



## THE INVOLVEMENT OF LOCAL COMMUNITIES IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF ECOTOURISM

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### Abstract:

Ecotourism has become an integral part of global tourism which is making contributions to the social, environmental and economic development of destinations and local communities. Ecotourism helps to conserve bio-diversity as well as the cultural heritage of the world ecotourism is also an effective vehicle for fighting against poverty and to achieve the overall development of the destination. It has become a blessing in disguise for the entire tourism industry. Ecotourism is based on nature e.g. rainforests or ecosystems. The presence of tourists should not damage that environment this is the main idea of ecotourism, and that tourist presence should contribute towards the local conservation issues. The involvement of the local population is very important to achieve positive impacts upon the local environment in which tourists are enjoying themselves. The local population should consider tourism alternative source of income and that is why their contribution is more important than that of the visitors.

### Introduction

The political empowerment and the economical development of the local population can be achieved through ecotourism. This kind of tourism has gained much importance these days so that the future generations may also experience the natural beauty of the world. Ecotourism focuses on the living parts of the natural environments, environmental sustainability, and personal growth. The cultural heritage is the primary attraction of ecotourism. Therefore, in addition to evaluating cultural and environmental factors became an integral part of ecotourism to recycle natural phenomenon to create economic development and opportunities to local communities. Ecotourism has become the major economical source and not a marginal activity to finance protection for some countries e.g. Nepal, Kenya, Madagascar and territories such as Antarctica.

*Sustainable tourism does provide the answer. Unfortunately it is to the wrong question. Rather than effectively addressing the complexities of tourism impact, what it is actually achieving is the considerably easier task of answering the question - 'How best can we cope with the criticism of tourism impact?' One that satisfies the immediate short-term wishes of some of the main protagonists in tourism's impact debate avoids sacrifices and enables behaviour much the same way as before - but with the veneer of respectability and from a higher moral platform.[3]*

The need for small scale, locally based ecotourism and slow growth is highlighted by the lack of sustainability. Because of the use of local products and materials it caused a greater multiplier effect on the economy. this form of

tourism is dependent on foreign investment for promotion or start up. According to The International Ecotourism Society, the ecotourism definition is: "responsible travel to natural areas that conserves the environment and improves the wellbeing of local people." Some critics of ecotourism has a view that no tourism can be eco-friendly due to the involvement of resources involved in transport, carbon and fuel but if we consider another point of view that humans are not going to stop travelling or making trash, so ecotourism invented the idea of recycling the natural resources and raise awareness. There were a lot of critics who said that recycling programs would never work, but we have achieved lot of success due to this form of tourism.

For the development of ecotourism natural resource management has to be considered as a specialized tool, but without the proper utilization of the resources the destinations having flora and fauna are destroyed. Proper management programmes and several plans can be introduced for the survival of these resources. Hill areas like Kurseong in West Bengal has many natural resources, but lack of proper management poised the situation. Researchers from Jadavpur University are working in this area. local social-economic benefits, biodiversity preservation, and environmental impact these are the major factors that differentiate ecotourism from the other forms of tourism. The annual growth of ecotourism sector in overall tourism industry is 10–15% due to its main focus on the practice of low-impact, culturally and ecologically sensitive travel that benefits host countries and local communities. But now days these standards

have not been maintained by many of the ecotourism projects.

### **Conclusion**

Many the challenges of various negative impacts are there in front of the local communities. South Africa is getting economic benefits with various negative impacts such as forcing the natives to leave their abode and violations of fundamental rights. Many countries are spending a tremendous amount of money and using human resources for ecotourism despite any positive outcomes, this is because of avoiding the role of local and native communities in this sector. Local communities are also not showing interest in some countries because Government fails to deliver promises of community-level benefits, violation of fundamental rights, damages environments and plenty of other social impacts. Many critics argue that ecotourism is neither socially nor ecologically beneficial without the involvement and the interest of the local communities. Several studies are being done on ecotourism and its structure but the role of local communities cannot be ignored.

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