Master's Thesis

# Benefits and Challenges of Tourism for Village Populations in India's Marine Protected Areas: Case Studies from the Sundarbans National Park and the Gulf of Mannar Marine National Park

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*Benefits and Challenges of Tourism for Village Populations in India's Marine Protected Areas: Case Studies from the Sundarbans National Park and the Gulf of Mannar Marine National Park*

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## Declaration

I hereby confirm that I am the sole author of this thesis and it is a product of my own academic research.

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# Statement of Ethics

To Whom It May Concern:

As a researcher, I acknowledge the ethical obligations that accompany the pursuit for information and data utilized within my study.

As the University Centre of the Westfjords does not have an ethics board, I herein declare that, while carrying out this research, my work will observe the highest possible degree of ethical standards. I will only report information that is knowingly obtained or that falls within the public domain and within the law.

My work will observe the plagiarism policy agreed to at the commencement of my Master's studies and due credit will be given to any information referred to in my report. Primary data will be obtained honestly and in a non-covert manner. I will not deceive or deceitfully acquire data or information from any individuals. Permission to participate in the study will be obtained before any information is collected and in the case of recorded conversations, individuals will be asked for consent and provided the option of saying no. All recordings will be deleted upon transcription.

In adherence with the Economic and Social Research Council Guidelines, my pursuit of information under the premise of completing a Master's degree:

- Will seek informed consent
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- Will respect the confidentiality and anonymity of respondents, unless permission for titles to be used
- Will ensure participants in the study will participate voluntarily
- Will avoid any harm to my participants
- Will prove to be independent and impartial

Signed,

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# Abstract

The success or failure of a marine protected area (MPA) is a direct result of the governing body's ability to alleviate prevalent stresses on the respective ecosystem. In India, a nation hindered by overpopulation and poverty, resource dependency by local communities constitutes the greatest challenge for effective governance. For this, tourism is widely heralded as a sustainable alternative, providing a platform on which the needs of multiple stakeholders can be met. Conversely, as the term *tourism* continues to become synonymous with local economic benefit, one would be remiss to ignore that when improperly managed, the institution can lead to social conflict, increased marginalisation and socio-economic degradation. This study investigates tourism trends, and the impacts of tourism in two of India's MPAs– The Gulf of Mannar Marine National Park and the Sundarbans National Park– with a focus on community perspectives. Data collection techniques included secondary literature and policy review, ethnographic field observations, 54 semi-structured interviews, focus groups, and a social survey, across a wide scale of stakeholders in the two parks. Adopting Miller and Auyong's (1991) Broker, Local, Tourist Model (BLT) as an organizational tool, points of conflict are extracted and sources of social conflict categorised. Findings are similar in both MPAs, demonstrating above all, that while India is enthralled with tourism development, financial benefits reach too high to help the communities it occupies. Many villagers feel unheard and underrepresented, and institutional obstacles impede the prospect of tourism work. Freedoms are increasingly restricted, while tourism is given free rein to grow. Most notably, this study identifies the principal cause of social conflict to be poorly integrated decision-making bodies. An absence of coordination by governing actors breeds a lack of enforcement and accountability. Looking ahead, it is recommended that clear demarcation of the roles and responsibilities of governing agents should be a priority, while further studies are needed to better understand institutional obstacles impeding community involvement in MPA tourism.

# Table of Contents

# List of Figures

# List of Tables

# Acronyms

BLT: Broker-Local-Tourist

CRZ: Coastal Regulation Zone

DISHA: Direct Initiative for Social and Health Action (DISHA)

EDC: Eco-Development Committees (EDCs)

GOM: Gulf of Mannar

GOMBRT: Gulf of Mannar Biosphere Reserve Trust

ICZMP: Integrated Coastal Zone Management Plan

IESWM: Institute of Environmental Studies and Wetland Management

IUCN: International Union for Conservation of Nature

MAB reserve: Man and Biosphere reserve

NFF: National Fish Workers Forum

MPA: Marine Protected Area

NGO: Non-Governmental Organization

OECD: Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development

PAD: People's Action for Development

SDB: Sundarbans Development Board

SIDCL: Sundarbans Infrastructure Development Corporation Limited (SIDCL)

SRDS: Sundarbans Rural Development Society

UNESCO: United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

# Acknowledgements

# 1.0. Introduction

In an era where the oceans and seas define our boundaries of knowledge, humans are becoming increasingly interested in protecting that which exists beneath the water's surface. Marine protected areas (MPAs) are defined as tools of conservation; designed and implemented for the purposes of protecting marine biodiversity and its associated habitats. As such, legislation and governance policies are primarily focused on environmental objectives, often times overlooking the presence of human populations in these areas. For local inhabitants, the impacts of certain restrictions, such as within fisheries, are immediately felt, but the real implications of an MPA generate over time, both positively and negatively, as a direct result of governance strategies. Environmental rejuvenation and protection can be high, along with local empowerment and employment potential, but to the same extent, when improperly managed, MPAs have led to conflict, increased marginalization and socio-economic degradation. In both cases, MPAs expose revenue-generating potential, which inevitability allows for outside financiers to influence and alter local sites. Tourism is one of these markets which has become synonymous with protected parks, and is widely viewed as a beneficial employment alternative for local inhabitants. It is promoted as an advocate of ecological preservation and has been proven to bring in financial support, and more importantly, environmental awareness when appropriately established.

As India's coastal regions develop, tourism infrastructure plays a large role in the future layout and utilization of these areas. It is a common belief that tourism provides a platform on which the needs of both the local residents and the business people can be met, in a manner which appropriately considers environmental vulnerability and conservation. It must, however, be investigated to what degree the benefits are shared and in which ways tourism benefits resident populations. All too often it is assumed that a shift of livelihood can be a favourable outcome, but stripping one of their traditional fishing zones can mean losing one's identity and individuality. The types of jobs available to an uneducated fisherman with minimal language skills would be limited. From dignified fisherman to resort room-cleaner can no longer be viewed as an acceptable

solution; ignoring the importance of pride, tradition and cultural heritage. Moreover, allowing for a tourism-dependant economy would be a critical mistake and in itself removes all sense of social security that even modest villagers once had. Conversely, allowing for dependence on a depleted resource is not a sufficient alternative, especially when it could spell the extinction of key species and habitats.

A shift in paradigms is inevitable and change is imminent; be it voluntary or imposed. This project seeks to understand the depths of tourism in India's MPAs, recognizing the implications of change on local populations and bringing their views to light. This is done by engaging stakeholders involved, from both inside and outside of the parks, across all societal levels regarding the topic. Focus is placed especially on grassroots level viewpoints, as they are a group most heavily affected, yet least often consulted. Two case studies are conducted in prominent MPAs in India– The Gulf of Mannar Marine National Park and the Sundarbans National Park– serving not as a control for other MPAs, but bringing forward issues which need addressing and introducing a framework by which other parks could be examined. Regarding site selection, one park is the country's largest MPA while the other is the most well known. As a whole they encompass the ideals of India's MPA definition, and act as a significant representation of other protected areas. By examining the local involvement within the tourism industry and understanding their opinions, the study examines what roles are available to residents and to what degree tourism benefits or troubles members of the developing society. As the study established an undesirable or destructive relationship, further analysis categorized the type of social conflict faced in the MPA, targeting the root of the problem. An in-depth review of policy documents and pre-existing literature accompany the investigation to establish an understanding of the industry as it applies to India, realize the goals and plans of governing systems, and draw relevant examples to provide a context for the findings.

## 1.1. Topics and Aims

Two overarching topics are examined to accomplish the above-mentioned task. First, the paper investigates the current state of affairs and tourism trends in two of India's MPAs from a management perspective. This focuses on tourism infrastructure and future

developmental plans, as well as policies in place for addressing socio-economics needs in the impacted area. It considers and analyses pertinent legislation, identifies and explains governance mechanisms, and assesses community-based conservation initiatives. Upon compiling and appropriately addressing the secondary data, the next topic addresses local, grassroots level impact analysis. This consists of conducting field surveys and on-site observation to better understand local sentiments and the degree to which involved communities benefit or suffer from tourism.

Through these topics, the objective is to conclusively answer three principal questions. First, what is the current state and status of tourism in India's MPAs? This encompasses government plans and policies, general outlook, the extent and nature of tourism desired, and the governance mechanisms used to engage the community. Second, what are the roles of the local communities and stakeholders in these two MPAs? Finally, the third question asks what are the local sentiments towards development and change? Do residents of communities hosting tourism feel better or worse off as a direct result of the tourism industry, and why?

The overall project provides a more complete understanding of how tourism has developed within India's MPAs. It outlines the different levels of consideration taken throughout the process, and provides insight from the local community perspective, regarding their perception of development and management initiative.

## 1.2. Analytical Framework

This project has been formed to examine the widely accepted mentality that tourism is, in fact, entirely beneficial to a host community, be it through direct involvement or financial percolation. Progress is often regarded as synonymous with increased quality of life, and it is my belief that the assumption of new opportunity may lead to complacency and blanket judgments. This is a common flaw highlighted by the *Interactionism Theory,* explaining that human beings develop opinions and beliefs based on their own environments and upbringing (Nelson, 1998). Our preconceived notions make it difficult to comprehend views of a culture with different visions than our own. Our measures of success, notably capital wealth and job security, are not underlying

principals of all cultures, and although intentions are pure it is easy to forget that certain groups may measure achievements and happiness by other benchmarks.

As it is challenging to find any single theory that is applicable to the particular situation in India, this study does not prescribe to any single theory, but instead draws on multiple principals and processes of thinking. First, it accepts the philosophy of *Critical Theory* in maintaining that our own ideologies limit our ability to perceive other cultures (Bohman, 2005). With this in mind, the study adopts an ethnographic component, living amongst local populations and speaking, both graphically and through writing, from their perspective. Immersion into their metaphorical shoes, even for a short time, allows for a better understanding of the context of their beliefs, and permits the report to speak with their system in mind. This application of *Ethnography* is common in qualitative studies, especially those intending to gain an in-depth understanding of foreign cultures and practices in an original environment (Reeves, et al., 2008). The hope is that this report acts as a bridge between the unheard levels of society and the official that govern them.

This research project has a focus on grassroots perspectives, as the literature review revealed that few studies of this kind had been previously conducted in either MPA. In this manner, the techniques of *Focus Groups, Semi-Structured Interviews,* and *Ethnographic Observation* have been employed to contextualize the issues of local people and the benefits or harm they face. Presented through two *Case Studies,* this will allow for stakeholders at multiple societal levels to be heard and
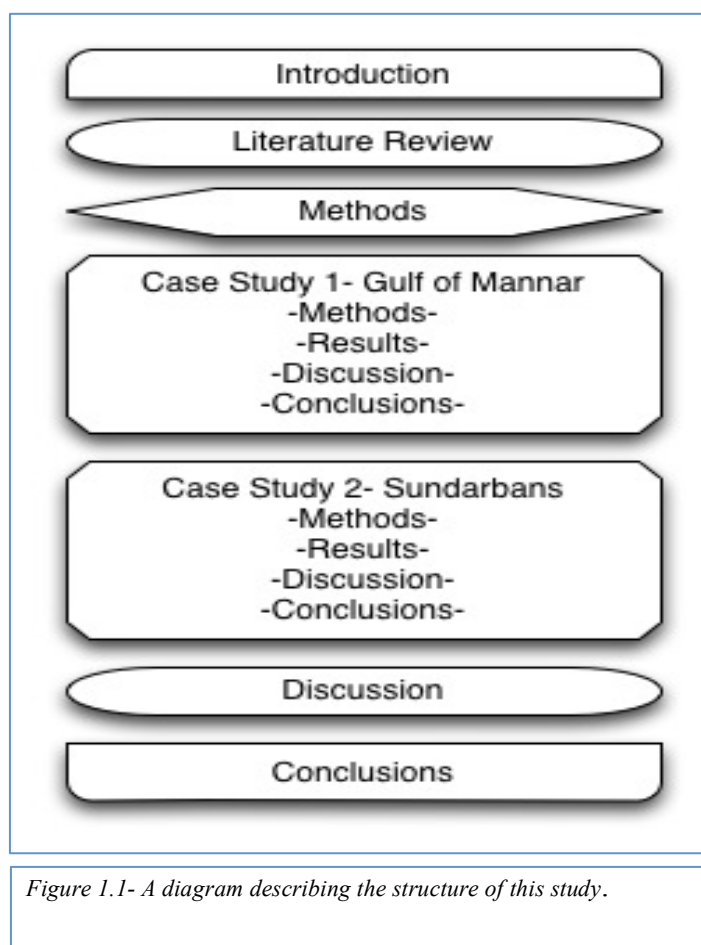


*Figure 1.1- A diagram describing the structure of this study.*

eventually hear what others around them believe. Figure 1.1 presents the format of this study, describing how each case study is a single investigation in and of itself, brought together in a final discussion and conclusion section. This method was chosen because it attempts to understand a situation in its entirety, allowing holistic views to speak to the issues faced in society (Yin, 2004). Also, as the industry of tourism is in a state of perpetual growth, it is imperative to ensure that consciously researched decisions are being made with the interests of all community members in mind.

The basis of this entire study is a series of four indicators established to provide comparability between the answers of interviewed stakeholders– quality of life, job security, community development and perception of happiness. Indicators were selected based on their ability to measure reactions to change resulting from development in the community. An indicator such as quality of life provides insight into perceptions of direct change, while a topic such as infrastructure and community development gives light to the sentiments of indirect change. Using these varying topic points, the study is able to provide a more holistic position, speaking to multiple views of the subject. The study speaks to the highest level of decision-making officials as well as the most common levels of the worker class. These four measures of life provide parameters for questioning and allow all stakeholders' responses to be interrelated. Definitions for each have been established as per their meaning for this study and can be found in section 3.0. Responses are examined within their respective categories, therein providing four angle of perspective to a single issue. When it comes to further study, individuals or groups can draw from the individual indicator that is most relevant to their department. Additionally, the simple collection and reduction approach should allow for easy adoptability to other MPAs, both in India and abroad.

# 2.0. Literature Review

## 2.1. Understanding Biosphere Reserves

The term *Biosphere Reserve* is an international designation given to both terrestrial and coastal marine environments deemed areas of high environmental significance, yet maintain a strong link to human activity. Coined in 1968 by the UNESCO Man and the Biosphere Programme (MAB), the title implies a national interest into coupling best practice methods with development on all scales. The program, implemented upon request by an individual nation, focuses on promoting a balance of human and natural interactions through relying on sounds science in resource utilization (Kelleher, 1999). By integrating sustainable practice into the earliest stages of planning, these reserves endeavour to form a synergetic relationship between innovation and conservation.

Unlike protected areas, a biosphere reserve does not protect any single sensitive habitat or focal point, or even focus on environmental issues for that matter, but instead seeks to embody entire ecosystems, including human beings (UNESCO-MAB, n.d.). They are organized into three zones of use– core, periphery and transition areas– fashioned in varying forms between countries, applied to highlight key conservation areas in need of increased protection and study, while allowing for communities to coexist within safe parameters.

According to the MAB (n.d.), the function of the biosphere reserves is threefold: 1) conservation, 2) socially sound development, and 3) research and education. In acquiring designation, countries make a conscience decision to better conserve their natural surroundings and raise awareness regarding the importance of ecological preservation. Innovation and development, within the context of an environmental conscience, remains a priority, but economic development cannot be at the cost of local population well-being. For this, the program includes a human dimensions component that challenges governments to investigate the impacts of development on local communities and ensure the progress is socio-culturally attentive at all levels of society. This all becomes possible as a result of the third function of the reserve, as increased research and monitoring of the areas in question allows for the right questions to be asked, and knowledge to be gained. Monitoring assures effectiveness, and the results

establish a platform from which to better educate the masses and inform complex and delicate decisions.

Like national or state parks, biosphere reserves remain under the jurisdiction of the relevant governmental bodies, but receive support on an international scale from the UNESCO network of biosphere reserves. There are no legally binding obligations that need to be upheld by an individual country, although a series of guidelines– the Statutory Framework for Biosphere Reserves– was developed at the UNESCO General Conference, and needs to be followed by participants (UNESCO-MAB, n.d.). Countries are to submit a progress report every ten years, to inform UNESCO of the reserves' operational status, lest they lose their title and world recognition. The implications of the latter are immensely significant as the reserve status is widely understood to be a platform on which governments can justifiably argue against projects that may be harmful for a given ecosystem or the inhabitants. Additionally, the information and research shared between the World's 621 reserves, spanning 117 countries, is invaluable as a developmental and sustainable planning tool. UNESCO (1974) best described these areas as *living laboratories*. These are places formed to focus on proper development in a manner which humans accept as being only a single part of a larger environment, a place where local communities aren't forgotten and sound scientific research informs decisions.

It should, however, be noted that in spite of the countless good intentions, there are, as always, two sides to the coin. Michel Batisse (2003) pointed out that by 1981 the focus of the program had been redirected to only concentrate on conservation and that research and logistic importance had been lost. Over 208 biosphere reserves were in action by 1981, but nearly all were declared in areas already labelled as protected areas or parks, not changing or adding to regulation or function, and as such, not contributing to any larger purpose.

Batisse (2003) clarified that this was not the case in all circumstances, providing cases of biosphere reverses created from nothing, like Mapimi in Mexico, or areas that built on national parks, such as Waterton Lake National Park in Canada, but it was concretely true in the majority of cases. Even in these cases, used widely as positive examples, conflicts and obstacles plague positive intentions. In mentioning the Mapini biosphere reserve, Kaus (1993) used this park as an example to point out the difficulties

associated with implementing a biosphere reserve. In maintaining joint tenure of land and poorly defined jurisdiction over rights to resources, multiple parties disagreed about the priorities of the park, which led to poor management-public relations. Martinez, et al. (2007) go one step further and say that there is no guarantee that proper management will occur in any park, because protected areas constantly find themselves short-staffed and under-funded.

To address these issues, in 1984 the Action Plan for Biosphere Reserves was adopted, encompassing multiple recommendations intended to refocus the program (UNESCO, 1984). One of these recommendations was a series of panels, which would focus on individual functions of reserves and attempt to form a more globalized and connected network. Furthermore, Parker (2013) recently added that it would behove us to consider individual biosphere reserves as networks within themselves, using lessons learned in the periphery of biosphere reserves where innovation is promoted and regulation is difficult, as guides for action within core areas of true importance.

For all the good and bad, a survey conducted in 2003 by the United States Biosphere Reserves Association concluded that throughout the 30 U.S. biosphere reserves, the majority of participants agreed the reserves, "Provided significant to highly significant benefits to their areas by increasing environmental awareness, improving public recognition of resource significance, increasing nature protection, and promoting an ethic of sustainability" (Vernon, 2004). This is to say, the overwhelming impact of these areas is both positive and constructive. Difficulties, of course, persist, but as it was so eloquently put by Ehler and Douvere (2007) and supported by others such as Day (2008), and Martinez, et al. (2007), monitoring, reporting and adaptive management need to be recognized as keys of on-going effective management. Simply declaring an area to be a reserve or protected zone is a large step in the right direction, but constant vigilance and application of research findings is what distinguishes great management from the adequate, and ends in desired results.

## 2.2. Marine Protected Areas

As stated above, within a biosphere reserve, the core areas are established on the basis of extreme environmental importance and activity within is to be heavily limited.

For this, protected areas or, in the case of marine biosphere reserves, marine protected areas (MPAs) make up these areas. The concept of a biosphere reserve is often confused and therefore merits substantial definition, but it will be assumed that the reader is comfortable with the concept of MPAs and will therefore not be so intensely summarized. That being said, so to limit ambiguity, let it be known that for the purposes of this thesis, the World Conservation Union's (IUCN) definition of MPAs will be used. It states that an MPA should be defined as:

*Any area of intertidal or subtidal terrain, together with its overlying water and associated flora, fauna, historical and cultural features, which has been reserved by law or other effective means to protect part or all of the enclosed environment* (IUCN, 2008, pp. 56).

In this definition it should be observed that an MPA is not limited exclusively to its marine components, but that it also includes the associated intertidal zones. Nevertheless, the United Nations Environmental Program (UNEP) has identified that this definition can still cause confusion when designating MPA status, as it does not specifically speak to such environments as saline coastal lagoons or near shore marine species' nesting territory, situated directly above the high tide level (UNEP, 2008). To avoid any such confusion, and so to further clarify the parameters of what an MPA represents in this study, it will add from the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) definition, that "An MPA is any area defined within or adjacent to the marine environment […] which has been reserved by legislation or other effective means […]" (CBD, 2003). This is to say, any zone under designation of a protected area, which falls within, or is directly related to the MPAs under review, will be considered a part of the MPA itself. With this, and in concurrence with Batisse (2003), the study recognizes that protecting the marine environment is an interrelated process, which needs to focus on not only the sea, but also the terrestrial environments which spill directly into it. This is consistent with how the Indian MPAs are defined.

## 2.2.1. Marine Protected Areas in India

Under the 1972 Wildlife [Protection] Act, India has initiated a network of MPAs, with the goal of protecting ecologically important areas. The initiative, run through state

governments, is progressively increasing its numbers in an attempt to target critical and important marine ecosystems (Singh, 2003). At present, India has four major coral reef areas– the Andaman and Nicobar Islands, the Gulf of Kachchh, the Lakshadweep islands, and the Palk Bay and Gulf of Mannar area– all of which are protected within this network of MPAs (Obura, 2008).

Recognising ecological values and importance for biodiversity conservation, a series of reef and non-reef ecosystems were also identified and registered as Biosphere Reserves in 1989. These consist of the Great Nicobar Biosphere Reserve in Andaman and Nicobar (885 km2), the Gulf of Mannar Biosphere Reserve (10,500 km2) in Tamil Nadu, and the Sundarbans Biosphere Reserve (9,630 km2) in West Bengal (Singh, 2003). The latter encompasses the largest delta in the world and has been included on the list of UNESCO World Heritage Sites since 1985 (Jalais, 2011).

In accordance with clearly outlined IUCN guidelines, Indian MPAs recognize the many linkages between land and marine ecosystems and the many sectors that exist within both. Management, although differing between parks, therefore needs to take into consideration other policies of coastal land use, already in place (Singh, 2003). The Coastal Regulation Zone (CRZ) Act of 1991 is one of such policies, implemented to protect against degradation of the sensitive coastline. There are four categories of CRZs, but in general the regulation speaks to areas influenced by tidal action up to 500 m from High Tide Line and the intertidal zone (Sridhar & Manuel, n.d.). Each category necessitates a differing degree of strictness. The Supreme Court of India has directed all coastal states to prepare and implement the CRZ plan, resulting in most states having now prepared their plans to protect coastal zones (Sridhar & Manuel, n.d.).

The guidelines also clearly mention the need to recognize and include local populations and stakeholders throughout all stages of the planning and implementation process (Sridhar & Manuel, n.d.). This will ensure an effective and thorough management strategy, considerate of the multiple parties present within the MPA. It is an attempt to ensure that benefits are shared by all, without the exclusion or marginalisation of any players. In fact, although conservation is seen as the priority of MPAs, it is stated by the IUCN (2008) that socio-economic considerations usually determine the success or failure

of MPAs. This is to say, problems arising from social conflict and public discontent is the biggest threat to the functionality of an MPA.

The onus of management and monitoring of MPAs in India falls to the wildlife wing of the Forest Department. Singh (2003) states that MPAs are still a relatively new phenomenon in India and that they face many obstacles in becoming properly functioning mature institutions. The greatest obstacles in this regard are legal issues, including settlement and demarcation of boundaries, lack of adequate management and protection infrastructure, inadequate scientific and technical person in management, absence of scientific management plans for the majority of the MPAs, uncontrolled exploitation of fish, prawns, crabs, corals, shells and marine algae, increasing use of the areas for ports and jetties, loading and unloading of large number of ships and oil tankers, discharge of pollutants, and expansion of salt and aquaculture ponds. Additionally, the persisting existence of local inhabitants depending on resource extraction and fishing for their livelihood is a continuous threat to the goals of the MPA (Singh, 2003).

There is great significance in in use of the term 'network' of MPAs, as opposed to simply the 'formation' of MPAs, in that it assumes a degree of interaction between all players cross-nationally. Defined by the International Union for the Conservation of Nature, an MPA Network is:

*A collection of individual marine protected areas that operates cooperatively and synergistically, at various spatial scales, and with a range of protection levels, in order to fulfill ecological aims more effectively and comprehensively than individual sites could alone* (Laffoley, 2008, pp. 8).

Parks will share a common foundation of vision, goals, principles, eligibility criteria, and the joint efforts of a network allow for crossover in strategy between the many stakeholders and many minds. The joining of parties equates to more aiding hands and would allow for financial allocation to individual MPAs from a larger pot. Certain areas would not receive immediate attention as prioritization and planning would determine the order of action, but a collective vision and goal would increase efficiency and ensure the proper steps were taking place in an order appropriate to their severity (Canada, 2011). Additionally, with increased interest and recognized importance, potential for action increases dramatically.

Most significantly, a network increases the knowledge base and allows for the sharing of effective conservation approaches and lessons from similar projects. Collaboration between neighbouring states, and even countries, becomes a possibility for technology sharing and assures that best practice methods are recognized and known (Keenleyside, 2012). It would also have an effect on public awareness of issues regarding the ocean throughout the state, not just a local concentration.

It must be understood that the removal or restriction of human activity within ocean zones leads to benefits that in turn profit socio-economic activity (Singh, 2003). The first priority, however, is the protection of countless types of biodiversity, both species and ecosystems. In time, the natural range of species and populations will increase and replenish fishing and marine harvest stocks. Although it may never be permitted for fishing and extraction to take place within an area of protection, the surrounding waters become plentiful with supply, while natural habitats and ecosystems are created, preserved and restored within MPAs (Beazley, 2005). With this, ecosystems will be able to grow and adapt, without interference, to become resilient production zones, even capable of withstanding climate change challenges. As a result, local communities will become a part of the privileged, able to reap the benefits of sustained fisheries and improved recreational opportunities. Public involvement and awareness of ocean literacy will increase, all the while promoting the values of cultural heritage (IUCN, 2008). This, of course, in turn increases support for MPAs and forms quite the ideal symbiotic relationship.

Upon planning and implementing an MPA network, proper management and governance will be the deciding factor in functionality and in attaining overall goals. Although collaboration and joint management is key, each MPA should receive its own respective managing committee, in order to ensure site-specific requirements are met (Beazley, 2005). With all components in place, an effective MPA network has the capacity to provide long-term protection of marine biodiversity, support the conservation and management of India's living marine resources, and help strengthen the socio-economic values of healthy coastal regions (Laffoley, 2008). The most valuable asset resulting from MPA networking, however, is the enhanced public awareness, knowledge and interest in ocean issues (Canada, 2011).

## 2.3. Tourism in Marine Protected Areas

As the population of our planet steadily increases, that which once sustained us is no longer sufficient; there are more mouths to feed, more bodies to employ and we risk advancing at the expense of the diverse nature surrounding us. In regards to our oceans and coastal zones, nearly forty percent of our population now lives within 100km of a coastline and the number is continually growing (Stewart, 2009). With this in mind, the application of marine protected areas (MPAs) serves as a saving grace to entire ecosystems and species at risk, all the while ensuring the availability of underwater resources for years to come (IUCN, 2008). Within the concept of protecting a coastal area, one must consider the human dimensions of the area in question, including the livelihood of locals and the potential international interests in tourism and learning (Keenleyside, Dudley, Cairns, Hall & Stolton, 2012).

According to the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), the most recognized body in the definition of MPAs, there are varying degrees of protective methods, divided into seven categories. With the exception of one IUCN category, all protected areas allow some component of tourism, with varying degrees based on their ecological goals. The concept of tourism within MPAs is, however, widely controversial. On one hand it promotes human interest via interactions and can boosts economic activity for locals involved in the industry. Conversely, it allows for the degradation of a protected resource and can, in the case of developing nations, exacerbate marginalization of fisherman and those who depend on the MPA for other sources (Oracion, Miller, & Christie, 2005).

Using the Broker, Local, Tourist (BLT) Model presented by Miller and Auyong (1998), this section seeks to understand the institution of tourism within MPAs from the perspective of the broker, the local and the tourist. Please note that the definition of broker encompasses several sub-categories, including vendors, planners and guides, but applies to any constituencies involved with shaping the outcomes of tourism. A detailed definition of each category is provided in the methods section of this report. Examples of existing tourism within MPAs will be examined to identify positive and negative components of this coexistence. One thing that remains certain is that as globalization

continues to encourage countless travellers to visit new places, the need for a balance between marine protection and well-planned tourism steadily increases.

## 2.3.1. Defining Coastal Tourism

It is widely accepted that while tourism is the fastest growing industry in today's economy, coastal and ocean tourism is the single largest contributor to that statistic (Hall, 2001). While accounting for the fragile nature of coastlines, it is necessary to understand the short-term and long-term implications of the industry, on both the ecological and sociological sides. For the purposes of this paper, the Orams (1999) definition of marine tourism will be used, as including 'those recreational activities that involve travel away from one's place of residence and which have as their host or focus the marine environment' (pp. 2).

The scale of marine and coastal tourism is wide. Upon hearing the term an immediate interpretation tends to include activities such as fishing, snorkelling, scuba diving, windsurfing, and yachting, yet in reality, the industry is far grander. One cannot ignore the enormous infrastructure that goes along with coastal recreation, including restaurants, hotels, souvenir shops, rental shops, marinas, theme parks, tour companies and the list goes on. One could even go as far as arguing the inclusion of land-based whale watching, reef walking, cruise ship supply and yachting events (Hall, 2001). This all needs to be considered when planning within MPAs, because increased attention to an area will bring growth, and land-based development will have long-term ramifications on surrounding marine areas.

When dealing with tourism feasibility within MPAs, activities need to be limited to an impact considered sustainable and appropriate within the goals of the protected area in question (IUCN, 2008). While all of these components add business to local economies, each advancement or innovation brings with it more tourists and more of an impact on the local environment. Without doubt, poorly planned and managed tourism can have a multitude of negative impacts on an environment (Bavinck & Vivekanandan, 2011), but one would be remiss to discount the potential the industry provides for developing nations and marginalized cultures.

## Implications for Brokers

Before beginning, remember that there are many different types of brokers, and that tourism in MPAs can be either good or bad for different kinds of brokers, depending on the situation at hand. Especially for cultures historically dependent on fishing and gathering as their main means of survival, the imposition of an MPA can serve as a larger opportunity than ever before presented. No one knows the area better than resident populations, and the introduction of tourism opens up the local market to a number of employment possibilities. By and large, the introduction of this union is revered as opportunity for promoting economic and social development and promises an increased standard of living, which could otherwise not have been possible to certain parts of the world (Petrosillo, 2007). Additionally, on an even more significant scale, it allows for the empowerment of local employees and even government bodies (Scheyvens, 1999).

The burden of setup is large and the costs plentiful; in some cases, too large for locals (Bavinck & Vivekanandan, 2011). The issues arise when foreign investors seek business in developing tourism areas. Without proper management, private sector brokers could grow dependant on foreign business and lose their cultural identity and value. Especially with the seasonal variability of marine tourism, this can cause a breakdown on the social, psychological and political influence of the local brokers. Especially in cases where an operation is being run as a satellite project or is being promoted from outside sources, non-locals tend not to be involved with the evaluation of its effects in the ways that locals would (Hall, 2001). As established by Scheyvens (1999), from a development perspective, the success of any sector in tourism should be measured by the local community's control and overall gain from shares in the activities involved.

## Implications for Locals

Although figures may show economic stability or growth in an area, the introduction of a foreign presence can, on occasion, cause severe damage to social and cultural systems (Scheyvens, 1999). It is truly possible to transform entire populations through well-managed tourism development, but when dealing with locals, above all, it is important to consider the entire population, and not judge success by that of individuals directly connected to the trade. Success for some, could lead to increased marginalization of others who do not benefit from sharing in the tourism boom (Oracion, Miller, &

Christie, 2005). As it is, locals, when accepting an MPA and anything that comes within the protected area, make many sacrifices. From a society's perspective, there is an immediate increase in monitoring and enforcement costs, the potential for any extractive economic opportunities are surrendered, there is more congestion on the remaining fishing ground, and user conflicts could lead to higher costs with the choice of fishing locations (Sanchirico, 2002). Many of these downfalls come from the presence of an MPA and not so much the tourism within it, but for the purposes of this study they will be argued as one in the same.

If it were all bad news then tourism within MPAs would never have existed in the first place. There are many advantages as well that come with proper tourism management strategies. In terms of positive impacts to communities, including brokers and non-involved locals, there is a direct input of scientific knowledge from outside sources informing the limits of anthropogenic activities, including tourism. These sources help to define the parameters of the MPA and decide what degree of activity can be undertaken within its boundaries. As a result of the scientific knowledge alone, locals can expect to learn more about the fish stocks in their area, see an increase in catch over time, and find larger and improved catches, whether by frequency or by a greater variety of ages and sizes (Sanchirico, 2002). Tourism can co-exist as a source of livelihood for some, while providing safety for growing fish stocks, to those who choose to remain in the fishing industry (Oraciona, Miller, & Christie, 2005).

With specific regard to underdeveloped areas of the world, financial success and foreign interests have the potential to be accompanied by educational opportunities and chances for locals to expand their horizons (Scheyvens, 1999). Development of proper infrastructure can allow for good schools and surely attract quality teachers. Even simple interactions with scientists or tourists will act as opportunities to learn and grow. The sense of economic empowerment can, in many ways, lead into psychological and social empowerment as well (Scheyvens, 1999). The increased self-esteem of individuals working together within a striving community is something to be proud of, and as word spreads of local success, political power will follow (Scheyvens, 1999).

