

# Tourism, Trade, and Globalisation: Impacts on Biodiversity

- A One Act Play

EQUATIONS, 2009

*“Conserving Biodiversity in a Globalising India  
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# overview

- *Scene 1: **Setting the stage** : interrogating the assumptions, myths and realities of **globalisation***
- *Scene 2 **Writing the script**: exploring the trends in **conservation ideology and its implications***
- *Scene 3 **Enter Tourism** ! examining how tourism plays its part in this drama – its overt and covert agendas and their **implications on biodiversity and people's rights***
- ***Curtains** : placing the dilemmas and conversations that seem necessary between us all*

# *Scene 1*

## ***Setting the stage***

*interrogating the assumptions,  
myths and realities of  
**globalisation***

# Globalisation myths (& realities)

- “the past 30 years has been witness to the most extraordinarily successful liberation movement of our time – the global movement of the elite and wealthy to liberate themselves of all constraints and shackles in order to accumulate unprecedented levels of wealth. These shackles have been of taxes, environmental regulations, trade unions and other forms of organisation, capital controls, trade barriers, and publicly owned and controlled services”. **Naomi Klein**
- Globalisation’s modern *avataar* –neoliberal capitalism or corporate globalisation advocates
  - strong private property rights, free markets, and free trade.
  - the state should not be involved in the economy too much, but it should use its power to preserve the above

# *Globalisation myths (& realities)*

- Capitalism and democracy are inseparable – in fact two faces of a coin
- The private sector is inherently more efficient/effective than government/publicly managed
- Wealth created /accumulated at the top does trickle down
- (even if all the above fail ) Anyway there is no alternative!

# *Globalisation myths (& realities)*

- **“free trade is good”** is at the heart of neo-liberal economics and one of its best sold myths.( Ha-Joon Chang)
- **“kicking away the ladder”**: virtually all successful developed countries initially succeeded through nationalistic policies using protection, subsidies and government intervention. they now impose free trade and neoliberal policies on developing countries, while this is not the method by which they reached developed status themselves!
- **“growth is good”** the myth that economic growth leads to development. free trade theory is about economic efficiency of resources in the short run and does not really base itself on, or promise to deliver, economic development.

# *Globalisation myths (& realities)*

- Links to conservation and biodiversity?  
What have been the casualties?
  - the shrinking of democratic space to influence domestic policy (because of overriding conditionalities).
  - With the push for greater liberalisation and greater “growth” the key causalities have been environmental deregulation and the indiscriminate use and abuse of use of natural resources for the benefit of a few to the detriment of us all.

## *Scene 2*

### ***Writing the script***

*exploring the trends in*  
***conservation ideology***  
*and its implications*

# *Conservation: under the scanner issues of legitimacy*

- “Wilderness” concept - Humans have been viewed primarily as an invasive species leading to erosion of biodiversity.
- Conservation and displacement. Massive political and financial backing that was given to conservation groups  
Creation of Protected Areas (PAs), National Parks and Sanctuaries speeded up globally.
- In 1962, 1000 official PAs. By 2007, 110000 PAs (12% world's landmass) resulting in **6 million** “conservation refugees” primarily indigenous people.
- In India 650 Protected Areas and estimated **2 million** of the world's conservation refugees.

## *Conservation: under the scanner issues of legitimacy*

- the role of adivasis in the protection of nature through symbiotic relationships not taken into account
- scientific knowledge “vs” traditional knowledge
- tiger vs tribal , PIL’s against the forest rights act in large measure exhibit these positions

# *Conservation: under the scanner frameworks*

- current conservation frameworks seem increasingly embedded in the neoliberal ethic.
- Credence and weight given to market based conservation : ecotourism, the economic valuing of environmental services, carbon sequestration, carbon trading and REDD
- fundamental belief seems to be that once these are embedded in market terms the logic of the free market will solve environmental problems.

