cooperate on servicing range of education and training needs in the region, enabling more choice, deferring competition-promoting areas of excellence and capturing economies through shared resources. In tourism this plays crucial role. When first private resort was planned at Goa or when a heritage property at Neemrana was planned, local community members were educated on all the aspects, benefits and costs related to this development.

Things have gone much further today. With more experience, the negative impacts of tourism are widely taken into account in order to design sustainable destinations.

3.4 MANAGING TOURIST DESTINATIONS

The issues of destination management in terms of tourism products organisation that are coherent with market segments and targeted by the strategies of tourism development, reflect the delicate interaction between tourism and environment. In the last two decades, the tourism system has been facing a wide range of changes in demand, increase of tourist flows, differentiation of tourist motivation and expectation, etc. The organisation of supply, in particular, in terms of emerging problems of compatibility between safeguarding of natural and cultural local resources as well as of the community identity and their tourist use have all undergone a change. Hence, there is a need to build consensus among the different players of supply and coordinate their actions. These changes have brought to light the urgent need to look at private and public players of tourism supply for tourist flow management and destination organisation from a coherent, integrated and qualitative perspective, i.e., taking care of the whole system. This is a system where the players involved are benefited from tourism and contribute to its costs in different ways, have different and diversified interests and objectives, and thus perceive and value costs and benefits subjectively. Here, the destination has to be managed as a whole with TQM as the aim. Transportation, roads, streetlights, hotels, monuments, parks, etc., i.e., everything has to be effectively managed.

3.5 CONCERNS FOR DESTINATION PLANNING

Any destination, if planned, without concerns and considerations is bound to fail. These concerns shall primarily be related to:

- Market research,
- Area planning, and
- Sufficient long range funding.

Even some destinations fail because they are built either with little or no thought given to the market feasibility. It is interesting to note that even some destinations fail due to the fast changing tastes, changes in technology, new competition and trends and last but not the most important poor management of resources.

In many destinations where tourist facilities have not been controlled or planned carefully, they have turned out to be unappealing jungle of buildings. When any area grows without control or planning, more particularly as a destination, each entrepreneur shifts for himself or herself, with little regard for the area as a whole. Initially an area suffers but in the long run even entrepreneur don't do well.

If you are planning large-scale tourism, then you must also expect environmental or ecological and socio economic issues which would require special considerations. For instance, when as a result of mass tourism, environmental problem arise, attention should also be given to the development of other forms of tourism like, special interest tourism, adventure tourism or alternative tourism, focussing upon highly controlled development and selective marketing, attracting limited number of tourists who could afford this form of tourism so that larger economic benefits can be generated without over-shooting the carrying capacity of these areas. All this will minimise negative environmental impacts. Some of the other environmental concerns may include:

- a) Installation of water supply and sewage disposal system for the use by hotels and other tourist facilities to prevent pollution problem,
- b) Development of electric power system while utilising the conservation technique,
- c) Installation of solid waste disposal plant to recycle waste product to greatest extent possible,
- d) To prevent flooding at destinations, adequate drainage system should be constructed which may otherwise cause health problems,
- e) To avoid traffic congestion as well as to maximise use of mass transit systems, adequate and good quality roads should be built,

- f) To avoid congestion and environmental deterioration of natural and cultural tourist attractions, there shall be application of visitor's flow management,
- g) You must prevent linear commercial development along roads and shorelines through effective land use planning and zoning. We see around the world that water front development has been largely unplanned. Result is that by accident or wealth, relatively few people live in accommodation fronting on many of the beauty spots of world. Long stretches of coastline are completely blocked from view by contiguous hotels/motels and residences. Some of the beautiful beaches of world, particularly in Spain, as a result of lack of this concern, have become "resort slums".
- h) There should be proper assessment of requirements for under-grounding of utility lines in tourism areas and there shall be careful landscape screening,
- i) To make a destination popular, efforts must also be directed to proper maintenance of tourist vehicles so that they do not generate undue amount of air and noise pollution,
- j) Open spaces and parks should be provided as well as generous use of suitable landscaping must be encouraged on hotel/resort sites, at other utility stations, at tourist attraction features and along roads and walkways.
- k) Environmental concerns should also address the problem related to the maintenance of environmental health and safety standards for both residents and tourists. This is essential combat environmentally derived diseases and high rate of road accidents resulting from traffic congestion.
- l) There must be programmes designed to inform the visitors and local residents with respect to visitor use control and why do they exist so that tourist understands the reasons for controls.

Use of environment has of course cost benefits. Often a person offering white water rafting may oppose the construction of a dam that removes rapids with little concern for benefits that the dam may bring to the locals.

For any destination development exercise it is imperative to examine the tourism impacts from the socio-economic perspective assuming that the degree of development and activity has a bearing on the tourism capacity of a destination. For this reason, it becomes essential to take note of measures of economic impacts and to evaluate the system's economic carrying capacity within a socio-economic context. Although not much of work has been done in this field but **Jansen-Verbeke** (1991) discussed this in the context of carrying capacity. Historic cities which have an impact on the use of building and land, leading to changes in use, loss of housing capacity, invasion of tourism oriented shops, rise of property value, etc. can have a bearing on the social conditions.

