

UNIT 30 INFRASTRUCTURAL DEVELOPMENT

Structure

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30.0 OBJECTIVES

After reading this Unit you will be able to:

- define infrastructure,
- understand its importance in quality management and the sale of a quality product,
- understand the concept of standardisation and its role in the promotional thrust of marketing a destination,
- identify solutions to bottlenecks and weaknesses in India so that your destination, fulfils its potential,
- appreciate the role of infrastructure in customer satisfaction, an important criterion in the demand led tourism system, and
- identify alternatives to mainstream view points.

30.1 INTRODUCTION

In different Units of this course you have come across the term infrastructure. Many a times you hear the views that lack of infrastructure slows down the pace of tourism development, etc. To make the attractions available to tourists certain basic infrastructure is needed. In this Unit we familiarise you with certain issues related with tourism infrastructure. After briefly discussing what is meant by infrastructure in tourism the Unit goes on to discuss the standards of infrastructure and its management. Various views expressed in this regard have been dealt with in the Unit. The Unit also points out the concerns left out in the Government policies for infrastructural development and also presents an alternative viewpoint.

30.2 ASPECTS TO BE CONSIDERED

Tourism has been restricted to certain small sectors of the market because the large scale movement of tourists has turned towards the supply, in greater quantities and at lower prices, of tourist services and products. Mass Tourism is characterised by its willingness to forgo quality in the interests of affordability. However, two interesting contradictions emerge when we take on the issue of infrastructure:

1. Tourism expands the space of the tourist, and in doing so, brings into his orbit destinations which may be economically, socially and culturally different to the

tourists home environment. Many tourists either cannot cope with these differences or find it extremely difficult.

2. Tourism makes people change their daily routine by taking them away from home and yet they want to retain their “environmental bubble” by patronising an international airline, an international tour operator and an international chain of hotels. They like to travel in an encapsulated form, with airconditioning, secure in their language, culture, money and value system. This dilutes the economic and social benefits. One solution to these contradictions is for the state to show foresight and plan tourism development, so that tourism infrastructure and services will not produce results which hamper the residents from meeting their basic needs and yet achieve the objectives of income, employment and development. Tourism needs to be understood and supervised if it is not to become a danger to the community. This should include:
 - i) Construction of a model to see the inter-relationship between tourism and other activities.
 - ii) Promotion of the beneficial effect of holidays with the domestic tourist.
 - iii) Subsidy for tourism for workers and other less favoured sectors to win their approval for tourism.
 - iv) Analysis of the role of tourism in the national economy.
 - v) Legislation for establishing an adequate frame work for all possible aspects of tourist activity.
 - vi) Provision of protection to tourists so that they may enjoy tourism under the best conditions.
 - vii) Protection of the rights of individuals and communities at the destination and their share in the benefits.

All these aspects have an important relationship with infrastructure in the tourism business.

30.3 INFRASTRUCTURE

The Lovely Planet Guide, an unseperable companion of occidental tourists to the orient, states that Malayasia, Singapore and Brunei “Offer the visitor a taste of Asia at its most accessible”. This is because “transport facilities are good, accommodation standards are high, the food excellent (often amazingly good) and for the visitor there are very few problems to be faced”

Cheap and easy to get about in this region offers variety in geographical and cultural products (Beaches, mountains, rivers, wildlife, cities, people and food). This promotion would have been impossible without looking into the issue of infrastructure.

What is infrastructure?

Text books describe infrastructure as that which is located **below** the ground, to complement that which lies **above** ground. In the case of Tourism supply, this definition is very limited, because the **tourist product is complex, without boundaries, spills over the globe and is not put together in a factory**. Therefore, our definition has to be expanded to meet the needs of the tourism phenomenon.

The Tourist product, physically located in a particular country, is the possession of mankind. **The first aspect of infrastructure is freedom to travel; freedom of access**. This involves international relationships, worldwide agreements, international policies, friendly relations and hostilities.