It is, however, crucial to recognize that tourism is, especially in areas of wide seasonal variation, a boom-bust activity, and that without proper monitoring of ecological

impacts, an area could lose its appeal as quickly as it developed itself (Eagles, McCool, & Haynes, 2002). Heavy utilization of resources by tourists, including fresh water, threatens the environment that many rely on. Degradation and destruction from small boat anchors, snorkelers, scuba divers and coastline development around sensitive marine habitats could prove a cost to the locals that they may never recover from (Hall, 2001). Most significantly, increased tourism brings with it excess garbage, litter and sewage; health hazards to marine life. Plastics find their way into water systems, being swallowed by fish or getting caught in underwater corals. Sewers being emptied into the sea, beaches in constant need of cleaning, and varying cleanliness standards are all results of the wrong kind of managing brokers, most often in it for nothing more than financial gain. This can be avoided, but understanding the possibilities, both negative and positive, help illustrate the need for proper management and reveal a potential for an increased local standard of living, or its evil counterpart, corruption and loss.

**Implications for Tourists**

There exists a growing desire, especially among western consumers, to explore the remote and untouched pockets of the Earth. For those coming from bustling cities, their keen eye falls on developing areas, ideally in their most pristine form, among other motivations. This does not encompass all sub-groups of tourists, but is a group capable of contributing significant financial gains to an area and is often targeted by MPA tourism planners. Tourists as a group find themselves in an odd predicament; they wish to share in something pristine, yet by choosing to travel to such a destination, consciously agree to take part in the degradation of said area (Scheyvens, 1999). That is, tourists ruin destinations for tourists. That being said, when it comes to addressing tourists' needs within an MPA, one must first make the distinction between types of tourists and motives. As highlighted by Petrosillo, et al. (2007) the way a tourist observes marine conservation depends on their background, their ideals and their motivations for travelling to marine areas. It cannot be taken for granted that someone choosing to spend their leisure time within an MPA is necessarily conscious of his or her impacts or that they are even concerned with marine conservation.

There are many reasons for visiting a MPA and many benefits a traveller could receive in return from the protected area. MPA tourism offers an educational opportunity

and allows the public to share in and support a sustainable innovation, while still enjoying themselves. It offers a sense of satisfaction to recreational enthusiasts with an environmental conscience, who trust in the scientific community to set appropriate limits for a coexistence between humans and nature. Furthermore, MPAs allow us, and future generations, the chance to share in relatively unspoiled and abundantly diverse marine ecosystems, which might not be present under different circumstances. In terms of the developing world, it can also serve as a means by which travelers can be a part of something bigger than themselves.

There are those who resist this mentality. While non-extractive users, such as scuba divers and swimmers have a minimal impact on species diversity and habitat degradation, over-visitation can cause damage to marine ecosystems (Sanchirico, Cochran, & Emerson, 2002). Another complaint, for quite the opposite reason, is that people oppose the limitations on their freedoms and want the choice of how and where they interact in the marine environment. By and large, however, studies have shown that tourist in MPAs are generally conscious of their surroundings and are pleased with the protective intentions (Petrosillo, et al. 2009).

A study conducted by Petrosillo, et al. (2009) interviewed 100 tourists within various Italian protected areas regarding their awareness, their perception of the protection and their feelings on the restrictions of their activities. Nearly 90% of the participants knew they were in a protected area and an overwhelming 72% agreed with the restrictions, even though they limited activities. Furthermore, 89% of participants were happy with the overall experience, 83% said they were willing to come back to the MPA, and 75% were willing to do so at a fee for environmental goods and services.

What it comes down to is, MPA managers have the power to create a positive experience by controlling tourist numbers, informing and educating visitors, and controlling the overall efficiency of the protected area. An MPA is only as good as its monitoring, educational and enforcement programs.

**Examples of Tourism in MPAs**

As the main message of this section, thus far, has illustrated the need for strong management, a series of examples will be reviewed to elucidate the implications of strong and poor management.

The first MPA example will review a successful marine reserve, achieved through strong leadership. The Tortugas Ecological Reserve, which is approximately 70 miles west of Key West in the Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary, had to deal with the issue of multiple interest groups demanding use of the area. To avoid conflict and assure all groups were accounted for, project managers identified and consulted all of the stakeholders involved– commercial and recreational fishers, divers, environmentalists, and other concerned citizens– throughout all phases of the planning process (Hall, 2001). With this, human dimensions, that are often disregarded until conflict arises, were addressed early in the planning process, avoiding future problems. With both the sociological and ecological factors on the table, managers organized a working group, made up of key stakeholders to develop an environmental impact assessment (EIA) report and define the activity within the reserve. Professional consultants from their given fields were brought in as consultants on matters of biology and oceanography, along with human dimensions specialist and economists. Now, a shortcoming of this process is that it took nearly two years of negotiations for the stakeholders to come to a consensus. What resulted was a highly functional and successful marine reserve, that considered ecological well-being above all, but did not displace or cause a loss to any parties of interest involved (Hall, 2001).

A second example looks at dive tourism and fishing within MPAs in the Calamianes Islands of the Philippines, which didn't go as well as planned (Fabinyi, 2008). The original goal was to, within MPAs, link sensitive habitat conservation in with dive tourism. The diving community would pay a service fee to the local fisherman to offset their losses, and in return, MPAs would be no take zones for ecological restoration and observance. By removing fishing from these dive areas, the hope was that fish stocks would replenish and overflow into permitted fishing zones. In turn, this action would also increase the attractiveness of the area to divers, due to increased biodiversity. The issue with this, however, was that local fisherman would not adhere to fishing limitations and

would often be found waiting around the dive sites to harass divers and tourists for fees. The money was not going towards conservation and the local government was too lenient towards perpetrators. Fabinyi (2008) believed that enough consideration was not given to clearly defining the roles and purposes of each particular MPA and that a realistic economic strategy was not presented to the local fisherman. Although it could be argued that this is an issue of local disobedience and mal-intent, more efficient management planning could have foreseen such issues and better addressed the disagreements between stakeholders.

The third and final case study examines a different type of tourism, one which is specific to a population of tourists very much aware of their surroundings and who attempt to improve places they visit. Volunteer tourism, especially surrounding sea turtle conservation in Costa Rica, has exploded over the past decade. It has been highly regarded as a practice that benefits all stakeholders, and accounts for the impacts usually associated with ecotourism. In practice, volunteer tourism involves a group of tourists seeking an educational opportunity in which they can gain field experience, while sharing in foreign cultures. Tourists, most often students, pay to participate in some form of conservation project, with their fees being put towards community and conservation costs. In a study done by Gray and Campbell (2007) of a volunteer tourism program in Gandoca beach in Costa Rica, they found that locals and brokers, usually NGO brokers, were unanimously pleased with the benefits of volunteer tourism. This seems logical as workers funded conservation efforts, while their presence provided income to innkeepers, restaurants and shops. Conversely, the volunteers themselves often complained of feeling useless, not being involved in important activities, and in some cases, they never even saw a turtle. Presumably, it is difficult to manage such a transient population of undertrained workers. It cannot be expected that every week managers will be able to train and lead volunteers to change the world. One strategy that could be executed is a pre-arrival preparation course, but even then, one of the issues found is the overwhelming number of volunteers that are brought in, even without need. Numbers of volunteers need to be better addressed and goals of the program need to be defined as conservational, not financial.

It is possible to successfully join marine tourism and marine conservation, but the onus of limits and observance falls to the managing bodies of the MPA. A protected area

that is properly managed can have benefits for tourists, locals and brokers, alike, creating an environment in which conscious activity also allows for a healthy and diverse ecosystem. Conversely, poor management can quickly lead to the degradation of protected environments, and corrupt local economies and cultures. The single focus that must unremittingly be retained is that an MPAs primary goal is ecological, and everything else remains secondary.

Due to the dynamic and fragile nature of coastlines and coastal communities, it seems there is no single management technique that can be used as a generic formula for developing marine tourism. However, when addressing a new area of interest, environmental and socio-cultural concerns need to be addressed. The process of appropriate regulatory instruments balances the positives and negatives to any given participant or individual impacted by the presence of tourism in the area. In actuality, this coexistence sets a precedent for management techniques that can, and someday will need to, be standard process worldwide.

## 2.4. Tourism Trends in India

Similar to other Asian countries, culture and heritage are the two major selling points of Indian tourism; offering travellers an exoticism nowhere to be found in the western world. One of the largest service industries, tourism in 2012, including direct and indirect impacts, accounted for 5.8% of the GDP, and 8.3% of total employment in India (Ministry of Tourism, 2012). The 2002 National Tourism Policy established that the nation viewed tourism as a major engine of economic growth, thus placing great importance of the development of the sector. The Ministry of Tourism is targeting a 12% growth rate as part of a 2010-2016 plan, establishing that 25 million jobs will become available, as a direct and indirect result of the industry. To ensure that all levels of society are reached, the Ministry launched a fully funded initiative, called Hunar Se Rozgar Tak, in 2009-10, for the purpose of building employable skills amongst youth belonging to the lower economic strata of society. Apart from providing numerous jobs across varying levels of society, it is worth noting that, in a heavily patriarchal culture, a high percentage of tourism jobs are filled by women (Ministry of Tourism, 2009).

The Economic Times (2013) spoke of India making significant strides in the tourism sector, improving its share in international tourism receipts from about 0.64% in 2002, to about 1.65% in 2012. In this regard, India has also improved its World ranking, climbing from 37th position in 2002 to 16th rank in 2012. Figure 2.1 illustrates a continuous growth in both domestic and foreign tourists' visits (Ghosal, 2013). As can be seen, there are 5 states– Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu, Delhi, Uttar Pradesh and Rajasthan– that collectively account for 70% total foreign visitors to India. Note, only Tamil Nadu and Uttar Pradesh are also seen as major tourist sites for domestic travellers. Graphs show a steady growth in numbers, although there is a significantly larger amount of domestic travellers than visiting foreigners.
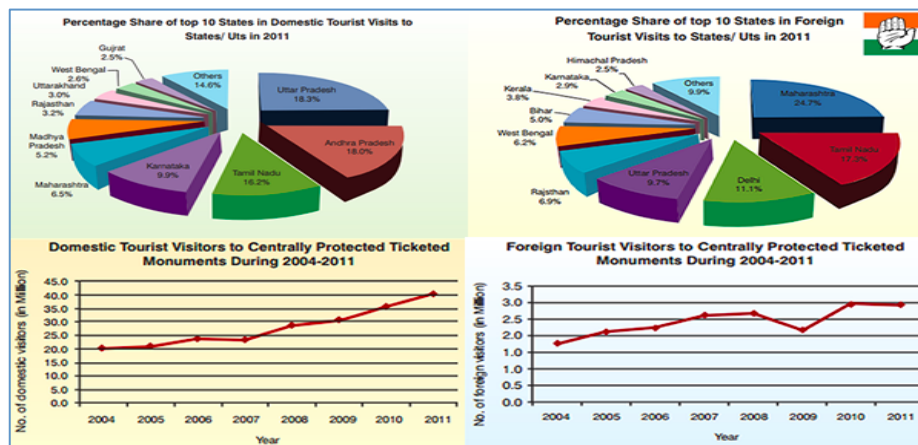


*Figure 2.1- Graphs illustrating tourism growth and distribution in India from 2004-11 (Gov. India, 2013)*

As a matter of fact, domestic tourism makes up approximately two thirds of the industry, having taken off in the past several years as a result of the emerging urban middle class (Ministry of Tourism, 2012). Certain hotspots, such as Goa, Kerala and Rajasthan still receive approximately 10 times the amount of foreign tourists, as compared to domestic, but as a whole, India still only ranks 41st on the United Nations World Tourism Organization's (UNWTO) list of top international travel destination (WTO, 2012). Although very much desired by the governing bodies, there are several factors that cause the low number of foreign tourists. First and foremost, the international perception of India is one of a mystical, yet dangerous, intimidating and overwhelming culture; often times outside the comfort zone of many traveller. The concerns of diseases, complicated governance, and safety are all reasons for hesitation, and as many other parts of Asia have well defined tourism infrastructure and routes, India is left behind. A heavy

focus is being placed on increasing India's appeal to the World, driven by a potential for foreign currency. For this, a significant portion of the nation's tourism budget is concentrated on overseas marketing and publicity, including the famed Incredible India campaign.

It is believed that the tourism sector can lead to large-scale employment generation and poverty alleviation, although it needs to be clarified that one does not comprise the other. As stated by Bolwell and Weinz (2008), many development plans accept that tourism contributes significantly to economic growth, however, it needs to be clarified that economic growth does not necessarily lead to less poverty. They go on to mention that, to date, the link between tourism and poverty has not been sufficiently examined in regards to poor countries. The Overseas Development Institute has identified many ways which tourism can benefit, but also disrupt the livelihoods of developing community member, extending as far as social conflict and violence due to alienation and increased marginalization (Roe, Goodwin, and Ashley, 2002). As part of the Ministry of Tourism's 12th Five Year Plan, Bolwell and Weinz (2008) recommend a specific focus to be placed on the adoption of a pro-poor tourism approach, aimed at increasing the net benefits to the lower strata communities. This would help to overcome barriers of tourism inclusion, ensuring that tourism growth does, in fact, contribute to poverty alleviation.

## 2.4.1. Tamil Nadu

Tamil Nadu offers a wide variety of tourism possibilities and has no shortage of attractions to encourage the many travellers who visit each year. Rich with every landscape from beaches to picturesque mountains, it is no wonder this is one of the most visited places in India. Whether one is searching for wildlife sanctuaries, temples, ancient monuments, or centres of art and culture, everything can be found in the most southern reaching state of the country. During the year 2001, Tamil Nadu occupied the third rank in both domestic and foreign tourist arrivals to India
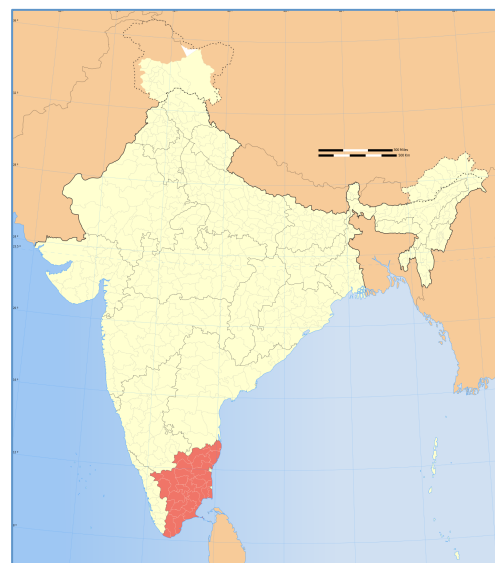


*Figure 2.2- A map of India dipicting the location (in red) of Tamil Nadu State (Gov. India 2011)*

(Ghosal, 2013). As seen in figure 2.1, by 2011, the state had progressed up to second place for most foreign tourists received, while remaining third with regard to domestic travellers. One thing that has been made quite clear by governing and planning departments of Tamil Nadu is that serious efforts are being made to reach first position in both of those categories.

In 2003, the Central Government of India published a 20-year tourism plan for the State of Tamil Nadu. Based on this outline, the State Tourism and Culture Department released a series of policy document, highlighting the plans for growth and areas of special interest. Significant steps are being taken to strengthen the existing infrastructure at tourist destinations and to identify potential future sites, worthy of large-scale infrastructure development (Gov. India, 2003). The most recent of these documents, the Tourism Policy Note 2011-2012, will herein be reviewed, providing a clearer understanding of the government's position on tourism, and what they perceive the outlook to entail. Please note, any information provided in the following section is taken directly from this policy statement, including statistical data and exact excerpts.

## Tourism Policy Note 2011-2012

The initial section of this document identifies tourism as an engine of development and a catalyst of economic prosperity in India. It then continues to speak of the benefits of tourism, especially the industry's ability to development economies and facilitate the growth of communities. It is categorically stated that for these reasons, tourism growth is being encouraged as a priority, by both Central and State governments, with the goal of achieving international standards at tourism destinations. The industry was once viewed as a religious or luxury activity, but as the middle class continues to grow and infrastructure simplifies the processes of travel, tourism is becoming more accessible and significantly more popular. The Government of India is extremely motivated in marketing and promoting opportunities throughout the country, and provides financial supports to any state establishing tourism infrastructure (Gov. India, 2003).

Four key goals are outlined– 1) make Tamil Nadu the top destination in India for attracting tourists; 2) Increase the number of tourist arrivals; 3) increase the length of stay of tourists, 4) increase the average spending per day. To achieve this, a series of high priority tourism circuits are being developed, fixed with enhanced connectivity and

improved tourism services. Multiple agencies are being asked to coordinate efforts toward developing a regulatory framework, forming a socially inclusive tourism network. Within this network, private sector development is greatly encouraged, and is one of the methods by which community participation is sought in this process. Another method engaged to increase community involvement is capacity building programs, implemented with the goal of providing employable skills to working class citizens, including women and disadvantaged groups (Gov. India, 2003).

Weaknesses which are impeding the progress of tourism have also been identified. They include inadequate access and connectivity to certain attractions, poor infrastructure at destinations, weak tourism management capacities, and limited participation by the private sector and local communities. These are four areas that are seen as a priority remediation projects. Conversely, the greatest advantage and opportunity of the State has also been identified. This honour falls to the rich cultural and pilgrimage heritage that already attracts significant tourism volumes. Pilgrimage tourism, as of now, accounts for an estimated 60% of Tamil Nadu's total tourist market. Met with proper management, the report believes that there is a great potential for growth in this sector (Gov. India, 2003).

The report goes as far as outlining what kinds of tourism the State hopes to develop, comprising of ecotourism, rural tourism, adventure tourism, and medical tourism. The first, ecotourism, makes use of the two biosphere reserves residing within Tamil Nadu–The Nilgiris Biosphere Reserve and the Gulf of Mannar Biosphere Reserve. It seeks to develop nature-friendly tourism opportunities, utilizing the hill stations, waterfalls, bird sanctuaries, wildlife sanctuaries and national parks. The second, rural tourism, targets exposing individuals brought up in urban areas to what rural life is like. Eighteen rural tourism projects have already been funded, amounting to approximately US $1 million. The third, adventure tourism, is said to be gaining much interest, and attracts many outsiders to the hill stations and water areas. This includes any activity from trekking, to paragliding, to boating. Priority in this category has to be the safety of participating tourists.

Finally, the fourth type of tourism, medical tourism, is already a big business in Tamil Nadu, as the State claims to be one of the top destinations in the country. To further encourage this, the Government of India is permitting a separate category of travel

Visas, allowing for a maximum period of stay for 1 year, for both the patient and a travel companion. Due to intense marketing and the high standards of services and equipment available in Tamil Nadu, it is already being recognized as a major medical tourism hub of India. Incorporating naturopathy, yoga and meditation into this field will greatly increase the potential audience being drawn in to this type of tourism (Gov. India, 2003).

To aid private investors interested in entering the tourism trade, a subsidy program has been setup, offering significant incentives for development. Projects encouraged include star hotels, amusement parks, golf courses, spas, boat houses, and so on. For the star hotels, varying subsidies exist depending on the star level sought. A single star hotel developer can expect to receive 10 per cent of the total project cost (excluding land value) or a maximum of Rs.25 Lakhs (US $40,380). Total claimable amounts go up with the quality of the hotels, so two and three star hotels are also eligible for a 10 percent return on their investment, equating to a maximum of Rs.50 (US $80,760) Lakhs and Rs.100 Lakhs (US $161,520), respectively. There is also a one-time subsidy offer of 100 Lakhs (US $161,520) for those interested in starting an amusement park, golf courses, rope car, boat houses, or other such activity directed towards increasing tourism. Other incentives include a soft loan programs, offering 0.1 per cent interest per annum for the first five years, a 10 percent return program on any heritage buildings being converted into guesthouses, and a 10 percent return program for restaurants offering four to five options of continental dishes (Gov. India, 2003).

In terms of human resources and capacity building, several steps are being taken to ensure that sufficient qualified staff can be supplied. Two government catering institutes offer diploma courses in hotel management, catering technology and also various craft certificate courses. Under the Hunar Se Rozgaar Yojana Program, previously mentioned in section 2.4, underprivileged members of society are provided an opportunity to enroll in multiple tourism-training programs, ensuring that the industry contributes to poverty alleviation. This includes training in serving, guiding, and the planning of tourist friendly activities. Guide identity cards are given to trained guides, allowing them to be officially employed, instead of relying on the informal sector. On top of this, the Chief Tourist Warden is coordinating with five Station Tourist Wardens to ensure that security efforts are in full force, and that safety is a priority for all, throughout the State (Gov. India, 2003).

The Government of India has sanctioned four Mega Tourism Projects to promote tourism in the State. These are a series of circuits where tourism development will focus, the overall goal being to have all four up and running by the end of 2012. Two of these four projects fall within the Gulf of Mannar Biosphere Reserve– the development of Rameswaram as a pilgrimage heritage circuit, and the development of Kanniyakumari as a pilgrimage heritage circuit. The total allocated funds for these four projects amount to Rs.5106.70 Lakhs (US $8.25 million), with both circuits within the biosphere reserve receiving Rs.1000.75 Lakhs (US $1.62 million) and Rs.1375.50 Lakhs (US $2.22 million) respectively (Gov. India, 2003).

Financial assistance will be provided from the Asian Development Bank (ADB), under a program labeled the Infrastructure Development Investment Programme for Tourism. Including the costs of the four Mega Tourism projects mentioned above, the State has prepared a plan for tourism infrastructure and activity development equalling Rs. 450 Crores (US $100 million). This will consist of an East Coast State Circuit and a Southern Circuit, being undertaken in four overlapping phases over a five-year period. The proposed financing plan for the project sees the ADB investing Rs.315 Crores (US $70 million) and State of Tamil Nadu contributing Rs.135 Crores (US $30 million). For implementing the projects, a Project Implementation Unit (PIU) will be appointed and be responsible for overseeing and contributing to the design, implementation and construction activities in the field (Gov. India, 2003).

## 2.4.2. West Bengal

According to the Economic Times (2013), West Bengal receives the sixth highest share of all foreign tourists to India; comprising about six percent of all external visitors arriving to the country. In terms of recent growth, from 2006 to 2012, international tourism in the state has grown by 22%, climbing from 1 million to 1.2 million, in a span of just 6 years (Ghosal, 2013). This is largely attributed to the focus being placed on tourism by the state and central governments, as
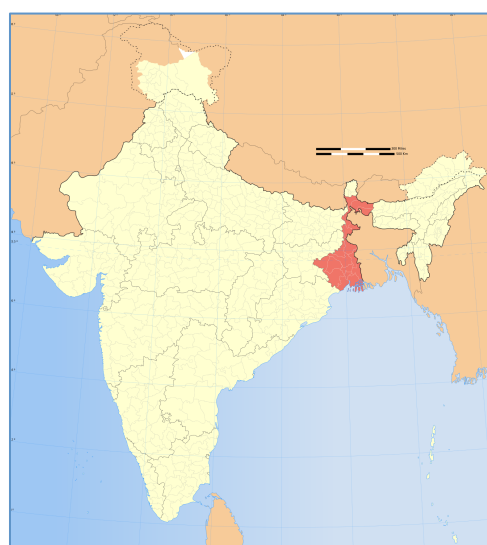


*Figure 2.3- A map of India depicting the location (in red) of West Bengal State (Gov. India, 2011)*

well as the significantly increased budget being allocated towards the industry's development. According to the Deputy Secretary of West Bengal Tourism, the tourism budget for West Bengal had increased from 6 crores (Approx. $1 million USD) in 2007, 2008 and 2009, to being 120 crores (Approx. $1.2 billion USD) in 2013.

Aside from government funding, West Bengal is also one of three chosen sites for a pilot Integrated Coastal Zone Management Project (ICZMP) being conducted by the World Bank. Along with the two other selected states, Gujarat and Odisha, a US $285.67 million budget, which has been allocated to this cause (World Bank, 2013). The intention is to build the capacity of coastal states in terms of coastal management, with the overall goal of achieving a nationally recognized ICZMP. The project was approved in June of 2010 and is expected to be completed by December 2015. A large focus of this plan deals with issues of coastal communities, for which tourism has been identified as a key alternative source of incomes for residents dependent on natural resources.

Tourism employment opportunities and skill building courses make up a large portion of the West Bengal ICZMP, placing considerable focus on the need for tourism growth. The overarching department charged with implementing this plan is the Ministry of Environment and Forests, who then mandates leading departments within each respective state. Figure 2.2 clearly illustrates the departments and agencies involved in the West Bengal Plan, and explains their positions in the planning hierarchy. As can be seen, the Institute of Environmental Studies and Wetland Management has been employed to oversee the project and assign various roles and tasks to the many involved agencies. In terms of tourism development, several sites have been selected as key tourism projects, including areas within the Sundarbans Biosphere Reserve. A thorough profile of the ICZMP in regards to the Sundarbans MPA is reviewed within *Case Study 2*.
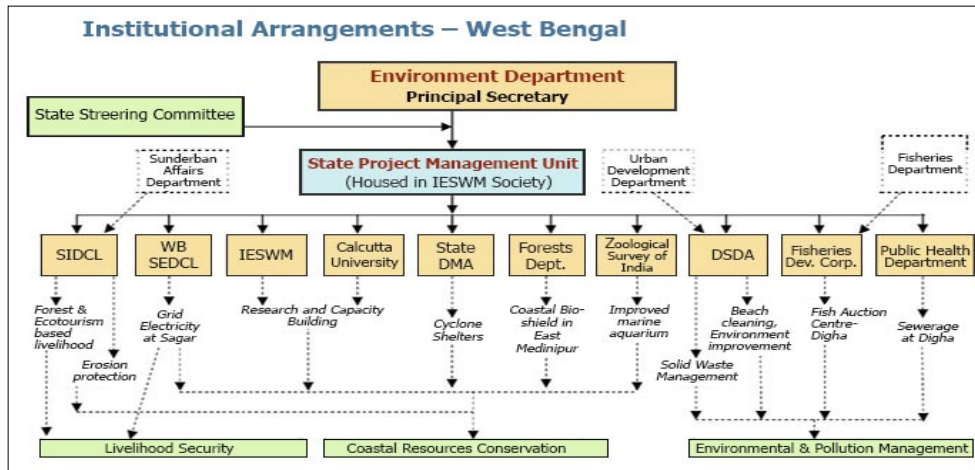
*Figure 2.4- A clear layout of agencies and departments involved in the West Bengal ICZMP (Gov. West Bengal, 2013)*

## The West Bengal Tourism Policy

So to provide direction and guidelines to tourism plans, the state government framed the West Bengal Tourism Policy (Gov. West Bengal, 2008). This document is herein reviewed, providing a clearer understanding of the government's position on tourism, and what they perceive the outlook to entail. Please note, any information provided in this section is taken directly from this policy statement, including statistical data and exact excerpts.

The policy begins with an overview of the global tourism industry, speaking to statistics, and revenue generating potential. It identifies tourism as a key global industry, presenting many benefits to national economies, international development, and cultural heritage conservation. According to this document, more than 800 million tourists travelled internationally in 2006, a number which is expected to double to 1.6 billion by 2020. Accounting for more than 230 million direct and indirect jobs, this makes up 7-8% of total global employment. It then goes on to state that Asia claims the second highest market share of tourism, both domestic and international, presenting a great opportunity for a country like India to develop socially and economically (Gov. West Bengal, 2008).

With respect to West Bengal directly, the opening sections claim that tourist arrivals in West Bengal in 2006 were estimated at around 18.4 million, up from 4.5 million total tourists in 1996. At 1.1 million foreign tourists, this growth represents a

great stride forward, although in terms of domestic travel, the government is displeased with the lowly figure of 17.3 million domestic tourists. As 461 million Indians travelled within their own country in 2006, this is a relatively low amount of visitors to West Bengal. The policy vows to continue striving for growth in the international industry, but attracting domestic crowds will be the key focus area for the foreseeable future. For this, the document acknowledges the importance of the private sector, recognizing the need to facilitate and support development at every opportunity (Gov. West Bengal, 2008).

The industry of tourism is seen as a competition between countries and states, and West Bengal places great importance on staying proactive and embracing innovation and development to extend market reach. The Vision Statement for West Bengal Tourism is:

*West Bengal will aim to become a preferred tourism and tourism-related investment destination by leveraging its unique geographical setting along with its various tourism-related assets. It will develop necessary infrastructure and promote tourism in an integrated manner which will not only bring in more investment and further the socio-economic goals of the Government, but also ensure that all these are in conformity with the relevant acts, rules and regulations relating to environmental protection. The overall aim will be to see that the tourism sector contributes towards improving the quality of life of people in general* (Gov. West Bengal, 2008, pp. 3).

In this, it is made clear that tourism is perceived as a told for development and that it is the intention of said government to endorse and encourage all aspects of the industry with precedence. This will be accomplished by providing high quality destinations and any associated infrastructure necessary. It is clearly stated that nature-tourism is one of the major competitive advantages that the state has, and that areas like the Sundarbans will be targeted for development. The 2008 report goes on to say that because of the unique and fragile nature of the Sundarbans, a detailed master plan will be designed for developing sustainable tourism in this area. To date, no such plan exists. Other coastal tourism project ideas, not necessarily within the Sundarbans MPA, include beach tourism and resorts, a tourist fishing harbour and villages, a marine-life museums, life-sized walk-through aquariums, boardwalks and sea-adventure sports. Specific mention is made for the need to follow Coastal Regulation Zone laws; a topic of great concern within this study (Gov. West Bengal, 2008).

In terms of human resources and capacity building, it is stated that the amount of jobs available exceeds the current supply. For this, training institutes have been created, such as the Institute of Hotel Management, Catering Technology and Applied Nutrition in Kolkata and the Food Crafts Institute at Darjeeling. Other private institutes will also be encouraged to offer tourism management courses, ensuring ample opportunity for students completing these diploma programs. At a more local level, taxi drivers, auto-rickshaw drivers, tourist guides, etc. would be sensitized and provided with necessary orientation training to make them more responsive to the needs of the tourism industry (Gov. West Bengal, 2008).

An incentives scheme has been developed to aid and subsidize any number of tourism projects being developed by private parties. This extends from hotels and resorts, to a wide variety of activities and operations. Benefits can include direct subsidies, state capital investments, waivers of electricity duty, and a refund on percentages of interest paid on loans. For developments deems to be a Mega-Project, large tax benefits accompany subsides, along with promotion assistance. Any individual or organization claiming to develop a project only needs to apply to the West Bengal Tourism Department, after which funding will be arranged. This is the same department charged with implementation of the Tourism Policy (Gov. West Bengal, 2008).

# 3.0. Methods

In order to effectively address the question at hand, two case studies have been carried out, engaging stakeholders at multiple levels. A *stakeholder* is herein defined as any individual or group who impacts or is impacted by the prospect of tourism. This extends from planners and policy makers to resort owners, tour guides and even fisherman and local school teachers, whose day-to-day lives will be influenced by the change. The structure of the study, organizing frameworks and reduction strategy will be outlined within this section, while data collection methods specific to each site will be addressed within the respective case study. Kindly note that this section is a general overview, while each of the case studies contains a separate methods section, outlining specifics of their individual fieldwork techniques.

## 3.1. Why Case Studies?

As the project seeks to understand tourism trends in India as a whole, the inclusion of two field sites provides multiple perspectives, speaking to issues and sentiments in varied locations. For the sake of organization and clarity, this report investigates each site on an individual basis. Each case study consists of a discussion of methods used and results collected, before a final section brings the data together to examine similarities and differences. Should results prove comparable, it would allow reasonable grounds for drawing conclusions on the status of local populations within India's MPAs. Should outcomes demonstrate dissimilarities between the two locations, it will elucidate the need to investigate India's MPA functionality on a state, or even individual basis. It would also call for future research to better understand the underlying causes of the differences.

Multiple approaches exist to seek out information, but based on its inclusive nature, the Case Study method was selected for this project. As stated by Yin (2004) the method is now a widely accepted technique, especially useful in examining, in-depth, an on-going subject within a real-life context. Multiple tactics such as surveys, ethnographies, and interviews can be incorporated into the definition of 'Case Study', allowing for a more complete understanding of the subjects and the topic in question. In this case, the research attempts to illuminate a particular situation– how stakeholders

within an MPA perceive the value of tourism– which consists of multiple perspectives within a system. The case study provides a setting wherein each interview can be placed, allowing the surveyor the unique ability to fathom a more complete context. Yin (2004) goes on to say that the utilization of multiple data collection techniques serve to compliment each other, and allows one to investigate topics not easily covered by other methods. As a single case study is not sufficient grounds to act as a control for other similar sites, the inclusion of two cases is meant to strengthen the conclusions of this study.

## 3.2. Site Selection

The sites themselves were selected for several reasons. Although drastically different, both geographically and socio-economically, as a whole they encompass the ideals of India's MPA definition, and act as a significant representation of other protected areas. One is the largest MPA in India while the other is the most well known, both in India and around the World. The idea was not to have two confirmatory cases, but instead to provide two theoretically distinct cases with different driving forces behind decision-making (Yin, 2004). It is worth noting that although the two sites appear to lack a previous grassroots level study of public sentiment, a significant amount of documentation exists for both locations. This was also a deciding factor in selecting these parks and is a common research practice referred to as a judgement sampling, or purposeful sampling. It is a non-randomized practice wherein a researcher selects an information-rich site or subject, learning a great deal from already existing research, in turn allowing for a more complete contribution to the field (Marshall, 1996).

