




Revisiting Ecotourism: Sustainability, Economic Development and Way Forward

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DOI: <https://doi.org/10.70333/ijeks-04-08-007>

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Article Info:- Received : 13 April 2025

Accepted : 25 May 2025

Published : 30 June 2025

Abstract

The importance of ecotourism as an alternative tourism continues to grow worldwide. Ecotourism represents travel to natural areas, conserving the environment and improvement of well-being of local people. The concept of ecotourism has been evolving continuously from early 1970's. The proposed paper deals with the key literature of ecotourism describing its different the several aspects viz. ecotourism and education of travelers, ecological conservation, environmental degradation and economic and political development of employment as well as the development of local bodies and employment generation along with benefits of local communities and other stakeholders. The major objective of the proposed paper is to state and explain various perspectives of ecotourism and to examine fundamentally of its major studies since 1970's with relation to the improving determinants of ecotourism. From the literature survey it is found that there are several determinants which are responsible to increase the marginal people to out of poverty. These are increase in the level of income and household consumption, increase in the availability of home amenities, significant changes in non-farm income and considerable improvement in environmental conservation. It is also important for us to know how ecotourism was in the past, how it is now and how it will be in the future. Some important shortcoming of ecotourism sustainability are also found in literature- lack of tourist investment, lack of knowledge and awareness, lack of participation of local people, slow involvement of government and non-government organizations, besides political disturbance. Indeed, for the betterment of the ecotourism and alternative sources of income urge the need for active participation of the local people, local NGOs and local government.

Keywords: *Ecotourism, Ecological Conservation, Environmental Degradation, Economic Development.*



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1. INTRODUCTION

Ecotourism is a type of “rural tourism”. The term ‘Ecotourism’ is perhaps the most misunderstanding term in travel and tourism industry. So, understanding the concept of ecotourism, in right perspective is sensible. Hence, ecotourism is defined as “responsible travel to natural areas that conserve the environment and improves the well-being of the local people, creates knowledge and understanding through interpretation and education of all involved as visitors, staff and the visited pilgrimages.” (TIES, 1990) It represents a nature-based trip to a relatively unspoilt touristic destination. In both developed and developing countries ecotourism is viewed as an engine of economic advancement and a pathway for improving the livelihoods of communities (Saufi, O'brian, wilkins, 2022). Ecotourism helps in poverty alleviation, new job creation, financial support and exporting of domestic products to international markets, (Dhungana and Dangi, 2021) biodiversity conservation and traditional economic activity, including agriculture, livestock and hunting. Ecotourism can promote sustainable development by maintaining biodiversity and ecosystem services. (Duffy, 2004)

For example, travelling and visiting a particular forest or a village is not called ecotourism unless the visit benefits the environment and local people of that particular place.

By reviewing several literatures related to ecotourism, anyone can come to know why ecotourism is very important as an alternative to tourism. Every environment has its own carrying capacity. When the number of tourists increased above this capacity it affects the balanced position of environment. That means uncontrolled conventional tourism creates potential threat to the natural environment. These potential threats include enormous pressure on an area and lead to impact such as natural habitat loss, soil erosion, and increased pressure on endangered species, increased pollution, and forest fire (Shiji, O, 2016). To minimise all these negative effect ecotourism is an alternative option of mass tourism.

The concept of ecotourism has been evolving continuously from early 1970s. The present paper deals with the key literature on ecotourism and highlights its various aspects viz.

ecotourism and education of travellers, ecological conservation, environmental degradation and economic and political development, employment as well as the development of local bodies, benefits of local communities and other stakeholders.

Main benefits of ecotourism is that it reduces pollution and waste by promoting restorable (Beaches, natural parks and wild life reserve, mountain and scenic landscape) use of natural resources. By limiting energy consumption, using renewable source like solar power and avoiding single use of plastic and ecotourists help protecting ecosystem from damage. In this paper various perspectives of ecotourism and its impact on environment and its socioeconomic condition have been focused.

The concept of ecotourism has been evolving continuously since early 1970s. At the very first time, Hector Ceballos-Lascurain defined the concept of ecotourism in the early 1980s. By reviewing various literatures helps ecotourism conceptualising and defining in different ways.

Ceballos Lascurain (1987) defined ecotourism as “Travelling to relatively undisturbed or uncontaminated natural areas with the specific objective of studying, admiring and enjoying the scenery and its wild plants and animals, besides any existing cultural manifestations (both past and present) found in these areas.”

