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THESIS ON INDIAN RESIDENT ATTITUDE
TOWARDS ECOTOURISM



The topic of this Master's Thesis Indian resident attitude towards ecotourism. The goal of this research was to explore the overall attitude and demand of Indian residents toward the concept of ecotourism within the country.

The objective of this research paper was to explore the fact that the Indian residents are how much aware of the ecotourism concept and how they perceive this concept. Both quantitative and qualitative methods have been employed in the present study to gain the desired and reliable outcomes. The results of research highlights the fact that majority of the residents are aware about the concept of ecotourism in the country. In addition to this, Kerala, Karnataka, Goa and Andhra Pradesh are considered as some popular ecotourism destination in India.

These master papers are composed of 146 pages and there are 22 tables, 26 figures and in total 117 references

Keywords: ecotourism, Indian residents, demand, resident's attitude, ecotourism destinations.

Anotācija

Šī maģistra darba tēma ir “Indijas iedzīvotāju attieksme pret ekotūrisma un pieprasījums”. Pētījuma mērķauditorija bija Indijas iedzīvotāji, ceļojumu rīkotāji, gidi un ceļotāji. Šī pētījuma mērķis bija izpētīt Indijas iedzīvotāju kopējo attieksmi un pieprasījumu attiecībā uz ekotūrisma jēdzienu valstī. Pētījumā ir izmantotas gan kvantitatīvas, gan kvalitatīvas metodes, lai iegūtu vēlamos un ticamos rezultātus.

Pētījuma rezultāti liecina par to, ka lielākā daļa iedzīvotāju zina ekotūrisma jēdzienu valstī. Papildus tam Kerala, Karnataka, Goa un Andhra Pradesh tiek uzskatīti par populārākiem ekotūrisma galamērķiem Indijā.

Šis maģistra darbs sastāv no 146 lappusēm, tajā ir 22 tabulas, 26 attēli, izmantoti 117 avoti.
Atslēgas vārdi: ekotūrisms, Indijas iedzīvotāji, pieprasījums, iedzīvotāju attieksme, ekotūrisma galamērķi.

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INTRODUCTION

Ecotourism is considered as significant aspect that enhances the overall tourism sector of the country. Ecotourism is related with traveling to natural areas so that they may preserve and value the cultural and natural history of the environment (Slocum and Kline, 2015). With the key aim to take care of the environment and do not disturb the integrity of eco-system. Thus, increasing Ecotourism factor also assist in creating economic opportunities that engage in activities related with conservation and fortification of natural resources.

Ecotourism provides income to local residents in the form of generating different options of employment. The main aim of ecotourism is to improve the responsible travel of the world through generating consideration towards social tourism (Fennell, 2014). Ecotourism provides income opportunities to local residents and this also drives them to contribute more in conserving the natural resources. Ecotourism includes many activities such as generating awareness about cultural and heritage tourism which requires knowledge about social and cultural values of the place.

Apparently, ecotourism involves all such practices through which rural values and norms can be promoted. Tourism industry gives employment opportunities to people because it has various activities which help in engaging numerous people in tourism processes. With the help of ecotourism, people can easily convey heritage information about India among different people. Tourism activities are economically concerned; hence this directs people to involve themselves in the same (Sharpley and Telfer, 2014). Ecotourism greatly contributes in enhancing total tourism value of the nation. Moreover, while visiting different rural places, tourist explores new areas which add value in tourism industry.

In addition to the same, people also have the favor in enhanced ecotourism practices because they know that visit of different tourism can give them the exposure to aware people about the place. This is yet another dimension through which categories in tourism can be enhanced. Since, value of ecotourism is increasing; therefore government is also spending huge resources in protecting and conserving natural resources. This not only changes the value of ecotourism; but also encourages people to visit more different states of India. Government recognizes the importance of ecotourism; henceforth in this aspect new sources are being created which also increases economic dimensions of India (Khosravi, Mohamed and Nair, 2015). This is also raising infrastructure of the tourism industry which is overall beneficial for Indian tourism.

Most of the places in India are still unexplored; therefore people do not know about such destinations which are rich in cultural and heritage tourism. Therefore, in this respect most of the

people do not favor that ecotourism helps in generating economic aspects. Henceforth, it is evident that ecotourism highly deals in amending the economic and financial perspective of Indian tourism and all the other industries (Hall, Gossling and Scott, 2015).