The Gulf of Mannar Marine National Park is India's largest MPA. It is home to a rich diversity of flora and fauna, but more significantly to the industry, is a key pilgrimage site for Hindus throughout the country. The tourism will be predominantly of a domestic sort, more specifically, religious tourism. The latter implies deep-seeded ideals that go beyond conservation and subjective reasoning. In a country controlled by its religions, and the promise of happiness in the afterlife by bathing in these waters, it will take more than an MPA designation to protect the area from a continuous influx of tourists. More specifically, the city of Rameswaram was chosen within the Gulf of Mannar because it is an area significantly changed by tourism, but not so much by

industry, which helps us limit the possible influences of tourism-specific change. This is to say, within reasonable doubt, any discovered impacts are directly related to tourism. The state government is well aware of the potential revenue associated with tourism, as was made overtly evident by the strong focus on its expansion within their most recent 5-year plan (Gov. India, 2011). The development of this industry is therefore inevitable, further contributing to the importance of understanding local responses and needs.

The Sundarbans National Park on the other hand is an internationally recognized Tiger Reserve, famous for the elusive Bengal Tiger, and for encompassing the largest mangrove forest in the World. Although an extremely restricted zone, exceptions are made for tourism, and infrastructure development is quickly sweeping the park. Located just a three hour drive from Kolkata, one of India's largest cities, the potential is immeasurable. On top of this, the state budget for tourism has more than tripled over the past four years, a hint of where the future lies for the millions of habitants that call this area home. A local nongovernmental organization (NGO), DISHA, has conducted fisheries studies in the area and has offered to share their contacts in order to allow this study to reach the deepest and most affected regions of the park.

# 3.3. Study Structure

## 3.3.1. Planning and Organization

As all methods require the reviewing of past studies, this report begins with a literature review of everything and anything pertaining to the topic at hand. This study describes the status of the two MPAs under review, presents the current standing of tourism within these areas, and finally, targets which stakeholders and interviews will be needed to answer the right questions. The stakeholder mapping examines a broad range of individuals or groups involved in the area who impact or will be impacted by tourism development. Using Miller and Auyong's (1991) Broker, Local, Tourist Model (BLT) as an organizational tool for the mapping will ensure perspectives from all desired angles are achieved. The study focuses only on the *Broker* and *Local* perspectives, as the tourist is a temporary visitor to the system, whose actions allow for tourism, but don't directly control any part of its planning or development.

**Broker, Local, Tourist Model**

  Developed by Miller and Auyong (1991), the BLT model acknowledges three dynamics that make up tourism communities– the Broker, the Local and the Tourist. All actors have a role, in some form or another, and need to be considered throughout the planning and implementation process. This method progresses away from the traditional 'host and guest' mentality of tourism, removing the homogenous label of host, from members of a community not directly involved with tourism. The model recognizes that although a village may be a tourist destination, people and processes still exist that are not linked to, or benefit economically from, tourism (Miller & Auyong, 1991). Should one choose to diversify and change their position (ex. a fisherman turning their boat into a tourist boat), they are still seen as members of a single community, but now play a different role in terms of tourism.

  This does, however, also recognize the possibility of conflict between various categories of the BLT model. The industry is no longer seen as a single directional, inclusive process, meaning that there are players involved who are impacted by tourism, but might not share equally in the direct benefits (Miller & Auyong, 1998). The example of a fisherman becoming a guide is a positive outcome of interaction within the triangle. Alternatively, if many fisherman decide to diversify and cater to tourism, then supply would go down, driving the cost of fish in the local community to go up. This is an example of a negative interaction with tourism, as recognized by the BLT model. Simply stated, the three individual sectors are continuously interacting with one another, and the model provides researchers a tool by which this interaction can be examined.

  Figure 3.1 provides a visual tool to help understand this model, and how it contributes to this study. As mentioned above, this study focuses on interactions between *brokers* and *locals*. Clear definitions for each of these categories are provided below.
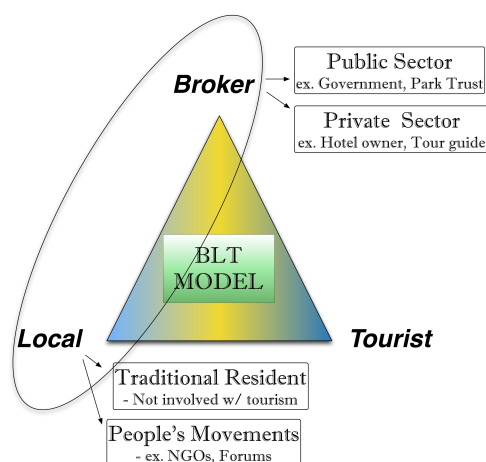
Figure 3.1- *Broker, Local, Tourist model of Tourism (Adapted from Miller and Auyong, 1991)*

A *Broker* is defined by Miller (2008, pp. 71) as, "Persons who, in one way or another, manage, design or otherwise seek in their occupational work to control tourism outcomes". This can be further divided to include anyone whose role influences the outcomes of tourism, be it in the public or private sector. A private sector broker could include hotel owners, souvenir shop workers, or servers at touristy restaurants. This essentially includes anyone who has made a business that profits directly from tourism. A public sector broker would include governmental agencies and policy planners, involved with the regulations, policies and enforcement of tourism (Miller, 2008). Brokers also consist of on-site and off-site brokers, acknowledging that foreign investors or State policy planner are also involved in community level tourism (Miller, 2008).

*Tourism Locals* are defined as, "Persons who reside in the general vicinity of tourism destinations but who do not depend on tourism for an income or seek any way to control organized tourism" (Miller, 2008, pp. 71). Some examples of people employed or residing within a tourism destination with no direct involvement or influence on the industry include fisherman, small ration shop clerks and school teachers. For grey-areas, such as fisherman who sometimes take tourists out for a fee, they will be regarded as brokers (Miller, 2008). As a slight variation from the conventional model, NGOs will be designated as *Locals,* due to the fact that in the context of both study sites, NGOs represented a collection of tourist locals, mobilized to speak up for their own needs. In this sense, although they do struggle to change the shape of tourism, they speak on behalf of those who are impacted by, but not involved with, tourism.

Finally, a tourist is defined as, "Persons who are motivated to visit a tourist destination and who subsequently return home" (Miller, 2008, pp. 71). For the purposes of this study, this group perspective will not be investigated. Although the role of tourists in tourism is key, this study determines that tourists are drawn to a location based on management and marketing, but do not influence its design. A tourism location develops based on the appeals of available resources, to which tourists are then attracted. Using Thailand as an example to further expound on this point, one can see that beaches and sex tourism are developed on a large scale, laying an infrastructure that in turn attracts numerous visitors each year.

In terms of terminology within this study, the term *local* refers to tourism locals–those who are in no way involved with shaping the outcomes of tourism. Additionally, terms such a *local residents* or *villagers* therefore refer to *tourist locals* in the sense of the BLT model. This study acknowledges that *tourism brokers,* including those in government and those in business, are also local residents and bona fide citizens with the same rights as other residents, but for the sake of clarity, chooses to view them in a separate classification.

### 3.3.2. Data Collection

Data collection varied slightly between the two field sites, but consisted of the same planning and preparation stages. Secondary sources were consulted– including reports, statistics, past studies– in order to establish a basic understanding of matters in the field. Contacts at each field site were also consulted regarding issues of their community and stakeholder mapping. Upon compiling sufficient background knowledge, a field plan was composed for each MPA. Both case studies contained an ethnographic fieldwork (*participant observation*) component, as well as an interview component. In the Gulf of Mannar, Dexter's (1990) technique of *elite interviewing* was engaged, while the Sundarbans was deemed better suited for *semi-structured chain interviewing. Focus groups* were also a key part of both studies, allowing for lots of information to be shared in a short amount of time. As a late impromptu addition, *social survey research* was also conducted within the Gulf of Mannar, to confirm a common point of contention between interviewees. An in-depth explanation of each research technique as well as justification for its use can be found in the methods sections of the respective case studies.

### 3.3.3. Developing Indicators

The next step involves developing a method by which information from one park to another, as well as from one stakeholder to another, can be compared. The interviewees form a very diverse group of individuals, which means that without strands of interconnectedness to pull them together, the dataset will be a wild mess of responses. For this reason, a series of indicators have been established to allow for comparability between stakeholders and field sites. These four categories– quality of life, perception of happiness, community development, and security– are the basis for questions in this

study. This means that after all interviews are conducted with the identified stakeholders in their respective MPAs, all points are organized into one of four indicator categories and matched up against other responses. These indicators, not uncommon to qualitative research, are defined below according to their parameters within this study.

1) Quality of life- Several established indexes have been developed by reputable bodies, including the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and the Economist Group, to measure life quality beyond that of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) (OECD, 2013). From these, so to ensure the objectives of the study are addressed in detail, components such as job security and life satisfaction will be considered as independent factors and viewed separately. For the purposes of this study the term quality of life will refer to material well-being, personal health, political stability, community life, and equality.

2) Job Security- This refers to more than the current unemployment rate, as the informal sector of India provides ample job possibilities, but not all should be considered sufficient livelihoods to support oneself and family. For the purposes of this paper, Job security will refer to consistent and constant employment, resulting in sufficient wages and/or benefits to provide said employees and their family with the means to live in a manner beyond poverty, hunger or desperation.

3) Community development- this indicator considers both hard-infrastructure (ex. Schools, hospitals, roads) as well as soft-infrastructure (ex. Education, health care).

4) Perception of Happiness- unlike the typical happiness index, which is based on widely accepted utilitarian principals– the desire to live long and fulfilling lives (Helliwell, Layard & Sachs, 2012)– this indicator seeks to gage the degree of satisfaction groups feel within their own community as a result of development surrounding them. It differs from quality of life as it examines a personal sentiment, which may be a result of life quality.

### 3.3.4. Conflict Analysis

Interviewing techniques and methods differ between case studies and will therefore be examined in their respective section in this report. Both are, however, subject to the same reduction strategy. As previously mentioned, all points are divided into one

of four indicator categories, at which point any datum deemed to be a point of conflict are further classified into a type of conflict category. These categories of conflict were determined by Bavinck & Vivekanandan (2011), as a means by which to differentiate between social conflicts in the Gulf of Mannar Biosphere Reserve. This is to say, instead of simply stating that social conflict exists, one is able to identify the type of conflict in a system by determining the parties involved. A *system* is defined as the villages and MPAs as a whole, including the governing actors (those who govern) and constituencies (people who are governed). The conflict categories utilize the terms, *System to be Governe*d (meaning the constituencies, or people who are governed) and *Governing System* (meaning those who govern). A clearer explanation of these terms, with examples, accompanies the conflict category explanation below. For the purpose of this study, social conflict will follow Bavinck & Vivekanandan's (2011) definition of,

"A struggle over values or claims to status, power, and scarce resources. More specifically, we argue that conflicts between individuals or groups derive from competing aspirations of wellbeing– the extent to which human beings are able to meet their basic needs and pursue their objectives for a satisfactory quality of life" (pp. 1).

The conflict categories are as follow:

Conflict 1: System to be Governed In-Out = (SG in-out)
- Concerns conflict and interferences between constituencies inside and outside of the system to be governed
- Example: fishermen in the system vs. fishermen outside the system

Conflict 2: Governing System In-Out = (GS in-out)
- Concerns conflict and interferences between between governing actors inside and outside the MPA
-Example: a park official vs. a state-level policy maker

Conflict 3: System to be Governed In-In = (SG in-in)
- Concerns conflict and interferences between categories or groups of constituencies within the MPA
- Example: fishermen vs. other kinds of fishermen

Conflict 4: System to be Governed- Governing System = (SG-GS)
- Concerns conflict and interferences between constituencies and governing actors within or outside the MPA
- Example: fishermen vs. officials in or outside the system

To further build on the conflict designation categories, each conflict point is plotted into a four-quadrant matrix. This will be the first physical contribution of this study. An example of such a matrix is presented below in Figure 3.2 and Figure 3.3. In illustrating the plot dispersion of conflict in the two MPAs one is able to see how differing stakeholders perceive the issues in their community and in between which groups the greatest amount of conflict lies. By identifying this distinction, future planners and policy makers will have a better idea of issues in the parks, and be able to incorporate more holistic governance mechanisms.

| Total Conflict in 'Quality of Life' | |
|---|---|
| SG (in-out) | GS (in-out) |
| ◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆ ◆ 11 | ◆ 1 |
| SG (in-in) | SG- GS |
| ◆◆◆◆◆◆ 6 | ◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆ ◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆ ◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆ ◆ 31 |

Figure 3.2- An example of the type of conflict matrixes that are used to illustrate social conflict in this study, based on indicators.

| As seen by 'Governmental' | |
|---|---|
| SG (in-out) | GS (in-out) |
| ◆◆ 2 | 0 |
| SG (in-in) | SG- GS |
| ◆◆ 2 | ◆◆◆◆◆ 5 |

Figure 3.3- An example of the type of conflict matrixes that are used to illustrate social conflict in this study, based on demographics.

The conflict points are first plotted into a matrix based on their indicator category. For example, Figure 3.2 is an example of how conflict points are plotted into a category of social conflict based on the indicator *quality of Life*. The section in yellow describes which indicator is currently being discussed, and each of the four quadrants is labelled with one of the four types of social conflict (ex. SG in-out, which we know from above is System to be Governed, in-out). Each dot within the quadrants then represents one point of conflict that was mentioned regarding *quality of Life.* Therefore, looking at Figure 3.2, one can see that 31 points of conflict were mentioned between the system to be governed (constituencies) and the governing system regarding *quality of life*.

At this point, it becomes necessary to differentiate between which stakeholders are making each complaint. By being able to target who states each conflict point, it becomes relevant where each group of stakeholders perceives conflict in the community (system). Figure 3.2 considers all conflict points concerning *quality of life,* while Figure

3.3 goes one step further and considers, still within the *quality of life* indicator*,* only those conflict points mentioned by governmental actors (public brokers). In this case, only nine conflict points surface, five of which are viewed as being between the system to be governed (constituencies) and the governing system. Four such categories of stakeholders are reviewed– governmental actors, non-governmental actors, locals, brokers. Each stakeholder (interviewee) has been categorized as a broker or a local (as per the definition in section 3.3.1), and also categorized as being governmental or non-governmental. For the purposes of this study, it is possible to be both a government official as well as a non-broker, as certain officials, village Panchayat Leaders, have absolutely nothing to do with influencing tourism.

Points of conflict don't necessarily amount to the same sum as indicator points, as some points are beneficial or simply state changes that do not reflect a conflict. For example, there may be ten Indicator points discussed regarding *quality of life,* but four of those points mentioned improvements in the community. That would mean that of the ten indicator points, there are only 6 conflict points. If the same conflict is raised on multiple occasions but from different stakeholders in different interviews, it will be recorded as an individual complaint and designated it's own conflict point within the matrix. If multiple points within one interview are deemed to be too similar by the interviewer, then only one conflict point will be assigned to the matrix and the multiple complaints will be classed as repetition of a single issue. In the case of village level governments (Panchayats), conflicts brought up may be classed as System to be Governed- Governing System, because small local bodies, although considered governmental, do not have any involvement or say in planning or tourism development, they simply represent a small community group.

### 3.3.5. Interview Analysis

It became evident at an early stage of the research project that the proper question was not, 'Do local populations benefit from tourism' but instead, 'Why don't local populations benefit from tourism'. For this reason, the conflict matrices will proceed with the review of interview responses. Once the type of conflict has been mapped, the results of individual indicators were reviewed. A discussion section follows, applying reasoning based on differing stakeholder positions. The purpose of this is to allow fluidity and

understanding to the reader. The response review is followed by an examination of any documentation provided by the interviewee during our meeting. This includes literature on alternative livelihood programs available, or policy documents pertaining to park tourism development.

# 4.0. Case Study 1: The Gulf of Mannar Marine National Park



*Figure 4.1- Pamban Village, Rameswaram Island*

The first site of investigation in this project is the Gulf of Mannar Marine National Park, located in the southern state of Tamil Nadu.

# 4.1. Park Description

The Gulf of Mannar (GoM) Marine National Park is comprised of 21 uninhabited islands and contains a collection of 117 identified hard corals, 14 species of sea grasses, and multiple mangrove species (Obura, 2008). Together, this makes for one of the richest regions of biodiversity anywhere to be found in India, or worldwide (Bavinck & Vivekanandan, 2011). Declared a National Park in 1986, and later a Biosphere Reserve in 1989, it is considered to be one of four important reef areas in India, and is home to countless species, including dolphins, whales, dugongs (sea- cows), sea horses, leatherback turtles, sea cucumbers and much more (Sundarakumar & Selvan, 2013). The MPA contains five bird sanctuaries under the Marine National Park Division, and is also an important bird migration site, as about 160



Figure 4.2- A map indicating the approximate location of the Gulf of Mannar Marine National Park (CDC, 2008)

different species of birds arrive to the islands each year (Sundarakumar & Selvan, 2013). It is India's largest MPA, yet for most Indians, the true importance of this area has nothing to do with marine conservation (Choudhury, 2007).

This is because, the Gulf of Mannar MPA also happens to be a revered religious pilgrimage site, and to bathe in Ramanathaswamy Temple is a feat that many travel from far and wide to realize. It is here that the Hindu God Rama, from the book *Ramayana*, is said to have built a bridge to Sri Lanka in order for his army to cross and reclaim his kidnapped wife. In fact, this land bridge, known today as Adam's Bridge or Rama's Bridge, was passable on food until the late 1400s when it was claimed by the sea after a cyclone (Commissioner of Tourism, 2013). The village of Rameswaram in the Gulf of Mannar MPA is considered to be one of the holiest places for Hindus in India and when preceded by a visit to Varanasi, it is believed to remove all sins, making one pure and allowing for happiness in the afterlife.

For this reason, management and planning cannot follow conventional or preconceived governance strategies, as tourism is something to be accommodated, not introduced. The industry has existed long before the MPA and due to the devote nature and influence of religion in India, will continue to exist, regardless of ecosystem

protection measures. An integrated management plan was designed in 2007 by the Wildlife Institute of India, in collaborations with park authorities (Choudhury, 2007). The purpose was to provide guidance and management schemes until 2016, taking into consideration all stakeholder involved with or residing in the MPA. It is essential to recognize that roughly 125 fishing villages currently line the shore, with an estimated 35,000 active fishermen depending on access to natural resources (Sundarakumar & Selvan, 2013). A clearly outlined classification of endangered and protected fish has been established, but high competition coupled with depleting stocks has deemed these populations to be the single greatest threat to the success of the MPA. Locals who are dependent on resource extraction increasingly find themselves faced with the option of growing restrictions or migration (Bavinck & Vivekanandan, 2011).

### 4.1.1. Tourism Activity

On the State planning level, tourism development is considered a sustainable alternative employment possibility for displaced citizens. Although tourism within the park is minimal, peripheral and buffer communities are rapidly developing into key destination hubs. Current tourism caters to a largely domestic visitor base, focusing on religious tourism, but the hope within the next five years is to encourage Rameswaram and other villages within the MPA to become major international tourist attractions. As part of Tamil Nadu's tenth 5-year plan, the Ministry of Tourism and Ministry of Forestry are poised to develop what they are calling four Mega-Projects; one of those being in Rameswaram (Equations, 2013). The types of tourists being targeted, outside of the religious pilgrims, include school groups, wildlife enthusiast, college students, researchers, bird watchers, scuba divers, and casual visitors. At present, tourism activities in Rameswaram include visiting the temple, a short boat ride along the coast, and an off-roading beach drive, conducted in oversized jeeps. Future plans include the installation of five information centres for visitor of the Biosphere Reserve.

# 4.2. Methods

## 4.2.1. Planning and Organization

The marine conservation network in India is a relatively tight-knit group, readily available to lend a hand when a fellow researcher brings forth a worthy query. This would prove to be quite helpful in the planning of a field visit, as other non-governmental organizations (NGOs), professors, and organizations with projects in the MPA region, were an excellent source of information and advice. Additionally, assisted by a local resident in contact with the host NGO in Bangalore, the study was able to obtain prior knowledge of the kinds of stakeholders who would be available for the study, along with time requirements, modes of transportation and key observation sites to be visited. Frequent phone and email contact was maintained during the month leading up to the field visit, and prior arrangements were made to facilitate a translator, fluent in both English and Tamil. The fieldwork component of this study took place during October 2013.

## 4.2.2. Data Collection

Several techniques were utilized across multiple field sites to ensure a complete and holistic dataset. This included a site tour led by a local NGO, People's Action for Development (PAD), a series of semi-structured interviews following the Elite Interviewing method, a focus group held with local fisher people in the community, and finally, a survey of tourist shops along the main street. Each technique played a role in engaging the issues of the area and will be further described below.

### *Participant and Site Observation*

Local NGO members were eager to show me first-hand what the development of tourism meant for residents and their community. An itinerary had been previously planned and I was chauffeured between Coastal Regulation Zone (CRZ) violations, garbage dumping sites, high erosion zones and then all the attractions that would fill the day of a regular tourist in the Rameswaram vicinity. As my guides were from the community, we would often stop to interact with other villagers, ask their stories of tourism and share some tea over memories, feelings or ambitions. During the subsequent

week in the field, we would relive many similar moments, learning about the happenings of the community simply by walking alongside locals and listening to casual conversations, jokes or stories. In a sense, the data collected through listening was more valuable then any questions I could have directly asked in an interview. It allowed me to see how individuals and groups interacted with one another, and due to the casual tone, it allowed for a comfortable and open speaking environment.

This method is by no means unique to my study, and has been used countless times before in anthropology, psychology and surely any other studies of humans in a real life context. Commonly referred to by cultural anthropologists and sociologists as *participant observation*, it is a handy tool in understanding people, processes and cultures in qualitative research (Kawulich, 2005). Adopting definition as outlined by Marshall and Rossman (1989- pp.2), *participant observation* provides, "The systematic description of events, behaviours, and artifacts in the social setting chosen for study". This study went one step further and interpret the term 'artifacts' as referring to any location or event deemed significant enough to be brought to the attention of the surveyor by those being surveyed. One of the greatest advantages of *participant and site observation* is the ability to visualize and better understand the context of the situation and location (Kawulich, 2005). In this case, it allowed local members to share what was important to them, and what they perceived as noteworthy regarding the development of tourism in their community in a non-threatening environment.

### *Elite Interviewing*

While *participant observation* allowed for an insight into local perspectives, the views of decision makers and governing officials is still a key part in this study. Furthermore, there are still other stakeholders, who speak on behalf of the locals, and can address larger scale issues that impact a larger population of citizens. For this, the tactic of *elite interviewing* was employed. The title is admittedly misleading, as the method does not imply a superior class or any special treatment, but instead would seek out individuals in a position of maximum knowledge or representation. Elite interviewees could speak to a topic on behalf of a population or decision making body, being themselves of a prominent or well-informed rank (Dexter, 1970). For Dexter (1970), elite interviewing has especially to do with non-directive interviewing. This is to say, the

interviewer gives great latitude to the interviewee and encourages him/her to tell some story in their own way. Thus elite interviewing relies on the interviewee's sense of situation/issues rather than on the interviewer's pre-formed questions.

Interviews conducted with these individuals were formatted in a semi-structure to unstructured design. This means allowing the interviewee to initiate topics and bring to light ideas and subjects that they consider to be relevant or important enough to share. Dexter (1970) goes on to say that in this form of interviewing, it is common that the interviewer is actually eager to let the interviewee teach him the problems, questions and situations, with minimal prodding or interruption. Of course, the interviewer is responsible to step in when the speaker has said their piece, encouraging more sharing, and introducing a new topic, or in this case indicator, to which the interviewee can speak. It is most important in unstructured or semi-structured interviews that parameters are not limited by the researcher, but instead are set by the extent to which a subject chooses to share (Dexter, 1970). "Holistic by nature, qualitative research is concerned with human beings in all of their complexities" (Myers, 2000).

One must keep in mind that the main purpose is not to get interviews, but to collect information regarding a subject or process in question (Dexter 1970). This approach seeks to observe behaviour as well as answers, while trying not to suggest responses or introduce bias. Sometimes more can be drawn from the way that an interviewee will speak about a subject rather than then the words they are actually saying. For example, if the subject switches to a topic and their mood becomes grave and resentful, it demonstrates a strong dislike, which they felt significant enough to introduce on their own accord. Conversely, if they speak with pride and confidence about change in the community, it can be recorded that they are self-vested in the program and believe in its intentions. These, of course, would be left to the discretion of the interviewer, but as it is their job to understand issues in a broader context, one can assume the matter was reviewed objectively.

## *Focus group*

Focus groups are an effective means of obtaining information with local stakeholders as it allows a group dynamic in which participants work off of one another's

answers, often segueing into new topics and issues without any instigation from the interviewer. It provides access to information that other methods wouldn't reach, as it removes the power imbalance between an interviewer and the subjects, allowing people to speak freely in a comfortable group conversation (Liamputtong, 2010). It is an opportunity for local populations to introduce topics which are important to them, often giving a voice to groups that are unheard by their society (Liamputtong, 2010).

Wilkinson (2004) suggests that the practice in fact does depend on a substantial contribution from the interviewer as they introduce the topic and provide direction for the conversation. The traditional sense of a focus group brings individuals together to gain a group perspective of products or issues (Wilkinson, 2004). The tool was used in this study as a method by which to engage the maximum amount of local perspectives on the subject of life with tourism and also to balance the voices heard through elite interviewing. Based on accessibility, the study engaged local people living in traditional communities, which were established before the formation of the protected area and the associated tourism development. This stage necessitated a translator. Usually their role is to wait for a full response to be completed before translating. In the case of a focus group where the group may continuously speak, the translator halted discussion between major points or at intervals not exceeding his or her memory span.

## *Survey of Shell Shops by the Sea Shore*

Throughout this study many locals insisted that absolutely no jobs were available within the tourism community and that all shops and tours were funded and owned by outsiders from other parts of India. It is understandable that residents of a fishing village would be hesitant to shift into a new paradigm, but it was unfathomable that no tourist locals would attempt to tap the newly blossoming market, becoming tourism brokers. For this reason a late addition was made in the study and an impromptu survey was conducted of all 21 shell and souvenir shops located on the main tourist street. The survey was simple in that it asked the same 4 questions to
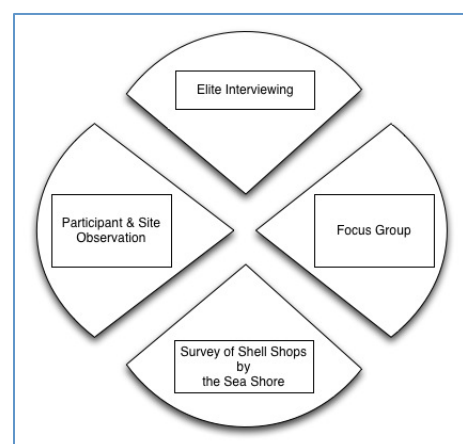
*Figure 4.3- A diagram displaying the methods used in this study.*

each shop owner. The first question asked, 1. Are you the owner of this shop? If not, questions would be referred to the owner, not the attendant. 2. Were you born in Rameswaram? 3. Have you always lived here/how long have you lived here? And finally, 4. what is the source of the shells you sell? All questions were asked in the context of casual conversation, removing any suspicion of intentions, which may impact the type of answers given. In reality, it was quite uncomplicated to differentiate the local owners from outsiders simply based on their appearance, but this allowed for a more substantiated confirmation. Figure 4.1 is a simple box graphic showing the different research techniques used in this case study.

## 4.2.3 The Sample

The stakeholder mapping and sample selection process involved brainstorming with multiple individuals and organizations, but also depended on governing officials' availability. In attempting to engage interviewees deemed 'prominent' for the Elite Interviewing process, we focused on speaking with the highest profile officials in their respective departments. During our time in the field if we happened to come across someone who was also relevant to the situation, although not in an 'Elite' manner, they would also be included, allowing for further data, but also serving as a confirmation for the data acquired by those speaking our their behalf. This somewhat removes randomness from sampling methods, but as stated above regarding sample selection, that is less important in qualitative techniques as the research seeks to address all parties relevant to the subject. The list of interviews is provided in table 4.1.

*Table 4.1- List of Interview Respondents from the Gulf of Mannar Case Study*

| Title | Category (BLT) | Governmental |
|---|---|---|
| President of Ramanad Fishworkers Trade Union | L | N |
| Hotel Owner- Lifelong Local/Fisherman | B | N |
| Rameswaram Tourism Director | B | Y |
| Rameswaram NGO Leader PAD | L | N |
| Thalgchimadam Panchayat President (Local Gov.) | L | Y |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Kundukal Village Focus Group | L | N |
| Local Hotel Associate | B | N |
| Forest Department Warden | B | Y |
| GOMBRT Official (Park/Reserve Trust Official) | B | Y |
| Park Ecology Researcher- University of Madurai | L | N |

*Table 4.2- Sample Distribution in the Gulf of Mannar*

| | |
|---|---|
| Participants | 10 |
| Non-Governmental | 6 |
| Governmental | 4 |
| Brokers | 5 |
| Locals | 5 |

The above tables provide the titles of the ten interviewees as well as the relevant distribution of the sample population to this study. There was an equal representation of locals to brokers and a nearly equal representation of governmental to non-governmental participants. Please note, there are a total of ten respondents, each of which has been categorized as a broker or a local (as per the definition in section 3.0), and also categorized as being governmental or non-governmental. For the purposes of this study, it is possible to be both a government official as well as a non-broker, as certain officials have absolutely nothing to do with influencing tourism. It was suggested at an early stage that weighting be applied to each interview, based on the number of people each participant represented, but this was decided against due to the subjectivity involved with determining representation size. For example, the President of the Fish Worker Trade Union might represent ten thousand people, but as he is also Chairman to the National Fish Workers' Forum, he could be said to represent millions of people. Allowing him extra weighting would sway the study, implying that answers from a Forest Warden are therefore less significant to those of a Forum Head. For this reason, sorting is based on demographics, such as 'local' perspective and 'governmental' perspective.

### 4.2.4. Data Analysis

As previously mentioned data reduction consisted of dividing interview talking points into one of four indicator categories, at which point conflict points will be extracted and further categorized into one of four conflict types. Let it be known that Focus Groups were reviewed and analysed in the same format as regular interviews. Taking into consideration that while multiple contributors spoke about a topic, it functioned to the same effect as Elite Interviewing, in that it gained perspective from a source deemed representative of many voices. Please refer to section 3.3 of this report for a more detailed outline of categorization, input into the conflict matrices and interview theme investigation.

# 4.3. Results

## 4.3.1. Field Observations

This section deals with ethnographic field observations. Deliberately presented in a journalistic context, what follows is an impressionistic account of key field visit findings as they were presented to the researcher. It discusses, in a chronological manner, what the group came across in the field, in the same manner by which it was presented. Although it was not the purpose of this research technique to only extract conflict points, the finding prove to be a series of complaints and issues resulting from tourism in the GoM MPA. Many issues are presented and touched upon, which will be more formally investigated in later sections.

Shortly after arriving in Rameswaram, several field visits were arranged. Members of a local NGO called the People's Action Development (PAD), as well as a National Fish Workers Forum (NFF) representative led this. Please note the latter also acted as my translator throughout the study. Sites were selected based on their development for the purpose of tourism, both in the context of affecting the community as well as simply being an attraction that brought attention to the area. This section will present the results of this visit, exhibiting the main sites as well as a description of their impact, as described by the local guides.

The first visit was to the Gulf of Mannar Interpretative Centre and Museum located on shores of the Kundhukal beach (Figure 4.4). Standing tall, bright and orange directly nearby was the Swami Vivekananda Memorial Building also built for tourism purposes by the Gulf of Mannar Biosphere Reserve Trust (GOMBRT)– the governing body



*Figure 4.4- GoM Interpretive Centre*



*Figure 4.5- Different view of the GoM Interpretive Centre, this time displaying a retaining wall affecting erosion*

charged with developing the park. The intention of the interpretative centre is to provide awareness regarding the importance of the park as well drawing attention to the rich marine biodiversity in the area. The centre displays life-sized models of reefs, turtles, sea cows and other species living in the area, as well as full write ups regarding many issues of conservation and education. The memorial was built to pay homage to a Swami, a religious teacher, known for travelling to the distant lands of America and spreading the good words of empowerment through education. The first impressions to a visitor prove very positive, but local communities and NGO members seem to feel quite differently.

The biggest complaint, by the field guides, regarding these two structures is that they are a clear CRZ violation and are illegally built too close to the shoreline. CRZ laws in India prohibit the building of a permanent structure within 500m of the high-tide-line (Sridhar and Manuel, 2012). Figure two is another view of the structures, this time allowing the viewer to see the retaining wall built to protect the buildings from erosion. One will notice that directly after the end of the retaining wall, the shoreline has retreated as a result of the erosion. While a sandy beach still exists beside the museum the water reaches directly to the tree line a few meters farther. This is to say that although the structures are, in fact, protected by the retaining wall, the rest of the coast faces drastic changes, including sediment deposition in certain areas, and the loss of land in others. As these changes are not concentrated only to the area of intrusion, the coastal village of

Kudhukal, located approximately 200m from the structures, complain about losing many palm trees, boat landing areas, and net pulling space. Their method of fishing consists of dragging nets by hand from the sea, which would necessitate significant amounts of open beach to work with. The boats of the Kudhukal village can also be seen in Figure 4.5.