The tourist product within a country is not a separate enclave. There is a relationship with other sectors of national life: agriculture, forestry, manufacture, settlement pattern education, religion, trade, health and land use. Thus, the relationship is not just only between buyers and sellers of travel as **tourism supply is a part of community life. This is because tourist oriented products and resident oriented products intermingle and**

overlap, for example in transportation, hotels, entertainment and culture, in parks, museums, sanctuaries, towns, monuments, walkways, sports facilities and places of worship. These are of equal importance to visitors and local citizens. **The more a resident community takes pride in the improvement of its community the greater will be the strength of its tourism product. This is the second aspect of infrastructure i.e. the level of development of services to the community and the level of services offered to visitors. Thus, infrastructure can be defined as the policies and relationships that remove barriers or obstacles to free travel — visas, passports, currency language, international connections, information and promotion, and prejudices related to race, religion and gender. Infrastructure also includes water electricity, sewage disposal, gas, land, taxation policies and other social facilities and institutions that improve the quality of life like construction, transport, networks, communication facilities, judicial facilities and public security, law and order, education and training.**

Thus, infrastructure cannot be provided by the traditional or conventional business firm. In planned economies the distinction between the public/state sector and the conventional firm is not as crucial as in market economies. This is because profit and non-profit organisations are given different roles in market economies whereas in planned economy, maximisation of the social value of production is given greater emphasis. In a country like India, which has seen the increase in inequality in distribution of wealth, resources and development since independence, it is natural that the quality of the infrastructure for all sectors of the economy is very uneven. We can see this in Delhi which has seen the growth of slums and migration to swell its population beyond the carrying capacity of its infrastructure. Today 60% of its residents live in slums. In this situation, the strength of the tourism infrastructure has to be created independently, and at a great cost. It is for this reason that the National Action Plan, 1992 asserts that in the process of development, it is the Government that is going to provide the infrastructure, while the private business firm is going to provide services like accommodation and transport. Thus, the Government will invest 13,640 crore, the public sector 11,600 crore and the private sector 13,860 crore to attract 5 million tourists. The Government and the Public Sector investments will be in the area of infrastructure whilst the Private Sector investment will be to increase accommodation and air capacity.

Check Your Progress-1

1. Define Infrastructure.

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2. Mention the relationship between infrastructure and tourism.

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30.4 INTERNATIONAL STANDARDS

Tourism, in the modern period, grew and expanded in Western Europe and America and 80% of international tourism is concentrated in these areas. The top ten tourism destinations do not include the Third World. Similarly, these destinations are also the main tourist generating countries. Tourists, therefore, demand services that they are accustomed to at home. Thus, we have seen the western style hotel replace traditional accommodation and air transport replace rail and road transport. This is because the quality of the later conform to Indian standards which are of a lower order than those which have been developed for the sparsely populated industrialised countries which have access to and utilise 60% of the worlds resources. Similarly, airconditioning, running hot and cold water, safe drinking water and western standards of hygiene are an inescapable consequence of wanting to be a part of the global tourism market.

The **National Action Plan** is quite clear about its objective; 5 million international tourists for whom Special Tourist Areas will be created in the least developed parts of the country (Sec Unit-29).

Similarly 50 lakhs each will be spent on upgrading Golf courses in Bombay, Delhi, Jaipur and Hyderabad along with new Golf courses in Goa and the North East to provide sports facilities of international standards which are now determined by the Japanese and the Americans. The **NAP** completely ignores the theoretical guideline that the quality of life of the community strengthens the quality of tourist oriented products. Therefore, it does not prescribe any investment for domestic tourism services, except at pilgrim centres. The leisure and pleasure aspect of domestic tourism is ignored because Indian standards are assumed to be compromisable. Often one hears views like "if a hill station is crowded in the summer and no accommodation is available, I am not worried. The domestic tourist will sleep in the car or find his own way. Its the international tourist who must be provided for, because he spends money".

This leads to a pressure on Third World destinations to organise, standardise and manage the supply aspect, since tourists are now moving out to the last periphery to seek quality experiences at a low price. To make this possible States and Governments are being advised by inter-governmental organisations like the **WTO** to standardise their services, and improve their quality to meet the social and psychological needs of the international tourist.

30.5 MANAGEMENT OF INFRASTRUCTURE

In this Section we shall look at primary sectors like energy, to develop a blue print.

Energy is most essential to the tourism product. Many people have been critical of energy consumption and distribution to the tourism sector. Users have also demanded lower rates to ease the product within the competitive prices at other destinations. Solutions to the problem of energy should be sought in the search for alternative sources of energy and in the implementation of conservation measures. The alternatives to thermal-diesel sources include:

- Solar energy sources,
- Wind energy sources,
- Hydro Power sources, and
- Tidal Wave sources.