Economically, the basic policy is to integrate tourism and at whatever level and scale of development, in to national, regional and local economies. This should be done through such techniques as establishing strong cross-sectoral linkages with other economic sectors, maximising local employment in tourism and encouraging local management and ownership of tourist facilities and services to the greatest extent possible.

Some of the specific socio-economic concerns to minimise socio-economic impacts arising as a result of the cross-sectoral linkages and maximum usage of tourism are:

- a) Efforts must be made towards maintenance of authenticity of local culture, though these may be adapted or expanded depending upon traditional skills,
- b) Tourism development in any area is characterised by adverse socio-eco-conditions, such as:
 - i) Low paid jobs, leading to socio-polarisation.
 - ii) Competing migrant labour associated with resident's hostility and aggression.
 - iii) Social tension between haves and have nots.
 - iv) Antagonism towards outside entrepreneurs and local vendors.

- v) High leakage of the earnings from the system due to repatriating profits/wages and import of luxury goods.
- vi) Though it is extremely difficult to establish a system for monitoring local social conditions that may emerge from changing socio-economic consequences given above, yet their impact can be minimised by providing financial incentives, training and other techniques for local ownership, management and operations of tourist facilities, so that residents can participate in and receive socio-economic benefits from tourism development at an area.
- vii) To reduce the social tension, you shall make certain provision that residents have convenient access to tourist attractions and facilities even if possible by reserving the right of passage to museum and attractions for local residents;
- viii) To develop tourism in its right perspective, i.e., you shall make attempts at educating residents about the concepts, benefits, and problems of tourism and current tourism development policies and plans for the area under consideration. On the other hand, you shall also inform visitors about local customs, behaviour patterns and value systems so as to minimise the social confrontations;
- ix) Efforts shall also be made at designing architecture of tourist attractions and facilities in line with local style of architecture, giving a unique sense of place to tourists and in some cases it helps in reviving distinctive local architectural styles;
- x) Local residents shall be trained to work efficiently at all levels so as to reduce the chances for resident-migratory worker conflicts in the area. Importance shall also be attached to language training; and
- xi) Strict control shall also be maintained on drugs, crime and prostitution. Tourist shall be informed that if any visitor is found involved in any of these social crimes, will have to leave the country or be legally prosecuted and punished for any of these serious offences. Besides, additional police protection shall also be arranged to combat such situations.

3.6 STAGES IN TOURIST DESTINATION DESIGNING AND MANAGEMENT

Destination Planning

The intricacy of the tourism system is demonstrated by the many individuals and groups which can affect a destination's future. This complexity makes destination planning not only vital but also most difficult. It is quite clear that some form of direction which is co-operative and proactive is required to guide planning and development at destination. The actions required for developing and implementing effective sustainable tourism at the destination should be dynamic, participative and adaptable to the needs and concerns of the stakeholders in the destination.

You have already read about tourism impacts in MTM-10. In fact, all aspects related to sustainable tourism development are relevant for designing tourism products, destination planning being the foremost. Often, one needs to go in for strategic planning in this regard.

In a strategic planning approach we find that disparate planning and development activities related to tourism are linked to an overall tourism plan. This is done to provide an integrated framework for directing tourism product development. Here we must remember that strategic planning:

- takes into account a long-term perspective.
- develops a vision.
- determines goals and the specific requirements to achieve these goals.
- is flexible, adaptable and dynamic at the same time.

- ensures that its formulation and implementation leading to are linked closely through various aspects like regular monitoring, environmental scanning and evaluation leading to adjustment.
- respects community participation and support.