The national eco-tourism strategy and Ecotourism Association of Australia (1992) together conceptualise ecotourism as “ecologically sustainable tourism that fosters environmental and cultural understanding, appreciation and conservation”.

The world travel and tourism environment research centre (1993) meant ecotourism as “tourism with the specific motive of enjoying wildlife or undeveloped natural areas”.

Australia’s national ecotourism strategy defined ecotourism as (commonwealth department of tourism 1994) “Nature-based tourism that implies with education and interpretation of natural environment and is to be managed ecologically sustainable”.

The international ecotourism society (TIES, 2015) defines ecotourism as “Responsible travel to natural areas that conserves the environment and sustains the well-being of local people, and explores interpretation and education”.

In the words of international union for conservation of nature (IUCN, 1996), ecotourism is “Environmentally responsible travel to natural areas, in order to enjoy and appreciate nature (and accompanying cultural features, both past and present) that promote conservation, having a low visitor impact and encourage beneficial active socioeconomic involvement of local people”.

World tourism organisation (WTO) has defined ecotourism as “a travelling to relatively undisturbed natural areas with specific objective of studying, admiring and enjoying the scenery, its wild plants and animals, as well as existing cultural aspects (both past and present) found in these areas”.

The ecotourism society defines ecotourism as “purposeful travel to natural areas to understand the culture and natural history of the environment, taking care not to alter the integrity of the ecosystem, while producing economic opportunities that make the conservation of natural resources beneficial to local people”.

The ecotourism society (TES) defined ecotourism as “responsible travel to natural areas that conserves the environment and sustains the wellbeing of the local people”. Its main aims are to attain ecological and socio-cultural integrity, responsibility and sustainability.

The definition of ecotourism has changed significantly with the passage of time. Earlier ecotourism was defined as a descriptive concept in which there was no difference between ecotourism and nature tourism. But now, ecotourism seems to be explained as the desired state of a development to maintain a balance between nature conservation, sustainable socio-economic development and nature tourism. Ecotourism in simple words means management of tourism and conservation of nature in a way so as to maintain a fine balance between the requirements of tourism and ecology on one hand and needs of the local communities on the other. Tourism and ecotourism must be placed within a country's overall development strategy in accordance with the context of a global economy.

Ecotourism if properly planned, developed and attracted has the potential of making significant contributions to the social and economic development of the region. For the success of ecotourism, natural resources managers, local people, tourism operators, policy

makers and tourists need to think in unison to make it a successful process.

2. ECOTOURISM IN WORLD PERSPECTIVES

Ecotourism is the largest growing industry in the world. There are many works have been done on ecotourism and its various perspectives across the countries of the world. Some research works have been discussed under:

H. Goodwin (1996) has discussed in his paper about ecotourism and its realisation. He analysed the growth of tourism industry giving competing definitions of the concept and focused on the application, importance, utility and value of ecotourism as an alternative to mass tourism. More about environmental responsible tourism, sustainable tourism, nature tourism and an interrelation between protected areas and tourism he furnished. The author concluded that protected areas can be benefited from ecotourism through generated money for management and protection of the world's natural habitats and species and local people's initiatives and awareness in conservation and maintenance of biodiversity in the protected areas. According to **Dejene, Seyoum and Readdy (2012)** the main objective of the present paper is to identify the ecotourism potential zone and to highlight its role for sustainable development and livelihood in Awash National Park (ANP), Ethiopia. The study group have discussed that ecotourism can be a fine example of alternative income generating and off-farm activities, which benefit local communities while achieving the goal of conserving natural resources. For this study primary data collected by them through questionnaire method from selected households of local communities, local tourists, researchers and travel agents. Though there are much resources in and surroundings of ANP, viz, natural resources, wild life resources, other tourist attraction, household resources etc. Some major problems of the area are like deforestation, expansions of farming, overgrazing and over extraction of water, which create conflicts between Park and local communities and also degradation of natural resources of the area they found. They also found many positive and negative impacts of the establishment of ANP on local communities. They concluded that the stakeholders should take responsibility to reduce the negative aspects caused by the establishment of the park simultaneously maintaining the