The next complaint, by the field guides, regarding the interpretive centre and memorial building is that the GOMBRT have installed fences everywhere, restricting the access of local communities. Where once people walked freely, stored their fishing gear, played on the beach, or brought their boats to shelter them from storms, fences now stand blocking access to a shared resource. The open areas are so limited that fishermen struggle between themselves to find space to manoeuvre or come to shore. Also, men are forced to leave their gear farther away from home, both an inconvenience and risk. The villagers engaged in the focus group commented that it is not a huge concern to them at this point, but they were only put up two months prior. The fences are directly in the path of an annual religious procession that takes place in February and they are concerned what will happen at that time.

As stated earlier, one of the strongest advantages of the Observation Participation method is to observe people interacting with each other in their environment. For this reason it came as somewhat of a concern to me when my group of local NGO guides



*Figure 4.6- The grounds in front of the Swami Memorial building where football tournaments were once held*

stood next to a group of fisherman as they all read a GOMBRT sign and simply laughed disbelievingly with one another about the good intentions stated. The men made a gesture towards the grounds in front of the building, explaining that once upon a time they would hold football matches there (Figure 4.6). Judging by the torn up, muddy and puddle ridden ground I assumed they meant casual pickup games, but was corrected in that the entire district used to come to these smooth grounds for tournaments. After development started the grounds were destroyed and now resemble a wasteland no one would play on, lest everyone break an ankle.

*Figure 4.7- The pier built to demonstrate the location where a Hindu god turned salt water into drinking water*



*Figure 4.8- A stone pillar marking the location of an old high-tide-line.*

The next such site was a short pier, seen in figure 4.7, called the Villondi Theertham. Jetting out into the sea, this point marks where a Hindu God, Ram, once dipped his bow into the sea to quench the thirst of his wife. Pilgrims coming to the Rameswaram temple would be lucky to also see this sacred site, consisting of nothing more than a large parking lot and this short pier. As was pointed out by my guides, and also blatantly obvious to anyone who visited the site, the pier does not permit sand to pass through in a natural manner, disturbing the sand budget and once again changing the coastline. Figure 4.7 shows one side of the pier facing significant accretion, while the other is bare through erosion. To further understand the severity of the situation, the stone pillar seen in figure 4.8 was once placed to mark the high-tide-line in the area. Needless to say, the shoreline has since been pushed many meters into the sea, changing the entire dynamics of the system.



*Figure 4.9- The official garbage dump is located at the side of a road leading nowhere.*

With the development of a community come many innovations, most with the intention of increasing the standard of living. Kundhukal villagers remember the joy they felt when they heard about a paved road coming to their area. This meant the first time they could take a bus to school, others could now access their village and possibly one day resources such as water would also reach

them. The road was built to pass their village and end a short ways away, directly outside the border of the MPA. It was here that the community planners had sanctioned a garbage-dumping zone, to keep the inside of the GoM Park clean. Villagers of Kundukal believe the territory was deemed less important as it fell outside of the National Park limits and it therefore became the location that all collected garbage would be dumped. Figure 4.9 shows the state of this area and the method by which waste is simply driven to the end of this road and discarded. Out of sight, out of mind. It may seem the ideal solution for community planners and businesses looking to discard their waste, but many villagers live in this area and are now subject to living in and smelling the waste of the adjoining city. As the tourism attractions continue to grow and bring in larger crowds, so this pile will grow and bring with it the health and safety problems associated with dump sites. Admittedly, options are limited as even sites within the Park itself are strewn with discarded waste. Figure 4.10 shows a strip of beach located directly parallel to the main tourist boardwalk. Covered in cans, bottles, plastics and old fishing gear, this is a sore sight and keeps people away from the beaches. Garbage disposal and clean up is a major concern for the health of the National Park.
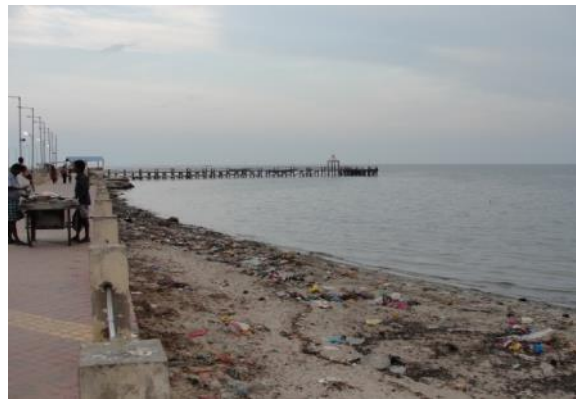


*Figure 4.10- A garbage laden strip of beach connected directly to the main tourist boardwalk.*



*Figure 4.11- A children's park developed by the GOMBRT to bring more tourists to the coastline.*

It is worth noting that although the guides complained about this site and made reference to the governing bodies not caring about the Park's well-being, the moment we went to get tea and snacks, each of their wrappers and plastic cups was thrown carelessly onto the ground. This mentality of throwing one's garbage anywhere is an issue ingrained in

the Indian society. It is a case of everyone pointing the finger of blame, yet no one setting an example for others to follow.

Since arriving in Rameswaram, it had been mentioned to me on several occasions that the GOMBRT had developed a children's' park at another site, which was very controversial within the fishing community. Fishermen going to or coming from work frequently traversed the land and children of the village played freely upon its beaches. When the children's park, seen in figure 4.11, was developed the authorities told the fisherman that they smelt too much of fish and that they could no longer walk through that area. On top of this, children who once played freely in this area, albeit local inhabitants, were also required to pay the park entrance fees and could no longer enter at will. Limitations and restrictions bred frustration in the community, but according to villagers, the GOMBRT committee has yet to rectify the situation. The price of tourism is proving costly for many local inhabitants.

The final site observations were made whilst visiting the abandoned coastal village of Danushkodi at the tip of Rameswaram Island. This site housed a large fishing community, but after the tsunami disaster of 1964 the area was declared a ghost town and people were relocated farther from the coast (Jones, 2013). This is seemingly the responsible decision and ensures the safety of many, but while the threat of a tsunami or cyclone is ever present, the site has now been made into a major tourist attraction. Tourists pay to reach Danushkodi via an 8km off-roading experience where numerous jeeps push their way through the sands of the

*Table 4.12- A tourist shop located in the ghost town of Danushkodi*

coastline, hoping see the place where the God Ram is said to have made a bridge to cross into Sri Lanka. The issue of impacts on the sensitive environment was not brought under question, but what agitated the local citizens was that they were evicted from their homes under claims of safety, yet countless people travel to these parts every day for entertainment. Figure 4.12 shows a small shell shop located in the town of Danushkodi to cater to tourism needs. If the area is unsafe then it should be unsafe for all. The PAD

people's movement believe this to be another unfair exception made for the tourist industry, demonstrating what their governing bodies deem to be truly important.

## 4.3.2. Conflict Analysis

It became exceedingly apparent at an early stage of the project that resident local populations regarded tourism and development in a negative light. This brought forth the question of where conflict and discontent was rooted and demanded a more in-depth analysis of the issue. The following matrices categorize conflict points mentioned during interviews, and illustrate problem zones in the system, as seen by specific demographics. Four types of social conflict have been defined by Bavinck & Vivekanandan (2011) and are again outlined below in the legend (Table 4.3).

*Table 4.3- Conflict Matrix Legend (Bavinck & Vivekanandan, 2011)*

| System to be Governed (in-out):<br><br>(SG in-out)<br><br>- Relates to interferences between constituencies, processes and events in and outside the system-to- be-governed | Governing System (in-out):<br><br>(GS in-out)<br><br>- Relates to interferences between governing actors inside and outside the MPA |
|---|---|
| System to be Governed (in-in):<br><br>(SG in-in)<br><br>- Problems between categories or groups of constituencies within the MPA, such as between fishermen making use of different gear types | System to be Governed- Governing System:<br><br>(SG-GS)<br><br>- Conflicts between constituencies within the system-to-be-governed and those involved in governing |

### *Indicator 1- Quality of Life*

In terms of *Quality of Life*–material well-being, personal health, political stability, community life, and equality– the total distribution demonstrates that majority of conflict is found between the system being governed and the governing system. This demonstrates a disconnect, be it intentional or not, from those making decisions to those being affected by the change. A distant second area of conflict was determined to be the influences of exterior involvement in the local tourism development. This could signify foreigners, of the community not necessarily country, funding, developing, or simply

entering the park for their own gain. As *quality of life* speaks to issues of equality and stability, this could also involve rights of access to resources and representation. Notably, very little inner conflict was mentioned, both between government departments or local people of the community.

*Table 4.4- A distribution of 'Quality of Life' conflict in the GoM involving all interview respondents.*

| Total Conflict in 'Quality of Life' | |
|---|---|
| **SG (in-out)** | **GS (in-out)** |
| ♦♦♦♦♦♦♦♦♦♦<br>♦<br>11 | ♦<br>1 |
| **SG (in-in)** | **SG- GS** |
| ♦♦♦♦♦♦<br>6 | ♦♦♦♦♦♦♦♦♦♦<br>♦♦♦♦♦♦♦♦♦♦<br>♦♦♦♦♦♦♦♦♦♦<br>♦<br>31 |

*Table 4.5- A distribution of* Quality of Life *conflict in the GoM involving 'non- Governmental' interview respondents*

| As seen by 'Non-Governmental' | |
|---|---|
| **SG (in-out)** | **GS (in-out)** |
| ♦♦♦♦♦♦♦♦♦<br>9 | ♦  1 |
| **SG (in-in)** | **SG- GS** |
| ♦♦♦♦<br>4 | ♦♦♦♦♦♦♦♦♦♦<br>♦♦♦♦♦♦♦♦♦♦<br>♦♦♦♦♦<br>25 |

*Table 4.6- A distribution of* Quality of Life *conflict in the GoM involving 'Governmental' interview respondents*

| As seen by 'Governmental' | |
|---|---|
| **SG (in-out)** | **GS (in-out)** |
| ♦♦<br>2 | 0 |
| **SG (in-in)** | **SG- GS** |
| ♦♦<br>2 | ♦♦♦♦♦<br>5 |

*Table 4.7- A distribution of* Quality of Life *conflict in the GoM involving 'Broker' interview respondents*

| As seen by 'Broker' | |
|---|---|
| **SG (in-out)** | **GS (in-out)** |
| ♦♦♦<br>3 | 0 |
| **SG (in-in)** | **SG- GS** |
| ♦<br>1 | ♦♦♦♦♦♦♦♦♦♦<br>♦<br>11 |

*Table 4.8- A distribution of* Quality of Life *conflict in the GoM involving 'Local' interview respondents*

| As seen by 'Local' | |
|---|---|
| **SG (in-out)** | **GS (in-out)** |
| ♦♦♦♦♦♦♦♦<br>8 | ♦<br>1 |
| **SG (in-in)** | **SG- GS** |
| ♦♦♦♦♦<br>5 | ♦♦♦♦♦♦♦♦♦♦<br>♦♦♦♦♦♦♦♦♦♦<br>20 |

Table 4.5, 4.6, 4.7 and 4.8, shown above, speak to conflict perspective by individual demographics– those representing the government as opposed to those not involved with the government and those classed as brokers and locals. Notice should be drawn to two key points. First, local and non-governmental participants have the most cumulative remarks surrounding conflict. Second, each matrix demonstrates the maximum amount of conflict as



Figure 4.13- Where locals see conflict in the GoM regarding *Quality of Life*

being between systems being governed and the governing system. Even the government itself views this as the most problematic social area. This is something that needs to be focused on, because it signifies that the people of Rameswaram and those living within the Gulf of Mannar National Marine Park are convinced that their problems are a result of their governing bodies. As the study focuses on impacts to local population, Figure 4.13 illustrates the dispersion of conflict as seen by lifelong residents.

### *Indicator 2- Job Security*

The next section examines *Job Security*– consistent and constant employment, resulting in sufficient wages and/or benefits to provide said employees and their family with the means to live in a manner beyond poverty, hunger or desperation. Again we see the largest conflict zone residing in the systems being governed and the

*Table 4.9- A distribution of Job Security conflict in the GoM involving all interview respondents*

| Total Conflict in 'Job Security' | |
|---|---|
| SG (in-out) | GS (in-out) |
| ◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆ ◆◆◆◆◆ ◆ 16 | 0 |
| SG (in-in) | SG- GS |
| ◆◆◆ 3 | ◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆ ◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆ ◆ 21 |

governing system zone, while the second highest disagreement area blames outsiders for disturbing the job market. This reflects availability of jobs as well as where companies are hiring their staff from. There was no suggestion of any conflict between government bodies or departments, and minimal complaints regarding quarrels between local residents.

*Table 4.10- A distribution of* Job Security *conflict in the GoM involving 'non- Governmental' interview respondents*

| As seen by 'Non-Governmental' | |
|---|---|
| **SG (in-out)** | **GS (in-out)** |
| ◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆ ◆◆ 12 | 0 |
| **SG (in-in)** | **SG- GS** |
| ◆◆ 2 | ◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆ ◆◆ 12 |

*Table 4.11- A distribution of* Job Security *conflict in the GoM involving 'Governmental' interview respondents*

| As seen by 'Governmental' | |
|---|---|
| **SG (in-out)** | **GS (in-out)** |
| ◆◆◆◆ 4 | 0 |
| **SG (in-in)** | **SG- GS** |
| ◆ 1 | ◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆ 9 |

*Table 4.12- A distribution of* Job Security *conflict in the GoM involving 'Broker' interview respondents*

| As seen by 'Broker' | |
|---|---|
| **SG (in-out)** | **GS (in-out)** |
| ◆◆◆◆ 4 | 0 |
| **SG (in-in)** | **SG- GS** |
| ◆ 1 | ◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆ 10 |

*Table 4.13- A distribution of* Job Security *conflict in the GoM involving 'Local' interview respondents*

| As seen by 'Local' | |
|---|---|
| **SG (in-out)** | **GS (in-out)** |
| ◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆ ◆◆ 12 | 0 |
| **SG (in-in)** | **SG- GS** |
| ◆◆ 2 | ◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆ ◆◆◆◆◆◆◆ 17 |

Table 4.10, 4.11, 4.12 and 4.13 demonstrate how conflict was viewed based on individual groups of participants. Nearly all groups saw the maximum amount of problems lying between local inhabitants and the governing bodies, while the non-governmental group saw top place being shared between this same category and impacts by those residing outside of the system. Keep in mind that as we are discussing job security, it may be as simple as a complaint that tourists only arrival seasonally, and that it is difficult to rely on the industry. Again, as the report focuses on local sentiments, Figure 4.14 demonstrates complaints were



**Local Views on Job Security Conflict**

- ■ SG (in-out)
- ■ GS (in-out)
- ■ SG (in-in)
- ■ SG- GS

Figure 4.14- Where locals see conflict in the GoM regarding *Job Security*
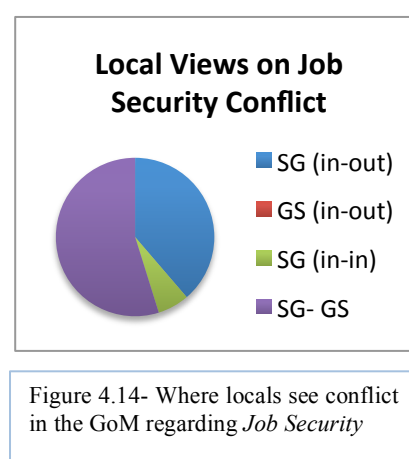
distributed amongst the four social conflict categories. A pattern is starting to develop, wherein the governing bodies are being accused of not observing the needs of the community.

## *Indicator 3- Community Development*

This section reviews concerns brought forth regarding *Community Development*– both hard-infrastructure (ex. Schools, hospitals, roads) as well as soft-infrastructure (ex. Education, health care). As in the previous two examples, the area of greatest social concern is the interaction between the governing body and the system to be governed. This category out contends the other 3 groups by nearly two thirds. Since the topic of this entire study is to understand the impacts of development on a community, this indicator deserves special attention, as it speaks to the type of expansion occurring and whether or not consideration is being taken for those living within the community, or just those who plan to visit it. Does access exclude local populations from grounds they once occupied, do land ownership issues come into play with new hotels coming up, are CRZ laws being followed, and does all of this enhance the status of the society it inhabits? According to these results, the community feels misrepresented on the subject of expansion.

*Table 4.14- A distribution of* Community Development *conflict in the GoM involving all interview respondents*

| Total Conflict in 'Community Development' | |
|---|---|
| SG (in-out) | SG (in-out) |
| ◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆ | ◆◆ |
| 9 | 2 |
| SG (in-in) | SG- GS |
| ◆◆◆◆◆ | ◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆ ◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆ ◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆ |
| 5 | 28 |

Table 4.15- A distribution of Community Development *conflict in the GoM involving 'non-Governmental' interview respondents*

Table 4.16- A distribution of Community Development *conflict in the GoM involving 'Governmental' interview respondents*

| As seen by 'Non-Governmental' | |
| --- | --- |
| SG (in-out) | GS (in-out) |
| ◆◆◆◆<br>4 | 0 |
| SG (in-in) | SG- GS |
| ◆◆◆<br>3 | ◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆<br>◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆<br>◆◆◆◆◆◆<br>26 |

| As seen by 'Governmental' | |
| --- | --- |
| SG (in-out) | GS (in-out) |
| ◆◆◆◆◆<br>5 | ◆◆<br>2 |
| SG (in-in) | SG- GS |
| ◆◆<br>2 | ◆◆<br>2 |

Table 4.17- A distribution of Community Development *conflict in the GoM involving 'Broker' interview respondents*

Table 4.18- A distribution of Community Development *conflict in the GoM involving 'Local' interview respondents*

| As seen by 'Broker' | |
| --- | --- |
| SG (in-out) | GS (in-out) |
| ◆◆◆◆<br>4 | ◆◆<br>2 |
| SG (in-in) | SG- GS |
| 0 | ◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆<br>◆<br>11 |

| As seen by 'Local' | |
| --- | --- |
| SG (in-out) | GS (in-out) |
| ◆◆◆◆◆<br>5 | 0 |
| SG (in-in) | SG- GS |
| ◆◆◆◆◆<br>5 | ◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆<br>◆◆◆◆◆◆◆<br>17 |

Table 4.15, 4.16, 4.17, 4.18 show points of concern and conflict relating to *Community Development,* as seen by the differing demographic populations interviewed. Majority of problems again lie between the governing bodies and the community, while absolutely minimal concerns were brought up regarding competing governmental agents. It's interesting to note that governmental interviewees do not recognize any conflict with local populations, although local populations do not seem to feel the same. Even brokers, those benefiting or influencing tourist, believe that there is a problem with the way that the governing body is managing



**Local Views on Community Development Conflict**

- SG (in-out)
- GS (in-out)
- SG (in-in)
- SG- GS
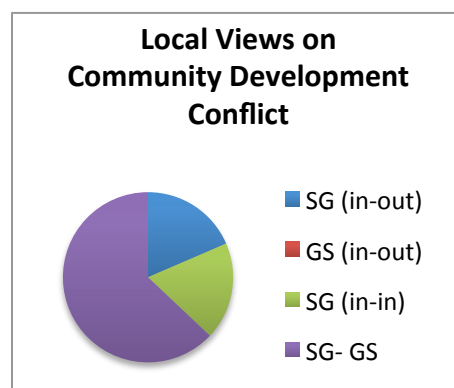
Figure 4.15- Where locals see conflict in the GoM regarding *Community Development*

people of the system. Once again the graph, 4.15, provides a representation of how local populations see the problems of community development around them.

## *Indicator 4- Perception of Happiness*

The question is whether or not *Perception of Happiness*– the degree of satisfaction groups feel within their own community as a result of development surrounding them– is generally positive or negative within the GoM National Park. This section, however, only speaks to conflicts mentioned

*Table 4.19- A distribution of* Perception of Happiness *conflict in the GoM involving all interview respondents*

| Total Conflict in 'Perception of Happiness' | |
| --- | --- |
| SG (in-out) | GS (in-out) |
| ◆◆◆◆◆ ◆◆ 7 | 0 |
| SG (in-in) | SG- GS |
| ◆ 1 | ◆◆◆◆◆ ◆◆◆◆◆ 10 |

throughout the interview process, and once again shows the governing bodies and outsiders from the area in a poor light. When it comes to causes of unhappiness, it's quite common for people to place the onus on their governments, but this case revealed an almost equal blame being put on pressures from outside of the community trying to move into the park.

*Table 4.20- A distribution of* Perception of Happiness *conflict in the GoM involving 'non-Governmental' interview respondents*

| As seen by 'Non-Governmental' | |
| --- | --- |
| SG (in-out) | GS (in-out) |
| ◆◆◆◆◆◆ 6 | 0 |
| SG (in-in) | SG- GS |
| 0 | ◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆ 10 |

*Table 4.21 - A distribution of* Perception of Happiness *conflict in the GoM involving 'Governmental' interview respondents*

| As seen by 'Governmental' | |
| --- | --- |
| SG (in-out) | GS (in-out) |
| ◆ 1 | 0 |
| SG (in-in) | SG- GS |
| ◆ 1 | 0 |

| Table 4.22- *A distribution of* Community Development *conflict in the GoM involving 'Broker' interview respondents* |
|---|

| As seen by 'Broker' ||
|---|---|
| SG (in-out) | GS (in-out) |
| ♦♦<br>2 | 0 |
| SG (in-in) | SG- GS |
| 0 | ♦♦<br>2 |

| Table 4.23- *A distribution of* Community Development *conflict in the GoM involving 'Local' interview respondents* |
|---|

| As seen by 'Local' ||
|---|---|
| SG (in-out) | GS (in-out) |
| ♦♦♦♦♦<br>5 | 0 |
| SG (in-in) | SG- GS |
| ♦<br>1 | ♦♦♦♦♦<br>♦♦♦<br>8 |

The four matrices, Figures 4.20, 4.21, 4.22, 4.23, that display demographic differences in this instance bring forth an interesting point, not seen in the previous indicators. In this case, individuals classed as *Brokers* or *Governmental*, simply did not recognize any threat to local peoples' perception of happiness whatsoever. Either this, or it was not important enough for them to mention at any point of their unstructured interview. *Local* and *non-Governmental* groups again point the finger at foreigner influences and governing bodies as the cause to their unhappiness. In this case, not one participant put any blame on conflict between different governing bodies. The graph, 4.16, showing local views, followed the same pattern as all other indicator groups in this study.
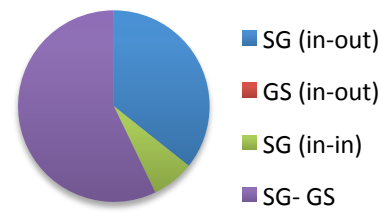


Figure 4.16- Where locals see conflict in the GoM regarding *Perception of Happiness*

## 4.3.3. Interview Analysis

In this section, the results of the interviews are presented. Responses of interviewees have been subdivided into four indicator groups and will remain as such for this section. The procedure of subdivision is shown in the methods section 3.0. The four distinguishing groups with their respective results are presented and shortly discussed herein. The paper's main question will be investigated from different angles to check the validity of conclusions. This is done by presenting all opinions, while drawing special

attention to reoccurring arguments and statements. Similarities and differences are identified and discussed in the ensuing 'Discussion' section in 4.3.

## *Quality of Life*

Opinions on quality of life, as with all indicators, largely differ based on the degree of involvement or benefit obtained from the industry. At the local level, those involved in tourism revel in their involvement with the incoming visitors, while those outside of the industry most commonly concentrate on how they've been negatively impacted. That being said, locals are quite aware of the negative impacts even if it does not affect them directly. Two local brokers spoke of the restrictions along the coastline and how the people of the community are not allowed the freedoms they once had. Conversely, government officials in this study overwhelmingly believe that tourism is beneficial to all members of a community and that it must grow.

From the fisherman and local perspective, there are several recurring negative points. When it comes to *Quality of Life* their biggest fear is that tourism will further alienate them. They don't want to adopt a new lifestyle, but the government is making it very difficult to live in the ways they were used to. First of all the entire shoreline has been fenced off and all of their actions are being restricted. They once had temporary structures on the beach to leave their gear, but are now being asked to remove their belonging. They can't very well carry their boats home, and when they carry fish or old gear with them, the bus drivers don't allow them to use public transport because they are deemed 'smelly'. On top of that, tourists come to this fishing village, yet complain that it smells bad, so the government is pushing the fisherman away so as to not ruin the experiences of the visitors. A large hotel was constructed directly on a common access way for fisherman and they were asked not to walk through, because it was off putting for the tourists.

On top of all this, the MPA restricts them from using the islands, but they claim that the Forest Department pushed them away for conservation, but then went and cut down all the vegetation for their own use. They complain that every new governing body is only looking for a way to fill their own pockets, and because of this, any conservation that once did exist is now being abused by the authorities. There is no respect shown from the authorities, and the community has never even been consulted about changes that

were occurring around them. There are supposed to take measures to raise awareness to the people, but they just wake up everyday and find whatever new fences have been put up or whatever new restriction faces them.

On the positive side of things, they say that they have no problem with tourists and are happy that people want to learn about their place. Also, it is a very important religious pilgrimage site, so they do not want to stop people from coming. There are positives that come with tourism, but multiple interviewees commented on the growth of tourism for the Hindu section and were worried that if it continued to grow like this, then other communities would start to suffer. For many years Hindu, Muslims and Christians have lived and fished together. If only one side gets attention, the fear is that it will not end well for the others.

On the officials side of things, opinions were much more optimistic and they ensured me that the community was benefitting. I was told that people are still allowed to go to the islands, but now only for school or research purposes. The Director of Tourism stated that, "Life is normal, except now there's more money". He went on to say that 50% of the population was benefitting from tourism and that there was no problem with inflation, because everyone was earning more. The Forest Warden also ensured me that every village was assigned a representative who would ensure that villagers were always informed and kept up to date with information.

With this in mind, the professionals who did not have a direct governing role also admitted that there was a complete disconnect between stakeholders and that most of all, even government departments lacked coordination. The people are not being consulted and no one asks the locals what they want, need or can do to help the situation. An ecologist studying the Park for many years commented that there was not enough research being conducted to determine appropriate targets, yet plans were said to already be in action. The plans are available in the format of a GOMBRT presentation, reviewed in section 4.2.5.

### *Job Security*

First and foremost, fisher people and other such residents were outraged because they were being denied occupational rights that their family has depended on for many generations. To these individuals fishing and marine resource collecting was all they

69

knew and now they were being told where to go and what to catch. They were accustomed to a lifestyle and are now being forced to change. Many officials say that tourism is an alternative, but the locals don't feel that local people can get jobs in tourism. Even if they wanted to start something, they said, they don't have the education to fill out even a basic form for a small loan. There is no interest to change.

To that concern, the response by professional and governing officials is that fishing is the main threat to the reserve and that it has to be changed. Over 300,000 people rely on these waters daily for extraction and the resources are being depleted. The Ecologist's view was that since the Park's implementation the situation has improved, but not nearly as much as it needs to. The main threat to coral reefs is not the trawlers, but instead the traditional trap fisherman, dropping their heavy gear on reefs. They can no longer rely on fishing because it is a resource that no longer exists in abundance.

The solution for this has been professional training programs offered for free. They include mechanic courses, tile making and nursing programs for women, computer technician studies, welding, truck driving, and the list goes on. On top of this GOMBRT offers a micro-loans option with extremely low interest rates of 0.5%. This removes the moneylender problems and allows people to embrace real, affordable change. It is a system that has proven successful in many cases so far, and it targets the younger generations and women, as they know that men are more or less adverse to the change at this point. The target, according to the GOMBRT representative, is that the next generation of fishermen is diversifying now.

This, however, has not convinced the local population. The Fish Workers Union President and NGO members believe that the jobs offered are iconic and that they are not open to anyone in the public. 300,000 people rely on fishing, yet since 2007 only about 1,000 have gotten jobs through these programs. Even if a job becomes available, it is a watchman position or a door guard role. These are not honourable and dignified alternatives and do not supply sufficient wages. Regarding the Tourism Director's early statement of everyone earning more, the National Fish Workers Forum Head mentioned that this was a Hindu pilgrimage site, meaning that about 90% of the people who came here were strictly vegetarians. This is to say, tourism could not help the sale of fish.

The Hotel Owner commented that demand was increasing and that more money was being brought in by filled rooms, but also commented that 80% of the hotels being built are from outsiders and that the money was not staying in the community. He said, "Some people do benefit, but that success comes at a very expensive price for those who don't reap the rewards". Additionally, fishermen are banned from taking people out on their boats, so there's no chance of added income there. This oppression and strictness is leading people to start crossing lines, and according to the Wildlife Warden, two to three boats are caught and seized each month. This means expensive fines and sometimes even trials; something these modest fishermen cannot afford. Numbers would be higher, but the Warden admitted to be heavily understaffed. On the issue of restrictions, a local NGO member brought up that a certain type of sardine has also been restricted, again due to the issue of it being too smelly for the other community members.

### *Community Development*

One point that can be agreed upon by all parties is that development in the GoM intensified after the tsunami of 2004 (PAD NGO & Panchayat Pradhan, 2013). The community needed to be rebuilt and the circumstances permitted governing officials and investors the opportunity to implement change. Community members agreed that not all change is bad, and this period of time saw electricity reaching new villages and permanent houses were built for people who once lived in huts. Also, they were enthusiastic about the development of a road which reached their villages as it meant easier access to the main town and children could even start taking the bus to school. A group of students in the village focus group mentioned that before the road, they had to walk 6km around a lagoon everyday to get to school. On top of this, transportation of fish and marketable goods has now been simplified and workers can focus more on the catch than how they will transport it to the market.

Unfortunately, with the good must also come the bad, and several negative issues have arisen as a result of the road. Villagers said that per year they lose 13 or 14 goats, which are hit by cars. No compensation program exists, which means that it is a direct hit to their already negligible income. Additionally, as mentioned in the previous section, areas near their houses are now used for dumping city garbage, which is something the people have to learn to live with. Most of all, no notice is given and no consultation is

done with local level citizens. Decisions are made by people who never took the time to understand local issues or address their concerns.

The biggest issue with development, negatively impacting the local communities, is the issue of erosion. As buildings, piers and interpretive centers are coming up on shorelines, coastlines are disappearing. Agriculture, palm trees and valuable beach space is being lost to the sea. Members of Kundhukal village are determined that the erosion began directly after the installation of these structures and that it was an issue they never dealt with in the past. Furthermore, fences have been installed on the beaches that do still exist, ensuring that the people can't even move to new areas. In terms of land rights, the NFF President stated that the land is under private control, making it very difficult for the people to be heard or influence change. Even the land where the village has been built is government land, and by not allowing users to have ownership rights, the government controls if and when the people will be pushed off.

With community development also comes the increase in land prices. Government can say people get richer, but if inflation has risen by more, then they are in reality, poorer. People such as the Tourism Director see this in a positive light, because local inhabitants are able to sell their homes for more money or develop into homestays. Many villagers feel otherwise, because they are unable to afford land and cannot keep up with the costs of living. The local Panchayat leader stated that development is needed and desired by the community, but that it has to be done with the people in mind and take into consideration that many groups operate in this region. At the moment all development is focusing on Hindu pilgrims, alienating other groups and potentially instigating religious rivalry. He also admits that within the last 10 years, more North Indians have come in and purchased land to build all of the hotels.

On the State side, they believe efforts are improving the lives of community remembers and hail such infrastructure improvements as a large hall for events, a local fish market, resting huts, boat jetties, parks, public toilets and an interpretation office. The also created programs for alternative livelihoods and have loan programs for helping people share in the development. The Integrated Coastal Management Plan was revised in 2011, and although not available to the public, planers claim it to ensure the wellbeing of

all stakeholder. A certain Director also wanted it to be mentioned that the town now had 3 hotels with star comfort ratings, improving the image of Rameswaram around India.

## *Perception of Happiness*

Interview respondent who generally opposed tourism assured me that they had no issue with the tourists themselves, but instead with the threats which faced them as a result of the industry. Villagers feel mistreated and unheard. They were comfortable in their previous way of life and do not feel like opportunities exist for them in tourism, even if they wanted to shift. They fear that tourism will alienate them and some speak of one day being evicted from their homes. The lack of communication from decision-making bodies is daunting and they are tired of being called smelly and undesirable from actors in the tourism sector. The NFF President and fish worker's representative declared that tourism is a direct threat to his people, and that on top of disturbing the peace, it is not needed. Tourism is not an alternative livelihood and conservation is not occurring, even though they are said to go hand in hand.

Conversely, those involved in tourism, including locals, had positive things to say. One attendant, in perfect English, spoke of his love of languages and how tourism has taught him so much. The tourism Director claimed that all tourism is positive and it can't have negative implications. A more realistic GOMBRT official mentioned the problem of pollution with increased visitors, but in general believed the industry to be beneficial for the local economy and community.

## 4.3.4. Shell Shop Survey

During the study a point that came up on many occasions was the issue of jobs in the tourism industry. The Forum of Fish Workers and several NGO members were convinced that local people didn't have access to jobs in the tourism sector, while politicians and community planners were convinced that tourism was a key platform in providing jobs for the local community. Appropriate census data was not available on the topic, so as a late addition, a survey of tourist shops was taken on the main Rameswaram strip to see where shopkeepers and owners were from and also where they got their shells. Although this would not conclusively prove that tourism is a suitable alternative

livelihood, should the result prove that locals can find work, it would demonstrate that there are local individuals choosing to benefit from tourism and moreover, finding work.