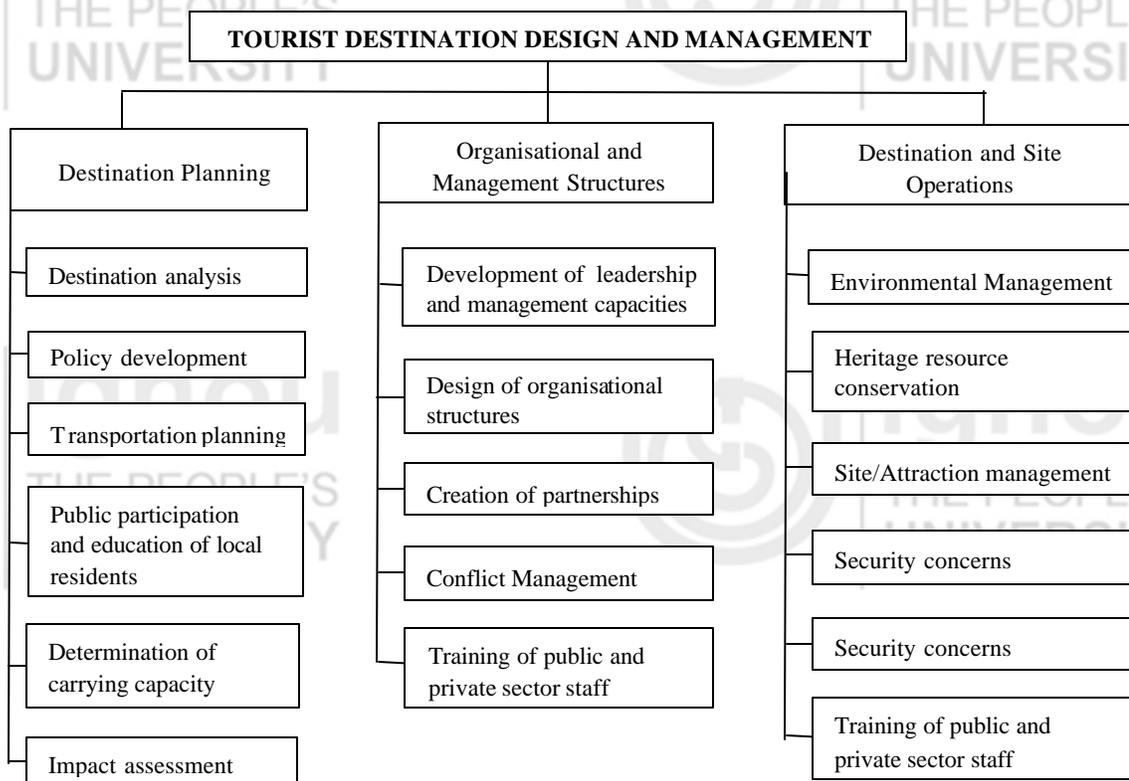


Figure I: Factors involved in Sustainable Tourism Destination Management

You have already read in MTM-08, steps in planning process. However, good planning generally contains the following elements and action steps:

- Defining a vision and mission statement.
- The implementation of a situational analysis.
- Developing strategic goals
- Evaluation of strategic alternatives to achieving these goals
- Development of strategies.
- Implementation of strategies including measurable objectives and detailed action plans.
- Monitoring and evaluation of strategies and action plans.
- Adjusting the strategic and operational plans based on information and feedback from evaluation and constant scanning of the external environment.

Destination Analysis

Once the community has decided that it is receptive to tourism, it is important to conduct a destination analysis to assess the community's infrastructure and tourism resources. Carrying out this task in a comprehensive manner can benefit everyone. The objectives of this process are:

- To determine what the destination possesses in terms of tourism attractions,
- To determine the location of tourism resources, infrastructure and attractions,
- To assess the tourism qualities of resources and attractions,

- To determine what stage of readiness for tourism the attractions and resources are in,
- To develop some initial priorities, and
- To outline an action plan.

The nature of a community's tourism resources are illustrated in **Figure II**.

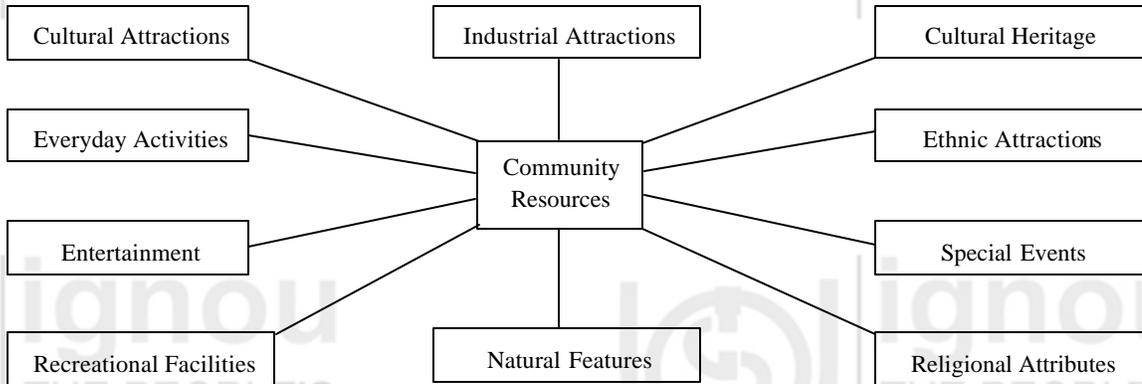


Figure II: Community Tourism Resources

Each community has significant infrastructure concerns that must be assessed. The factors are illustrated in **Figure III**.

