



MINISTRY OF FOREST

FIJI TOURISM TALANOA Making Tourism Sustainable

11/04/2013

OVERVIEW OF PRESENTATION

- Introduction of the Ministry of Forest.
- Current status of Fiji's forests.
- Impacts of tourism development on SRM.
- Tourism industry role –SFM & Biodiversity

Who we are and what type of Organization are we?

- MoF is a public service organisation responsible for portfolio leadership & policy initiatives for the conservation and sustainable management & development of Fiji's forestry resources.

Our Vision/ Mission

- The Leader in Forest Sustainability and Innovation for Small Island Economies To drive sustainable resource management, economic growth & improving livelihoods through SMART forest polices that is based on research and development.

Our Role.

- Ensure conservation, sustainable utilisation and management of forest resources
- Approve and issue forest related licenses
- Provide training extension service and research
- Coordination with key stakeholders including forest resource owners.

CURRENT STATUS OF FIJI'S FOREST

- 54.7 % of Fiji is Forested.
- 89.4% (894,000ha)of this is classified as primary forest (most biodiverse form of forest)
- Modified forest – 0.5% 5000 ha
- Production Plantation – 10.1% 101000ha

Change in Forest Cover

- 1990-2000 Fiji gained an average of 2000ha of forest per year. (reforestation rate of 0.21%)
- 2000-2005 – rate of forest change decreased by 100% to 0.0% per annum
- In total between 1990-2005, Fiji gained 2.2% of Forest cover or around 21000ha and lost 1000ha at that time.
- Measuring the total rate of forest conversion for the 1990-2005 interval Fiji only gained 0.001% of its Forest.

Biodiversity & Protected Areas

- 164 known species of amphibians, animals, birds, mammals & reptiles. 28.7% are endemic & 15.2% are threatened.
- 1518 species of vascular plants, 50.1% are endemic, 9.9% is protected.



IMPACT OF TOURISM DEVELOPMENT

- Definition of Tourism by a Forester

“Tourism is now a phenomenon, not just a simple holiday activity. It [tourism] is a human activity which encompasses human behaviour, use of resources, and interaction with other people, economies and environments. Tourism is more of gaining an exceptional experience than a regular living, while travel can consists of various reasons behind it.”

Definition of Environment

- Environment: In terms of tourism, is always understood as a nature or atmosphere of a destination or a place which is used for tourism. Nature consists of mountains, water resources such as sea side, sea, rivers, waterfalls etc. Green environment includes plants, forests, parks, rainforests, safaris etc. when elaborated to wilderness it consists wild life, animals, forest species and so on. Socially; heritage sites or cultural uniqueness is also a part of an environment.

Tourism and Environment are interdependent

- Tourism is based on the environment; Tourism has and will always devour the natural resources. Tourism is the main factor carrying out the natural environment in both positive and negative aspect.eg Zoo, forest parks, mangrove removal
- Relationship between tourism and environment can get equilibrate if financial profits gets used for the conservation programs or environmental sustainability.

Negative Effects

- clearing of vegetation for constructing resorts and hotels or other tourism facilities,
- also many rare species have been brought to the verge of disappearance due to ill planned tourism which leads to Habitat devastation
- depletion of natural resources like water, land and resources like food, energy or raw materials etc. which are already in short supply.

- Degradation of land resources like wood or plantations – Mangrove sites removal
- Solid waste littering is more common in the case of trekking, rock climbing or hiking tourists. Tourism also pollutes the tourism sites with noise and air pollutions.
- The cutting down of forested areas, changing the landscape etc all have negative impacts on the ecological balance of the tourism destination,

Positive Impact

- However with all these harmful effects, the environment is also gaining the optimistic outcome of tourism. Tourism is moving towards a sustainable side by helping and preserving the natural resources for the future generation. Various nations and its conservative organisations are implementing strict plans for conserving their flora and fauna and protecting their natural resources.

Tourism industry role –SFM & Biodiversity

- As tourism industry benefits from the tourism sites, it should be morally responsible to take the role in the conservation of the natural setting from which it gets benefits. An appropriate and well managed tourism approach can reduce the pessimistic impact of tourism on the natural environment.

1. Appropriate use of earned revenue

- educating the tourist is an essential aspect in the effort of conservation of the natural environment. The revenue earned from various tourist activities can be used to enable organisations to focus on the conservational efforts. Without the money, conservation process is nothing. Eg; funding of efforts/ projects on Reforestations & Afforestation Programs

2. Developing eco-tourism

- to bring a change from the basic idea of mainstream conventional tourism to sustainable tourism and eco-tourism which are far more environmental friendly and aims at nourishing both the external and the internal environment of the destination thus reducing the negative effects of tourism on the environment without compromising the value of experience that the visitors can get from visiting the sites. Eg, Sleeping Giant Zipline Sabeto

3. Sound planning

- Sound environmental management of tourism amenities like resorts and hotels can enhance the benefits to natural areas; requirement is careful planning of tourism development which is based on the environmental resources existing in the destination area. Eg Building Resorts on the existing mangroves, forests and beaches instead of removing them completely.

4. Developing awareness among tourists

- Conservationists should offer means by which people using the particular destination, both locals and tourists can be made aware of the importance of maintaining the environment. In fact they can encourage the people to contribute towards maintaining the environmental balance. Eg. AVIVA farm Sabeto, Nadi.

5. Helping wildlife preservations

- Tourism also plays a vital role in the preservation and protection of various species of endangered species which is a vital part of the natural environment. Nature loving tourists visit wildlife reserves and in doing so contribute to the conservation process. Eg Coloisuva Forest parks, Nadarivatu Forest Parks.

6. Agro tourism

- capitalizes on rural culture as a tourist attraction. It is similar to ecotourism except that its more to cultural landscape instead of natural landscape. More focusing on Forests.
- Visits are structured around a tour offering insight into the cultivation, care, processing and manufacturing of these commodities for sale or export. Eg. Sandalwood Farm Visit.

Climate Change and Forest.

- Climate change is a global issue and has been the centre of discussion especially under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) platform.
- There is an immense need for national commitment in the effort to address climate change. Especially the need for countries to take appropriate actions to conserve and enhance sinks and reservoir of Greenhouse Gases (GHG) such as FORESTS.
- Therefore, Ministry of Forest is very grateful to be here today and be part of this Talanoa Session with the biggest Industry in Fiji, to show our support towards the national commitment in addressing climate change.

Vina du riki!