*Table 4.24- The results of a shell shop survey in Rameswaram*

| | |
|---|---|
| Locals of Rameswaram | 18 |
| From Outside | 3 |
| Collected Own Shells | 4 |
| Purchased from Wholesaler | 17 |

Results of the study revealed that 86% of the storeowners and workers were born and raised in Rameswaram while 14% were foreign to Rameswaram. One of the outsiders also requested that I included that he has been living in Rameswaram for 25 years and that he considers himself a local at this point. It can be added that based on observations, the stores belonging to outsiders were larger, and contained more expensive and better-organized products. In terms of where the shells were obtained, 81% admitted to acquiring the shells from a wholesaler. 19% of respondents claimed that they collected the shells themselves, although they appeared to be the same shells as all of the other shops. The collection of specific types of shells is permitted in the MPA, while others are strictly forbidden. A clear categorization of this is available in the form of a free publication.

## 4.3.5 Policy and Development Documents

During the process of data collection, several interview respondents provided documents and policy statements regarding their role in the park. Of those documents, the Tamil Nadu 20-Year Tourism Plan along with the Tourism Policy Statement was summarized within the literature review. Both speak to the government focus on tourism development and the large financial allowances that have been allocated for its growth. The plan addresses sustainable development, although lack of enforcement is an issue raised repeatedly. The third document provided was a GOMBRT (2013) presentation on the Park's function, which highlights actions being taken by the governing body to ensure

a comfortable transition from fishing to alternative livelihoods for local citizens. This section will summarize and present this document in the form that it is most relevant to the study. A discussion in section 4.3 will then speak to the implications.

The 42-page document begins with an ecological overview, highlighting the rich biodiversity that inhabits this area. It then speaks to threats upon the area, of which a large focus is put on anthropogenic pressures from the buffer zone; specifically over exploitation of marine resources. The document mentions that over 300,000 fisherman are dependent on the GoM for their day to day livelihood, using 5,000 trawling vessels and about 25,000 traditional boats. On top of that, about 70% of the coastal community depends on the sea for their livelihood, which includes coral removal (for jewellery and construction), seaweed collection, and trade in highly endangered marine organisms like sea cucumber, turtles, sea horse, sea cow, sponges and scheduled shells (GOMBRT, 2013). With all of this come illegal destructive nets, dynamite fishing, and what's more is that they themselves point out that there is a lack of enforcement of regulations in the area. More than simply enforcing, the document clearly states that there is a complete lack of coordination between GOMBRT, the Fisheries Department or any other governmental departments.

With this, the GOMBRT has three guiding objectives which define their work: 1) to conserve the globally significant assemblages of coastal biodiversity in an integrated manner, 2) develop sustainable coastal zone management, and 3) improve livelihood opportunities of local communities. Steps and goals have been clearly identified to achieve these targets. First, the formation of the Trust will put in place a Long Term Funding Mechanism. Next, by strengthening management of the MPA, GOMBRT will also strengthen the Park's infrastructure with clearly demarcated boundaries. This, combined with the implementation of an Effective Biodiversity Conservation program will effectively address the issues of marine conservation in the area (GOMBRT, 2013). For the conservation program, a panel of 5 conservation advisors has been elected by the Trust Director and consists of professors from surrounding universities who specialize is the field. Regarding the fisherman and other local stakeholders, a sustainable alternative livelihoods program is already in place.

There are multiple outcomes of these programs, but the ones that impact the local communities most include more anti-poaching watchers to protect endangered stocks, Capacity building for programs for students and young people, training programs for field projects, opportunities to work in the Trust, coaching and tuition programs for students in grade 10+, vocational training in many fields and loans for any community member attempting to transition into a new livelihood opportunity. Between 2007 and 2011 1,754 people have received free vocational training in a new field of work. In terms of loan program, those directly dependent on the fishing industry receive the highest loans as they are classed as a high threat to the park.

## 4.4. Case Study 1 Discussion

As can be expected, the results varied greatly between stakeholders. It was interesting to discover that local residents not involved in tourism, especially fisher people, are very aware of the types of problems that surround them and are taking action to better their situation. While the majority of stakeholders sided with the opinions that benefited them most, it should be mentioned that business owners were aware of local issues and spoke sensitively about the suffering felt by the uninvolved class. The Park Trust officials were also aware of trouble within the communities and had included alternative livelihood training and loan programs in their official planning. Whether these steps should be considered enough, or if they compensate for the exclusion of locals in consultation and planning, is another story.

Tsunami disaster rehabilitation brought with it an eruption of tourism development (PAD NGO & Panchayat Pradhan, 2013). The argument that tourism brings jobs is ever present, but the concept needs to be further considered and questions need to be asked such as how many jobs, what kind of jobs, do they offer competitive salaries and is it an honourable alternative. A proud fisherman could lack even the basic education to serve as a guide, and cleaning dishes for 12 hours a day is not a suitable 'quality of life' substitute. Others say that tourism is for the brokers, not locals, which is a justifiable assessment, but as traditional fishermen are being pushed away from the coastline, tourism is being celebrated as a key alternative.

A major issue faced in governance is that the Park regulates fishing because it is depleting a resource, but natural human tendency opposes change. This is especially the case if tradition is engrained in a family legacy dating back many generations. This is to say, the motivation of the Park officials is to save an ecosystem, and even if locals were permitted to continue fishing, the stocks are not available to supply them a sustainable livelihood. Tourism development is seen as an alternative opportunity for an inevitable need to shift away from resource extraction.

Also in terms of governance, and what is to be the biggest contribution of this study, is that while results showed people to perceive the majority of conflict between the systems to be governed and their governing bodies, the real problem lies with a poorly integrated governing system. The Wildlife Warden admitted to being heavily understaffed, while the GOMBRT official acknowledged that government departments working in tourism didn't work together. Policy developed by one department was not being enforced by another, and even the CRZ violations are a clear sign of neglect for proper planning and regulation. Villagers and NGOs are well aware of the corruption involved with development and made statements about each newly elected official or group simply looking to fill their own pockets. With this in mind, it's no wonder that the community feels ignored and rejected. This is to say that while the perceived cause of social conflict by all interviewed stakeholders in the Gulf of Mannar is between the people and the government, the real problem lies with poorly integrated tourism planning. The resulting lack of consultation and community involvement is what is seen on the surface, but the root of the issue originates deeper, as too many departments with their hands in the planning pot allows for low accountability and improper management strategies.

## 4.4.1. Limitations of the Study

There is insufficient data available to run quantitative studies as yet, but a qualitative study was chosen to lay the groundwork for future work. Although the goal of research is to conduct data collection in an objective manner, certain variables always play into the equation. The researcher attempted to remain impartial on all issues, but the same cannot be said for the field guides. A result of being guided by local residents and NGO members was that the case was presented to me with a strong bias against tourism.

The researcher was taken to sites to view the negative aspects and had a series of interpreters nearby to provide accounts of harassment, loss or displacement. This provided the study with an incredibly authentic and in-depth view from the grassroots perspective, but could have worked to underplay the efforts of management. That being said, the study intends to understand local benefits from tourism, for which this method proved effective. Furthermore, interviews were conducted with a balanced group of stakeholder, meaning all angles were represented.

The second limitation is time, as my fieldwork in this MPA was limited to one visit of 8 days. Kawulich (2005) mentions that Participant Observation methods of research are often carried out over years of immersion into a population, while this study was conducted in a significantly shorter timescale. With that in mind, for the level of study and analysis performed in this project, the effort was sufficient. More time and immersion, would certainly lead to a more in-depth analysis, but would probably not change the key findings of this project. Also, the depths of understanding were increased by engaging locals as guides and spending the months leading up to the study by speaking with scientist and other NGOs to establish a base of knowledge on issues. Many hours of policy analysis also aided in this department.

On the topic of methods, several researchers have noted that Participant Observations also vary depending on factors as simple as the gender of the researcher (Kawulich, 2005). This relates to the different types of people researchers would be exposed to and the way people would perceive or act under these conditions. It is also said that the researchers views, ethnicity, class and theoretical approach would affect the way in which collected information was processed (Kawulich, 2005). To this the study would have to agree, but also state that as a middleclass Canadian male, of Indian origins, the researcher would fall into the more privileged class.

Finally, the issue of translation was somewhat of a concern as the interviewer was constantly dependent on proper translation from another member. This is something that could not be avoided due to the circumstances and was taken into consideration before the study began. To ensure uniformity, the same translators were employed throughout the entire process. They had the ability to stop conversations as needed and also took their own notes, which could be compared at a later time to correct discrepancies. When

permitted, interviews were also recorded. The recordings were deleted after transcription as per the ethics statement of this document.

## 4.5.  Case Study 1 Conclusions

As tourism continues to develop, there has to be an urban zoning plan to guide sustainable development and avoid coastal erosion, and other such interferences. As goes the ancient adage; the road to hell is paved with good intentions. A management scheme exists to address social issues of community development, yet efforts are not reaching the lowest ranks of society. Many people feel unheard and underrepresented. Although ample programs are in place to help those reliant on natural resource harvesting, communities haven't been approached regarding what they really need, or what the future holds in store for them. As outsiders in their own homes, they are at the mercy of decision-making which takes place at a state-wide scale.

This study highlights the lack of coordination between governing bodies and demonstrates the need for strong, unified and communicative governance within the MPA. To date, conservation efforts have proven successful to a marginal degree, but the top-down legislation route lacks enforcement, consultation and communication, which is impeding the achievement of MPA goals. Better communication methods and consultation of local communities will be a key to improved functionality of the Park and an increased quality of life for those who call it home.

The greatest contribution of this study is discovering that the blame of social conflict is misplaced, and that although all stakeholders involved believe the issues to lie between the people and their government, the actual onus falls to poorly integrated decision-making bodies. The former is simply a result of the latter. Future studies could investigate the strengths and weaknesses of governance mechanisms being employed, while further investigating department relevance in terms of who should be involved in tourism planning. At a government level, a study should be conducted to better understand roles of each department and clear demarcations of roles and responsibilities need to be written, and monitored for strict adherence.

# 5.0. Case Study 2: The Sundarbans National Park

*Figure 5.1- Traditional fisherman working in the buffer zone of the Sundarbans National Park*

The second site of investigation in this project is the Sundarbans National Park, located in the state of West Bengal.

## 5.1. Park Description

If the designation and management of an MPA were not complex enough, the integration of The Sundarbans National Park in West Bengal should be viewed as a phenomenon of its own brand. Formed at the confluence of three major rivers– the Ganges, Meghna and Brahmaputra– this vast archipelago lies as a barrier between West Bengal to the North and the Indian Ocean to the South. The immense delta formed at the mouth of these rivers sees flows of freshwater from the Himalayas meet the saline water s of the Bay of Bengal, providing ideal conditions for mangrove growth and the rich biodiversity that follows. So to ensure the reader comprehends the shear enormity of this area, keep in mind that the park reaches across India and Bangladesh, 40%



Figure 5.2- A map indicating the approximate location of the Sundarbans National Park (CDC, 2008)

falling within the former and 60% within the latter, and comprises the largest continuous mangrove forest and delta in the World (Jalais, 2011). Widely recognized as the largest Tiger Reserve in India and home to the greatest concentration of wild tigers anywhere, the Sundarbans is also home to spotted deer, sharks, dolphins, porpoises, crocodiles, eighteen varieties of snakes, lesser cats and a variety of countless other endangered flora and fauna (Singh, 2003).

For this reason, among many others, it's no wonder that the park has obtained the titles of national park (1984), biosphere reserve (1989) and UNESCO World Heritage Site (1987) (Gov. India, 2012). Prior to this, in 1973, under the implementation of Project Tiger, the area was dedicated as a Tiger Reserve, of which the core area would eventually becomes the national park (Singh, 2003). In terms of preceding history, it is said that although the East India Company acquired the civil administration of Bengal in 1765, the wilderness was considered too impenetrable to enter until revenue anxious colonialists brought in groups of labourers in the mid-19th century (Jalais, 2011). This could also explain the high density of endangered species which thrive, not hunted, within its depths. The purpose of the migration was to establish new agricultural operations, but even today, that lack of irrigation and saline conditions are difficult to grow on and the region continues to survive on mono-cropped agriculture. In addition, high tides, cyclones and

storms regularly upset the lives and livelihoods of inhabitants, destroying property and crops as they come (Gov. India, 2012).

### 5.1.1. Tourism Activity

Vast tourism plans have been discussed for this area, although to date, activities are limited to hotel/resort stays and taking a boat ride into the core area of the reserve. Certain buffer areas, such as Bakkhali, offer a beach experience, but even this has, thus far, not been developed or promoted extensively. Tourism opportunities within the park are being developed by many stakeholder including, but not limited to, local entrepreneurs, private developers, the Fisheries Department, and the Forest Department. The long monsoon months, from June to September, see a significant decline in socio-economic activity in the area, but lodging and resorts continue to develop at an astonishing rate. The tourism potential of this MPA is of great interest to the State government, and current infrastructure projects are underway to increase accessibility from major cities. As Kolkata, a major metropolitan, is a mere 3 hours drive away, proper planning and development could see a mass influx of tourism revenue reaching the area in a matter of less than 5-years. Conversely, poor management and planning would surely prove harmful towards conservation and protection efforts currently underway in the marine and terrestrial components of the Park. As it currently stands, access to the core area of the MPA is completely restricted to locals, but allows for tourism entry at a select few locations.

# 5.2. Methods

### 5.2.1. Planning and Organization

The NGO in Bangalore, Equations, had conducted earlier studies in this National Park and therefore initiated contact with contacts in the MPA (Equations, 2008). Equations is an organization that strives to obtain social justice in tourism development, studying the social, economic, cultural and environmental impacts of tourism on local communities (Equations, 2013). A fellow researcher from the organization also accompanied me on this fieldtrip, both as a researcher and translator. Note, the work of said researcher and the Equations (2008) organization is tangential to this study, and in no way shares authorship. Our efforts were to be directly linked with the Direct Initiative for Social and Health

Action (DISHA); a Kolkata based group concerned with environment, social health and human rights issues. As functioning actors within the MPA, they were able to suggest the most appropriate and impacted sites to be studied and also coordinated local guides and accommodations for us along the way. Three villages were selected for the study, all of which had experienced tourism development, but in differing stages– Bakkhali, Jharkhali and Sajnekhali. Figure 5.2 highlights the villages selected for this study (circled in red); each considered a key tourism entry point into the vast wilderness of the Sundarbans MPA. Several days would be spent in each location, accompanied by a local guide. Data collection methods would consist of Participant and Site Observation, as well as a series of semi-structured interviews being conducted with any all stakeholders deemed significant to the study. Additionally, key interviews with major governing officials and park staff were to be conducted following the study upon our return to Kolkata. The project was scheduled to take eight days. The fieldwork component of this study was conducted during November 2013.



Figure 5.3- A map of the Sundarbans National Park, highlighting sites selected for this study (DISHA, 2013)

## 5.2.2. Data Collection

Similar to the Gulf of Mannar study, several techniques were utilized to ensure a complete and holistic dataset. The techniques in both case studies vary only in that elite interviewing was substituted for semi-structure interviewing. For efficiency purposes, methods previously outlined in *Case Study 1* will be restated, but descriptions will be limited to a reference from section 4.0. Research tools engaged in this project included a site tour of the three villages given by community members active in the struggle for local representation, and a series of 44 semi-structured interviews, including multiple focus groups. The techniques complement each other and provide further understanding and depth into the results of this study.

## Participant and Site Observation

With each village came a guide who was well versed in the issues of the community and generally well-known within the respective communities. Our first guide, in Bakkhali, was the State's National Fish Workers Forum representative, a well-respected young local gentleman who was born and brought up within the MPA. He spoke on behalf of fisherman within the region and was extremely active in the human rights movement. In Jharkhali we were equally well represented thanks to one of DISHA's founding members. Finally, in Sajnekhali we were hosted and guided by a member of a local peoples' movement called the Sundarbans Rural Development Society (SRDS), active in standing up for local peoples' needs and lending a hand to tiger and crocodile victims' families. These individuals along with their associated groups were eager to demonstrate first-hand what the development of tourism meant for them and their community. Visits were chosen at their discretion, including, but not limited to, resorts in the area, mangrove plantation sites, houses of community members impacted by the forest department, and clear CRZ violations. This ensured an authentic local perspective, although any and all additional requests from the researcher were incorporated. Walks and visits were frequently interrupted as familiar local faces were stopped for questioning, or passers-by simply wanting to contribute to the study. Even the act of drinking tea at midday would often become an impromptu interview. The value of this data was that it allowed the researcher the ability to observe how individuals and groups interacted with one another, and due to the casual tone, it allowed for a comfortable and open speaking environment. A more detailed description of this method is available in section 4.1.2. Essentially, it allowed local members to share what was important to them, and what they perceived as noteworthy regarding the development of tourism in their community.

## Semi-Structured Interviews

The interview technique employed in the Sundarbans was a series of semi-structured interviews following a *chain sampling*, or *snowball*, sample selection scheme. This method identifies cases of interest from people who know people, be it initial interviewees recommending further respondents or our field guides themselves choosing information-rich sources known to them (Nastasi, n.d). Initial stakeholder mapping outlines a broad range of stakeholders we hoped to engage, with the gaps being filled by recommendations. The purpose of this is to target the most informed members regarding a given topic, and

should a name be mentioned on more than one occasion, priority would be given to obtaining said interview (Nastasi, n.d). Rather than trying to prove a hypothesis, this will provide meaning and understanding to a system in its entirety (Myers, 2000). A more detailed explanation of semi-structured interviewing is provided in section 4.1.2. The same series of four indicators– quality of life, job security, community development, and perception of happiness– were used as the basis of questioning and comparison.

This choice of interview sampling is defined as entirely qualitative as it uses *purposeful* or *criterion-based sampling*, as opposed to a quantitative study which would engage a random sampling technique (Nastasi, n.d). This is to say, the sample is selected based on its relevance to the research question, developing detailed and holistic descriptions, integrating multiple perspectives, learning how events are interpreted, and describing processes (Weiss, 1994). Sampling therefore takes into account temporal, spatial and situational influences, helping to form the context of the study (Marshall, 1996). Based on the findings of qualitative research, variables can be identified and hypotheses framed for further quantitative studies (Weiss, 1994).

Unlike the *elite interviewing* method utilized in *Case Study 1*, interviewees are regarded as speaking on their own behalf and do not represent a larger population. This raises the question of sample size, determining how many interviews would be needed to appropriately address, and confidently draw conclusions to, the research question. This is a widely disputed topic, but this study will accept that the guiding principle should be the concept of saturation as defined by Mason (2010); "When the collection of new data does not shed any further light on the issue under investigation". The goal of interviewing is to gather any and all information regarding a topic, yet also recognize that there is a point of diminishing returns when little to no new information surfaces. Yin (2004) brings to light the importance in case study research of doing data analysis while still collecting data. He states that the purpose of a case study is to understand a system completely, and as one respondent may produce information that conflicts with another, it is important to be flexible and open to incorporating newly acquired information. In regards to saturation, this signifies that there is no clear cut-off point and that data collection is complete when confirmatory evidence has been achieved, adding that it should take into consideration rival hypotheses or explanations (Yin, 2004). Simply stated, "An appropriate sample size

for a qualitative study is one that adequately answers the research question" (Christie, 2005).

### Focus group

Focus groups will again be utilized, as they are an effective means of obtaining large amounts information from local groups. A detailed explanation of the reasoning and methods can be found in section 4.2.1. Figure 5.4 is a simple triangle diagram identifying the methods utilized in this case study.
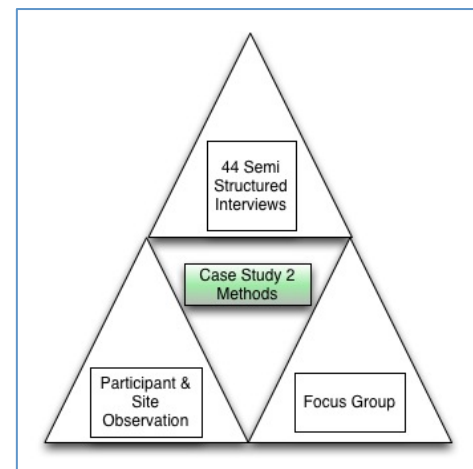


Figure 5.4- A diagram showing the three research technique engaged in case study 2

## 5.2.3. The Sample

The stakeholder mapping and sample selection process involved brainstorming with multiple individuals and organizations, of varying persuasions, but also depended on governing officials' availability. Villagers and local level authorities were simply approached in the field, while meetings with the highest levels of governing officials were prearranged by phone. In the case that a figure of authority was not available or willing to meet with us, the subsequent ranking member of their office or field would be contacted. During field visits or transitions from one interview to another, if we happened upon other relevant stakeholders, they would also be included. Field guides would be interviewed regarding their perspectives before any interviews were conducted in a given area, ensuring that we had a clear understanding of the issues in each area and therefore established a base for our questioning. The list of interviews is provided in table 5.1.

*Table 5.1- A list of all interview respondents in the Sundarbans National Park*

| Title | Category (BLT) | GOV. |
|---|---|---|
| Henry Island Fisheries Hotel Manager- Fisheries Department Hotel | B | Y |
| State leader of National Fishworkers Forum (NFF) and DISHA member | L | N |
| Focus group 1- Santhal Pada Village, Purba Bijaybati | L | N |
| Hotel Owner 1- Bakkhali | B | N |
| Hotel Owner 2- Bakkhali | B | N |
| Owner of Sabat (Fish drying lot) | L | N |
| Forest Department Chief Officer- Bakkhali | B | Y |
| Coastal Police Superintendent- Bakkhali and Frezerganj | B | Y |
| Hotel Manager 3- Bakkhali | B | N |
| Focus Group 2- Locals near living near Hotel Icon | L | N |
| Frezerganj Gram Panchayat- (Local Leaders) | B | Y |
| Secretary of CPI/CPM in this area & DISHA founding member- Jharkhali | L | N |
| Hotel Manager 1- Jharkhali | B | N |
| Hotel Owner 2- Jharkhali | B | N |
| Sundarbans Development Board- Worker | B | Y |
| Panchayat Pradhan (Local leader)- Jharkhali | B | Y |
| Local Boat Guide- Jharkhali | B | N |
| Jharkhali Lashkarpur Marine Fisherman Cooperative Society Limited | L | N |
| Forest Beat Officer- Herobhanga beat- Jharkhali | B | Y |
| Local fisherman- Jharkhali | L | N |
| District Armed Forces Camp- Jharkhali | B | Y |
| Sundarbans Rural Development Society- Rujitjubilee- Sajnekhali | L | N |
| Chairman of SRDS and Founding Member- Rujitjubilee- Sajnekhali | L | N |
| Resort Manager ICNL- Rujitjubilee- Sajnekhali | B | N |
| Fish businessman (middleman)- Rujitjubilee- Sajnekhali | L | N |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Crocodile Widow- Rujitjubilee- Sajnekhali | L | N |
| Hotel Manager- Sajnekhali | B | N |
| Boat Repair Crew, Rujitjubilee- Sajnekhali | L | N |
| Fisherman living next to lodge- Sajnekhali | L | N |
| Sundarbans Tiger Camp Resort Manager- Sajnekhali | B | N |
| Sundarbans Field Officer- Sajnekhali | B | Y |
| Diapur Village Focus Group- Sajnekhali | L | N |
| Diapur Villager- Sajnekhali | L | N |
| Lahiripur Gram Panchayet Prahdan | B | Y |
| Tiger Widow, Seed Collector- Sajnekhali | L | N |
| Power plant (solar) Committee Secretary, SRDS Member- Sajnekhali | L | N |
| National Fish Workers' Forum member | L | N |
| Tiger Reserve Field Director | B | Y |
| Sundarbans Development Board- Technical Officer | B | Y |
| Director of Institute of Environmental Studies and Wetland Management | B | Y |
| Divisional Forest Officer, 24 Parganas | B | Y |
| Project Engineer in Sundarbans Infrastructure Development Corporation (SIDC), Executive Engineer in Sundarbans Development Board | B | Y |
| Economist and Credit Planner, Office of the District Magistrate | B | Y |
| Additional Director & Ex-Officio Joint Secretary, Gov. West Bengal Tourism | B | Y |

*Table 5.2- Sample Distribution in the Sundarbans*

| | |
|---|---|
| Participants | 44 |
| Non- Governmental | 27 |
| Governmental | 17 |
| Brokers | 26 |
| Locals | 18 |

The above tables provide the titles of interviewees as well as the relevant distribution of the sample population to this study. Again, please note, there are a total of forty-four respondents, each of which has been categorized as a broker or a local (as per the definition in section 3.0), and also categorized as being governmental or non-governmental. For the purposes of this study, it is possible to be both a government official as well as a non-broker, as certain officials have absolutely nothing to do with influencing tourism.

Of the forty-four interview conducted, twenty seven are classed as non-governmental, while seventeen represent the government and decision making bodies in some manner. Based on the Broker-Local-Tourist organization tool, twenty-six respondents were classed as *Brokers* and eighteen were *Locals.* This is a substantial representation of the group groups and will provide a thorough analysis of the research question.

### 5.2.4. Data Analysis

As previously mentioned data reduction will consist of dividing interview talking points into one of four indicator categories, at which point conflict points will be extracted and further categorized into one of four conflict types. As with the previous case study, focus groups will be reviewed and analysed in the same format as regular interviews, taking into consideration that while multiple contributors spoke about a topic, it functioned as a single voice for a community or village. One addition to this is that interview points will be provided based on demographics in this study, due to the significantly larger number of respondents. Please refer to section 3.3 of this report for a more detailed outline of categorization, input into the conflict matrices, and interview theme investigation.

## 5.3. Results

### 5.3.1. Field Observations

Similar to the *field observations* section in *Case Study* 1, this section is intentionally presented in a journalistic manner in order to best illustrate ethnographic field observations. What follows is an impressionistic account of key field visit findings, in a

chronological manner, as they were presented to the researcher. Many issues are presented and touched upon, which will be more formally investigated in later sections.

### *Bakkhali- Site 1*

The first day of fieldwork started with a train ride from Kolkata, then a bicycle rickshaw, a short ferry and taxi ride to the Henry Island Fishery Department's hotel and resort. Along the way we picked up our field guide, who was also the State representative of the National Fish Workers Forum. The Fisheries Resort, seen in figure 5.5, is a tourism retreat run by the Fisheries Department, open to any and all tourists. It



*Figure 5.5- The Henry Island Fisheries Department Hotel*

is an example of a government department capitalizing on the growing tourist industry in the region and is so far a part of two such resorts in the area. The manager was happy to show us around, describing interesting details such as high demand in peak season, but most notably, was eager to point out the dispute currently going on with the Forest Department in the area. The Fisheries Department had recently received a memo from Forestry to prohibit them from trespassing on Forest land. Just a few days before we arrived, the Forest Department has installed red flags along the borderline, further ensuring that the Fisheries group did not cross their designated property. Nearby was a beach, which we accessed via a boardwalk. Our guide informed us that this was once a regular landing site for many fisherman, but ever since the resort came up, they asked them not to pass through the area. The reasoning was that they were smelly and off-putting for the tourists. Local groups took up their cry and the issue was covered in the local newspaper just two days prior to our arrival.

This area is one of the fastest growing tourism regions in the Sundarbans and as such, we were interested in speaking with local villagers about the changes around them. On our way to conduct our first focus group, one of the villagers recognized our guide and started to tell him about what the Forest Department had been up to. A short while ago they had cut down a large plot of mangrove trees and sanctioned a bungalow to be built. Also,

*Figure 5.6- A new road built by the Forest Department runs directly through a mangrove forest*

there has been talk of Forest Department tourist lodges coming to the area and just recently a new road was commissioned and built. The road, seen in figure 5.6, runs directly through a mangrove forest and what's more is that it blocks the flow of tides in the area. Not only were many trees cut down in the process, but now the landscape has been altered as well, all in the name of tourism. Figure 5.6 also demonstrates the water level coming all the way up the newly formed road. At this point locals say they are allowed to use the road, but if past examples are any sign of the future, they're sure they will be told to stop once more tourists start arriving. Still on course to visit the village we made a detour at the Forest Department Station nearby. The head officer was not present and all others declined to speak with us.



*Figure 5.7- A house in the village where the first focus group was conducted. As with most houses in the Sundarbans, there is a pond.*

With the road behind us, we made it to the village and began our focus group with the local crab collectors. Please note that the details of interviews and focus groups will be discussed in the next section, as *Field Observations* strictly relates to data collected as a result of visits and non-interview conversations. It was here that we would first learn of the major qualm of village people in the Sundarbans; harassment from the Forest Department.

The group was most adamant regarding their victimization from the Forest Department and stated that they were constantly being accused of stealing wood from the forest. The issue of wood collection is a serious concern in the Sundarbans, as many poor populations need wood for fire and cooking, but the collection of timber from the forests is illegal. The villagers pointed to how many trees were cut down for the road and bungalow, but stated that if they were suspected of taking from the forest, the Forest Department has allegedly

gone as far as planting illegal species in local ponds for the purposes of framing villagers and fining them.

After spending several hours near the Henry Island resorts we made our way into Bakkhali town, arriving on a newly developed road, lined with streetlights and countless hotels on either side. Although it may not seem strange at first glance, the concept of street lights in an area this deep into the National Park, where a majority of the population doesn't even have electricity, is quite a development. The street lights were an installation led by the local hotel organization and was a step taken to ensure the security of tourists and locals in the area. We checked into a government run hotel and noticed a sign on the door offering free training courses to local inhabitants who wanted to learn serving at the hotel restaurant. It would be a weekend course and offered a certificate of completion that contained a government stamp.

Bakkhali was a village in the buffer zone of the Sundarbans MPA and is seen as a major tourist attraction for its beaches. Hotels were plentiful and the community infrastructure was quickly developing for this purpose, including a coastal police station. In the evening we took a trip to the harbour front where we met and spoke with several fishermen cooking dinner on their boats. The sun had long set, but the many streetlights from across the water illuminated our surroundings. The fisherman spoke unfavourably of the unnatural setting and said that the whole area had changed so quickly and drastically. Bright lights now shone from the town all the way along the coast to the sea. Outsiders wanting to build hotels have invaded the lifestyles and setting people here were once accustomed to, and without being informed or consulted once, everything they knew had changed.

The next morning we visited a Sabat, fish drying yard, where we met the owner of the operation and also the Chairman of the entire landing area. This is a vast operation, as seen in figure 5.8, spanning several square kilometres across the coastline. Figure 5.9 shows the owner of the yard fixing a fishing net while we spoke with him in his hut. The setup employs 15,000 people, including 3000 women. This consists of catching, drying, and sorting. The entire operation doesn't cost the local government anything. Taxes are paid and the residents are employed, yet the area still faces a threat of eviction as the vast beach area has potential as a tourist site. A similar site faced that reality some time back,

*Figure 5.8- This* Sabat, *or fish drying yard, employs 15,000 people, including 3000 women. It's existence is being threatened by tourism.*



*Figure 5.9- The owner of the sabat fixing a fishing net while he spoke with us in his hut.*

and as land ownership rights will not be given to the people here, the tentativeness of job security is ever present. They have been informed that the area is a potential site for a coast guard operation, but the owner stated that three potential sites identified for the coast guard station and this was by no means the most ideal. He alleged that the government makes these claims so that no one questions the move, and then months later a tourism industry will have commandeered the land. Tourism does not have the potential to employ 15,000 people and is an industry that has heavy resource demands on a government. The only thing this yard has asked of the government is a small bore well and a disinfectant for the masses of flies, yet only the former was in fact given. The people believe that this demonstrates the priority of the governing bodies and the alienation that will be felt by the local residents as tourism continues to take over the area.

After leaving the Sabat our guide was keen to show us several newly developed sites that were clear CRZ violations. As mentioned in the previous study, for the purpose of environmental well-being, no permanent structure can be built within 500m of the high-tide-line in India. Although an official law, numerous examples exist throughout both of the MPAs in question. Later on in the study, a visit to the District Magistrate's Office would reveal that 98 CRZ violations have been formally recognized within the Sundarbans Park and buffer zone, yet no action has yet been taken. The sites we visited were nearly all privately run hotels, with the odd exception of a large personal property which was built by an outsider. Upon questioning the hotel managers and owners they were quick to point out that they had received whatever permissions they needed and were not included in the CRZ zone. One lavish hotel even pointed at other lodges 50m away and said that they were within the violation zone, but that his establishment was outside of the questioned limits.

Locals living near the hotels were less pleased with the lavish hotels nearby. They claimed that hotels did not offer much in terms of employment to local people and even when they did, the hours were so long and wages so low that it was not possible to accept the position. They claimed they wouldn't even get time off for meals or to tend to their families. What they could earn with fishing was significantly more, but the waters were becoming polluted and the busy town was interfering with the lifestyle. Our guide told us of a story that happened to this small community some time back, while the villagers listened on in silence, begrudgingly nodding along to the details. A few years earlier a group of male tourists came from Kolkata and got drunk on the beach. Bored and confident, they raped a 7-year-old girl from the village, leaving her for dead on the beach. When she was found, the family reported this to the police and the men were identified, but no action was taken. They declared that since the men were foreigners and had money, they were given special treatment and let go. Also, in order to save the face of the tourist industry, they tried to hide the case and pretend it didn't happen. According to our guide and the members of the village, the official police report eventually stated that a sex worker from another city was murdered. Upon later mentioning problems with foreigners to the local Police Chief, he mentioned a case of a foreign sex trade worker, although it was before his time in charge.