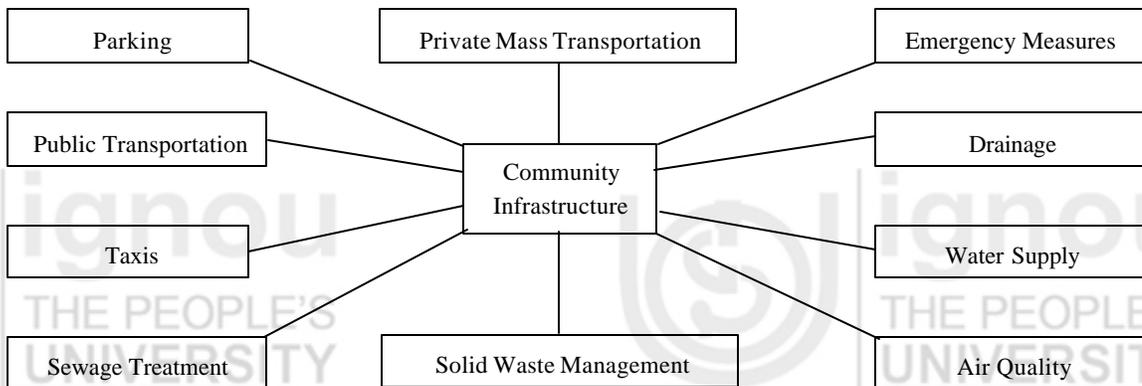


Figure III: Community Infrastructure

Tourism infrastructure is essential in determining the destination's readiness for tourism and the assessment process can examine a number of factors as illustrated in **Figure IV**.

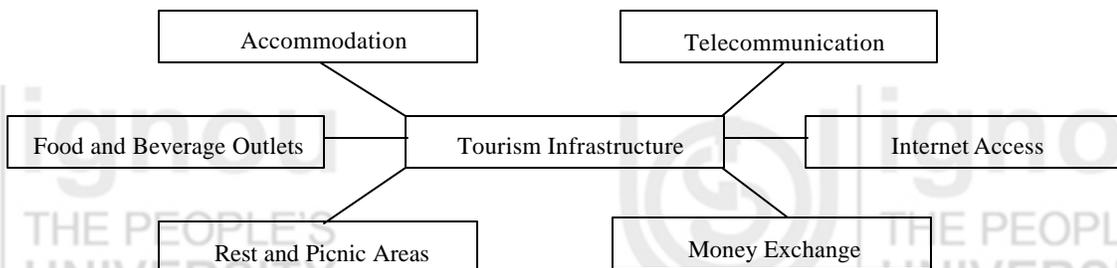


Figure IV: Tourism Infrastructure

The primary tourism infrastructure is supported by a range of other factors all of which are crucial in determining success and helping the community to achieve the highest possible economic returns from tourism. These factors are illustrated in **Figure V**.

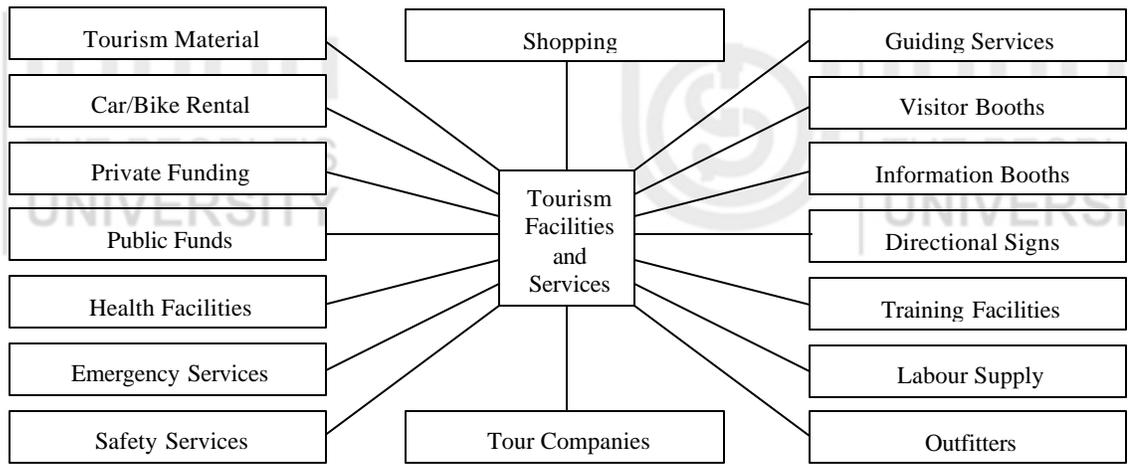


Figure V: Tourism Facilities and Services

To prepare a detailed inventory of the above given factors you can draft a number of worksheets covering:

- Telecommunications at Accommodation,
- Money Exchange and Picnic Areas,
- Food & Beverage Outlets, Internet Access for Tourism Infrastructure,
- Guiding Services,
- Visitor Booths,
- Information Booths,
- Directional Signs,
- Training Facilities,
- Labour Supply,
- Outfitters Tour Companies Safety Services,
- Emergency Services,
- Health Facilities,
- Public Funds,
- Private Funding,
- Car/Bike Rentals,
- Tourism Material Shopping, and
- Tourism Facilities and Services.

Thus, tourism infrastructure is essential in determining the destination's readiness for tourism.