development of tourism as well as agricultural activities to bring about economic development of the local communities. **Lipton and Bhattary (2014)** explored the impact of Chitwan National Park (CNP) and associated tourism on the livelihoods of Tharu communities in Chitwan district, Nepal. They made a comparative discussion of the living conditions of the residents of two wards, namely Bachhauli and Harnahari of Chitwan district. The main objective of the study is to examine the impact of the CNP and associated tourism on the Tharu people of sauraha in Chitwan district of Nepal. They used both primary and secondary data for this study. Employing Interview schedule they surveyed on Tharu people through close and open ended questions. They found that the economic impact of CNP and tourism in Harnari ward is higher than Bachhauli ward. They also found that there are both positive and negative impacts of the establishment of CNP on Tharus economic life. They found that there is less negative and more positive impact associated with Park establishment on the Tharu people of Bachhauli and Harnahari wards and made suggestions and recommendations for economic and cultural sustainable development of the Tharu people of **Chitwan**. **Nugroho, Negara, Wualandari and Pramukanto (2016)** revealed that how eco-tourism activities can promote rural development in Indonesia. They explained that the transformation of the economic sector from agriculture to manufacturing in Indonesia has faced many challenges they observed. In that case, they noted that rural tourism as a tool for economic development, which would help develop the region into ecotourism, i.e, to cause products, to emerge entrepreneurship, to develop infrastructure and the development of home stay and to promote rural tourism and environmental values etc. The main objective of this paper is to describe the development of ecotourism in the framework of development of rural area. The authors concluded that the development of ecotourism beneficial to rural development by economic transformation can taking place from the primary sector to the services sector. **Ghimire and Dhakal (2020)** have brought out the impact of ecotourism on the tribal community in two different regions namely, Ghalegaun and Golaghat of Nepal. Their main objective was to identify the impact of ecotourism on the livelihood of indigenous community and their local

environment in these two regions. They collected primary data through household surveys, Key informant interviews, focus group discussions and secondary data through literature survey (journals, articles, books etc). They have interpreted through graphical and descriptive analysis in Microsoft Excel and statistical package for social science 20. The analysis provides details of socioeconomic status, environmental status, Waste management, socio-cultural status and economic status of these two regions. Apart from focussing on the positive and negative effects of ecotourism on these two regions, the study has also found out several limitations. There were several suggestions from the study for future planning and mitigation of negative impact of ecotourism on indigenous communities. Finally, the study group concluded that these adverse impact could be minimised by strictly regulating price, encouraging youth in ecotourism activities and planning for solid waste management techniques. **Upadhyay, Tiwari, Chhetri and Dhungana (2022)** was clearly examined in the study of how local people's effort can improve and sustain ecotourism. The main objective of the paper was to find out how people living in the study area are dependents on ecotourism for their livelihood. They presented the concept of ecotourism here by defining it in various ways. They stated different perspectives of local people's perception of the sustainability of ecotourism. To understand the perception of local people they prepared a semi-structured interview schedule on 167 respondents. After collecting all the data they rechecked, edited, coded, categorically, entered and analysed in the computer program using R software. The conclusion of this study shows that the main source of income for the local people being agriculture, ie 70 percent of people are directly involved in the agricultural work and the rest of them for livelihood relied on business and other sources. They explored to find out the relationship between local people's perception of impacts and the importance of ecotourism with their socio-economic and demographic characteristics. **Shi, Zhang, Song and He (2022)** highlighted how the development of tourism around wolong nature reserve changes the local communities' ways of life. They discuss how ecotourism affects their household capital usage and illustrates their livelihood strategies as well as the impact on nature conservation habitats. They

have chosen 292 household for survey and used random and stratified random sampling for data collection. They used the methodology of calculating livelihood capital index and multinomial logistic regression. Mainly they found that the tourism around the giant pandas' habitats has led to local economic growth and benefits the communities. Finding some limitations they gave some suggestions for future development of the study site.