Thus, it can be said that it is the **main problem** which should be solved in future and why author of Master Thesis has chosen this topic.

The aim of this paper is to analyze the resident attitude and demand for ecotourism in India. Further, it focuses on different ecotourism destinations in India along with the valid reasons due to which they are popular. The trends in the tourism industry are shifting towards nature based tourism as it possess capability to provide remarkable experience to the tourists in every possible manner and acts as development tool in every possible manner. Previous research studies have been have been undertaken in order to know the present scenario and demand for ecotourism in India. Apart from this, data has been collected from the Indian residents along with the tour operators so as to accomplish the key goals associated with the research.

Subject of the research: Residents attitude and demand for ecotourism

Research Environment: Ecotourism in India

Research question: what is the resident's attitude and present demand for ecotourism in India?

Tasks:

1. To understand the concept of ecotourism with respect to India using analysis of theoretical sources
2. To analyse the factors that attracts tourists towards this type of tourism
3. To analyse the initiatives taken by government along with other private parties to promote the concept of ecotourism in India using development analysis
4. To characterize eco-tourism offer and management in India using analysis.
5. To investigate residents attitude and demand for eco-tourism in India using questionnaire of residents and interviews with tourists, tour operators and tour guides
6. To give conclusion and suggestions

Research methods used

Phenomenology research method has been undertaken in the present study with the motive to accomplish all the research tasks. Further, through this research method it is possible to know the attitude of Indian residents towards ecotourism. Apart from this, phenomenology method has been applied with the motive to collect primary and secondary data with the help of questionnaire, interviews, documents analysis and secondary sources that involves books, journals and online articles. All the data has been accessed with the help of trusted sources that are reliable.

Research period: The research period time used **13-09-2017 to 13-11-2017**.

Research limitation: The main limitation associated with the present study is time where due to less time less number of questionnaires has been filled.

1. ECOTOURISM AND RESIDENTS

1.1. Theoretical concept of ecotourism

1.1.1. Concept of Ecotourism

Ecotourism as one of the concept has gained in the modern era where its contribution in protecting environment is quite high. In short, the concept has been adopted by every country with the motive to conserve natural resources in every possible manner (Fennell, 2014). It has been analyzed that developing an ecotourism enterprise is considered to be complex and it takes into consideration understanding of the market principles along with the business fundamentals that undertakes building strong relationship with the local communities.

The theory of ecotourism is based on the belief that conservation of natural resources along with the economic development as the main goals. Ecotourism concept relies on conservation, education, ethics, sustainability and the local benefits to the people living in the society are able to gain. Through this concept it is possible to obtain high level of learning experience along with the appreciation of the natural environment (Sharpley and Telfer, 2014). With the rising environmental issues and other form of challenges it has become necessary to take some correction actions for its protection. Ecotourism supports the local community and it directly contributes in the maintenance of habitats and species by delivering revenue to the local community.

The range of activities that are associated with the ecotourism initiatives takes into consideration sport hunting, village cultural tours, photographic safaris etc. The entire tourism sector has evolved where in past no such actions or initiatives were taken with the motive to protect surroundings but at present the entire scenario has changed where protection of natural resources has become must (Ballantyne and Packer, 2013). Tourism sector has evolved with the help of four platforms through which it is possible to explain the concept of tourism in better manner.

The first key platform is the advocacy that takes into consideration the employment, direct revenue, development of the natural areas and incentives to preserve destination culture are the main attributes of this platform. It clearly states that promoting ecotourism of any specific area supports in providing employment to the local people and this contributes a lot in development of that area in every possible manner. The next key platform is precautionary that relies on Butler's 1980 life cycle model. The key assumption of this model is that tourism carries the seeds of its own destruction unless it is planned in proper manner and managed effectively. No doubt their exist tension between the tourism and environment where negative impact of tourism industry on the environment is quite

high and this needs to be managed in proper manner (Sharpley and Telfer, 2014). Therefore, the best possible solution is to take precautions well in advance for conservation of wildlife and other form of species that can allow in safeguarding environment in every possible manner. Apart from this, the concept of ecotourism is further associated with adaptancy platform where it has been identified that ecotourism is considered to be on a very small scale where social and ecological impact is less as compared with the traditional tourism. Therefore, adaptancy is required where there is a need for people to adopt this concept so that adoption within the society can take place in quick period of time.