Policy Development

To plan in accordance with sustainable guidelines, a destination needs a policy that shall reflect all the concerns and objectives of the stakeholders. Developing this policy can be a long and complex process. This is due to the different and often competing interests of the diverse groups that constitute the stakeholders at any given destination.

A community-formed policy can be used by constituents to demonstrate to elected politicians the desires and goals of the community. In India this may be particularly useful during transitions of public leadership at election time, whereby potential incumbents can be asked to make a commitment to the vision statement.

To translate it into a community policy, it requires the support of local government, stakeholders and businesses. It also needs to fit well with regional, national and global tourism policies. There is potential for conflicts in this area, as top-down planning often supports different tourism development priorities than local stakeholders. Hence, destinations must determine what is required to be done locally and what requires regional, national government assistance, and ensure that new political and legislative structures establish sustainable tourism development frameworks.

Transportation Planning

There is a wide range of techniques for helping to solve the transportation problems of an area. Tourism destinations throughout the world are now discovering that unless they can deal with the important issues of cultural change as well as water, sewage and transportation management they will be unable to take advantage of their appeal as tourist destinations. Visitors expect safe, comfortable and convenient transport services as part of their experience at a destination. Some of the transportation services are provided by public sector; however, local needs of visitors are catered by private tourist transport operators. However, planning should be done in such a manner that destination should not face the problems of traffic jams.

Public Participation and Education to Local Residents

Managing tourism in a sustainable way requires that everyone affected by tourism is informed and involved in tourism: both in the planning process as well as in the implementation of policies and action plans.

Local people can be involved in development of tourism at various levels, ranging from information gathering to direct decision-making, ownership, and employment in planning, project development and service delivery. However, in the context of destination designing and development, a clear distinction has to be made between consultation and participation. While community consultation is highly recommended, this cannot be taken as synonymous with participation. Sustainable tourism development requires participation that allows people the right to design and influence their world. In order to accomplish this opportunities should be created to enable community members to participate as much as possible in directing the development of their community at levels discussed above.

Local people shall also be given training for exercising their duties effectively both at planning as well as post-operational stages. For instance, what we see that at many destination due to lack of this training or education to local people become short-sighted and start cheating the tourist whereas we should educate them about the long-run benefits of tourism of any destination.

Determination of Carrying Capacity

In its simplest form, carrying capacity measures the level of destination use that is sustainable. In fact, carrying capacity is a complex concept, particularly when a range of products and services must come from the same environment (as in the case of tourism) Yet the question remains similar: how many tourists/visitors can be accommodated in a destination and within specific portions of the destination without threatening the long-term sustainability of a specific site and destination.

The concept of Carrying capacity has its value particularly because it draws attention to limits and thresholds beyond which a site does not wish to tread. But in dealing with the reality we need to consider the following factors:

- Tourism depends on many attributes of an environment: aesthetic qualities, maintenance of wildlife access to shoreline or ability to support active uses. Each has its own response to different levels of use.
- The impact of human activity on a system may be gradual and may affect different parts of the system at different rates. While some environmental resources may be highly sensitive to human impact (e.g., habitats for fragile or endangered species) others degrade gradually in response to different use levels.
- Every environment serves multiple purposes, and its sensitivity to different use levels depends on the values of all the users.

- Different types of uses have different impacts.
- Tourism managers need some form of measure to reduce the risk of unknowingly stepping over biological or cultural thresholds, with results that degrade the product, cause other adverse effects or discourage customers.

Impact Assessment

While planning a tourist destination it is mandatory to assess physical, social and economic impacts of developments at proposed site. On this basis, measures can be recommended and actions can be taken to minimise environmental degradation. Depending on the project and individual destination, members of the public, bureaucrats, politicians and scientists can be involved in this impact assessment exercise. In fact, participation of all in impact assessment is a vital dimension of destination planning process.

3.6.1 Other Aspects

Besides proper planning there are various other aspects crucial to destination designing:

1) Organisational and Management Structure

Establishing the right organisational and management structure is often a key to success for any destination. While each destination requires a distinct organisational structure, the importance of the stakeholders' involvement cannot be overemphasised. In general, every destination needs a structure for the management of tourism and its related issues.

2) Development of Leadership

Once the decision has been made to proceed with tourism development, the next step is to establish leadership and a decision-making and implementation structure. Establishing leadership is to guide, monitor and adjust the tangible and intangible costs and benefits of tourism to ensure the long-term sustainability of the industry and the environment at the proposed site. An organisational structure for leadership should therefore be created so that continuous and long-term management of tourism is undertaken.

3) Design of Organisational Structures

Establishing ongoing leadership will facilitate future planning related actions such as constant scanning of the environment, identifying opportunities and managing problems as they emerge. This increases the ability and opportunity for sustainable tourism development.

