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Contents Part III

101	SUSTAINABLE TOURISM DEVELOPMENT IN KERALA - POLICIES AND INITIATIVES Dr P Ezzath	520 - 522
102	India-Pakistan-Afghanistan Energy Cooperation and Role of China Samardeep Kaur	523 - 526
103	LARVAL PRESENTATION AND LIFE HISTORY RESTRICTIONS OF SOME PAPILIONIDAE BUTTERFLIES IN SRI LANKAMALLEDWARA RESERVE FOREST OF EASTERN GHATS - SOUTHERN ANDHRA PRADESH - INDIA P. Nagalakshmi & K. Suryanarayana & S. P. Venkata Ramana	527 - 533
104	IDENTIFICATION AND CHARACTERIZATION OF NUCLEAR MATRIX ATTACHMENT REGIONS IN THE ADP-CLIMASE PYROPHOSPHORYLASE LARGE SUBUNIT GENE ISOLATED FROM SORGHUM BICOLOUR Pulak Das & Indrani Chandra	534 - 540
105	STUDY OF GROUND WATER QUALITY OF KHARONE TOWN (M.P.) AND ITS IMPACT ON HUMAN HEALTH ANITA SOLANKI	540 - 543
106	Awareness towards Crowdfunding among Young, Budding and Prospective Entrepreneurs in Bangalore Justin Joseph & Nithin A.R & Dr Valarmathi B	544 - 549
107	Genetic diversity and phylogenetic relationships of some medicinal plants from the Western Ghats of India Shashikant B. Ghatge	550 - 551
108	Genetic diversity and phylogenetic relationships of some medicinal plants from the Western Ghats of India Shashikant B. Ghatge	552 - 553
109	REVIEWED STUDY DEPICTION OF SECURITY HINDRANCE IN ORGANIZATIONS Renu Bala	554 - 559
110	Sylvia Plath: Poetry of Accumulated Pains & Betrayed Relations Maninder Kaur	560 - 565
111	Infertility cured by dynamic potencies Dr. Partha Pratim Pal & Dr. Madhumita Nath	566 - 570
112	GIANT FRESHWATER PRAWN, <i>MACROBRACHIUM ROSENBERGII</i> (DE MAN 1879): A REVIEW M.A. Farook, H.S. Muthu Mohamed, N.P.M. Mohammed Tariq, K. Muhammad Shariq & I. Asif Ahmed	571 - 584
113	Production Potential and Biological Efficiency of Five <i>Pleurotus</i> species H. Rana & K. Shivan	585 - 588

SUSTAINABLE TOURISM DEVELOPMENT IN KERALA - POLICIES AND INITIATIVES

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ABSTRACT: Tourism is the second large industry in India. It provides large employment opportunities. It also influences the Indian economy on a great scale. It contributes foreign exchange on a large scale. Tourism in India can be developed through sustainable tourism. Sustainable tourism refers to the sustainable tourism is a way of traveling and exploring a destination while respecting its culture, environment, and people. Kerala also plays a leader role in bringing sustainable tourism policy. In Kerala sustainable tourism is applied through three strategies. They are economic, social and environmental responsibility.

Key Words:

Tourism

Tourism is the second large industry in India. It provides large employment opportunities. It also influences the Indian economy on a great scale. It contributes foreign exchange on a large scale. The word Tourism defined by UNWTO as, "Tourism comprises the activities of persons travelling to and staying in places outside their usual environment for not more than one consecutive year for leisure, business and other purposes"

Sustainable Tourism

Sustainable tourism refers to the sustainable tourism is a way of traveling and exploring a destination while respecting its culture, environment, and people. Expressed simply, sustainable tourism can be defined as: "Tourism that takes full account of its current and future economic, social and environmental impacts, addressing the needs of visitors, the industry, the environment and host communities"

Conceptual definition

Sustainable tourism development guidelines and management practices are applicable to all forms of tourism in all types of destinations, including mass tourism and the various niche tourism segments. Sustainability principles refer to the environmental, economic, and socio-cultural aspects of tourism development, and a suitable balance must be established between these three dimensions to guarantee its long-term sustainability.

Thus, sustainable tourism should:

- 1) Make optimal use of environmental resources that constitute a key element in tourism development, maintaining essential ecological processes and helping to conserve natural heritage and biodiversity.
- 2) Respect the socio-cultural authenticity of host communities, conserve their built and living cultural heritage and traditional values, and contribute to inter-cultural understanding and tolerance.
- 3) Ensure viable, long-term economic operations, providing socio-economic benefits to all stakeholders that are fairly distributed, including stable employment and income-earning opportunities and social services to host communities, and contributing to poverty alleviation.

Sustainable tourism development requires the informed participation of all relevant stakeholders, as well as strong political leadership to ensure wide participation and consensus building. Achieving sustainable tourism is a continuous process and it requires constant monitoring of impacts, introducing the necessary preventive and/or corrective measures whenever necessary.

Sustainable tourism should also maintain a high level of tourist satisfaction and ensure a meaningful experience to the tourists, raising their awareness about sustainability issues and promoting sustainable tourism practices amongst them.

OBJECTIVES

- To appreciate the benefits and problems arising from various forms of tourism, especially in terms of social equity and the environment;