# *Conservation: under the scanner credibility deficit*

- trend of partnership with big business seriously eroding credibility among grassroots actors. (IUCN, WWF)
- Executive officers of corporations that are major polluters serve on the boards of many environmental organizations
- The politics of funding & the potential influence of those providing the money for research and advocacy
- Conservation organizations not been vocal enough about e.g MoEF diverting vast tracts of forest land to mining, extractive and polluting industries

## Scene 3

### ***Enter TOURISM!***

*Tourism's part in this drama  
its overt and covert agendas*

***implications on biodiversity and people's  
rights***

# *The tourism numbers -footfalls*

- one of the largest and fastest growing economic sectors in the world. a symbol of globalisation.
- From 1950 to 2007, international tourist arrivals grew from 25 million to 903 million.
- By 2010 international arrivals are expected to reach 1 billion, and grow to 1.6 billion by 2020.
- In 1950, the top 15 destinations absorbed 98% of all international tourist arrivals. In 1970 the proportion was 75%, and this fell to 57% in 2007, reflecting the emergence of new destinations, many of them in developing countries.

# *The tourism numbers -\$\$\$\$*

- Export income globally generated by international tourism ranks fourth after fuels, chemicals and automotive products
- The overall export income international tourism receipts and passengers transport, exceeding US\$ 1 trillion in 2007
- The corresponding figures for India are 5.37 million international arrivals in 2008 and forex earnings of 11457 million USD (INR 50730 crores ).
- Impressive global economic growth, however vulnerability of the sector, its contribution to stable jobs , its capacity for poverty alleviation and its green credentials suspect/overrated/unproven

# *Policy frameworks - global*

- Tourism is increasingly being located in natural areas that are frontier, inaccessible, ecologically fragile and critical in terms of their biodiversity.
- On the global stage, tourism promotion and industry bodies like the World Travel and Tourism council and the UNWTO have constantly fallen back on global guidelines and agreements to showcase their commitment to sustainability and to the environment.
- key “global documents” linked to tourism have two core ideas running consistently
  - **That they promote the principle of free market, and protectionism in trade and investment is to be dismantled.**
  - **That the initiatives should be voluntary and industry led**
- UNWTO global code of ethics(!), agenda 21 for the travel and tourism industry, UNEP (IYE), tourism guidelines in the CBD all reflect these principles . WB, ADB. Large donor agencies

# *Policy frameworks - national*

- The **National Tourism Policy of 2002** clearly states – *“wildlife sanctuaries and national parks need to be integrated as an integral part of the India tourism product, and priority needs to be given to the preparation of site and visitor management plans for key parks, after a prioritization of parks.”*
- The **National Environment Policy 2006** promotes ecotourism in many fragile ecosystems and glosses over negative impacts that tourism brings in.
- Under the **Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980**, section 2(d), non-forestry activity is prohibited in a forest area. Arguing that revenues from tourism could potentially be used for conservation, tourism has pushed itself into forest areas. While the Wild Life (Protection) Act 1972 does allow tourists into Protected Areas, it clearly disallows commercial establishments. The **Indian Board for Wildlife, XXI meeting in January 2002** resolved “lands falling within 10 km. of the boundaries of National Parks and Sanctuaries should be notified as eco-fragile zones.
- **Forest departments** promoting and implementing tourism. Many have ecotourism cells but very few have clear strategies or plans for impact assessments of tourism’s implications on conservation or biodiversity.

# *Holiday from Regulation & Holiday from accountability*

- First push for dilution of the Coastal Regulation Zone Notification (CRZ), 1991 (issued under the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986) came from the tourism industry, with repeated demands for the relaxation of the “no development zone”. Subsequently, with over 21 amendments (read dilutions), in the battle between development and the coastal ecology, development won hands down.

# *Holiday from Regulation & Holiday from accountability*

- Tourism exempted from the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Notification 2006 (also under the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986).
- large infrastructure projects for e.g in the North eastern region, Lavasa in Maharashtra , Ski villages in Himachal Pradesh let of the hook as “tourism projects”

# *Curtains..... But the show goes on*

- Frameworks and ideological underpinnings of neoliberal globalisation inform much of current conservation thinking and action – resulting on serious concerns of legitimacy and credibility
- Sidelines issues of ethics and rights of vast sections of society who are protectors of and dependent on natural resources and biodiversity
- Sidelines actual impacts on conservation and biodiversity

# *Curtains..... But the show goes on*

- Are conservation scientists ready to walk across the “barriers” of scientific knowledge, listen to, learn from and dialogue with the original stakeholders of our natural resources.
- Are tourism policy planners regulators and implementers willing to do likewise?
- Equating sustainability with green concerns is not sufficient.

**just sustainability = justice+ equity+ environment**