Some pros and cons of a few leadership bodies in tourism are outlined in **Table 1**:

Table 1: Some Pros and Cons of Potential Leadership Bodies

| Organisation | Role | Pros and Cons |
|--|--|---|
| Convention and Visitors Bureau/local destination management organisation | Tourism marketing and promotion; visitor information services | Pros: May be funded by public and/or private sources, hence may have funding sources. Cons: Narrow functional area. |
| Chamber of Commerce | Business development, networking, and support | Pros: Familiarity with broad business community needs and functions. Cons: May have pro-development philosophy. |
| Local Council/Economic Development Office | Economic development, resource allocations, public services | Pros: Legitimate representative of community, has potential funding source. |
| Community group (e. g., resident or environmental organisation) | Advocacy, lobby group, networking | Pros: Representative of local resident interests. Cons: Generally volunteer based hence may lack funding or suffer volunteer burnout. |
| Community Tourism Organisation | Strategic tourism planning and management; ongoing monitoring of impacts and planning outcomes; adjustment of overall strategic plan as required | Pros: Broad-based community interests represented with active guidance of tourism. Cons: May be time consuming to set up and may be costly to maintain, depending on activity. |

If no appropriate body exists at the destination, either you shall identify the key stakeholders in the community's tourism domain or you can form or appoint a community tourism organisation (CTO). Sustainable tourism development will require collaborative participation of key individuals, organisations, and groups. Hence, a broad diversity of community interests, values, and expertise should get representation in the CTO. The CTO must be perceived to be a legitimate and capable representative of the whole community.

4) **Creation of Partnerships**

One of the most important lessons that have been established in all areas of development is the considerable influence of partnerships on the success of any initiative and tourism is not an exception. Public/private partnerships between government, public organisations, community organisations, industry and commerce are seen as the cornerstone of success in many destination initiatives. Partnerships can bring together many different sets of ideas, points of view, and contributions of various kinds whether they are financial, social or political in nature in helping to achieve a successful heritage area strategy.

5) **Conflict Management**

Managing the diverse objectives and opinions of all stakeholders is critical for tourism organisations involved in its development. Controversy can be harmful to tourism proposals; lengthy delays may attract adverse media attention could harm the image or reputation of the developer. Similarly, community resistance to development proposals (due to perceived threats of negative impacts) can make it very difficult for developers to establish a mutually beneficial working relationship at the destination. While a detailed treatment of conflict management is not possible in this Section, however, the following points can provide some useful direction for you:

- Anticipate, analyse and attempt to prevent conflicts wherever possible at the initial stages itself,
- Establish such effective mechanisms that enable communication, consultation, and participation of all stakeholders in decision-making,
- Understand community values and attitudes, and involve the community (through consultation and more direct participation) prior to making commitments on issues that have a significant impact on the community and environment,
- Identify and involve all key stakeholders in the conflict management and conflict resolution processes, and
- When it comes to dealing with the local community, it is better to be as inclusive as possible. You must realise that this only requires managing a diversity of opinions, interests, attitudes, and values of stakeholders with varying knowledge and communication skills. Thus, the participation mechanisms you develop shall be able to deal with these challenges. However, different mechanisms may be required for different conflict situations.

6) **Training of Public and Private Sector Staff**

Training is an important tool to ensure that local people can be involved in the actual implementation and management of tourism business. This is also important in order to reduce leakages of revenue, to enable import substitution and generate employment. This is also required to improve public understanding and enhance business, vocational, and professional skills of locals. Training should include courses in tourism, hotel management and other relevant topics so that they can assess and understand the actions of tourism in a healthy way. Training can be developed through linkages with area and regional educational institutions such as community colleges or universities.

The training of staff in terms of tourists' needs and views, as well as training about the destination is important in any situation where there is interaction between the visitor and the staff. This requires an investment of time and resources that can be difficult to justify in a restricted budget situation. However, in the absence of such finances the training dimensions cannot be neglected if the site is to be protected and the message is to be transmitted to the visitor.

It is important to note that training and education can take many forms from formal in class instruction to distance education to self-paced computer based learning to publications and manuals.

Achieving the right kind of organisational structure and management is essential in allowing a destination to achieve a sustainable future in present times of cut throat competition. There are many approaches for creating a management structure but the principles identified above should be seen as important dimensions of any organisational structure irrespective of its principal participants. The most important consideration is that all stakeholders from the community, the public and private sectors must be seen as essential actors in the overall management of the tourism destination.

3.7 OPERATION OF DESTINATION OR SITE AS A PRODUCT

Once a destination has developed the policies, plans and management structures, the next logical step is to develop management operation policies and procedures. These are designed for smooth operations in order to ensure the ongoing attractiveness of the destination and the protection of local culture and environment. This should involve cooperation of all stakeholders in the tourism and should not be seen solely as the responsibility of local authorities. A variety of issues have to be considered in this regard.

1) Environmental Management

A major task for any destination designer and developer is to ensure that the environment is improved both within the destination itself and in terms of its impacts on the surrounding areas. This should be a topic for significant discussion among all stakeholders, policymakers and decision-takers. This should centre around the following physical factors:

- Roads and street lighting,
- Drainage,
- Water supply,
- Electric power,
- Sewage disposal,
- Solid waste disposal,
- Maintaining greens,
- Telecommunications, and
- Sanitation and public health standards.