This is not an isolated incident and we would hear similar cases throughout our visits. This is an example of the types of problems that locals face as a result of tourism developing in their community. Although it is admittedly a rare occurrence, people don't feel safe in their own community. Binge drinking and drunken behaviour is so common with tourists, and the loud music, shouting, and provocative clothing makes for a very uncomfortable environment for people living around these resorts. The interview response section in 5.2.3 will cover the different concerns brought up individuals during our focus groups.

The last major observation that is worth noting in the Bakkhali area was that upon speaking with the Forest Department, the Coastal Police, and the Panchayat (local government), each had different opinions as to whose responsibility it was to monitor tourist activity. There was no single governing body and it all depended on where the tourist was at the time of the incident. Also, there was a general denial when it came to the possibility of tourists being harmful. At the Panchayat Office several officials in the room

grew enraged by the fact that one of their members was speaking about possible problems in the industry and quickly silenced him. The interview would eventually be brought to an end, as the conversation was becoming a heated debate. Safety precautions were being taken, such as the implementation of streetlights and the commissioning of boats for open water rescue, but acknowledgement of issues in the community were difficult to come by.

After Bakkhali, the next field site was the town of Namkhana, where the field guide participated as a key speaker in a general meeting of fisherman in the area. Figure 5.10



*Figure 5.10- Our guide speaking at a general assembly of fish workers in Namkhana.*

shows him speaking to the assembly, informing them of issues in the area. It was an opportunity for local voices to be heard and problems to be addressed. It covered topics such as fishing licences, run-ins with the Forest Department and park boundaries. Other topics were covered, but we would leave shortly after his speech so to reach our next destination by nightfall. Local people are aware of issues they face and are mobilizing to speak out together. The concern over fishing licences was brought up by almost all interviewees regarding the limited number of permits provided which allow fishing in the MPA buffer zone. Fishing without a permit is illegal, yet not all fishermen have access to said document.

## Jharkhali- Site 2

After a rickshaw and crowded bus ride, we reached our next destination. Jharkhali was drastically different, as it didn't show any sign of tourism development whatsoever. As a matter of fact, the town itself didn't have a hotel for us to stay in and we were put up with a family member of our new guide. Our new guide was a founding member of the DISHA organization and heavily informed regarding local politics. As we walked around the village he pointed out rivers and ponds that once carried many fish, but were now empty. He blamed pollution from the city and also resorts, which we discovered, were built a short drive away from the city, farther into the interior of the MPA buffer. The area did not have electricity or water, but generators and bottled water kept us going.

*Figure 5.11- A traditional fishing boat, on which men would live for 8-10 days at a time.*

This was where we first learned of the true dangers in the forest. Fishermen and honey collectors had just returned from the jungle and were busy selling their catches and spending time with their families. Due to the bans on fishing in certain areas, these men leave for about 8-10 days at a time, living and cooking on their boats, and spending an entire day just to reach the sites they are allowed to fish. Figure 5.11 shows a typical fishing boat where a group of men would live for days at a time. Living off the jungle has its rewards, but all too often the jungle strike back and claims a casualty. Between tigers and crocodiles, every trip away from home involved risking one's life. Our guide commented that once upon a time fishing was dangerous, but lucrative. Now, it's still dangerous but not lucrative and on top of the natural threat, the forest officials constantly torture locals. Fishing zones are very strict, which means areas where fishing is allowed are always overcrowded. If anyone strays out of these zones, they are caught and their equipment seized. On top of this, not enough fishing licenses are available so people are forced to fish illegally, for both sustenance and commerce. This not only means that the threat of the Forest Department is always present, but it also means that they have to hide in the dangerous jungles and pull their boats up on the unprotected shores. This is where the majority of the attacks occur and if one doesn't have a license, there is no insurance.

After mingling in the village and learning about the major concerns in the area, we set off on a motorbike rickshaw towards the resorts and tourism-focused district. The first thing we noticed was that the road was very rough and although there were plenty of rides into the area, none would be comfortable. The types of accommodation varied in scale from very simple, usually owned locally, to large, luxurious private cottages. The majority violated CRZ rules based on their proximity to the river, although they had all been given building permission. Figure 5.12 is an example of the type of resorts and cottage set up that can be found in the area. The resorts are quite different than the houses of the surrounding area and Figure 5.13 shows the type of fence and wall put up to ensure privacy is maintained. Without question this is also for security and safety reasons, but it is symbolic

of the relationship that villagers and these resorts have. Both acknowledge that there is no involvement or communication at any time.



Figure 5.12- An example of the type of resort that one might find in the Jharkhali area



Figure 5.13- The gate and fence which surrounds the compound of the resort in Figure 5.12

At the end of the resorts' road came the Sundarbans Development Board fisheries station. This is a government run operation that initially began as a naturally propagated fish farm, but as of recent has been selected as the site for a 106 acre high-end ecotourism resort. This would quickly become the most confusing and misunderstood topic of this case study. A key breeding ground to crocodiles and a winter home to tigers, this area has been selected as a site for a resort which would cost approximately $400US per night to visit and would include a helicopter pad to increase accessibility.

To clarify, deep in the buffer zone of the Sundarbans MPA, an area widely inhabited by local people, the government has sanctioned a resort with bright skylights and helicopter pad. Everything said, all parties still referred to this as an ecotourism project. Throughout the study this was brought back up, some officials agreeing with it, some speaking out against it, and others denying it altogether. One member of the authority was able to show us the official plans which clearly highlighted a helicopter pad, while the Vice Director of West Bengal Tourism, the man second in charge of all state tourism planning, denied that the project would have any such components. Regardless, those who refuted it were leaders in a position to have given permission for it, and the local people knew nothing more than the rumours they had heard. Whatever the plan, this area was a key sensitive habitat for wildlife and mangrove forests and the plans needed to more directly address ecological concerns. Figure 5.14 and 5.15 were taken near the ecotourism project site, demonstrating another area that had been commissioned by the government to build

bungalows. As can be seen in Figure 5.16, this site would consist of clearing significant amounts of mangrove trees and reclaiming land in a swamp area.



*Figure 5.14- A sign outlining the development of a bungalow as sanctioned by the State government itself.*



*Figure 5.15- Putting the sign in figure 5.14 into context, this is the area where government bungalows will be built.*

Just past the SDB Fisheries site a wildlife rehabilitation centre is being built. It is partially for tourism, but also to handle the many cases of animal injuries that occur in the MPA. Large cages have been built where they will house tigers and other animals receiving medical attention, and then tourists can pay and come see the animals. There is also a mangrove plantation in the compound (Figure 5.16) and a large tower for tourists to climb and get a better view of the MPA. On the morning of our arrival a group of workers had caught a baby crocodile and were keeping it inside the main office. Keen to show us their catch, they brought the creature out in a little steel pot that they had filled with water and trapped him inside. They took their turns reaching in to poke and pick up the creature, passing him around for all to see. Understandably it was something interesting



*Figure 5.16- A mangrove plantation at the edge of the wildlife rehabilitation center.*

which merited attention, but the unprofessional nature of the situation and the rough handling of this creature in an MPA was unbecoming of a government rehabilitation department. The plan was to take the baby crocodile to a zoo or park nearby, claiming that it was protection from locals who would eat it. I decided this was an important observation to include as it showed that the level of training and professionalism among the staff, and

also spoke to the conservation methods, claiming that if a crocodile wasn't taken from its natural habitat, then it would be hunted.

Jharkhali lacks attractions and the long road to the resorts was in a rough condition, but there are many hotels in the area and since it is only a 3-hour drive from Kolkata, it is considered a top potential tourism site.

### Sajnekhali- Site 3

The previous two sites were villages in the buffer zone of the MPA, while Sajnekhali was much closer to the core, all too familiar with the realities of living in a Tiger Reserve. Only a river and a small fence divided the village from the core area of the Park, and although a tiger had never entered the village to claim a human life, they would regularly swim across in the darkness of the night to take cattle and poultry. It's uniquely humbling to live in a place where your life is, quite literally, not in your own hands. Villagers would speak casually about their friends who had been taken by the wild, and speak to the troubles that the widows and families would face in the aftermath. A common occurrence in these areas, any local would tell you that approximately 250-300 people are taken annually, between tigers and crocodiles alone. This doesn't take into consideration the 18 snake species, sharks and other hazards faced on a daily basis. Official Forest Department records would show many less, because the unfortunate reality is that many are taken while illegally fishing or honey collecting and are not reported for fear of a fine to other members in a crew.

The first story we heard was about a tiger jumping onto a fishing boat while it trawled the coastline. It grabbed onto a fisherman and dragged him from the boat before running into the forest, his friends looking on helplessly from the boat. He was a last minute replacement for another fisherman and now his family was not entitled to an insurance claim, as he was not officially registered to the boat. Without a provider for the family, wives and children are frequently forced to the city, hoping for any job that will keep food on their table. The wife of our host once told us how she begged him to stop fishing. He was lucky enough to find other work, but in reality, anyone here would accept other work if they could. For this reason, villagers say they would accept any job available to them that kept them out of the jungle, opening up the potential for positive tourism intervention. Unfortunately, this was not to be the case.

Locals had no hope of tourism relieving them of their burdens and upon asking if they would take a position if it was offered to them, most couldn't even fathom the possibility long enough to answer the question. Some would shake their heads in disbelief and others would simply remain silent. The fact is that the resorts and tour boats surrounding Sajnekhali and the small village of Rujitjubilee, where we stayed, had a large impact on the people, but very few that provided opportunity. The Forest Department had employed a group of local boys to serve as tour guides and resorts employed young educated locals with seasonal serving jobs, but to the average fisherman, crab catcher or honey collector, their education and skillset was simply too limited for a role in tourism. The only connection that people wanted to speak of with tourism was the shouting, loud music and generator sounds that came from the expensive, fenced off resorts and the garbage that it left behind.

In the village of Rujitjubilee, we were put up with a local family, living with them in their mud houses and bathing in their pond. About a year earlier the World Wildlife Fund had installed a solar power operation in the village and our hosts were one of the lucky families who are plugged into the grid. Water on the other hand necessitated walking to a well near the school. The father of our host family, and also our guide, was heavily involved in a local people's movement called the SRDS; a group dedicated to protecting the environment surrounding them and the people that inhabited it. It was an example of community mobilization, where the people, as modest and poor as they were, recognize an issue that faces them and come together to overcome it. Providing employment opportunities to tiger and crocodile widows, all the while planting mangrove trees along



*Figure 5.17- A gathering of the Sundarbans Rural Development Society– an organization dedicated to improving lives in rural Sundarbans.*



*Figure 5.18- This garbage bin is an example of the small steps that are improving life in the village of Rukitjubilee.*

the coast, it was an example of the differences that even small voices can make. Figure 5.17 shows the SRDS at a gathering, about to march through the village singing songs for the environment and encouraging people to mobilize for a better cause. Figure 5.18 is a small example of the types of changes the SRDS is making in Rujitjubilee.

In speaking with the people we would come to learn that the reason these types of movements are so key is that the people of these areas are not represented by a government capable of speaking on behalf of their concerns and needs. Development comes and goes, and foreigners arrive to purchase land and then leave someone else in charge of a hotel while they move back to the city. Laws of selling land exist without enforcement and flashy multi story hotels are being built, sticking out like a sore thumb against the otherwise natural and simple delta. Resorts function without limits and enforcement of regulations only apply once tourists are in boats on their way into the core area, controlled by the Forest Department. The people of this area have lots to say about the resorts, the drinking and the provocative clothing, but when it comes to the SRDS, people proudly state that it is a new hope for everyone.



Figure 5.19- A plantation of mangrove trees, planted by tiger and crocodile widows and funded by the SRDS



Figure 5.20- A destitute crocodile widow praises the SRDS for giving him chickens and a helping hand through life.

From moving around speaking to numerous villagers, it became apparent that to the people of Sajnekhali, tourism is not the act of foreigners arriving, enjoying themselves and leaving. It is the process of good vegetables being purchased at the market by hotels, for exorbitant fees that locals could never compete with. It is the act of resorts approaching local widowed women and offering them jobs as prostitutes because they understood how easy it was to take advantage of a desperate situation. Tourism meant boats being allowed to access areas of the Sundarbans that even fisherman were not allowed to enter, and sometimes even driving through the nets of local people and damaging their gear. One

private sector broker did state that if they ever destroyed fishing nets they made sure to compensate the fisherman, but the fact remains that tourism and local communities are not designed in a way that they work together. Instead, it creates a competition; one that the locals could never win.

As we were guided through the surrounding villages, our guides repeatedly stopped to show us aquaculture instalments that the SRDS and the community were starting to develop. The people strongly believed that they needed to stop relying on the forest for employment, but did not consider tourism a suitable alternative. Their solution was the construction of many sweet-water (freshwater) ponds, as seen in Figure 5.22, and multi-crop agriculture. The land made it very difficult for either of these, as cyclones would regularly bring in saline storm surges, contaminating ponds and making the land uncultivable. Regardless, this was a solution the people believed in and had been proven successful, and lucrative, in multiple examples.



*Figure 5.21- Our local guides leading us through the community to speak with many villagers.*



*Figure 5.22-Locals believe that the solution to depending on the jungle would be developing aquiculture ponds like these.*

In speaking with the many hotels, resorts and even the Panchayat office (local government), no one seemed aware of the issues and claimed that they had never been approached with any concerns. Hotels believed that their relationships with the local people were cordial and even spoke about opening aid stations during cyclone and storm events. They spoke of purchasing vegetables from local people, although fish demands were too specific to rely on the local market, and even showed us local workers who were hired during the tourist season. It was mandatory for all private boats to have a local, Forest Department trained, guide, and some would go above and beyond and maintain the property around their resort. There was a significant degree of denial when it came to

drunken behaviour of tourists or the initiation of a flesh trade, but some hotels would admit that it was difficult to tell people not to drink too much on vacation, even if it was a National Park.

On the final day of our visit to Sajnekhali, we entered the core zone of the MPA by boat and were met by the Forest Department. As one of the main entrances to the jungle, an interpretive centre had been established, demonstrating the types of creatures in the Park and also the methods used to protect them. Interestingly, there was a large section dedicated to the protection and development of local populations, acknowledging their importance in the ecosystem of this area. The exhibits spoke of wells being dug, jobs being provided and aid being given during hard times. It did, however, also speak of the threat faced by resource stocks, especially by those that continued to enter the jungle illegally. The priorities of the Forest Department are not a secret, similar to those of the resorts and tourist lodges throughout the area.



*Figure 5.23- Two private tourist boats, brought ashore near their respective resorts.*

With all of this in mind, there is one final field observation that needs to be made. The major issue with tourism that many individuals locked onto was the excess amounts of pollution and garbage being thrown around by visitors. Granted, many bottles and plastics could be seen on the roadsides, but even whilst being guided around, our hosts would have no problem throwing a tea cup on the ground or discarding a wrapper along the coastline. It's understandably a cultural issue that is prevalent throughout the country, but the adage of throwing stones from glass houses comes into play more than some would care to recognize.

### 5.3.2. Conflict Analysis

It became exceedingly apparent at an early stage of the project that the majority of local residents regarded tourism and development in a negative light. This brought forth the question of where conflict and discontent was rooted and demanded a more in-depth analysis of the issue. The following matrices categorize conflict points mentioned during

all interviews, and illustrate problem zones in the system, as seen by specific demographics. Four types of social conflict have been defined by Bavinck & Vivekanandan (2011) and are outlined below in the legend (Table 5.3).

*Table 5.3- Conflict Matrix Legend (Bavinck & Vivekanandan, 2011).*

| System to be Governed (in-out):<br><br>(SG in-out)<br><br>- Relates to interferences between constituencies, processes and events in and outside the system-to- be-governed | Governing System (in-out):<br><br>(GS in-out)<br><br>- Relates to interferences between governing actors inside and outside the MPA |
| --- | --- |
| System to be Governed (in-in):<br><br>(SG in-in)<br><br>- Problems between categories or groups of constituencies within the MPA, such as between fishermen making use of different gear types | System to be Governed- Governing System:<br><br>(SG-GS)<br><br>- Conflicts between constituencies within the system-to-be-governed and those involved in governing |

### Indicator 1- Quality of Life

In terms of *Quality of Life*–material well-being, personal health, political stability, community life, and equality– the total distribution demonstrates that majority of conflict is found between the system being governed and the governing system. Of all conflict points mentioned regarding this indicator, respondents also believe that stakeholders from outside of the MPA area pose a serious threat and that they are responsible for the second largest amount of conflict within the Sundarbans. Conflict between groups living within the Park, as well as governing bodies in conflict with themselves, drew a respectable third and forth position, with a mentionable amount of plot points.

*Table 5.4- A distribution of 'Quality of Life' conflict in the Sundarbans involving all interview respondents*

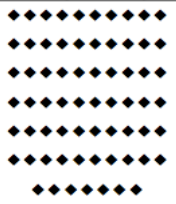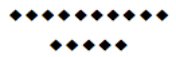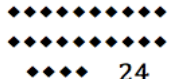| Total Conflict in 'Quality of Life' | |
| --- | --- |
| SG (in-out) | SG (in-out) |
| ◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆<br>◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆<br>◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆<br>◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆<br>◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆<br>◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆<br>◆◆◆◆◆◆◆<br>67 | ◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆<br>◆◆◆◆◆<br>15 |
| SG (in-in) | SG- GS |
| ◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆<br>◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆<br>◆◆◆◆  24 | ◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆<br>◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆<br>◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆<br>◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆<br>◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆<br>◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆<br>◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆<br>◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆<br>◆◆<br>82 |

| As seen by 'Non-Governmental' | |
|---|---|
| SG (in-out) | GS (in-out) |
| ◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆<br>◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆<br>◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆<br>◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆<br>◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆<br>◆◆◆◆◆<br>55 | ◆  1 |
| SG (in-in) | SG- GS |
| ◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆<br>◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆<br>18 | ◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆<br>◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆<br>◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆<br>◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆<br>◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆<br>◆◆◆◆◆<br>55 |

| As seen by 'Governmental' | |
|---|---|
| SG (in-out) | GS (in-out) |
| ◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆<br>◆◆<br>12 | ◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆<br>◆◆◆◆<br>14 |
| SG (in-in) | SG- GS |
| ◆◆◆◆◆◆<br>6 | ◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆<br>◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆<br>◆◆◆◆◆◆◆<br>27 |

| As seen by 'Broker' | |
|---|---|
| SG (in-out) | GS (in-out) |
| ◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆<br>◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆<br>◆<br>21 | ◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆<br>◆◆◆◆<br>14 |
| SG (in-in) | SG- GS |
| ◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆<br>◆◆<br>12 | ◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆<br>◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆<br>◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆<br>◆◆◆<br>33 |

| As seen by 'Local' | |
|---|---|
| SG (in-out) | GS (in-out) |
| ◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆<br>◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆<br>◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆<br>◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆<br>◆◆◆◆◆◆<br>46 | ◆  1 |
| SG (in-in) | SG- GS |
| ◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆<br>◆◆<br>12 | ◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆<br>◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆<br>◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆<br>◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆<br>◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆<br>49 |

The four tables, Table 5.5, 5.6, 5.7, 5.8, shown above, speak to conflict perspective by individual demographics– those representing the government as opposed to those not involved with the government and those classed as brokers and locals. Note that both the Brokers and the Governmental respondent blamed

**Local Views on Quality of Life Conflict**



- SG (in-out)
- GS (in-out)
- SG (in-in)
- SG- GS
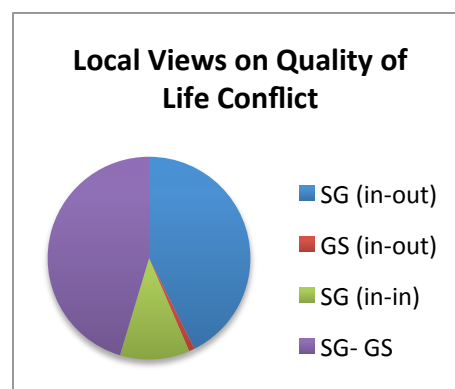
*Figure 5.24- Where locals see conflict in the Sundarbans regarding Quality of Life*

majority of the conflict on issues between the governing system and those to be governed, while Locals and Non-governmental groups place equal blame on that and also outsiders to the area. This could include foreign investors, or even the tourists themselves. As the study focuses on the perspectives of local communities, Figure 5.24 is an illustration of the conflict distribution as seen by Local interviewees. There is no single cause declared on the issue and two main types of social conflicts are highlighted.

### Indicator 2- Job Security

This section examines *Job Security*– consistent and constant employment, resulting in sufficient wages and/or benefits to provide said employees and their family with the means to live in a manner beyond poverty, hunger or desperation. Similar to the previous indicator, two major social conflict groups have been highlights, the most plotted of which is between the governing system and the system to be governed. There was a very minimal mention of conflict between governing systems during interviews. Of the 48% of

*Table 5.9 - A distribution of 'Job Security' conflict in the Sundarbans involving all interview respondents*

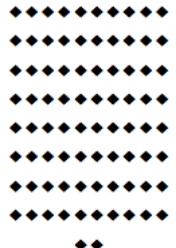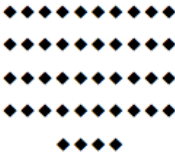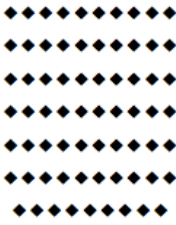| Total Conflict in 'Job Security' | |
|---|---|
| SG (in-out) | SG (in-out) |
| ♦♦♦♦♦♦♦♦♦♦ ♦♦♦♦♦♦♦♦♦♦ ♦♦♦♦♦♦♦♦♦♦ ♦♦♦♦♦♦♦♦♦♦ ♦♦♦♦ <br> 44 | ♦♦♦ <br> 3 |
| SG (in-in) | SG- GS |
| ♦♦♦♦♦♦♦♦♦♦ ♦♦♦♦♦♦♦♦♦♦ ♦♦♦♦♦♦♦ <br> 27 | ♦♦♦♦♦♦♦♦♦♦ ♦♦♦♦♦♦♦♦♦♦ ♦♦♦♦♦♦♦♦♦♦ ♦♦♦♦♦♦♦♦♦♦ ♦♦♦♦♦♦♦♦♦♦ ♦♦♦♦♦♦♦♦♦♦ ♦♦♦♦♦♦♦♦♦ <br> 69 |

points deemed to be problems between the governing body and body to be governed this could represent restrictions on livelihood, lack of alternative opportunity, and harassment or trouble within current system of employment.

*Table 5.10- A distribution of Job Security conflict in the Sundarbans involving 'non- Governmental' interview respondents*
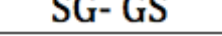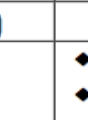
| As seen by 'Non-Governmental' | |
|---|---|
| SG (in-out) | GS (in-out) |
| ♦♦♦♦♦♦♦♦♦♦ ♦♦♦♦♦♦♦♦♦♦ ♦♦♦♦♦♦♦♦♦♦ ♦♦♦♦♦ <br> 35 | ♦ <br> 1 |
| SG (in-in) | SG- GS |
| ♦♦♦♦♦♦♦♦♦♦ ♦♦♦♦♦♦♦♦♦♦ ♦♦♦♦♦ <br> 25 | ♦♦♦♦♦♦♦♦♦♦ ♦♦♦♦♦♦♦♦♦♦ ♦♦♦♦♦♦♦♦♦♦ ♦♦♦♦♦♦♦♦♦♦ ♦♦♦♦♦♦♦♦♦♦ ♦♦♦♦ <br> 54 |

*Table 5.11 - A distribution of Job Security conflict in the Sundarbans involving 'Governmental' interview respondents*

| As seen by 'Governmental' | |
|---|---|
| SG (in-out) | GS (in-out) |
| ♦♦♦♦♦♦♦♦♦ <br> 9 | ♦♦ <br> 2 |
| SG (in-in) | SG- GS |
| ♦♦ <br> 2 | ♦♦♦♦♦♦♦♦♦♦ ♦♦♦♦♦ <br> 15 |

| As seen by 'Broker' | |
| --- | --- |
| SG (in-out) | GS (in-out) |
| ◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆ ◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆ 20 | ◆◆ 2 |
| SG (in-in) | SG- GS |
| ◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆ 8 | ◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆ ◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆ 18 |

| As seen by 'Local' | |
| --- | --- |
| SG (in-out) | GS (in-out) |
| ◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆ ◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆ ◆◆◆◆ 24 | ◆ 1 |
| SG (in-in) | SG- GS |
| ◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆ ◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆ 19 | ◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆ ◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆ ◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆ ◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆ ◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆ ◆ 51 |

The following four tables, Table 5.10, 5.11, 5.12, 5.13, illustrate the dispersion of social conflict seen by groups throughout the MPA. The first point worth noting is that non-governmental and local groups had the most complaints or issues to bring forth. Of the issues mentioned, they believed that governing systems were their main source of conflict, while outsiders from the area also contributed significantly to their discontent. Again, no one felt the need to mentioned conflicting governing bodies as a source of conflict. Figure 5.25 shows the distribution as decided by local groups in the MPA. It shows that groups competing against each other in the Sundarbans are also a big concern when it comes to job security. Interview responses will show this heavily to be a result of competition for resources and territory.



Figure 5.25- Where locals see conflict in the Sundarbans regarding Job Security

## Indicator 3- Community Development

This section reviews concerns brought forth regarding *Community Development*– both hard-infrastructure (ex. Schools, hospitals, roads) as well as soft-infrastructure (ex. Education, health care). Overwhelmingly, the fault of conflict is directed at the governing systems versus system to be governed category, claiming nearly double the conflict points of any other category. This is a pattern seen within all indicators thus far, but what's unique about this dispersion is the emphasis put on category 2. This is the first time that blame is put on 'conflict between governing systems' as a major cause for

| Total Conflict in 'Community Development' | |
|---|---|
| SG (in-out) | SG (in-out) |
| ◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆ ◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆ ◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆ ◆◆◆◆◆◆ 36 | ◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆ ◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆ ◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆ ◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆ ◆◆ 42 |
| SG (in-in) | SG- GS |
| ◆◆◆◆◆◆ 6 | ◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆ ◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆ ◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆ ◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆ ◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆ ◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆ ◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆ ◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆ 80 |

social conflict. This implies that not only do governing bodies not always cooperate, but that a degree of awareness is present on the subject of disorganisation and poor integration. The individual demographic tables speak to this perception and acknowledgement.
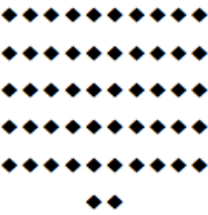
| As seen by 'Non-Governmental' | |
|---|---|
| SG (in-out) | GS (in-out) |
| ◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆ ◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆ ◆ 21 | ◆◆◆◆◆◆◆ 7 |
| SG (in-in) | SG- GS |
| ◆◆◆◆◆◆ 6 | ◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆ ◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆ ◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆ ◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆ ◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆ ◆◆ 52 |

| As seen by 'Governmental' | |
|---|---|
| SG (in-out) | GS (in-out) |
| ◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆ ◆◆◆◆◆ 15 | ◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆ ◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆ ◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆ ◆◆◆◆◆ 35 |
| SG (in-in) | SG- GS |
| 0 | ◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆ ◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆ ◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆ 28 |

| Table 5.17- A distribution of Community Development conflict in the Sundarbans involving 'Broker' interview respondents | Table 5.18- A distribution of Community Development conflict in the Sundarbans involving 'Local' interview respondents |
|---|---|
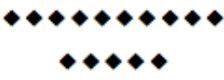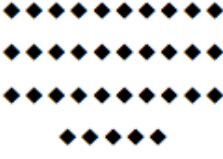




The trend of blame being only put on the governing system against the system to be governed is broken. For the first time we see, in Table 5.15, 5.16, 5.17, 5.18, that conflict between governing bodies is on par with, or in the case of governmental interviewees, supersedes, the concerns of governments against the system. It is necessary to point out that is an issue recognized by *Government* and *Broker* categories, but is not seen by members of the *Local* or Nongovernmental groups. In the latter two cases, the general opinion still points to the government versus the system and the main point of cause. This is significant in the government is viewed as multiple departments for the first time in this report. Figure 5.26 shows us that locals share the same opinion as in previous indicators as to where their social conflicts are rooted.
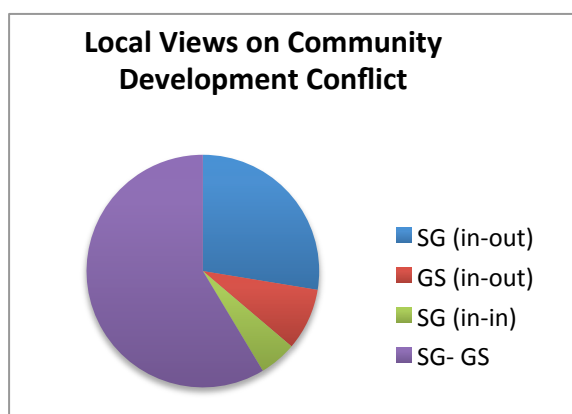


*Graph 5.26- Where locals see conflict in the Sundarbans regarding Community Development*

### *Indicator 4- Perception of Happiness*

This brings us to how people perceive their happiness– the degree of satisfaction groups feel within their own community as a result of development surrounding them– throughout this study. Complaints directly in regards to *Perception of Happiness* were much fewer than in other indicators, as conflict points were normally a result of speaking about a specific topic and not generalizing about one's current status. That being said, when an issue which threatened a group's happiness was mentioned, it almost always fell within the social conflict cause of governing system against system to be governed, or as a result of conflict with actors outside of the MPA.

*Table 5.19 - A distribution of 'Perception of Happiness' conflict in the Sundarbans involving all interview respondents*

| Total Conflict in 'Perception of Happiness' | |
|---|---|
| SG (in-out) | SG (in-out) |
| ◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆<br>◆◆◆◆<br>14 | ◆◆◆◆◆<br>5 |
| SG (in-in) | SG- GS |
| ◆◆◆<br>3 | ◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆<br>◆◆◆◆◆◆◆<br>17 |

*Table 5.21 - A distribution of Perception of Happiness conflict in the Sundarbans involving 'non-Governmental' interview respondents*

| As seen by 'Non-Governmental' | |
|---|---|
| SG (in-out) | GS (in-out) |
| ◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆<br>9 | 0 |
| SG (in-in) | SG- GS |
| ◆◆<br>2 | ◆◆◆<br>3 |

*Table 5.22- A distribution of Perception of Happiness conflict in the Sundarbans involving 'Governmental' interview respondents*

| As seen by 'Governmental' | |
|---|---|
| SG (in-out) | GS (in-out) |
| ◆◆◆◆◆<br>5 | ◆◆◆◆◆<br>5 |
| SG (in-in) | SG- GS |
| ◆<br>1 | ◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆<br>◆◆◆◆<br>14 |

Table 5.23 - *A distribution of Perception of Happiness conflict in the Sundarbans involving 'Broker' interview respondents*

Table 5.24 - *A distribution of Perception of Happiness conflict in the Sundarbans involving 'Local' interview respondents*

| As seen by 'Broker' | |
|---|---|
| SG (in-out) | GS (in-out) |
| ◆◆◆◆◆<br>5 | ◆◆◆◆◆<br>5 |
| SG (in-in) | SG- GS |
| ◆◆<br>2 | ◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆<br>◆◆◆◆<br>14 |

| As seen by 'Local' | |
|---|---|
| SG (in-out) | GS (in-out) |
| ◆◆◆◆◆<br>◆◆◆◆<br>9 | 0 |
| SG (in-in) | SG- GS |
| ◆<br>1 | ◆◆◆<br>3 |

Upon illustrating the conflict points based on specific demographics, in figure 5.21, 5.22, 5.23, 5.24, it's interesting to note that Locals and Nongovernmental groups don't view the government as their source of unhappiness, but instead put the onus on outsiders who come into the MPA. Problems between the governing body and the system it governs is still the number one thorn in the *Governmental* stakeholders group, as well as that of the *Brokers*. Figure 5.27 shows that 69% of problems directly concerning local happiness is a result of actions from outsiders.



**Local Views on Perception of Happiness Conflict**

- SG (in-out)
- GS (in-out)
- SG (in-in)
- SG- GS
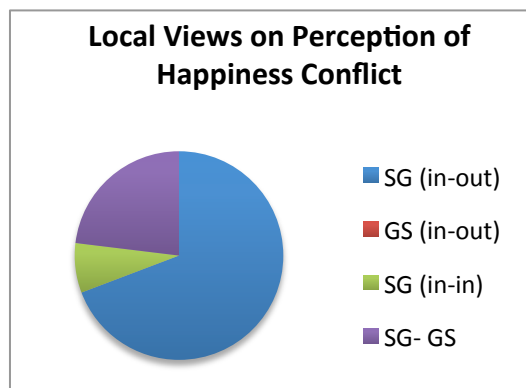
*Figure 5.27- Where locals see conflict in the Sundarbans regarding Perception of Happiness*

## 5.3.3. Interview Analysis

In this section, the results of the interviews are presented. Although field observations were presented in chronological order, organized by location, interview review will follow the same method as that of the first case study. Responses of participants have been subdivided into four indicator groups and will be presented in based on responses relating to each category. A description of the four distinguishing groups is presented in the methods section. The study's main question will be investigated from

different angles to check the validity of conclusions. This is done by presenting all opinions, while drawing special attention to reoccurring arguments and statements. Similarities and differences are identified and discussed in the ensuing 'Discussion' section in 5.4.