3. ECOTOURISM IN INDIAN PERSPECTIVES:

Ecotourism developed in India in 1980s. Thanmala in Kerala is the first planned ecotourism destination in India. India is well known for its diverse topography, ecological diversity and rich biodiversity (Jhariya, 2012). The geographical diversity of India has given its wealth of ecotourism which is being protected and preserved as major resources for ecotourism in India. The ministry of tourism, government of India has identified 6 major categories of ecotourism resources in India. Viz, biosphere reserve, mangroves, mountain and forests, coral reefs, great and little desert, flora and fauna etc (Kumar, 2015). There are several research works undertaken on ecotourism in India based on these resources. Some of the research works are discussed below:

Karmakar (2011) has been described by the activities of ecotourism impact on regional economy and local wellbeing. According to him, ecotourism has proven to be the engine of growth in many economies of the world and recognized as the backbone of the economies of many countries across the world. The present study reflects and summarizes the current state of ecotourism activities in different parts of North Bengal. Main purpose of this study is to explore the status of economic analysis, positive environment, economic and socio-cultural impacts of ecotourism on the study area. The author carried out this strictly using both primary and secondary data to highlight some of the problems of the study area and recommending several planning measures for North Bengal so as to promote ecotourism activities of the area. Kala (2013) discusses the development of Dhanolti national park in Uttarakhand as an ecotourism destination and its local impact. The main purpose of this research paper is to promote sustainable ecotourism as well as the development of local communities and

management of ecosystem and environment by establishing an Eco park in Uttarakhand. This Eco Park has been made possible and surveyed intensively by the joint initiative of the state forest department and local communities. The Eco Park's income has continuously increased since its inception. According to him (2013) the area which was once degraded by dumping of non-degradable plastic waste is almost free from such environmentally unfriendly substances. The study further argues that model is more appropriate for meeting the requirement of ecotourism; whether the national park and sanctuary or the Eco park. At present Eco parks are used to pull tourist arrivals simultaneously to provide a variety of livelihoods for economic development to the local community. Appropriate planning policies should be evolved by local and government agencies to meet the sustainability of the region and conserve natural resources the author suggested. Bhavani (2016) suggested in her paper about the development of ecotourism in India and how it can be made dynamic as a sustainable development. Hence, research paper, he deals with the definition, features, principles and description of ecotourism in India and highlights the relationship of sustainable development with ecotourism. In case of developing countries ecotourism is a modern initiative to earn foreign exchange and create employment side by side alleviating poverty she viewed. The good aspects of ecotourism and its challenges and the steps to be taken, further she pointed out. Singh (2016) states that in developing countries, ecotourism has an immense potential for economic development and environmental protection. She added that ecotourism is not only boons economics but also creates employment besides empowering the local people. The main objective of this research paper is to delineate the broad field or scope of ecotourism in India by identifying a few eco tourist areas. She focused how ecotourism is being used as a tool to strike a balance between environmental issues and sustainable development. Her highlight include the link between sustainable development and green tourism and various environmental issues of ecotourism and the effort made by the government to resolve it. Dr. Sasmita Mohanti (2017) in her article defined ecotourism as an integral part of the green economy. She said, ecotourism is an environmental protection system,

which is experiencing increased popularity in the context of socioeconomic development. Her main focus on Chilka Lake as one of the ecotourism destinations in Odisha. Estimating the relationship of sustainable development with ecotourism is her main goal in this essay. She says that ecotourism maintains sustainable development of Odisha state creating employment opportunities for the local people, raising awareness of the environment and proper utilization of locally available natural resources. The main purpose of this chapter is to determine the impact of ecotourism on the conservation of natural resources as well as the livelihoods of the local people. After all she says that sustainable development of the Chilka Lake is possible only through the maintenance of ecological balance strictly with some restrictions on the local settlement. **Kumar and Singh (2018)** discussed about the ecotourism in Himachal Pradesh. They said that ecotourism has emerged as an important livelihood option for the local people, creating a source of income for them without harming the environment. It serves as a tool for local socioeconomic progress based on ecological principles and sustainable development theory. They discussed ecotourism of the region from the perspective of STRENGTH, WEAKNESS, OPPORTUNITIES and THREATS (SWOT). In this paper the main goal of ecotourism is to engage the local people in the proper use of natural resources in promoting economic growth by preserving ecosystems and biodiversity. The main purpose of this study is to identify and describe the potentials, problems and opportunities that may arise in the implementation of the community. So, their notice on lack of proper planning and management of the area could lead to degradation of environment. Finally, they intend to investigate the important problems of the indigenous people on the land and natural resources of the region. Besides suggesting several present and future proposals for sustainable development in this region. **R, Gupta, A, Gupta and S, Gupta (2018)** have given an overall history of ecotourism and described it as an emerging concept in their paper. The main objective of their study is to identify and evaluate the importance of marketing strategies adopted for ecotourism and evaluate the growing impact of digital marketing on ecotourism destinations. In this article their introduction of a modern concept appears which has the relationship of ecotourism with digital marketing. Here they have given an

important idea of how ecotourism can be influenced by the use of modern digital media in the country. To improve ecotourism they highlighted the present Indian government's projects such as Swachh Bharat Abhiyan, Namami Ganga etc. In this study they have explained the important role of ecotourism as well as a number of issues. So, the government should take multiple steps to solve these problems and create ecotourism hubs by identifying ecotourism destinations.