However, research in alternative energy sources has not come up with any viable commercial form other than nuclear energy which has problems of safety. In a low energy society the **consumer must be made aware of the high cost of providing energy for services given to the consumer to avoid careless waste and to sensitise the tourist to the problems faced by such societies.**

Adjustments made in transport through the application of energy efficient technology are

not only possible but also prevalent in today's world. The location and management of facilities and services can reduce losses and waste through proper planning and use of quality materials and an ingrained maintenance culture, so that extensive travel does not create excessive demand for energy. Certain steps to be initiated in this regard can be:

1. Shift static users of power to alternative resources.
2. Combine business and pleasure trips.
3. Combine carriers to reduce waste, rather than encourage individual transport.
4. Locate accommodation units near transport terminals.
5. Integrate terminals of different modes to avoid waste by individuals.
6. Develop Tourism circuits to shorten distance of tours.
7. Consolidate or cluster developments at resorts for easy access and energy conservation.
8. Enhance attractions in cities where infrastructure is strong and historic sites, buildings, museums, theatres, sports facilities, unusual events and cultural attractions and local industries are well developed.

In many countries, toll systems on roads discourage individual users. Similarly, car pools reduce pressure on petroleum resources. In National Parks, automobiles are parked at the entrance and battery operated vehicles or mass transit systems or walking are the preferred mode. However, alternative tourism, which seeks a more authentic experience for the tourist often puts an unsustainable pressure on the energy system. In such cases local traditions should be relied upon and low energy consumption could be the natural attraction. Similarly, concentration and clustering at resorts can often impose urban architecture and an outlook which destroys a natural attraction like a beach, a forest or the mountains.

Since there is a close relationship between tourism supply and the national economy in a country like India, **creating and managing the tourism infrastructure, in line with international standards is difficult and expensive.** Thus, franchising and management contracts provide the necessary knowhow to achieve the global outlook. Such arrangements include:

- architectural standards,
- special training programmes,
- computer reservation systems, and
- brand name recognition.

This is popular in the transport and accommodation sectors. For government owned land, like a national park, agreements with private businesses can be in the form of a concession. The private business provides accommodation, food and other services, but under the control of the agency giving the concession. The advantage is that Government can earn revenues without investing in the services and the local economy can benefit from the demand for goods and services. Recreation facilities can be created for the public in greater numbers by sharing with the private sector an asset owned by the Government but not developed by it. However, the tourist business is seasonal and the returns from such financial arrangements may be difficult to secure. Therefore, investors will be difficult to attract. That is why in India, in the tourism sector, there is a push for foreign investment. Foreign investment will only flow once government regulations are reduced and the policy towards such investment is stable. To avoid environmental degradation and public approval, not only a high degree of local participation is required but also on site supervision by a public agency.

It must also be noted that International Tourism is highly susceptible to monetary fluctuations. This can also increase the negative risks in foreign investment. That is why India, like other destinations, is attempting to mobilise investment from its own private sector through a package of incentives to encourage tourism enterprise.

These include:

- low interest and long term loans,

- Government subsidies for facilities in backward regions or special tourist areas,
- Financial arrangements like equity participation, tax reduction, tax exemption, interest rebate, duty free imports, and
- Land at low cost.

All these measures should be qualified by the social and economic costs to the nation of investing in tourism supply instead of health or education.

Check Your Progress-2

1. Explain the role of Public and Private sectors in the area of infrastructure.

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2. What do you understand by international standards in tourism?

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30.6 BOTTLENECKS AND SHORTCOMINGS

Organised Tourism in India is a recent phenomenon. Because India's share of the world market is extremely negligible (0.40%) the travel trade has identified several problem areas and offered strategies to overcome these shortcomings. This is what we shall term the mainstream argument, since, Government policy is determined by the critique of its policies by the travel trade. As the team of travel writers, Rabindra Seth and Dharmarajan asserts "to ensure greater customer satisfaction the infrastructure which is admittedly weak in every aspect, ranging from airports to toilets, has to be strengthened".