More and more people have to be encouraged to take active participation in promoting the ecotourism concept so that entire society can be benefitted with the help of this. The last key platform is knowledge based platform that supports in knowing about the strengths and weaknesses of various type of tourism and it relies on scientific knowledge with the motive to know the best combination of the tourism modes for each destination (Khosravi, Mohamed and Nair, 2015). This platform is linked with the emergence of the sustainable development paradigm that involves environmental along with the socio-cultural factors. It is the main reason due to which ecotourism concept is associated with the parental concept of sustainable development along with the tourism.

One of the most significant features of ecotourism is local community involvement where it encourages local people to take part efficiently. The main reason behind the same is sustaining the tourism sector along with the conservation of natural environment and delivering economic benefits to the local people. Due to this basic reason concept of ecotourism is considered to be most integral. In the modern era, people with proper local knowledge along with the passion for the place in which they have grown highlights as one of the major sustainable development strategy (Slocum and Kline, 2015).

Further, it is a well-known fact that local people of any specific area can surely provide a base in promoting any destination that is nature based. Another key aspect that is vital involves the financial viability of ecotourism along with the sustainability of tourism development is the capacity acquisition along with the skills. No doubt the entire tourism sector is considered to be complex but promoting it in different way and through the involvement of different tactics can support the entire society in every possible manner.

The overall success of the ecotourism concept is associated with the right kind of operations and delivering appropriate financial benefits to the local people. Ecotourism concept can only survive in the market only it is sustainable as the business entity (Chiutsi, Mukoroverwa,

Karigambe and Mudzengi, 2011). Therefore, it is quite clear that feasibility of this concept relies on the level of customer satisfaction along with the financial sustainability. No doubt large amount of funds are required in order to promote destinations that are nature friendly and supports in conserving different habitats and species.

With the motive to attract tourists towards this type of tourism the first main requirement is economic and political stability. Further, political initiatives are must where government has to take various measures for promoting this concept. No doubt, in every nation initiatives have been witnessed from government side that is allowing more tourists to visit ecotourism sites located in different areas (Ballantyne and Packer, 2013). Considering the case of India where awareness level in relation with ecotourism is quite high where many areas have been benefitted with the help of this such as Kerala, Goa etc that possess some unique natural attributes and provides unique experience in the field of tourism.

The concept of ecotourism is regarded as nature based tourism that takes into consideration analysis and management of the natural surroundings with the motive to be ecologically sustainable. In the modern era, with the rise in level of environmental issues that involves disasters and other form of calamities it has been necessary to take some corrective actions so as safeguard environment. In short, ecotourism is associated with the sustainable practice where some corrective actions are taken for protection of natural resources. Eco-tourism involves responsible travel to natural along with the cultural areas that supports in conserving the environment and allows in sustaining the well being of the local people living in the society. Considering the nature of ecotourism it reflects the eco-friendly attributes that are totally in favor of the surroundings (CHEIA, 2013).