## 1. Quality of Life

## Government in the MPA

Just as local villagers proved themselves capable of comprehending the problems and social conflicts surrounding them, so too did most of the government bodies. In many cases, those who were charged with decision-making and enforcement were aware of problem areas, and to the best of their knowledge, were dealing with it. Interviewees spoke of erosion along the coastline and the need to plant mangrove trees. Certain Forest Department official had already received funding such project in the past and say they hired locals to help with the planting.

They also understood the state of desperation in the MPA, the need for jobs, and the low standard of life. Forest Department officials spoke of village women illegally extracting wood from the forest and spoke of one scheme started where they can apply and take wood from the plantations around the area. He admitted that this wasn't sufficient, but stood by the law forbidding them to enter the jungle to take wood, going on to say that he catches and fines approximately 100 people per year.  On top of this women's help groups have been formed, helping them learn new skills, as well as providing them with free knitting machines, seeds for planting, pump sets for agriculture, and smokeless stoves.

They say these actions are proving effective to improve the quality of life in the area, but as soon as tourism is mentioned, it was as if every official put on a pair of rose-coloured glasses. Upon inquiring whether plans to deal with problems of tourism had ever been discussed, several local government respondents retorted with claims that there can never be anything wrong with tourism, so there is no need to consider the subject. These statements would come from the same officials who were representing a village complaining of drunks, loud noise and desperate village women being hired as prostitutes. Questions of tourist boats ripping fishermen nets were brushed off as myth, and the industry was hailed for its employment potential.

Forest Department officials and police were more realistic and admitted that drunk behaviour was the biggest problem with tourists, and people running around naked on the beach after drinking was a concern to them. Only 2-3 tourists are stopped and fined each year, but action has been taken and the Forest Department has the ability to make arrests. A Park official commented that tourism is very much required, but that everyone just comes to drink. To ensure that the problem does not get out of hand in the jungle, a Forest Department official guide is assigned to each tourist boat. The main job of this is to provide tourists with security.

With regard to tourist safety, in Bakkhali the Police Director has taken a further precaution and makes all hotels submit a report of who stayed with them every single day. On top of this, tourists travelling alone are not allowed to stay at any hotel, as several years back someone came to this area to commit suicide. This officer has taken action to increase safety through education and pamphlets even though he says that crime is very low here. Signs will be put up in the next few months. These are precautions ensuring tourists' safety, but when it comes to local residents, all departments do not have a direct set of precautions laid out. The main saving grace is that although tourists do not face restrictions, if a private tour boat is found of breaking any MPA rules, the owner is fined and his boat can be banned from the Park.

The general consensus is that people are emulating the tourists and everything is changing for the good. More income is coming into the community and with it better food and clothes are available and affordable. Village Panchayats admit that they are never consulted regarding development, but still stand by the industry. On top of not being informed about projects, two separate local leaders told us that even if they did object, they would never say anything because the ruling party of the state is a different political party than their own, and that they would spread negative propaganda about him to the people. Both admitted that development, especially the proposed ecotourism resort with a helicopter pad, will affect the animals, birds and ecosystem.

## State Government

In terms of *Quality of Life,* the opinions of the State Government in many ways echoed that of the inner-MPA government representatives, with the advantage of a much more informed answer. They declared that tourism was improving areas by providing

opportunity, and that an Integrated Coastal Zone Management Plan (ICZMP) was underway, which would integrate all of the development plans in the area into one single document. Ten different government departments were involved in the document. Tourism would be a large part of this plan, because of the potential this area has. The Head Divisional Forest Officer for the 24 Parganas area also spoke of collective meetings being held with fisherman unions and forums, which were opportunities for the local people to speak out and have their issues heard. She said, that there are so many people in the Sundarbans, these meetings are the only way for everyone to be heard. The shouting is something they simply grow accustomed to.

The Divisional Forest Officer would go on to acknowledge that with so many players in the game, there were bound to be some complaints from the local level. A major reoccurring complaint was the amount of garbage that was being brought in with the tourists, so the Forest Department responded by installing two incinerators. The people were said to have been content for being heard. There is also the issue of encroachment of local and Forest Department land by lodge owners, for which four meetings have been held with the owners. The Chief Warden is now developing a set of guidelines for lodges and awareness meetings are being held to improve the standard of tourism etiquette.

In speaking with the Deputy Secretary of West Bengal tourism, he was fixed on the fact that tourism meant people were earning more many and therefore enjoying a higher quality of life, stating, "Local growth is achieved through inflation of prices that they get for products". We relayed the concerns of locals, including that of higher prices on all goods, to which he quickly turned the blame onto the agricultural department, stating that they set the vegetable prices. He went on to say that the tourism budget could not afford to consult the social level, and began mocking us because he believed it was impossible to plan for problems which he declared didn't exist as yet. He did get worked up when we brought up the issues of lodges starting a sex trade, but then declared that it was a problem of the police department and not his, before moving on to the next subject. In referencing the budget of his department, he also declared earlier that the tourism budget for West Bengal had increased from 6 crores (Approx. $1 million USD) in 2007, 2008 and 2009, to being 120 crores (Approx. $1.2 billion USD) in 2013.

The Tiger Reserve Field Director was a more pragmatic individual, mentioning that problems did exist and that the local people and lodge owners had no choice but to use the natural resources in their desperate state and location. He spoke of development plans that offered alternatives for these people, saying that lodges had mushroomed and laws were not being strictly followed. Many issues are outside of his jurisdiction, but they have started a Joint-Monitoring Program, including all stakeholders, to ensure that people cannot use the excuses of not knowing laws. He went on to say that tourism is important, and should be considered as one option for alternative livelihoods, but that the industry should not be allowed to cause havoc. Another alternative that would help the people greatly would be multi-cropping. His overall goal through tourism and other alternative livelihood initiatives is to wean people off being dependent on the jungle.

In speaking with the Sundarbans Development Board, we asked to what degree local communities were consulted on issues of development and to what degree permissions had been granted. Although Panchayat leaders in the field would repeatedly tell us that they are never approached, the SDB official claimed that all plans were previously approved and that the local community is informed along the way. Regarding planning for impacts, an executive engineer for the SDB claimed that it was too difficult to plan with communities, because the people were too uneducated to identify problems until infrastructure was built and it became a reality. He claimed them too unintelligent to follow a PowerPoint presentation. We attempted to speak with the SDB Deputy Project Director as well regarding the large ecotourism project his department was developing in Jharkhali, but he sent us off to another member, claiming that he knew nothing about the project and that he had only heard about it in the newspaper. A member of this office spoke out and declared that good programs were also being offered, but that he didn't believe in the work of his department because it was for financial gain. The good projects that he did mention involved raising general awareness in schools in 19 blocks where children will participate in a program, and learn about the Sundarbans.

**Brokers**

Brokers, be them local or foreign, generally benefitted from tourism, and believed their presence to be helping those around them. Many would mention that there is no relationship with the villages around their hotels, but that the people would now sell more

in their stores, they could charge more for goods, and that finances would leak into the community. The tourists would come, stay and go, not interacting with locals, and since the houses were so scattered, everyone kept to their own business. One hotel owner estimated that 60% of profits go back into the community, although he admitted that all profits of his hotel go directly to Kolkata. Majority believe that the standard of living is increasing as a direct result of tourism and that community life is improving for all. They attribute the strong new economy for the increase in education, saying increased literacy means higher wages. Some people are even able to study in Kolkata. To ensure that they do their part to help the locals, one resort mentioned that they spread wheat, mustard seeds, rice, and fruit seeds around their compound. This is mostly for birds, but the locals can use anything outside the resort walls. The same resort said that they provide food and clothes for children of employees, that they gave a football, volleyball and net to the local youth club, and that they brought in a doctor and opened an aid station during Cyclone Aila. Several other hotels also spoke of lending their medical equipment out during emergencies our providing access to their vehicles if the people needed to be rushed to the hospital. There was also mention of keeping the area around the hotels clean. Some would hire locals to fix a road, or clean up a beach

In terms of tourists' behaviour, some state that there has never been an issue, while others admit that alcohol is a concern. They try to tell tourists not to drink so much, but on vacation they always want to. Tourists are explained what and whatnot to do, and for the most part have no choice but to listen, because it is for their own safety. The boats do not allow plastics on the ride, and there are dustbins on board for garbage. Most also claim to burn or compost their own garbage to ensure it doesn't pile up in the community. If during these boat trips any fisher peoples nets were destroyed, lodge owners ensures us that they would pay for the repair costs.

Within the *Broke* community, there is a complaint that foreign brokers have a lot more money and therefore market their resorts better than locals can. They use the Internet and have more money to invest into their accommodations, making it difficult for smaller lodges to compete. Rates have to be reduced just to stay competitive. None have spoken of getting a hard time from the Forest Department, or ever questions about CRZ. All claim to have obtained sufficient permissions. One local lodge in Jharkhali mentioned police official coming and asking for money, but for the most part they are left alone.

Aside from lodges, we also spoke to guides and fish marketers. The former is directly involved with tourists on a daily basis and shares the opinions of hotel owners, but the fish marketer is an independent business whose only attachment to tourism is the fish he sells to lodges in the area. His role is to buy the fish from locals and sell it to stores in the city. He says that business in the Sundarbans is worse for two reasons. The first is that too many people are migrating and that there are fewer fishermen. Secondly, there are less fish in the ponds and rivers, so people are selling less fish to him. He claims to have no attachment to tourism and says that even lodges rarely buy fish from him, because their specifications and needs are too specific for a small entrepreneur like himself. Also, export rates are so high that no one could afford to buy at the local level. He disagreed that tourism was benefiting the local people, but mentioned that it would be nice if more solar electricity resulted from the development. He added that he would not join the grid if they brought in mainstream electricity by building some plant or station. He says that local groups have done a good job identifying the problems associated with life in the Sundarbans and that tourism wasn't helping the locals, but the actions of organizations like the SRDS was bringing hope back into the people.

## Locals and Nongovernmental

One common theme keeps resurfacing regarding tourism in the MPA; "A lot of money comes to the Sundarbans, but we are the people of Sundarbans and we receive nothing of it". Communities believe that tourism development will not help the people of the Sundarbans and the income that the lodges are receiving is being sent directly out to financiers in cities. Tourists are brought in, tour on private boats, maybe buy something at a small stall, and then leave. Where to locals benefit in that process? Even if hotels purchase vegetables and food products at the local market, it ends up harming villagers because they cannot afford to compete. Hotels want first pick of the high quality vegetables, so they offer higher rates to the venders. That means that villagers get second grade vegetables, and even the vendors who earn more, now have to spend more in other stalls.

When it comes to the tourists themselves, many complain of the garbage, the litter in the river, the screaming, and the provocative clothing. Hotels and their staff only encourage this behaviour by playing loud music and bringing in non-traditional

entertainment. There is also the issue of lodges started a sex trade in the area, which villagers are very reluctant to discuss, because it involves a lot of their women. When men go fishing for 10 days at a time, the wives get contacted by hotels and are brought in to entertain male guests. It's not quite understood why the women accept, but the levels of desperation are something we can't understand. Locals in a focus group even mentioned that unmarried or widowed women who participate in these acts are still accepted by their communities and will still find husbands, although it causes a lot of distress to families and the village as a whole. It's also very difficult to explain to the children and a lot of socio-cultural issues come into play.

There are examples of local people complaining to resorts, but no successful examples. One gentleman spoke about approaching a lodge near his house because they played loud music into the night and he needed his sleep for long days of fishing. The lodge owner told him that he had spent hundreds of thousands of dollars to build his resort, and he would do whatever he needed to make a profit. Many people say they don't want tourism and they want to go back to their peaceful ways of life. Lodges are causing cultural pollution and it's difficult to send one's children to school near these lodges.

There are said to be 55 tourist boats per day, significantly increasing the amount of mechanized boats and causing much diesel pollution in these waters. So much so that it makes it difficult for manual boats to ply through. Throughout this study, when a local was discussing the term *Quality of Life, it* was often referenced in the context of equality. There are three zones, even within the core area of the MPA, where tourism boats are permitted, but fishing boats are not– Chandkhali, Netidhopani, and Bagmara. These boats pollute, make noise, and sometime drive directly through and destroy the nets of fisherman, yet they are allowed special permissions within the Park. A local fishermen forum asks, "Politicians know what the state of fisher people are and what the impacts of tourism would be, yet they give them permission. Why?" It appears that tourism has free rein, but all NGOs agree that there is not one fisherman in the whole Sundarbans who has not been harassed by the Forest Department at one time or another. The Tiger Reserve officials want tourism to grow but if there is big money investment people will not be benefitted. At best their jobs will be as 4th class staff.

Organizations like SRDS have started out of this desperation and the people, at least in the Sajnekhali area, are confident that things will start to get better. Many people don't have land and can only rely on fishing. Even when surrounded by lodges on both sides, they reap no benefits. Some say that what happens in the lodges is kept away from them, so it does not affect their personal lives, but these are the minority.

## 2. Job Security

### Government in the MPA

Governmental stakeholders, with the exception of one, unanimously believe tourism to be an effective alternative livelihood for people living within the Sundarbans MPA. In one way or another they spoke about the opportunities of the market, whether in terms of opening stalls, working in hotels, higher incomes, serving as a guide, or countless other prospects. Local Panchayats claimed that the economy and location were in rough shape and that tourism would be the answer for a desperate people; it was the only alternative to migration.

Between December and March many tourists come, and although the administration of all eight hotels interviewed were from another city, all employed a handful of local employees. Some locals, who could afford it, would start a store, hotel or find another way into tourism. Also, as the Forest Department grew, new opportunities would open such as planters in the nursery, construction workers and inspectors. Many commented that without any other industry, tourism was the only lifeline for this area. The Forest Department itself was benefiting greatly from it, building guesthouses and claiming fees from tour boats and the interpretive centres. They would train guides from the local villages and also use them to ensure that companies and tourists were not misbehaving. Furthermore, the Coastal Police Director in Bakkhali initiated a program for cycle vans in area, offering 100 to purchase subsidized rickshaws to start a business.

### State Government

As can be expected, many examples of employment opportunities were presented regarding this section. One thing that was exceptionally interesting however, was the amount of respondents who didn't believe tourism was a major alternative livelihood source for local populations. The Tiger Reserve Field Director and the Divisional Forest

Officer both mentioned that it was one option amongst several, the latter going on to say that if a local is only a service boy at high-end resort, than that is not okay. The Forest Department has tried to involve locals in ecotourism, last year hiring 42 guides. These are boys who used to do physical labour. They have also started many self-help groups, for whom they have successfully opened 107,500 bank accounts in just 3 months. The tourist season is only 3-4 months long, so to ensure that the boys don't go back to honey collecting in the jungle, they give them other jobs to do. The Forest Department is highly understaffed, so this is mutually beneficial. There is also the reality that people don't want to leave what they do, and although they only fish because it is all they have, it is also all they know.

An Sundarbans Development Board (SDB) executive engineer spoke of the vast development plans in his department and how they would open up 110-120 shops, train tourist guides at the museum/interpretation centre, and have locals selling at the food mart. Homestays are also being developed in nearby villages, of which ten have already been started. Personal art stalls would be built and pay and use washrooms installed, which the locals would run.

There are also those who don't believe tourism will provide jobs whatsoever. An SDB representative seemed shocked by the question and stated, "Fisher people getting work? Why should fisher people work in high-end lodges?". We responded by mentioning that a lot of the development was focused towards alternative livelihoods, to which he would respond," The locals don't need to work here, they have agricultural development". He continued on by saying that a 2001 census showed that of the 420,000 people in the area, 80-85% of people were dependent on agriculture. Of that 19-23% of cultivable land was multi-cropped. The real potential is in giving seeds to people and allowing them to move away from mono-cropping. He ended with, "We bring in a lot of people from outside into the Tiger Reserve, so we depend on external resources and money is also going out, so how does it benefit the area". West Bengal's Deputy Secretary of Tourism claimed, "I am not sure honestly sure that due to tourism people are getting jobs".

**Brokers**

All agreed that there was a need for new employment opportunities and the general consensus was that local people could either migrate, fish or work in tourism. Most hotels

acquired their vegetables and certain other products from local bazaars, all construction labour was locally sources, and resort staff, other than management was usually people from the community. Peak season is from September to February, during which time more help is needed and more jobs are available. The influx of tourists helps people in the bazaar, small shops, rickshaw drivers, people running small huts on the beach, handicraft workers and vegetable growers. On top of this, the Forest Department has hired 35 local boys to be guides on tourist boats, making it mandatory for hotels to higher at least one per boat. All are benefiting and since there is tourism, people are not migrating anymore.

One local hotel owner used to be a construction labourer, but he saw the potential in tourism and made the switch. He was afraid he wouldn't be able to pay back a bank, so he took a loan on the local level and started a hotel. He says that he is dependant on peak season and that last year during a very important festival the weather was so bad that people didn't come. He is only able to make profit for few months per year. He doesn't think that local people benefit from tourism and if the industry grows, he says it won't help villagers. That being said, he added that everyone here used to be fisher people but restrictions of the MPA and Forest Department designated fish catch zones means a 1.5 days journey even with a license, so after rice season, people migrate.

## Locals and Nongovernmental

According to locals and NGOs working in the area, tourism has not helped employment too much because people still don't want to take up tourism jobs. The salary at a hotel is not more than 3000 INR (approx. $48US) per month, but through fishing on a good catch you can earn up to 50,000 INR (approx. $800US) per month. Fishing is also carried out for 8-9 months per year, while tourism is only available for 4, weather permitting. There are those who choose to switch to tourism, but many say it's because there are not enough jobs and it's the only other option is migration. That being said, many agreed that if more jobs were available, it would slow down migration. Out of all the villages we visited, each had about 2 or 3 examples of people who received work from the industry; one had two women cook, one had a boy working as a guide, and so on. Several respondents mentioned that they went and asked for work, but the resorts said they needed people for specific work and that the local people lacked the skills required. The scope of working in tourism is 1 in 1000. Upon asking many fishermen and tiger or crocodile

widows if they would accept a job in tourism, they couldn't even fathom the possibility of an opportunity, and most would simply not answer.

There was the odd exception, of course, where a local person would speak of their hopes to start a store, or someone who sold honey to tourists, but the concept of tourism received a lot of negative responses. People recognize the need to stop relying on the jungle, but were adamant about tourism not being the alternative. They insist that multi-cropping and proper irrigation would relieve the dependency on fishing, and aquaculture and tank fishing would be very lucrative for them. Recently people have started pond cultivation of crabs, where 5kg of crab eggs, which takes 3 months to mature, can be collected and sold for a very large profit. These same people don't think that they will be given work in tourism, and even if they received it, they could not live from 4 months of income per year. One bright light is that organizations like the SRDS are providing a few jobs in the community and have gotten people out of misery.

## 3. Community Development

### Government in the MPA

Located a few hours drive from the busy city of Kolkata, the potential for tourism in the Sundarbans is immeasurable. The beaches, jungle and exotic boat experiences are the gems that many governmental bodies are attempting to develop for the masses to enjoy. A few tourism projects mentioned by a local official for his community are a children's park, mini zoo, city centre, sanitation project, electricity sub-station, and a youth hostel. Of the three sites, The Government of West Bengal has declared Bakkhali an international tourist site, ensuring that plenty of development and foreign interest will soon makes its way into the city. The central government has sanctioned sufficient funds to build a bridge allowing cars to reach the city directly by road, all claiming that it will help with economic development in the area.

It seems that each department has the ability to develop, of which we confirmed tourist bungalows from the Forest Department, Fisheries Department, Sundarbans Development Board, and the State government. Local Panchayats claim taxes on private and local businesses, which ensure that they also gain from the industry. When it comes to keeping developers in check, the Fisheries Department complained that the Forest

Department was putting up flags as to where the property line was, but who is in place to check the Forest Department. Majority of officials, including those charged with enforcing building laws, were unaware of what CRZ laws even meant. Of those who did understand, one even went as far as to say that CRZ was not involved with tourism. A list of permissions exists before building can commence, yet of every Panchayat we visited, not one was able to say that prior permission had been sought to develop on their lands. This includes the Jharkhali mass ecotourism project. No permission should be given is a proposed site is within 500m of a body of water, yet establishments continue to multiply.

With all these grand plans underway, there are some officials who don't fully agree with the development or those who are not privileged to be at part of it. One local Panchayat claims to have also put in a request to improve communications, road, hospital, and schools in the area, but has received a poor response as the central governing party is different than the party to which he belongs. Other forest officials and Panchayat leaders mentioned fears behind mass development, especially in terms of the high-end ecotourism project being built in Jharkhali. They say that if it doesn't interfere with the mangroves and the nature then it is fine, but that they doubt how possible that is. One enforcement officer went on to say that, "We are a small office, the higher office will think about that. Also, we are small people, so we don't have control over the instructions we get".

There are benefits that are also resulting from this development. Electricity is reaching places where it never existed before and developers say that there any many more benefits that are reaching the local people. The Forest Department has formed committees of Adhavasi's (the poorest class) to help in forest protection. Of these members, 33% have to be women and it has to include people at a decision making level. In villages where large resorts are being built they have set up incinerators near the jetties and all garbage from tourist boats is meant to go into the incinerator. The Forest Department helps villagers build ponds and dig wells, amongst other projects such as brick roads and solar lamps.

One thing that's widely agreed upon is that controlled tourism is very important for the Sundarbans Tiger Reserve and that development should not be limited. A carrying capacity study has not been done and as many tourists can't even get on a tourist boat during the busy season, all officials believe that there is no limitation to how much more

development can occur. So far the Jharkhali area already has between 20-25 boats, and this is not enough for the number of people who come through. Tourist boat licenses are different from fishing boat licenses, and unlike the latter, the government has no plan of limiting how many tourist boats are allowed within the MPA.

## State Government

This would prove to be the most eye-opening indicator discussed as it brought to light the true colours of multiple stakeholders. The first and most important point to recognize from the State Government interviews is that three respondents– the Deputy Secretary of West Bengal Tourism, the Director of the Institute of Environmental Studies and Wetland Management, and the Sundarbans Development Board representative– all claimed that tourism and conservation could not coexist and that they were, in fact, adversaries.

Director of Institute of Environmental Studies and Wetland Management (IESWM), a leader in the Department of the Environment, spoke boldly about the need to do away with CRZ regulations, at least in terms of tourism development. He declared that countries all over the World were permitted to build along the coast, and only in India did they have to stay 500m back. He would go on to say that in 1997 there were only 30,000 tourists who visited the Sundarbans, but today there are 200,000 that visit each year. This necessitated an obvious need for increased infrastructure, stating that the only problem in the Park was too many untapped roots. He referenced a certain area, Gangasagar, stating that environmental issues of the Park would not be an issue there, because it was not so close to the sea. He claimed that the Tiger Reserve was zealously protected but that it made for a very low tiger-sighting rate, since the jungle was too thick. Crocodiles could be seen in the water, but developers should choose one island and keep it pristine, and then develop tourism in the other areas. In further speaking about the CRZ violations and erosion issue he stated that lodge owners know about the dangers of erosion, but they only think short-term. "India is a poor country and people only envision the next 5-10 years". He finished by mentioning a retaining wall project that was just commissioned, say that some land for this will need to be taken from the people, but not a problem, because it will all be resolved.

The Tiger Reserve Field Director was again a calm voice on the matter, saying that tourism was allowed in limited zones, both in the core and buffer, but it was now being taken out of the core. More tourists were arriving, which has changed the dynamics of the industry and necessitates change. That same day he claims that he had signed a plan to implement waste disposal systems, no plastic/foam regulation, plans to address noise pollution, sewage, and a carrying capacity study. On his desk sat a copy of the new Tiger Conservation Plan 2012-2013 to 2016-17, which was to guide process through the next years of tiger conservation. The Divisional Forest Officer would later add that Environmental Impact Assessment was always carried out on large projects, by a third party company.

A member of the District Magistrates office provided us with a 4-page list of all the CRZ violations in the area, claiming that tourism did not conform to the building laws in place. In some cases he says that clearance is not being given, but that building still commences, because it is not difficult to win a politician over for special permission. He claims that the industry has grown, but the reason it is still small is because building materials need to be carried in. He expects it will soon begin to increase much more rapidly. There is no Master Plan, so everyone simply builds where they can get land. The individual does not believe in the work of his department because he claims that politicians don't consider the environment in their plans. The reasoning behind this is that a negative impact on the coast is not going to have a positive or negative tangible impact for the politician.

The ICZMP is a project by World Bank, being conducted in three different States. Several departments within the State Government have been selected to implement integrated tourism management plans, including the Sundarbans Infrastructure Development Corporation (SIDC). An executive engineer with SIDC, usually charged with building roads, bridges and other infrastructure for tourism, mentioned that his department has never dealt with tourism management before and therefore lacked the knowledge to develop a plan. He went on to say that the work has now been outsourced to an Italian consulting firm. A project proposal was written by the Italian firm, HYDEA, and now and Indian organization, Ghosh, Bose & Ass., is working with them to put the plan in place. He said that engineers are not tourism planners or environmental technologists, and that if they

had the capacity, they would not have to hire these consultants at such high rates. Tourism is being planned and managed by foreigners.

## Brokers

When it comes to community development, the most common themes for *Brokers* were electricity, garbage disposal and land prices. Very few, if any, had access to electricity as yet and were keen for the prospect of infrastructure development bringing power to the region. Smaller hotels can only afford to run the generators during the night, so visitors complain of being hot during the day. If electricity came to the villages it would help everyone, including villagers who had nothing to do with the development. Other development would eventually include a proper garbage disposal system, doing away with the problem of too much litter and waste piling up. Also, a bridge and better roads are said to be underway, which would increase access to the area, help in cases of medical emergencies, and add income this the increase in tourism.

Regarding land prices, there is no set amount for how much land in any given area costs now, meaning it's at the owners discretion, but some plots are going for rates as much as 700% more than they were worth 5 years ago. In Rujitjubilee, 6 people have sold land amount to 10 acres of coastline. The implication of this for local people is that they can earn significantly more money by selling plots of their land.

## Locals and Nongovernmental

When speaking directly about tourism, local sentiments were quite negative, which brought in the need for another measure of growth. Infrastructure development, a complete result of tourism in the area, allows another perspective of how communities perceive change. In some regards this was an effective practice in that people spoke more openly about wanting electricity or how the roads were making their lives easier. By and large, people do associate the development with tourism growth and feel it is destructive to the environment around them. The department with maximum power in the area, the Forest Department, restricts any cutting of trees or invasion into the jungle, yet they constantly clear-cut large segments of mangroves for the purpose of building new roads, bungalows and offices. The people claim that within a short time they won't even be allowed to use those roads, as tourists will populate the area and fishermen are often regarded as smelly

and undesirable in the public image. The clear cutting from the Forest Department leads to heavy erosion, leaving the villagers more open to the sea, and vulnerable to storms.

Local groups agree that the potential for tourism is very high, especially in Jharkhali, and for that a lot of development is occurring. These are important fishing areas and more boats will increase pollution and reduce fish populations where they enter. The problem is that the tourists come to see the tiger and all tourism is dedicated to that purpose, ignoring the locals. Even the roads through the mangroves are to allow foreigners the sensation of being immersed in the jungle. Officials says that the development will help locals, but may groups claim that all they really want or need is a mobile medical unit, which has not even been mentioned.

In the past, organizations such as SAHARA have come in and tried to develop large-scale projects in the Sundarbans. The people protested and the company was not permitted to implement their scheme, but now governmental departments are trying the same thing with this large-scale ecotourism resort in Jharkhali, but no one will be able to tell them to stop. High-end tourism is resource intensive. Right now there is solar lighting, giving the place a unique look, but many believe that electricity and a helicopter pad will destroy the nature and change the place. One group said, a hotel that charges $400US per night in India cannot be eco-friendly. It is an area where tigers come for shelter in winter, it is a breeding ground for crocodiles, and it is home to many mangrove trees. On top of all of this, it is a CRZ violation and no local person will have the education to work in a place of this prestige.

## 4. Perception of Happiness

### Government in the MPA

Government official unanimously declared that tourism was a good step for local communities and that it benefited those in the surrounding area. Some chose to end their piece there, while other mentioned that projects like the helipad in Jharkhali needed to be checked and could not be allowed to become a reality. There was no objection to tourism or no serious problem faced by tourists which would cause any alarm. It was motivating to meet certain officials who were genuinely concerned with the impacts they made, and one such Police Director encompassed this best when he declared, "I'm doing for my own

country, so of course I have to do a good job". The Sajnekhali Park Director stated that his motivation comes from the satisfaction of knowing that, "Some people around the world know India, much less know West Bengal, and in that much less know Kolkata, but everyone knows the Sundarbans".

## State Government

All official agree that any tourism should be in the form of ecotourism, but no clear definition for what the entails exists. It was stated that no one has as yet properly calculated the benefits of tourism, leading to varying answers regarding how tourism is now affecting local communities. Most agreed that if the main focus is conservation with locals included, then yes it is beneficial. Others would straight out declare that it was beneficial to all and that it should be encouraged. More tourists meant higher prices for foods, more items sold and jobs for many. At least three officials, however, disagreed with the roles of their department and spoke about weaknesses in the planning. Others believe that tourism and the environment cannot coexist, meaning that locals could not benefit from the development.

## Brokers

As a whole, *Brokers* believe tourism to be benefiting local communities and speak about good relationships with those around their stores and hotels. One person mentioned that people claim tourists litter, but that is a result of high tides bringing in garbage and that there is really no issue with the visitors. Tourism equals more employment and villagers are happy because they don't have to migrate. Most have no direct interaction with the locals, but by everyone keeping to themselves, there are no negatives with tourism. One hotel owner would go on to add, that two opinions will always exist, but that he doesn't see any problem with tourism.

## Locals and Nongovernmental

Opinions vary drastically on the topic of tourism although most locals interviewed would agree that there is no personal benefit in the industry for them. Some are happy to see people coming to their villages and learning about their culture, but state that they have nothing to gain from increasing tourism. Some would say that it's a good idea, as long as the mangroves are protected. Others flatly oppose tourism, feeling that people are coming

in and taking what is theirs. They are threatened by hotel developers and owners showing them no respect, and once the tourists begin to arrive, they bring with them a shameful lifestyle that some locals are starting to mimic. People are embarrassed by the way foreigners dress in such revealing clothing, men get drunk and are obscene, loud music is always playing, and now men are acting inappropriately with local women and hotels are encouraging it. One villager said that he has to turn his head down when he walks past tourists because he feels shame in how they bring all their technology and open clothing into his village. Too many tourists will spoil the children of the village.

A significant amount of people would also say that tourism is not all bad, and neither are all tourists bad. For it to work they need to stop throwing garbage, be sensitive to the communities need for sleep at night, and stop the flesh business of women. So far no one has admitted to protesting, stating that they didn't know how, or that the government and planners are hand in glove with each other and would never listen. There's also the possibility of getting villainised if one speaks against their government, so there is a fear to break the mould. On the topic of the ecotourism project in Jharkhali, a Calcutta Wildlife Society Member working in a mangrove plantation directly in the planned area said that he didn't even know about the project. Everyone agrees that groups like the SRDS are changing lives and very necessary as a voice for the unheard people.

### 5.3.4 Policy and Development Documents

During the course of our study, interview respondents gave three documents to us. This consisted of 1) a list of CRZ violations documented within the Sundarbans, 2) a profile of the new ICZMP, and 3) an NGO presentation on issues of the Sundarbans.

### CRZ Violations

The First document clearly listed 98 permanent structures that are CRZ violations. The included data highlights the bloc the structure falls within, the Panchayat (local government), coordinates, name of the hotel or resort, if it is private or government run, date of construction and contact information. Of these 98, 18 have been identified as Government run hotels, resorts or lodges. This includes the Fisheries Department (4), Local Panchayat (1), the Forest Department (2), and the Department of Tourism, amongst others. Private establishments make up the majority of this list. The area known as

Frezerganj, had the most identified violations with 32 in own community. It was clearly pointed out that while the list has been established, no action has yet been taken against any violators.

## ICZMP Profile

At least ten different government departments have been identified with forming a part of the ICZMP project in West Bengal. These departments are coming together under the context of tackling four major issues– 1) creating coastal infrastructure, 2) environmental quality management and pollution control, 3) developing ecotourism and livelihood development opportunities, and 4) capacity building in what they term as ICZM activities. The document begins by outlining multiple problems in the areas, the most pertinent of which being, "loss of livelihood due to several reasons including non-sustainable practices, loss of biodiversity due to over exploitation of resources, coastal pollution by anthropogenic activities and above all conflicting (existing and/or intended) use of the coastal space and associated social tension". This is significant in that it recognizes the issues outlined previously by local interviewees, as well as acknowledging social tension within these areas. Statements imply that practices of those living in the area are unsustainable, which bring upon a need for alternative livelihoods. As mentioned, target number three of the report seeks to develop ecotourism and believe it to be the alternative option for local communities. The implementation of the ICZM pilots is to be hosted by the Institute of Environmental Studies and Wetland Management.

Two out of the seven targets outlined by the ICZMP state that they seek to tackle social vulnerability and livelihood issues throughout the state. Three indicators will be used to monitor the program's success. The first looks at a switch to multi-crop agriculture with connection to the power grid on Sagar Island. Many locals addressed this change in agricultural practices as their best hope for the future, and although the target site is small now, the plan is only in a pilot stage. The second indicator monitors the increase in GDP in the coastal district of West Bengal, seeing if income is increasing as a result of development. Finally, the third indicator measures the number of tourists arriving to certain areas, using stable or increasing numbers as a sign of success. This is to say, the success of livelihood improvement within West Bengal and the Sundarbans is largely based on whether people are earning more, are connected to electricity and see increased numbers of

tourists.