4. ECOTOURISM IN WEST BENGAL PERSPECTIVES

India is associated with a large number of ecotourism destinations. Among them, West Bengal is the most fascinating one. West Bengal has the 'golden triangle of ecotourism' from the royal Bengal tiger and mangrove forest of Sundarbans in the south, dry deciduous forest and Indian elephant of western hill tracts and one horned rhino and dense forest of the east Himalayan region and its foothills. Apart from this golden triangle covers several ecotourism destinations which have been developed in different parts of West Bengal. Several research works have been undertaken on ecotourism in West Bengal and some of which are described below:

Singh, Sharma and Sharma (2004) in their paper have forecasted about eco-environmental degradation in Pushkar lake, Rajasthan. This region is considered to be a very promising region for the tourism industry. That's why Pushkar lake has been identified as a special region where the tourism industry has a socioeconomic and geo-environmental impact. The authors therefore suggest that proper attention needs to be paid to the development of the tourism industry there. Tourism industry will pose a direct threat to society and physical environment if not given proper attention by government and non-government organisations. **Bera and Biswas (2009)** seek to explain how ecotourism can improve the quality of life of indigenous people in the Dooars region. According to them, the Dooars region constitutes a high density of tribal population. Generally, all the tribal people concentrate on the tea plantations and forested areas to get jobs. They are still backward and mainly involved in primary economic activities, although some of them are engaged in tertiary

economic activities. In spite of these, they still live below the poverty line and most of them are unemployed. Therefore, the authors suggest that ecotourism would play a leading role in the economic development of tribal communities. **Biswas and Bera (2009)** in another research paper illuminated that the Dooars region is uniquely identified for its unique and diverse ecotourism organization and it has tremendous potential for further development. But the region has not yet been properly popularized and developed, despite there is great potential for the development of ecotourism in the Dooars region. There are a number of problems in the region and that have been identified for immediate solution by improving the ecotourism industry in the region. **Dandapath and Mondal (2013)** highlighted in their research an important part of tourism sector, that's the impact of urbanisation on coastal ecotourism in West Bengal. In this research paper they have illustrated the coastal or beach locations which are most attractive tourist destinations in West Bengal. The main objective of this research paper is to examine the levels of urbanisation and its impact on coastal ecotourism. Mainly there is an inverse relation between the growth of urbanisation and degree of environment. Visibly the coastal area like Digha, Junput, Sankarpur are degrading day by day by the abnormal increase of urbanisation. The result is erosion of coastal portion, lowering of the beach, exploitation of casuarina trees, destruction of sand dunes regarding necessary development of ecotourism. In spite of the immense potentialities of ecotourism development in coastal region, it has not yet been developed and declared as an ecotourism destination. However they are of the opinion that region may be considered as ecotourism to explore the opportunities for development of the coastal region in a sustainable way. **Das (2018)** gives an overview of the realities of the ecotourism and eco-degradation in the Darjeeling Himalayan region of the Indian state of West Bengal. The main purpose of this research paper is to show how a tourist destination can be protected from eco-degradation through the practical application of ecotourism.

According to him, ecotourism not only provides entertainment to the local people and tourists of a region but also generates economic resources for the locals apart from developing the local ecosystem. Basically, excessive pressure on

the natural environment leads to environmental degradation. Man-made pollution and social pollution have been mentioned as the main reasons for that. The author further pointed out the main reason of deterioration of the ecosystem is unscientific management and loss of 'carrying capacity' of the region.