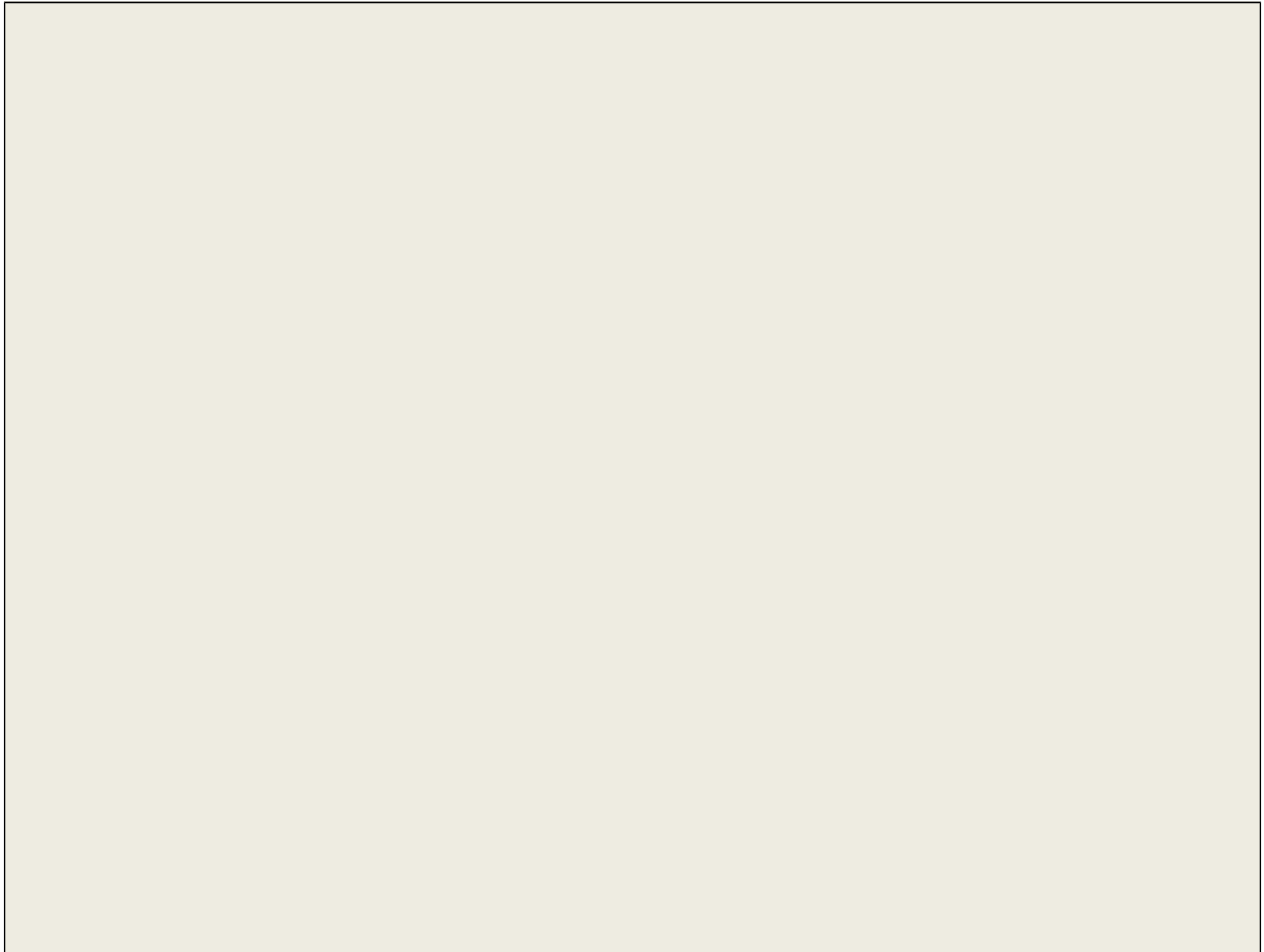
Concept of ecotourism is based on different type of principles that supports in understanding about this concept in better manner. First main principle is reducing the environmental impact as in the present era many activities are present that are damaging environment such as pollution, cutting down of trees for development of nation that involves highway, buildings etc. In short all the range of inhuman activities are adversely affecting surrounding and due to this reason main principle of ecotourism is safeguarding environment. Respect for host culture is another significant principle of ecotourism where this concept provides a base in understanding about different types of culture and in turn provides remarkable experience (Anishchenko, 2016).

Delivering more benefit to the local people is another key principle associated with ecotourism where it has been found that local culture of the area is promoted along with the destinations that

eco-friendly. So, this directly plays most significant role in the development of the nation along with the people living in the society. Visiting nature based destination directly leads to enhance tourist satisfaction where people can easily gain knowledge and this leads to more awareness. Promoting nature based destinations in the modern era has become must as it is one of the most appropriate way through which nature can be safeguarded (Eshun, Adjei, KNUST and Segbefia, 2016).

Table 1.

Eco-tourism elements



Above diagram represents the key elements associated with the concept of ecotourism where it highlights that basic motive is the protection of natural resources whereby understanding this concept it is possible to take possible measures for protecting the range of natural resources for the welfare of surroundings, and it directly allows in generating revenue. In the modern era, tourists can be easily encouraged towards the range of natural sites, and it is somehow leading to economic development.

Apart from this, local involvement is also one of the main elements where local people of the community have to be considered for development of this concept so that more people can be a part of this concept (Hall, Gossling and Scott, 2015). In short, it can contribute to enhancing the living standards of the local people. Different organization, communities, institutions and educational institutions operating at the local level have started to take the initiative for the welfare of the environment, and different strategies have been developed so that environment can be protected in best possible manner.

