

Sustainable Mountain Development

Existing approaches to mountain tourism development have failed to benefit a wider community and protect the natural resources crucial for the survival of local communities and for mountain and tourism development (Banskota and Sharma 1994). In order to formulate a concept of mountain development in which tourism can play a catalytic role, it is essential to identify the importance of a mountain area in terms of its resources and the value of these resources from local, national, and international perspectives. Mountain development, to a great extent, means poverty alleviation.

Clean air; watersheds; biological diversity (genes, species, and ecosystem); scenic beauty; the cultural heritage of the people; human resources; and renewable resources such as firewood, fodder, etc may all be classified as environmental resources. The environmental resources found in the Himalayas are unique and have limited substitutes (Himalayan Resources for short [HR]). These resources are also the basis of mountain tourism development (MTD). These resources are of immense value to humanity (Thorsell and Harrison 1993). The total economic value of mountain environmental resources (consumptive, productive, and non-consumptive use values) is believed to be far in excess of what is currently realised (Banskota and Sharma 1994; Wells 1993; McNeely 1988).