India has been known for its traditional hospitality and personalised services, based on its colonial tradition of **Sahib log** and the large labour force. However, what the tourist wants is efficiency and time saving, which only technology can give. The argument is, therefore, on how to retain the USP (Unique Sales Proposition) and yet modernise India's Tourist Product.

What the mass tourist wants is also economy along with mass production. A country like India can not afford to spread its resources for tourism too thinly. To give a value for money product that will be not only competitive but also superior, we will have to look at the following areas:

1. Number of destinations to bring on the tourism map.
2. Facilitation — visa, immigration, customs.

3. Airports and facilities and staff training; accessibility and cost of travel to India from all parts of the world; Availability of airports and air services from entry points to tourist destinations and capacity on Trunk Routes where business travellers compete for space, with tourists; Air worthiness of our fleet and safety as well as on time arrival.
4. Roads and surface transport to ensure standard sized airconditioned coaches and tourist cars/taxis; Highways to access tourist attractions; Wayside facilities like cafes and rest rooms, petrol stations and repair shops, telephones and overnight accommodation.
5. Hygiene in all matters, both personal and public.
6. Accommodation to suit the taste and pocket book of a highly segmented demand that ranges from the youth hosteller to the high spender. Cleanliness and providing western facilities at all destinations; Water and electricity availability, safety and courtsey are other requirements.
7. Trade Fairs and reciprocal Festivals for promotion.

For this restructuring of the tourism industry many feel that incentives play an important role. However, experience points out, that what matters in the final analysis is the kind of facilities provided to the tourist, whether a back packer or the up market variety. **What is needed for India to take-off in the tourist market are available, clean, hygienic and comfortable facilities.** This does not require the Government's intervention in the hotel and Travel Agency Sector, but the provision of smooth, surfaced roads, quality coaches and cars and a clean environment around monuments. These are the ground realities of a good tourist product, according to veterans of the trade.

But what about income and earnings? How are these ground realities to be achieved? In a situation where tourism targets are difficult to realise and the earnings from tourism in dollar terms are going down, it is difficult to take appropriate steps, in time, to improve the product. If we are to achieve the benefits of tourism, we have to ensure a better and balanced spread of the infrastructure. If funds are not forthcoming, then the privatisation process can be sped up and foreign investment sought to fill the gap between needs and resources.

Whilst the trade supports the new approach to limit travel circuits, improve airports at tourist destinations and the introduction of air taxis and private airlines, there are still some areas that they feel have not been studied. These are:

- irksome taxes like road and luxury taxes imposed by State Governments,
- the debate over dual tariffs (Re/\$) by the hotel industry,
- medium priced and low cost hotels, and
- paying guest accommodation.

This type of restructuring will help tourism planners to manage travel budgets, while covering the lead time required for the infrastructure to catch up. The stumbling block seems to be the issue of hygiene, telephone and meals — areas Europeans are not willing to compromise on.

Similarly, the trade felt that support for Air India should not be expressed through a closed skies policy. After the failure of the Visit India year, when a lot of foreign airlines withdrew from Indian destinations, the travel trade is appreciative of the open skies policy of the Government which includes charter operations. In 1993, 605 charters brought in 50,000 tourists. Another problem identified by the Travel trade is the negative fall out of the term "Tourist Industry". This has repercussions in the Income Tax Act which denies to tourism services the benefits other services get, like depreciation. Secondly, it raises the power tariff and denies to tourism incentives for energy conservation. Labour unrest, but particularly the pilots strike, also had an important role in giving our infrastructure a poor image because we had no alternative. Today the open skies policy has changed the scenario. The travel trade has also approved the broad outlines of the NAP. The states will now provide the infrastructural back up like roads, water, power and security. The private entrepreneur will invest in the services. However, their criticism relates to the over

1. Doubling of hotel accommodation within 3 years.
2. Doubling of tourist arrivals within 5 years.

The reason for the trade's pessimism is based on the weakness of the infrastructure (absence of sites) and the complex bureaucratic procedures to ensure the best use of scarce resources.

Whilst India does offer a variety of attractions, it is using its resources very ineffectively. Part of the problem is identified in the shortcomings of the approach adopted to market the tourist products overseas. The literature available is stereo-typed and often out of date. Information gathering and dissemination are highly professional activities, which require investment and training.

