

ECO-TOURISM

- Ecotourism has been defined as “environmentally responsible, enlightening travel and visitation to relatively undisturbed natural areas in order to enjoy and appreciate nature (and any accompanying cultural features both past and present) that promotes conservation, has low visitor impact, and provides for beneficially active socio- economic involvement of local populations” (Ceballos-Lascurain 1996).
- According to this definition, ecotourism can involve
- both cultural and environmental tourism
- bring benefits to the local population which is also an integral part of the activity.

- It is to be noted that ecotourism should be able to fulfill the following:
- a. Protect environment.
- b. Benefit conservation of local cultural items.
- c. Benefit local economy.
- d. Empowers local communities.
- To ensure that local people gets their due benefits from ecotourism, some control over it should be handed over to the local people.
- There will be empowerment of the local people if their voices are taken into consideration.
- They should be able to decide what forms of tourism facilities and wildlife conservation programmes should be developed in their respective regions.
- The local community should become an important stakeholder in decision making and for claiming benefits.

- **Characteristics of Eco Tourism**

- There are various characteristics of eco-tourism are as following:
- Focuses small group of people travel to natural areas.
- Results in promoting environmental awareness among the tourist and locals.
- Ensures fiscal benefits for preservation of the area.
- Strengthen local communities.
- Respect local traditions and customs.
- Ensures protection of human rights and activities such as conservation of ecological and cultural sustainability through ecosystem protection

- **Principles of Eco tourism**

- The principles of eco-tourism are as following:

- Adopt low-impact tourism activity that protects ecological natural areas.

- Highlights the biodiversity richness and their values.

- Build environmental and cultural awareness

- Encourage environmental conservation and cultural preservation.

- Encourage the sustainability of ecotourism enterprises and activities.

- Promote community participation.

- Provide employment opportunities to local people.

- **Negative Side of Eco Tourism**

- The concept of eco tourism can only be implemented successfully if there is clear understanding of the positive as well as negative impacts. Here we are discussing few impacts needs to be addressed otherwise they result in negative development.
- 1) The activities of tourist may be focused on sustainable basis but requirement of infrastructure development is something which certainly affects the environment adversely. As this is bit natural when a concept at the destination become popular the demand for such product will increase and thus require to add more infrastructural facilities to accommodate more tourist. To minimize the impact infrastructural development the concept of carrying capacity need to be followed in true letter and spirit.

- 2) Human beings also harm trees and other flora and fauna while camping or doing activities in the natural settings. Campers may snap twigs and branches off trees to light camp fires and tree trunks may be used as bill-boards for notices, hence a total damage to the area.
- 3) Leftover material including empty water bottles, food bags, aerosol bottles, exhausted batteries results in degradation of eco system and also endangers the life of animals if they consume these items.
- 4) Tourists sometimes try to feed the local animals in the tourist area and as result some of the animals become aggressive by the type of unhealthy food they are being fed, and in their attempts at grabbing food from tourists in picnic areas etc.