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A Basic Overview of Environment and Sustainable Development (Volume: 2)

Editors: Dr. Shubhadeep Roychoudhury; Dr. Tanmay Sanyal; Dr. Koushik Sen; Mrs. Sudipa Mukherjee Sanyal

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Ecotourism: A Sustainable Development Perspective in India
Abhinaba Sinha

Keywords: Ecotourism, Sustainable development, Biodiversity, Wildlife conservation.

Abstract:

Ecotourism has recently emerged as the favoured practice for addressing a range of environmental issues. It tackles various conservation problems, promotes environmental awareness, and generates revenue for the well-being of local communities. Thus, it provides a long-awaited solution for promoting sustainable development while ensuring the maintenance of environmental integrity. India, a nation blessed with a diverse array of landscapes, exceptionally rich flora and fauna, as well as cultural and tribal diversity, offers great prospects for the development and practice of ecotourism. Despite these positive attributes, India faces tremendous environmental crisis owing to its ever increasing population pressure and unemployment. Consequently, ecotourism emerges as the need of the hour, capable of generating revenues while simultaneously promoting sustainable development. It also serves as a solution to long-awaited conflicts between various environmental issues such as habitat destruction, fragmentation, and the utilization of human resources. Under this backdrop, the present chapter focuses on the various hallmarks of ecotourism, different types of ecotourism activities, the code of conduct for eco-tourists, and the merits and demerits of ecotourism. Furthermore, the chapter delves into the current scenario of the ecotourism industry in India. Thus, this chapter aims to briefly discuss the aforementioned aspects and raise awareness to fuel the popularity of this noble practice in this great nation.

Introduction:

Ecotourism emerged as a novel idea in the 1970s, and by the 1990s, it became a popular practice as it proved to be a potential solution to the prolonged conflict between tourism and threats to the environment (Ceballos-Lascurain, 1996). As one of the fastest-growing sectors of the global tourism industry, ecotourism has the potential to serve as an environmentally, socio-culturally, and economically feasible option for promoting sustainable development in noteworthy natural ecosystems and landscapes (Dandapath et al., 2016; Santarém et al., 2019). The term "ecotourism" refers to the development of tourism in natural environments with a primary focus on various conservation elements, creating environmental educational awareness, and generating revenues for local communities (Santarém et al., 2019). Thus, promoting tourism without compromising nature and natural processes and ensuring their sustenance for future generations to address their own needs (Fennell, 2020). The range of variable natural resources and landscapes in India is almost unparalleled in the world, ranging from immaculate forests, the

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