In terms of tourism development, the plan specifically speaks of increasing tourism on Sagar Island (also known as Gangasagar), which is a famous pilgrim site within the Sundarbans Biosphere Reserve. Plans for development focus on the vicinity of Kapil Muni Ashram, the pilgrim sites, with strict plans to maintain the fragile ecology of the Sundarbans. The Sundarbans Infrastructure Development Corporation Limited (SIDCL) is charged with planning and implementing this ecotourism project, including any roads, jetties, bridges, or wells that are needed. SIDCL was mentioned in the previous section as being an engineering department of the government. An area designed for local merchants to sell their goods and crafts is being setup as an official component for local people.

## DISHA's Sundarbans Presentation

The final document is a presentation created by the Direct Initiative for Social and Health Action (DISHA) to highlight social issues identified within the Sundarbans. It begins with background information on the area, speaks to specific zoning demarcation, identifies issues, and outlines recommendations to address said conflicts. As a clear description of the Park is provided in the *Literature Review*, section 2.0, it will not be repeated at this point. Of the issues stated, only those relating to tourism within the park will be herein discussed.

The first issues deals with the type of locals who are included in Forest Department activities and jobs. DISHA, along with many locals, believe that participation of communities is limited to the Eco-Development Committees (EDCs) and village forest protection committees, which are organized and selected by the Forest Department. These are groups of locals chosen to receive special privileges from the Forest Department, and are supposedly the voice of their community. There purpose is to share information with communities, and also report issues to the Forest Department. The major complaint is that the Forest Department s use of EDCs is tokenistic, and that by having a group of locals in the pocket of a government department, they are able to demonstrate local populations that are benefiting from Forest Department activities. Significant documented information is available on this topic through the Equations website.

Even as fishing is strictly regulated, aquaculture, shrimp seed collection and tourism

are being allowed in the buffer zone of the Tiger Reserve. Large numbers of tourism boats are also allowed in the core area of the Reserve, causing oil and sound pollution. This is another example inequality in terms of treatment towards fishermen, as opposed to tourism. Both are destructive, yet limitations are not equally distributed. DISHA claims that there are many incidences of violence and harassment on fishing communities, and with the declaration of a new sanctuary (West Sundarbans Wildlife Sanctuary) on the horizon, this is increasingly becoming a concern. It should be noted that the designation of the new sanctuary is being considered without discussion with local communities.

## 5.4. Case Study 2 Discussion

As this case study contained significantly more participants than *Case Study 1,* the discussion will be divided into subsections, to individually consider, and draw from, groups of results.

### 5.4.1. Field Observations

Local populations overwhelming speak negatively about the impacts of tourism, and even good thoughts are shadowed by wider and deeper resentment towards the industry. In many case, villagers are surprisingly aware of the complex issues that surround them, and in multiple situations have mobilized and are coming together to speak as a collective. Field visits revealed a serious issue from litter and improper garbage disposal, be it from tourism or not, but the increasing number of visitors to the area will have serious implications in the matter if a proper remedial step is not taken in the near future.

Another major issue noted is the impact of saline water infiltration into sweet water (fresh water) ponds. Resulting from erosion and weakened coastal defenses, the ramifications of this limits agricultural possibilities, threaten the availability of potable water, and in the form of storm surges, threaten the lives and homes of villagers. The foremost cause of this phenomenon is believed to be the removal of mangrove trees lining the coast, for the purpose of building hotels, jetties and bungalows. CRZ violation continue to be a large problem in the area, as no enforcement of the law allows permanent structures to continuously be erected, forever changing the layout of the coastline. As the defenses of

mangrove forests protect villagers and their boats from cyclones, storm surges and floods, this is a cause for serious concern in the area.

For us to reach our site, we had to switch modes of transportation 3-4 times in one day, to reach any given region. At no point were we on a properly paved road, and while watching the rickshaw man bicycle along in front of us, at no point did we think the ride to be anywhere near comfortable. This is an area that development has avoided until now, and many villagers have never been exposed to the ideals and processes of what we deem a civilized society. Many are easily manipulated or cheated by outsiders, and lack the basic knowledge or skillset to stand up for themselves or address the rising concerns around them. There is no authoritative body that represents their needs, and although the Forest Department and Panchayat are present, many feel these figures to be more of a risk than the tiger itself. As it is, figure 5.12, the proposed Forest Department bungalow site in the middle of a mangrove forest, demonstrates the motivations of the department at this time. When the topic of hope and a future is brought up, not one local mentioned government run programs or tourism. All thoughts are directly with local groups, like the SRDS, who provide planting jobs, or assist with implementing multi-crop agriculture. To these people, tourism is simply a large resort with a high fence nearby where they live, but with whom they have no relationship or interaction. People strongly believe that it is not within their capacity, but also not within their best interests, to become a part of tourism, because it does not offer a sufficient their lifestyle. Although the Forest Department and other governmental departments speak of community programs and livelihood programs, not one of the three sites visited were privy to such agendas.

## 5.4.2. Conflict Matrices

There are two key points worth noting from the results of the *Conflict Matrices*. First, local and NGO respondents consistently established that the main cause for social conflict was primarily interactions between the governing body and the system to be governed, followed closely by issues with outsiders of the Sundarbans region. In terms of the latter, this includes both the tourists coming into the Park as well as foreigners establishing shops, lodges and tour programs within the MPA. When it comes to *Job Security,* locals view both categories as equal obstacles, feeling excluded and underrepresented. When it comes to *Perception of Happiness, NGOs* and *Locals* both

agreed that the majority of blame is on outsiders. This is understandable as it is the brokers and outsiders that make the most explicit changes in a community and can affect local happiness in the short term. Although it is government permissions and lack of enforcement that allows these groups to exist in the Sundarbans, it is their immediate actions which are viewed and deemed threatening by the village populations.

The second discovery resulting from the conflict distributions is the acknowledgement by governing bodies and brokers, alike, that there is a serious flaw within the governing system itself. There is a disconnect between departments charged with leading policy and planning within the MPA, and it is the inconsistency, lack of integration and nonexistence of enforcement that causes much strife between stakeholders sharing in the Sundarbans. This is recognized in *Job Security* and *Community Development*, demonstrating that those at fault are also aware of problems existing within their networks. Let it be stated that upon reviewing the source of these conflict points, this was not the result of governing interviews with high-ranking officials, but instead encompasses the mindset of local governments and department representatives working within the MPA boundaries itself. It also includes two cases of interviewees working in Kolkata at head offices, but not in a position of authority of decision-making. A more holistic vision of issues within the MPA would point to this being one of the key driving forces of conflict, demonstrating that parties are aware of the situation, but also showing that locals and NGOs are not.

## 5.4.3. Interview Review

The topic of job opportunities brings about an interesting discussion, as broker and local governments unanimously deemed tourism to be an open door into new careers, while locals, and even state governments do not share that opinion. At the state level, many said that it would not supply sufficient jobs and some believed it was not an option at all for villagers. It was to be an industry that served as entertainment for outsiders and an income for those who were motivated to establish a business opportunity within the MPA. How could such discrepancy exist in what seems to be a simple subject; do jobs exist for local people or not? The Forest Department hired 42 boys to act as guides just one year before, and planners for Gangasagar mentioned 110-120 stores opening at the pilgrimage tourism site. The controversy, however, is not rooted in how many jobs, but instead in the

quality of work available and ability to support one's family on the associated wages. Villagers are said, and agreed, to only be capable of forth class labour jobs, with insufficient wages and incredulously long hours. Other alternative training programs exist, but not enough people are being engaged, and the system is not striving to maximize involvement.

Born of desperation and poverty, locals often turn to illegal wood collection and resource extraction from the jungle. This leads to harassment and fines from the Forest Department, both of which blame each other. The Forest Department has organized help groups and allows for wood collection at certain plantation sites, but the efforts again only help a select few, or provides minimal supplies during limited times of the year. The goal of the MPA is primarily to protect the biodiversity, putting the forest officials in a difficult bind. Many departments and operations function within the Sundarbans, but only serve their own cause. It is the Forest Department s responsibility to ensure the well-being of the jungle, but also look to the needs of local communities. All Forest Directors mentioned being extremely understaffed, and on top of this, have the greatest responsibilities of the Park.

Speaking to the issue of multiple departments and operations, this is a serious issue in terms of enforcement and accountability. The notion of 'passing the buck' and placing blame on others was ever present; stakeholders believing themselves to be the protagonist in the story of the Sundarbans. The Fisheries Department angrily spoke of the Forest Department placing red flags at their hotel property boundary, yet the Forest Department itself has signs in marshy mangrove areas showing that a department bungalow would soon be arriving. All agreed that the potential for the Sundarbans, only 3 hours from Kolkata, was infinite, but each was trying to find their own hold within the Park, breaking laws and developing in any space available. CRZ laws were not being followed, even by government projects, and although all land rights and building permissions were claimed to have been given, not one Panchayat (local government) agreed that they had been consulted in projects of the area. Aside from permissions, there is also no knowledge share in terms of new projects, until the plan itself has been approved. The Deputy Secretary of West Bengal Tourism himself stated that his department does not have the funds to consult at the lowest levels of society. He mocking told us to go ahead and do it, while he dealt

with bigger issues. For local governments, the most difficult part of this was that the central governing body was not the same party as their local government, and they would be aspersed, or worse, should they take up a complaint.

Tourism has clearly emerged as a priority in terms of Sundarbans development and many stakeholders directly involved with the industry share the opinion that more money and change will increase the quality of life for all in the MPA. The current budget for tourism in West Bengal, as declared by the Deputy Secretary of Tourism is nearly US $1.2 billion, demonstrating how much the central government expects and supports the increase in development. Lodge owners speak of the several staff that they hire, but jobs are seasonal and aside from a select few, tall walls separate the resorts from the rest of the world. Locals believe that although the industry brings in a lot of money, it never reaches low enough in the societal rungs to be accessed by the common people. On top of this, vegetable prices and food products increase in price because of more market competition and the costs of land and living go up. Worst of all, the culture is being polluted with a flesh trade, litter, loud constant music and foreigners being allowed to dress and act as they please. Upon raising these issues with governing officials, majority stated that they have not planned for any tourist precautions, but would consider it at a time when the problems did arise. This means that tourism is not being checked, and plans do not yet exist to ensure the safety of local inhabitants.

On a planning level, the point which needs to be most recognized from this study, is that three high ranking officials categorically stated that tourism and conservation could not coexist. This included the Director of the Institute of Environmental Studies and Wetland Management, who is charged with planning the tourism component of West Bengal's ICZMP. Furthermore, three government representatives stated that they did not believe in the roles of their departments, and admitted to lacking knowledge and experience in the tasks assigned to them. One has had to go as far as hiring Italian consultants to design their tourism management plan, as the department has never before dealt with anything other than engineering work.

The most unexpected revelation illuminated in this study is the profound desire that local people share to no longer be dependent on the jungle. In the case of *Case Study 1*, the issue was defending a trade which generations before had practiced, but in the case of the

Sundarbans, the depleted resource was recognized and moreover, the dangers of the jungle are simply too much of a threat for the people. Locals seek changes based on the length of time it takes to reach restricted fishing zones by manual boat, the risk of harassment from the Forest Department, and the ever looming reality that 250-300 people per year are taken by tigers and crocodiles alone. Tourism is not rejected because people oppose modification, it's simply not believed to be a possible alternative. Tourism season is limited to 3-4 months, wages are significantly less than the costs of living, and education levels limit the average villagers ability to find any role in the industry. Even those willing to settle for forth-class jobs, will face long arduous hours at a pay rate less than that of basic mono-crop agriculture.

### 5.4.4. Policy and Development Documents

The implementation of the ICZM pilots is to be carried out by the Institute of Environmental Studies and Wetland Management. This is the same department whose head Director told us that he doesn't believe tourism and conservation can co-exist. The same man who told us that CRZ laws shouldn't exist and that one small island should be preserved and that the rest should be developed for tourism. Those charged with protecting the environment don't believe in the cause of their own departments and are driven by motivations that go against what the MPA stands for. Politicians are blinded by growth potential and it seems that no screening process is associated with selecting ICZMP planning members. A director position being filled by someone who doesn't believe in the ideal of his own department is another example of a failing governance system.

Continuing with the ICZMP, two out of the seven major targets outlined state that they will seek to tackle social vulnerability issues and livelihood issues, yet of the ten Pilot Investment Executing Agencies (PEAs), not one has any connection to social studies or any component of livelihood research. This is to say, that although the plan states an intension of bettering local communities, no department or organization with any experience or background on the matter has been employed in the process. Similar to the example of an engineering department being asked to plan tourism management, this demonstrates a lack of coordination at the highest planning levels. Either the government is not interested in actually fulfilling these targets, or there is, in fact, no government position in place to understand and represent the needs of the local people.

A list of CRZ violations demonstrates the knowledge of noncooperation with central government laws. When dealing with plans such as those of the Jharkhali ecotourism resort and helicopter pad, a forest official admitted that it was a CRZ violation, but added that he was not in a position to question the matter. On top of being a violation, the planned structure is being developed on a recognized crocodile breeding ground and home to tigers in winter months. This raises the question of true motivations in the MPA. Is conservation or tourism revenue the driving force behind development, and if a Forest Officer is not within his jurisdiction to question development in sensitive habitats, who is controlling movement within the park?

### 5.4.5. Limitations of the Study

The limitations of this study in many ways are the same as those outlined in *Case Study 1* as methods were repeated and guides were once again members of the local community. Field visits largely consisted of areas and meetings that locals deemed significant in terms of tourism development, as seen through their eyes. This would naturally include key problem areas and draw attention to all the negative impacts in the region. The same opportunity was not provided for planners, government bodies, or brokers, although attempts were made to obtain their perspectives via means of interviewing. Again, time was also an issue, as was previously mentioned, and 8 days is a considerably short field observation period. Days were long and intensive in order to accommodate for this restriction, and information saturation is believed to have been obtained within the 44 interviews conducted. That being said, Nastasi (n.d.) believe that qualitative research necessitates a high tolerance for ambiguity, suggesting that a longer length of time in the field could have provided further elucidation to the subject at hand. Other limitations of the *field observation* technique, as outlined by (Kawulich, 2005) can be found in section 4.3.1 of *Case Study 1.*

In terms of the sample selection process, Christie (2005) pointed out that a *random sampling* method provides the best opportunity to generalize the results to a population, but this method was not engaged during this study. Instead, *Case Study 2* utilized *snowball* sampling and *purposeful* sampling to collect the required data, with the goal of obtaining a deeper understanding of the complex issues relating to a specific question. This is to say that while results are illustrated in a manner that speaks to an entire population, the

methods chosen for data collection only speak to the perspectives of a group of individuals linked in some form or another. This was accounted for by selecting three separate field sites, employing guides of differing status, involvement and distinction.

Marshall (1996) would add that in *field observations* and *interviewing*, the researcher needs to take into consideration the broader pictures, meaning everything influencing the type of answers being given. This could include why a subject would answer the way they do, and whether or not this answer would be the same next week or month. This comes back to the issue of time restrictions, but also brings to light that human beings are emotional, indecisive beings, easily influenced by short-term events. Therefore, for the purpose of this study, let it be known that results are an indication of human sentiment during the process of data collection, and do not speak to any other time frame or generation other than that under current questioning. This study also acknowledges that paradigms and mentalities do evolve and change, but as this study is an investigation into results of change, it is not a shortcoming to draw on the emotions expressed by those living within the change.

## 5.5. Case Study 2 Conclusions

The tentativeness of life, the constant struggle to survive from one day to the next, is ever prevalent, and the institution does not exist for local people to be heard or have their concerns addressed. West Bengal, and India as a whole, is stuck on tourism development, but fund flow reaches too high to help the communities it inhabits. The prospect of working with the tourism industry is quite literally unfathomable for many modest fishermen and honey collectors, limited by no education or language skills, while those who do find their way in are faced with seasonal work, long hours and minimal wages. While people of the Sundarbans agree that their salvation will be found in aquaculture, pond fisheries, and multi-crop agriculture, efforts of officials throughout the MPA are focused on developing personal tourist lodges, resorts and bungalows, not concerning the interests of the people. The game of pointing fingers results in inefficiency in governance and decision-making, and allows for money to be spent while progress is put on hold; through all levels of society. An example at a governance level would be the numerous CRZ Violations, while the local communities are not exempt from this matter, as they continue to complain about garbage and litter from tourism, all the while throwing their

own trash on the roadside. Conservation has fallen to the wayside, and while denial and resentment is rampant.

In terms of governance, there is a fault in continuity, both in newly elected parties and with department integration. A lack of role demarcation, limits enforcement and allows for unregulated construction to consume the Park. There are too many governing bodies with their hands in the tourism pot, each building their own lodges and trying to capitalize on tourism revenue. Within the ICZMP alone there are 10 departments entrusted with different planning roles, several comprising tourism development. An engineering department with no background or experience is planning management schemes, and the ICZMP process itself has been outsourced to an Italian firm. Conflict points revealed that, in many cases, members of these same branches, along with brokers, are aware of this issue, and believe it to be the number one cause for social conflict within the Sundarbans. Local populations, on the other hand, maintain that the root of their social problems remains with the governing system, and with outsiders entering the Park, for long or short-term business. Conflict has become a debate of positions, since all stakeholders were not involved in decision-making.

This study has demonstrated the need and desire for an alternative form of employment, be it tourism or not. It also explained that the tourism industry, to this point, is does not engage local populations and is not considered a sufficient or suitable means of living. Through use of conflict matrices, we are able to affirm that governing bodies are aware of issues in management, while the local populations are too far removed to see internal conflict, therefore blaming to government as a single body. There is also a concern with the type of development entering the park, and the tourists' behaviour that follows. With this in mind, futures studies should investigate methods of governance integration, the definition of ecotourism as it applies to the Sundarbans, and the plausibility of aquaculture and dual-crop agriculture increasing within the region. Qualitative research is holistic in nature, and as studies such as this begin to elucidate complexities of a society, it is important to keep moving forward, with the goal of understanding human needs and limits, and how to obtain them.

# 6.0. Discussion

The purpose of using multiple case studies was not to draw comparisons between parks, but instead establish a degree of similarity and trends regarding tourism within India's MPAs. By selecting both the largest MPA along with one of the most well-known, the project could form a baseline study, initiating understanding of where local populations stand on the topic of tourism development. This further extends to understanding the degree to which they are involved and benefited. The project served to give voice to grassroots communities as well as to form a bridge between the governing bodies and the people they govern. Field observations along with in-depth interviews provided understanding into the sentiment of multiple stakeholders across society, while conflict analysis matrices were effective at demonstrating perception as well as misplaced blame within the system.

This study was formed around three guiding questions, allowing for a holistic understanding of the industry of tourism in MPAs of India, and the associated roles and impacts. The first question– *what is the current state and status of tourism in India's MPAs*– encompasses government plans and policies, general outlook, the extent and nature of tourism desired, and the governance mechanisms used to engage the community. Within the literature review, policy and state plans were thoroughly examined, bringing to light an immense emerging focus from both Tamil Nadu and West Bengal on tourism development. Within their latest 5-year plan, focusing almost completely on tourism, Tamil Nadu has established what they are calling four 'Mega-Tourism Projects', one falling within the Gulf of Mannar MPA. For this, 1000.75 lakhs (Over US $1.6 million) have been sanctioned to develop the Rameswaram area. On top of this multiple subsidy and loan programs are now available for hotel, resort or attraction developers. In West Bengal, the tourism budget has grown from 6 crores (approx. US $1 million) in 2007, 2008 and 2009, to 120 crores (approx. US $1.2 billion) in 2013. Tourism in both states has intensified following major natural disaster events, and the industry is being viewed as a rehabilitation program for impacted areas. Tamil Nadu declared that per 1 crore (approx. US $160,000) spent on tourism, 475 jobs are created, as opposed to 126 from the manufacturing sector. There is a clear desire for immediate increased tourism, and money is seemingly not an issue. Both MPAs have been identified as high potential tourism destinations, and infrastructure is developing as quickly as possible. Ample employment

opportunities are promised, although no indication is made of who will be getting said jobs. On the ground level, the Forest Department in the Sundarbans and the GOMBRT committee in the Gulf of Mannar have established groups with villagers, and claim to be developing programs to involve and assist local populations. Many villagers claimed that they are not included in these groups, and that distribution of any benefits from the governing bodies are limited to the select few chosen by the Forest Department or GOMBRT. The efforts are deemed tokenistic and insufficient.

The second question asks, *what are the roles of the local communities and stakeholders in these two MPAs?* Continuing with the above-mentioned point of tokenistic representation, fisherman, and honey collectors in the case of the Sundarbans, could not even fathom the possibility of being given work in tourism. The villages where focus groups were held had never been informed of development or asked to participate, and even Panchayats (local governments) spoke of not being consulted regarding new projects and infrastructure development. Funding was being provided by the state, and majority of resorts and hotels belonged to owners outside of the MPAs, collecting pay cheques from a city. In the Gulf of Mannar, government departments controlled tourism activities, while in the Sundarbans most boats where privately owned by resorts and only included a local guide. To this extent, villagers feel the impacts of their lifestyles being restricted, prices in a community rising, and surrounding land being purchased by outsiders, but do not share equally in the benefits. In speaking with local guides, they were given seasonal work while tourists were abundant, but had to turn to other means of income during the other 8 months of the year. Majority of hotels did staff a local group of employees, but the wages were said to be insufficient, while the hours long and arduous. Again, this was seasonal work, not providing a suitable alternative livelihood from resource dependency in the MPA.

Finally, the third question asked *what are the local sentiments towards development and change? Do they feel better or worse off as a direct result of a tourism industry, and why?* For this, inhabitants of the two MPAs displayed contrary opinions. While villagers within the Sundarbans, including shop owners, spoke adversely to the topic of tourism, those living in the Gulf of Mannar repeatedly stated that they had no issue with tourism itself and even spoke to some of the benefit resulting from infrastructure development. The problem for them was not tourism, but instead how they were being restricted or harassed by governing officials. The road, for example, was a great convenience to many, and

allowed the children to go to school and fisherman to transport their catch. The road also caused issues with garbage dumping and the killing of livestock, but unlike the Sundarbans, many spoke about the positives as well. It is natural to oppose change, especially in remote traditional villages, but as a whole, tourism is an industry that influences vast change in a relatively short amount of time. One thing that was agreed upon amongst all grassroots level stakeholders is that consultation or information sharing was never a part of the development and that they feel threatened and helpless against the rapidly emerging tourism market. The primary business of both regions is fishing, and people in these areas do not feel as if tourism personally benefits their lives. The Gulf of Mannar is a Hindu pilgrimage site, drawing in a large majority of vegetarian tourists, and workers of the Sundarbans can get a higher rate on their product by sending it to Kolkata, so they also have no contact with the tourism industry. Local populations do not view tourism in a positive light in either of these MPAs. Each group of stakeholders placed blame on one another, most commonly claiming that poor governance, corruption and selfishness were the industry's driving forces.

If one group of stakeholders claims tourism to be an equal opportunity employer, while the other claims it to be a source of alienation, we must investigate the obstacles involved. The necessity for a shift away from fishing and resource extraction is evident, but when dealing with the issue of increased marginalization within communities, it is imperative to distinguish between a refusal to shift and an inability to shift. There will be parties that benefit from tourism and others who don't, but it is important to identify if the issue is restricted to those who consciously choose to enter/not enter into tourism, or if select groups are being excluded. If it is, in fact, the latter of the two, then it becomes an institutional obstacle, not a personal decision. Unfortunately, according to interview data with locals in the community, many do not feel that tourism is an equal opportunity industry and cannot even fathom work in the business. This signifies that as development and change continues, local inhabitants are determined that institutional obstacle bind them from profiting from the new market.

The greatest contribution of this study, in terms of new knowledge, was the identification of misplaced blame with regard to the roots of conflict. In the very initial stages of this project it became abundantly clear that the question should not be does tourism cause harm to local communities, but instead what class of conflict exists and what

are the main sources of strife within Indian MPAs. For this purpose, conflict points were charted within a series of matrices, illustrating the perceived source of social issues. By reducing all information obtained within each respective case study, it was revealed that, regardless of where conflict was perceived to be, the shortcomings of tourism within both MPAs was a result of poor governance and departmental integration. This means that the main source of social problems falls within category two of the Bavinck & Vivekanandan (2011) conflict categorization; interferences between governing actors inside and outside the MPA. This is an issue that was not identified by *Local* or *NGO* groups in either Park, revealing that blame is being improperly assigned and that those responsible for social conflict are not being held accountable. Instead, in both parks, *NGOs* and *Locals* agreed that issues between themselves and the governing body made up majority of concerns; assuming the governing figure to be one overseeing entity, instead of a series of non-communicating bodies. In the Sundarbans, this would go one step further, assigning blame to actors from outside of the MPA, such as tourists or hotel developers coming in, as an equal problem in terms of quality of life and perception of happiness.

An example of this void in coordination would be the constant reminder of CRZ violation, brought up repeatedly by varying levels of stakeholders. A law exists, but is not enforced, and on top of this, the perpetrators are the governing departments themselves. In the Gulf of Mannar, a marine interpretation centre has been erected which is causing heavy coastal erosion and threatening the well being of nearby villages. In the Sundarbans, multiple government departments, including the Forest Department, have built hotels and bungalows in CRZ violation zones, showing no regard for the importance of sensitive coastlines. The State Director for the department commissioned to plan CRZ laws himself stated that he didn't believe it was a necessary precaution. This is one of many examples that demonstrates the miscommunication and disregard that government actors show between themselves. Each works for its own agenda and shows little interest in integration and holistic management. Concerns are repeatedly brushed off as someone else's problem, and the lack of accountability ensures that nothing is held to a proper standard. Furthermore, no enforcement exists to ensure that players are adhering to conservation and safety regulations.

Concerning the aforementioned issue of placing blame, *Brokers* and *Governmental* interviewees in the Gulf of Mannar shared similar views. This was not the case, however,

for the Sundarbans National Park, where both of these groups categorically acknowledged a lack of integration between governing bodies, and spoke to disagreements or lack of communication between decision makers. This would be the first time throughout this study that different levels of governance and decision-making was mentioned. This is significant for two reasons, as it establishes an understanding, on behalf of decision makers, that an effective management strategy is not present, and also signifies that the true cause of social conflict is understood, at least by some, within the Sundarbans MPA. That being said, it should be indicated that this group of *Governmental* players who understand governing issues does not consist of top-level Sundarbans officials, but instead local level, or implementation level staff. The first step to solving a problem is clearly identifying it, which means a serious self-examination is necessary from governing bodies of both MPAs. For India, a resistantly patriarchal society, obsessed with class and caste, egos will be the largest obstacle to overcome.

One issue that cannot be ignored is that MPAs are formed for the protection and conservation of nature and its resources. This is to say, that the success of the MPA relies on the governing body's ability to engage and successfully alleviate stresses on the ecosystem. Local population, due to their heavy dependency on resource extraction, are considered one of the greatest threats to these ecosystems, and as such, need to be regulated in order to successfully accomplish the goals of the MPA. To this extent, limitations on fishing and extraction processes can be justified, but if the people's concerns are not addressed as a priority, desperation and lack of alternatives lead to illegal activity and a redundancy of the MPA.

In the Sundarbans, many are openly willing to shift away from a dependence on the jungle, because the threat of tigers, crocodiles and harassment from the Forest Department is so prevalent. Even then, the possibility for alternative livelihoods is quite limited and the opportunity for change does not exist for the masses. The Gulf of Mannar, on the other hand, faces a crisis of identity, wherein fisher population believe it to be their legal right to continue with their livelihood, no matter the depleting fish stocks, because it is what their ancestors did for generations before. In this case, the question of entitlement to a job can be raised– whether or not we have the right to be born into a trade and assume the inalienable right to continue it– but unlike the blacksmith, or other failed attempts of this in the past, the ecosystem depends on a solution. Long-term trend analysis in Tamil Nadu from 1985

to 2006 showed that in spite of improving techniques and increasing effort invested into catching fish, the fishing yield is declining steadily, along with already declining trophic levels (Murugan & Durgekar, 2008). This goes to show that top-down regulation and restrictions are not having the desired effect, and that alternative measure need to be investigating, lest there be considerable ecological and economic repercussions for the future. Essentially, if the needs of local people within the MPA are not met, then the MPA itself cannot succeed in achieving its scheduled goals. Willingly or not, those who govern MPAs need to make it a priority to encourage a shift from resource dependency, and although tourism is being heralded as the complete solution, it is, so far, not that window.

Indian hero, Mahatma Gandhi, himself said, "Constant development is the law of life". In a country with a population of over one billion people, change and development is inevitable, but can come at great cost to some. Tourism is an industry that has proven successful in MPAs elsewhere across the globe, but the main drivers need to remain in line with the goals of the park. It appears that the focus in Tamil Nadu and West Bengal has shifted from marine conservation to development of a revenue generating industry, threatening the well being of an ecosystem and the people who inhabit it. As infrastructure and accessibility increases, it becomes a certainty that tourism will have a great impact on these sensitive coastal regions. More than ever, this is a reason why all players need to be considered; tourists, locals, brokers and governing agents are not groups of rats, but are people like you and me. Instead of excluding and restricting inhabitants who are seen as a threat, more focus needs to be dedicated to understanding how to make all living communities benefit more from a growing, healthy marine environment rather than a depleting one.

# 7.0.  Conclusions

This project was formed around two overarching themes– 1) an investigation into tourism trends and the current state of affairs in two of India's MPAs from a management perspective, and 2) a grassroots-level impact analysis to better understand how tourism influences the communities it occupies. It has provided a more complete understanding of how tourism has developed within two of India's MPAs, and has outlined both an increasing nation-wide interest in tourism development, as well as obstacles to decision-making. Furthermore, this project is unique in that it provides the first reported insight from the local community perspective, regarding their perception of development and management initiatives. The use of multiple case studies, demonstrating similar results, strengthens the baseline for future studies and suggests a direction for effective action by stakeholders. It also illustrates that concerns regarding management and social conflicts are not isolated to any single MPA, but instead are widespread across at least two predominant MPAs in India. This is not to act as a control for other MPAs, but suggests that further studies be conducted in order to target major obstacles in aiding inhabitants of this country's protected areas. A protected area's success depends on its ability to remove prevailing stresses on the ecosystem, meaning that without sufficiently appeasing local needs, an MPA is not capable of functioning at its highest possible capacity. Tourism is repeatedly proclaimed a sustainable platform on which the needs of governing bodies, local people, and entrepreneurs can be met. This study has shown that tourism, as it has been applied in these two areas, has not proved to be a sustainable alternative livelihood in the cases of the Sundarbans National Park and the Gulf of Mannar Marine National Park.

The results demonstrate that in both cases a change is necessary and alternative sources of employment are a must, be it for safety or simply that a depleted resource is in threat of extinction. Tourism has proven effective in this regard in other regions of the world, but is seen as a source of great alienation of local inhabitants within both parks reviewed in this study. That being said, the topic of tourism development was rarely put under fire. This study has shown that it is not the industry itself that draws negativity, but instead the increased restriction of freedoms and the methods by which developers encroach upon or behave within local communities, that is repeatedly brought to the surface. Although the general consensus deems interferences between governing bodies and the system to be governed as the leading cause of strife, evidence shows that the true

root of social conflict lies in poorly integrated governing bodies and poor communication between decision makers, planners and developers. On top of this, the lack of consultation of local governing bodies and residents is cause for confusion, fear and resentment. If tourism is to succeed in India's MPAs, the current top-down system needs to be reinvestigated, as it not only lacks continuity, but also fails to be inclusive of all stakeholders.

The use of two case studies demonstrates that methods are replicable and comparable, providing a strategy by which management and community involvement can be assessed across other protected areas in India and elsewhere. Continuing forward, at a government level, a study should be conducted to better understand the roles of each department and clearly demarcate the roles and responsibilities of governing agents. This will resolve miscommunication and lack of accountability, while hopefully increasing enforcement and monitoring for strict adherence. Likewise, future studies should investigate methods of governance integration, and assess the completeness of multi-departmental ICZMP and policy planning. At this stage, too many gaps are allowing for illegal developments to be erected, while profits escape the communities they occupy. By allowing this type of selfish and single-minded mentality to persist, government has let conservation fall to the wayside, making way for revenue-hungry, self-indulgent behaviour. Furthermore, a clear and specific definition of ecotourism is needed, as it applies to conservation areas in India. The term is being misused in an attempt to pass harmful and unsustainable projects, extending as far as a high-end resort with a helicopter pad, directly on sensitive tiger and crocodile breeding habitats. Finally, it has been demonstrated that tourism, as currently applied in these two sites, does not meet the desired standards as an alternative livelihood, and therefore other possibilities need to be explored and assessed. The plausibility of aquaculture and dual-crop agriculture, for example, was frequently mentioned in the Sundarbans, and further studies should investigate viability and implications involved with increasing such practices within the respective regions.

Findings of qualitative research, inclusive of this study, are valuable beyond the specific results, in that they provide a holistic understanding of the functionality of entire systems and the actors within. As studies such as this begin to elucidate complexities of a society, it is important to keep moving forward. At this point, the more knowledge acquired, the more prepared India will be to address proper development methods when

dealing with protected areas. As a rising super power and home to over one billion residents, the implementation of a proper conservation tourism strategy can set the stage for increased opportunity in an already environmentally conscious India.

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