Part of developing a destination as a product is to ensure that sustainable values are adopted by all in the tourism industry. **Environmental Management System (EMS)** is a system to assist facilities such as hotels and restaurants to improve their overall environmental performance. The main benefit of using a system such as EMS is that it takes a holistic or integrated approach to the facility. This is done by monitoring the environmental behaviour of a facility from the beginning of the process (e.g. inflow of resources and products into the facility) to the end. The EMS monitors all the environmentally sensitive areas in a facility such as solid waste generation, consumption of water, disposal of wastewater and consumption of energy (electricity and other fuels).

The EMS is designed to produce positive impacts upon the environment as well as a minimum yet positive impact upon costs to the business. It is important to remember that the EMS is meant to be a guideline. Depending on the size and type of facility, managers may decide to adopt some or all of EMS procedures. It may take time to see results. Since EMS is a staged approach, the facility can start off with small improvements and increase the commitments to implementation of a fully-integrated EMS over time.

In order to effectively manage the physical factors listed above the staff needs to be trained since no programme will work unless the staff is committed to the successful environmental management

systems. This training may take the form of communication meetings and/or specially designed programmes aimed at teaching the management practices in these areas. There is also a strong need to create awareness about tourism among the staff and host population.

2) **Heritage Resource Conservation**

You know that a destination's historic, cultural, and natural heritage are often its main attractions. These resources must be protected accordingly and management approaches need to emphasise their conservation. Conservation at a destination demands a systematic approach and discipline. Historic sites have technical conservation issues which require to be addressed at length during the planning phase of tourism development.

The management of heritage sites is truly a multi-disciplinary field. It involves the traditional areas of activity of heritage preservation such as conservation, curatorships, design, interpretation, research, building rehabilitation and the protection and enhancement of crafts. In addition, it requires an understanding of urban or rural planning, architecture, real estate finance, building partnerships, public participation and product development, etc. One of the difficulties of this process is for each participant to understand and appreciate the concerns of the other disciplines and perspectives. It must be stressed that an essential ingredient of success for any heritage area scheme has to be the ability of the various actors to work together effectively.

The most important management principle has to be that everyone understands and appreciates the cultural significance of a site. It is essential that the authenticity and character of a site must be defined before any management interventions take place. This may be seen as a clear definition of a site's essential values and which has to be developed as a product after great deal of research as well as consensus building amongst the relevant partners.

Every heritage site has limits: physical, ecological and social. Tourism can have significant negative impacts on a site due to overuse and visitation. Thus, understanding these limits is essential in protecting the value of the resources, overuse of which can cause irreparable damages.

There are a number of ways to conserve a destination's individual attractions as well as the destination in general. Awareness is crucial so that visitors can appreciate and respect the unique nature of a destination. Methods to encourage awareness and education in this regard:

- offer literature, brochures and briefings,
- interpret local cultural values,
- provide cultural guidelines,
- advise visitors to respect local customs and values and tell them the do's and don'ts, and
- suggest appropriate behaviour when photographing residents when purchasing goods and tipping.

3) **Site/Attraction Management**

One of the major site management tasks is related with visitor numbers, behaviour and impacts. You have been already told that there shall be limits on the use of any kind of site, but when those limits are exceeded, damage begins to occur and the visitors' experiences are compromised. The visitor impact therefore can be seen in relation to the result of the number of people using a site, the type of activity, when the use occurs and the ability of particular environments to withstand use.

Managing use of tourism resources at a site could be fairly straightforward if there is an ideal level of their use. This, however, may be unrealistic when attempting to meet the economic objectives of a site. It is the role of the site management team to attempt to ensure the least possible damage while guaranteeing the financial viability of the site. To achieve the financial viability there shall be an ongoing process of understanding the visitor and his or her expectations in relation to site use.

4) **Managing Visitors**

The task of managing visitors appears to be a fairly simple one by reducing the number of visitors to the site or reducing the number of people at any one period of time or limiting the number of people

in a particular place on the site itself. But there are a number of other possible management strategies for dealing with the visitors as:

- Restricting or limiting entry to the area,
- Reducing numbers of large groups,
- Implementing a quota system,
- Using pricing techniques to reduce demand,
- Directing visitors to other areas,
- Having different pricing policies for different times of the week and year,
- Developing a reservations system,
- Using a system of lotteries to determine who can use a site,
- Extending hours at particularly busy times of the year, and
- Limiting accommodation near the site.

You must acknowledge that each of these management strategies brings with it certain costs and benefits and have important political realities that must be reconciled as part of a management process.