So, a good interrelationship should be established between guest and host people and to formulating a policy will act as a bridge between the two. Lastly, he stated that knowledgeable person should be realistic rather than opportunistic, so that environmental degradation may be prevented through ecotourism and ecotourism may be used effectively in the future. **Debnath and Saha (2019)** explained ecotourism in the Dooars region of Alipurduar district in West Bengal. According to them, there is a lot of space with full of beauty in and around the Dooars region that can be developed as ecotourism. The main objective of their study is to find out the possible ecotourism sites in and around Dooars and to explain the impact of ecotourism on the locals. They have shown the impact of ecotourism on the overall development of the Dooars region with various problems or obstacles to the development of ecotourism in the region. Finally, they viewed that the multiple efforts need to be taken to reduce the problems of ecotourism and government agencies with private organisations and local associations have to come forward to take care of the overall development of the region.

5. CASE STUDY

Ecotourism is a fastest growing industry in the world and it has a large scale of potentiality in global human activity. Ecotourism is a sector which can develop tourism. By discussing various literature we have been able to gain a thorough understanding of the past, present and future of ecotourism. Two case studies have been given below as examples of ecotourism.

Kakroodi and Gosha (2013) have discussed a case study on ecotourism and rural sustainable development of Javaherdeh village, Ramsar in Iran. The study examined the natural potential of Javaherdeh village in Ramsar and its role in achieving the aims of ecotourism in the area. They have selected 70 of villagers and tourists and surveyed to know the available potential natural resources and their participation in sustainable development. In their survey they

found that the rate of tendencies in villagers on participation in sustainable development of the

area appears in the table below:

Table: The rate of tendencies in villagers with participation in sustainable development of area

Type of inclination	Quantity of family	Percentage (%)
Agree with participation	53	75.7
Disagree with participation	8	11.4
Others	9	12.9

Source: (Kakroodi and Gosha (2013))

*Another case study has been discussed by **Lipton and Bhattarai (2014)** titled, 'Park establishment, tourism and livelihood changes: A case study of the establishment of Chitwan National Park and Tharu people of Nepal'. In this study they have focused on the changes of livelihood pattern of Tharus communities before and after establishment of Chitwan National park (CNP). This study found the impacts of CNP and tourism on the Tharu communities of Bachhauli and Harnahari ward in Chitwan district in Nepal. In this study, they have analyzed from the collected data about socio-cultural and economic conditions of Tharu people before and after establishment of Chitwan National park (CNP).

Their survey on Tharu respondents has found several results about the relation between CNP and Tharu communities. The classification of obtained results is organized under the cultural identity, access to resources, culture and community development and employment. These are discussed below:

- Of the total households in the buffer zone of CNP, 6.68 per cent are engaged in the tourism sector.
- Of the total of 2467 households who are engaged in various tourism related activities, like, 1110 are hotel, 419 are drivers, 119 are nature guides, 712 are café owners, 19 are restaurant owners and 88 are hoteliers.
- 75 per cent of the Tharu respondents of Bachhauli ward and 81 per cent of the Tharu respondents of Harnari ward viewed that Tharu cultural shows to tourists would help sustain and promote Tharu culture.
- Before establishment of the park they did not have a firewood problem and forest resource also. But after establishment of the park they are facing problems to get resources.

- 49 per cent of the Tharu respondents of Bachhauli ward and 62 per cent of Harnari ward are engaged in tourism and park related work.
- The result demonstrate that at least each Tharu household in both study wards was engaged in any type of work
- The results found that there is less negative and more positive impact associated with park establishment on the Tharu people of Bachhauli and Harnari wards.
- The results show more the economic impact of CNP and tourism in Harnari ward higher than in Bachhauli ward. However, the socio-cultural impact was found to be moderate in both wards.

Finally, they highlighted several challenges faced by the Tharu communities and given some recommendations for improved economic and cultural sustainable development for the community of Chitwan in Nepal.

6. SOCIOECONOMIC IMPORTANCE AND ECOTOURISM

After discussing several literatures it was found various socioeconomic importance of ecotourism around the worldwide, nationwide and locally. These are following:

- Source of Income: local people of any tourist place can earn money through different sources. Ecotourism promotes connection of business. Local residents earn money through non-farm organization. They also earn money as a tour guide and take charges of boating, lodging, housing, cooking etc. As a result their financial condition has improved and poverty is mitigated largely.
- Development of small scale industries: Depending on the ecotourism, the local people get a variety of handicrafts and

small scale based jobs. As a result, a local and small market developed there.