At the TAAI convention at Hyderabad in 1992, Inder Sharma identified the lack of major support from the community and the Government as the major bottleneck to the growth of tourism in India. For example, building a canal or a dispensary is more satisfying to the voter. To change this situation, the need of the hour is to make everyone believe that tourism is a national asset.

As a fall out of the convention tourism, the highly competitive convention business opportunity has not been realised because of the need for a requisite infrastructure. For example the conference of Immunologists will bring 10,000 delegates to India. They require facilities of a convention city. Although Haryana has offered an 80 acre site near the international airport, the convention complex will take years to build. It requires a massive auditorium with the latest technology, committee rooms, attached hotels, shopping plazas, communication centre, entertainment centre and medical centre. However, at the moment, such facilities would have long periods of non-use which would entail high maintenance and replacement costs.

Clubs and weekend retreats can play a small role in overcoming these problems. The travel trade has also raised the issue of infrastructural weakness in unique eco systems and for adventure sports. The Thar desert, the Himalayan region and the North East have been identified as unique geographical areas which have remained undeveloped because of (a) difficult terrain and (b) security reasons. Now that inner line restrictions have been removed, improvement of the infrastructure and accessibility of destinations is underway with extension of airports, new accommodation units, rafting and adventure tools.

The heritage town concept is bringing infrastructural improvement to the South. This involves conservation and protection of archaeological and architectural sites present in a large number of towns and villages. The planing also involves the provision of public amenities for tourists and pilgrims. Heritage hotels are a spin-off from this concept. In the first phase towns included are Mamallapuram, Kanchipuram, Chidambaram, Kanyakumari, Rameshwaram, Tharangambadi, Thanjavur, Kumbha Konam, Srirangam, Thiruhiani, Palam and Sriperumbudur.

Kerala is one state where tourism is looking up, despite the lack of an international airport and shortage of quality accommodation. With the upgradation of the Trivandrum airport, a privately funded airport at Kochi and joint ventures in the hotel sector between KTDC and the Taj and Welcome Groups have helped to establish the primary stage of infrastructural development. The success of tourism in the state will ultimately depend on the planned growth of the infrastructure. However, given the resource crunch, **selective development should be done to ensure effective and sustained development of destinations.**

Island resorts are to be developed in Lakshadweep and Andaman and Nicobar islands. Here, the problem lies in getting clearance from the Ministry of Environment. These islands can be made accessible by air or by sea, and the developer has to set up the entire infrastructure including non-conventional sources of energy, drinking water plant, sewage pipes, etc. This raises the question of economic viability of the project, since the Government's investment will be land given on long lease. One way out is to use luxury ships, both to transport and accommodate tourists so that environmental damage can be contained and the high level of investment on infrastructure can be reduced. Garbage disposal can also be contained so that the islands and the seas will not be polluted.

30.7 ALTERNATIVE VIEW POINT

Tourism of the rich to the countries of the poor does not automatically lead to the solution of economic problems or developmental objectives. In fact, it is the policy maker, the provider of services and the tourist who benefit most and profit from tourism in the most undeveloped destinations of the world. The reasons for this are.

- The global division between the rich and the poor,
- Different cultures, attitudes and values, and
- Different ways of living and working.

In the decade of 80's tourism related problems emerged because of serious cases of wrong development. In extreme cases it led to:

1. Unpairment of the life support of native population groups because of the construction of tourism facilities, particularly fishing and agriculture, toddy tapping, etc.
2. Environmental damage like bulldozing sand dunes, polluting sea water, cutting trees to build roads and lay other infrastructure, deforestation for the construction of accommodation and air strips, etc.
3. Sex Tourism and child prostitution which bring diseases like AIDS to Third World countries where people can not cope with them because the health and awareness infrastructure does not cover their needs.
4. Culture shock and Demonstration effects which do irreparable damage to faulty and community relationships.
5. Tourist related crimes like eve teasing and drug trafficking.
6. Resistance by the victims of tourism to the developments from above which are often not compatible with the reality of the local people and are certainly not implemented with their participation.
7. Developing concepts of tourism that will be environmentally and culturally sustainable over a long period, and which should control and guide investments with greater responsibility and respect for people at the destination.