5) **Managing the Surrounding Environment of the Site**

Practically every site is dependent on the surrounding areas and community for financial as well as other types of support. In addition, the surrounding community most often provides a wide range of visitor services and attractions that play crucial and complementary role in fulfilling the visitors' experience. This involves therefore close co-operation with other tourism activities in the region. If a group of sites or even a group of destinations work together to each establish a unique regional niche, visitors will likely stay longer in the area and visit each destination or site for a different experience. Therefore, it is useful to think of the community in its many dimensions as one of the many stakeholders involved in the overall management of the site. Hence, relationship between site and surrounding community must be considered and incorporated into every planning and management exercise.

6) **Management of Visitors Amenities and Services**

Once the visitors arrive at the site or destination it is important that they are treated in the best possible manner in order to ensure their complete satisfaction and willingness to repeat their visit to the site as well as to recommend it to others. Visitor amenities and services exist both on-site as well as offsite. On site amenities and services include:

- Drinking water,
- Toilets,
- Public telephones,
- Postal services,
- Emergency medical services, and
- Garbage removal and disposal.

The range of on-site amenities obviously depends upon the scale of the site. Larger sites can offer a full range of eating, accommodation and entertainment services. In many countries these services are contracted out and there is a need for a stringent process of not only leasing but also of regular monitoring of administration and management of on-site services.

Off-site amenities include:

- Accommodation of various kinds,
- Restaurants,
- Retail activities,
- Services such as car repair, email,
- Recreational facilities,
- Entertainment possibilities,
- Health-care, etc.

While as a site manager you do not have control over these amenities, you can always influence local community and regional or private sector interests so as to provide some of these amenities through your public relations programmes.

7) **Security**

Today, security of self and baggage is most important concern of the tourists. Most tourists want to feel safe and secure at the destination – not only safe from theft and crime but secure and confident in the abilities of the destination to deal with any problems that may arise. It is often more of a sense of security than anything tangible that tourists are seeking. Particularly tourists are more concerned with security against terrorist attacks and other similar unprecedented circumstances.

Besides, concerns of a destination's fire, police, and hospital facilities are paramount. This includes, for example, concerns that doctors or police speak the tourist's language, are trustworthy and sympathetic. If any problems do arise for tourists, lack of preparation on the part of the destination will not support the image of a tourist-friendly destination.

When visiting a foreign or even a domestic destination, tourists want to feel confident that the water they are drinking is safe and the food free of adulteration. Hence, strategies to promote these feelings of security shall revolve around training and awareness campaigns for locals. For example, hotel and restaurant workers may need training about what tourists find acceptable and unacceptable in terms of hygiene and food preparation. The most important focus of strategy, however, shall be on how to communicate with tourists. The unknown is frightening so therefore honest, straightforward information will reassure them about what is and is not safe in a destination. For example, if tap water is not safe to drink, but is safe for brushing teeth, explain to visitors why and where they can purchase bottled water. Many tourists are also worried about diseases like malaria, cholera and dehydration. If malaria prophylactics are necessary, it is important that tourists are aware of this before they arrive and that they are confident that the destination would be able to cope with any potential problems.

8) **Disaster Management**

Many regions, worldwide, are prone to disasters such as fires, typhoons, and particularly floods. Therefore, destinations should be concerned about the impacts of disasters not only for the safety of the local people, but also from the point of view of destination's ability to deal with the disastrous situation effectively and professionally. While planning for such eventualities, tourists perception of safety to same must be kept in mind.

During times of disaster local governments are in the best positions to provide leadership, supervise the distribution of relief goods and medicine and to manage evacuations. Since local governments have the most at stake and are the most closely involved in local development, they can be most effective in planning long-term risk reduction.

Disasters often bring a bad image to the destination. Therefore, in this regard public relations exercises in the form of "damage control" assume greater importance in mitigating the negative effects on the tourism industry caused by the disaster. For example, if a typhoon hits one corner of an island and images of the damage reach the international press, the destination must work hard to publicise that only one portion of the island has been affected and the rest is open for business as usual.

Besides these major disasters you should also provide special considerations to water, transport, and communications in times of crisis as internal dimensions that must be planned far ahead of time and cannot be managed by a damage control public relations team.

Check Your Progress

- 1) Discuss principles of destination development.

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- 2) What should be your concern for destination planning?

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- 3) Highlight factors involved in destination designing and management.

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3.8 LET US SUM UP

Every destination needs a design plan for developing attraction and facilities in order to pull people out of their houses. While designing these attractions, as a planner you need to address crucial issues like regional economic development, sustainable development, healthy working conditions for manpower working in tourism related services at the destination. In this Unit, we have also made an attempt to examine the social-eco and environmental impacts of tourism developments at the destination but their management strategies have also been suggested so as to minimise their impacts. The application of Environment Management System (EMS) has been visualised as the main concern for all destination planners and designers if destination is to remain on world tourist map for a large period of time.

3.9 CLUES TO ANSWERS

Check Your Progress

- 1) Refer Sec. 3.3.
- 2) Refer Sec. 3.5.
- 3) Refer Sec. 3.6.