- Earning foreign money: Attractive tourist places of any region earns a huge amount of foreign exchange. It is helpful for the development of socioeconomic condition of that area and contributes upliftment of countries' economy.
- Sustainable use of resources: Ecotourism is a sustainable form of tourism. Development of ecotourism of any region is completely based on sustainable use of natural resources. Local people are trained

to ensure that natural resources are not damaged by local and foreign tourists, so that they can provide accurate information about biological diversity, conservation techniques and sustainable use of natural resources.

- Cultural matching and international knowledge: Ecotourism sites promote cultural collaboration for both local and foreigners and bring international knowledge to the local people. Ecotourism acts as an international knowledge vehicle.

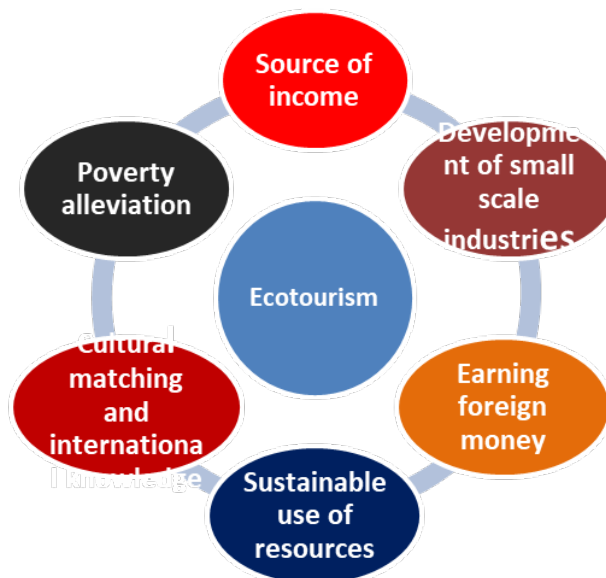


Fig-1: Socioeconomic importance of ecotourism

7. DRAWBACKS OF ECOTOURISM

By studying various literatures the authors have highlighted several positive aspects of ecotourism but some of its drawbacks have come to the common readers' attention which are discussed below.

- Lack of financial support: Due to lack of proper financial support some ecotourism sites could not be developed properly. Some places of Dooars region in India are still lagging because of this. So, proper support would help to develop the region properly and also help to preserve local culture, traditions, arts, heritage etc (Debnath and Saha, 2019).
- Lack of participation of local people: It is observed by studying various literatures that most of the local people are engaged in farm organizations, very few people are

associated with ecotourism related activities. So, without participation of local people ecotourism cannot be promoted or developed.

- Lack of knowledge and awareness: Most of the local people do not have proper knowledge about ecotourism. So they avoid knowing the positive aspects of ecotourism besides saving the environment.
- Inadequate infrastructure: Due to inadequate infrastructure such as transport and communication, water facilities, tourist did not prefer to visit some ecotourism destinations.
- Slow involvement of government and NGOs: Some areas have got great potential as an upcoming tourist spot. But due to lack of proper planning the area could not established as an ecotourism destination

till now. The main reason for this is the low involvement of government and NGOs.

Environmental degradation, over-commercialization, social and cultural disruption are also seen as drawbacks of ecotourism. Drawbacks of ecotourism

8. CONCLUSION

By thoroughly studying the above literatures on various perspectives may be concluded that the impact of ecotourism has spread across the world. A number of research works have been undertaken on ecotourism across the local areas, nation and world. It is a logical component of Eco development. It is a complex and multidisciplinary phenomenon having tremendous role to play in the understanding of human history and its interaction with the rural environment and the diffusion of environmental knowledge and awareness. It may serve as an important tool for environmental education for raising ecological and environmental awareness, both as tourists and local people. Ecotourism not only generates employment but also provides a financial benefits besides empowering the local people.

For developing countries it creates a lot of opportunities in environmental issues, empowering local tribes, generating employment and sustainable development. From the above discussion the investigations have found several positive aspects of ecotourism as well as some negative aspects. Therefore, to eliminate these negative effects, local people, government and non-governmental organizations should come forward and more actively be involved in its development. So it can be said that the future prospects of ecotourism will be bright.

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Cite this article as: Prakash Shaw and Dr. M. Alankara Masillamani., (2025). Revisiting Ecotourism: Sustainability, Economic Development and Way Forward. International Journal of Emerging Knowledge Studies. 4(6), pp. 962 - 972.

<https://doi.org/10.70333/ijeks-04-08-007>