It is interesting to note that **anti-tourism activists and networks have been successful in sensitising tourists from rich countries but have been unable to make their own governments become more responsible and open in their planning for tourism development.** Whereas surveys of tourists indicate that they are willing to participate in holidays more in step with local conditions, including the consumption of local produce, the policy makers and the industry, whilst paying lip service to alternative concepts, continue to advocate the kind of tourism that has already polluted the beaches of Bali and Thailand; brought about conflicts and resistance to the growth of golf tourism; focussed on the evil of sex tourism and child prostitution. In India the industry in a way promotes these "silent" evils, since we never study tourism impacts. As a young boy from Lakshadweep said "island people like to have a protective cover between them and the outsider, like a mask". The tourism lobby also projects only a positive image of tourism in justifying the expenditure on tourism and legitimising the kind of activities that are taking place under the umbrella of tourism. **It is also known, from experience, that tourism succeeds only when the gap between the tourist and the local person is not very wide.** The greater the difference in terms of income, access to resource, life-style and culture, the benefits of tourism are reduced. Secondly, in the NAP or the industry support that this new vision for tourism development is projecting, there is no mention of carrying capacity, a concept that every destination, location or site, has to determine for itself. The considerations should include:

1. The degree of openness of the local social and settlement pattern.
2. The infrastructure needs of the local population and priority these should have over the infrastructure needs (to be created from the base) of tourism.

3. The social and recreational needs of the local community, and the similar needs of the tourists. If the gap is too wide, tourism should not be pushed.
4. How much income, revenue, and employment will tourism generate for the local people? This should have priority over the foreign exchange earnings that Central Government can earn to improve their balance of payments position. The average Indian is not linked to or involved in the economy where foreign exchange earnings are either meaningful or beneficial to him. This would involve an assessment of local problems and their solution via tourism development which must be evaluated before plans are made or implemented.
5. The “weakness of the infrastructure” argument must be evaluated against the ground realities of the people’s lives and expectations rather than those of the tourists alone.

As we can see, the concept of infrastructure **means different things to different people**. In trying to solve macro-economic problems the Government often misses the micro-economic realities. The travel trade is in the business of profit and their investment in tourism is purely consumer oriented. They ignore the fact that often tourism kills itself. They become the handmaidens of destruction, because Travel Agents and Tour Operators are linked to the international system and to be in business they have to fall in line with the mainstream values of the Tourism System. However, tourism does have creative possibilities if one approaches the issues raised in the critique with awareness, concern and sensitivity.

Tourism, as an advanced form of consumerism, depends on distant and unknown “others” to supply the needs of the tourist, whose money commands governments and the trade to develop tourist products often at the expense of the resident. This dependence on money creates a culture in which individuals become bonded to the market, which is then called “free” and the consumers choice a “freedom”.

In the industrialised countries few of the basic needs are satisfied locally. Items of daily consumption are rarely produced close to the place where they are to be consumed. Household goods, shelter, transport, leisure, entertainment and health care, all have their location in communities which are not going to be able to use them. The privileged of the planet can alone have access to such products. This form of free market enterprise demands an infrastructure that is not only coming at heavy price but also putting pressure on the ecology and the environment (Also see Unit 34).

Check Your Progress-3

1. How should we develop the infrastructure?

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2. Identify the areas of weakness of infrastructure in India.

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30.8 LET US SUM UP

The concept of infrastructure in tourism has different connotations in relation to different services. However, there is a distinct relationship between infrastructure and the quality of tourism product or service. Both the public as well as the private sectors have their role in infrastructural development. There are certain weaknesses of infrastructure when compared to international standards that are determined basically from the point of view of European or American tourists. However, there should not be a mad race to imitate the Western model with only high spenders in mind. Infrastructural development should take place keeping in view the sustainable aspect and avoiding negative impacts on the environment or the host population.

30.9 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS EXERCISES

Check Your Progress-1

1. Take into account the specific needs of tourism mentioned in Sec. 30.3.
2. See Sec. 30.3

Check Your Progress-2

1. Both have a vital role to play. The public sector, like providing essential infrastructure road, airport, water supply etc. and accommodation, etc. by private sector. See Sec. 30.5.
2. Base your answer on Sec. 30.4.

Check Your Progress-3

1. Mention in your answer a critique of the European model stressing upon our own resources. See Secs. 30.6 and 30.7.
2. See Sec. 30.6.