Further, there is a **strong relationship between sustainability and ecotourism, conservation and development**. The motives associated with ecotourism can be viewed from a different viewpoint where it can be undertaken as the awareness campaign, conservation strategy or initiative of the business. Different type of institutions that are working in the development of ecotourism concept their main role is to formalize and implement different practices that can work for the improvement of the surroundings. The overall concept of ecotourism will be of use when awareness level in the entire society is quite high, and people are well aware of the reasons due to which they need to protect surroundings (Giddens and Sutton, 2017).

In short, ecotourism can easily become future of tourism if proper initiatives are taken, and the local community coordinates with the institutions, organization and another type of parties that are working in promotion of this concept. Ecotourism can also be regarded as one of the significant areas of the wider tourism market.

Further, the real practices of this concept can be witnessed with the help of places such as ecotourism resorts that have adopted the practice of waste minimization, energy management, involving the local community in the major affairs, etc. Apart from this, various destinations have been developed so that people can obtain more knowledge about this concept. Without learning about the history of various cities and preserving the historical landmark, it is possible to utilize this concept properly (Chen and Liu, 2017).

The main benefit to the local community is that it can enhance the quality of life of the local people. Further, it is a well-known fact that tourism allows visiting different locations but ecotourism concept not only allows tourists to visit different places but supports in providing the unique experience to the tourists. Ecotourism generates value for the planet and the people living in the society. The value is reflected in the form of information and knowledge that is delivered to the tourists. Apart from this, the local community is also benefitted when people from different communities know about their local culture with the help of various destinations, and this allows in

generating revenue. So, this type of tourism experience is highly unique as it is associated with the nature where the small contribution can work a lot in protecting surroundings (Abraham, Nagarajan and Thottunkel, 2016).

Sustainable tourism can surely provide the remarkable experience to the individuals who are associated with it. This type of tourism can act as the major source of inspiration such as in the case when proper knowledge is imparted to tourists then surely they prefer to take the initiative for the welfare of the environment. Apart from this, every nation at its own level has started to promote the concept of ecotourism where the main focus is on the development of the destination that contributes to environment protection (DonoHoe and BricKer, 2015). In the country like India, ecotourism concept has played the significant role in economic development and in turn every individual living in the society has contributed in developing this concept at maximum. It has highlighted the importance of managing ecosystem that has been disturbed due to the different type of human activities such as cutting down of trees, pollution, etc.

Protecting natural resources and the overall environment is considered to be most significant. In the country like India ecotourism is categorized as nature-based practice whose main constituent involve interpretation and education and through this local person living in the society are directly benefitted. India as one of the land is composed of different geographies, and various tourist destinations are present through influence capability to attract the different types of visitors. India has endangered and numerous species in its surroundings that contribute a lot to the development of the ecotourism. Apart from this various destinations are present that are the best example of ecotourism. Moreover, different wildlife areas along with the national parks present in the nation have supported in the growth of wildlife resource (Wigglesworth, 2015).

At present different wildlife sanctuaries are present, and protection laws have been introduced so as to safeguard natural resources. In short, the government has taken corrective actions for the welfare of surroundings and conservation of natural resources so that entire environment can be safeguarded in best possible manner. Moreover, different zoological and botanical gardens are situated in India that has directly contributed to the development of ecotourism concept at the faster pace and a large number of tourists around the globe are attracted (Newsome and Hughes, 2016)

1.1.2. History of eco-tourism

The concept of eco-tourism was developed in the year 1980 with the motive to deliver an experience to the individuals who are interested in knowing about environment and culture of different nations. Further, it started to gain popularity with the help of people who are conscious

about their environment in terms of protection, etc. The rising environmental issues and awareness to protect surroundings have played the most significant role in developing this concept (Dowling, 2013). Before the period 1970 very few efforts were applied in safeguarding ecosystem and environment and the overall awareness level in relation with the environment was also very low. Further, in the past, no such effective sources were present for educating people living in the society regarding the eco-tourism concept.

The popularity of the eco-tourism concept is directly associated with the rise in the level of environmental education. In the ancient time, people were not at all aware of the ways through which they can safeguard surroundings, and no such importance was realized due to the low level of natural disaster. But, on the other hand with the rise in the level of natural calamities such as floods, earthquake, etc. it has become must to take corrective actions for the protection of surroundings.

The basic concept of ecotourism was developed in Africa for the first time when local people started to go on eco-adventure tours that were associated with hunting the local wildlife. So, this provided them remarkable experience and through this overall awareness level in the society increased in short period (Fennell, 2014). At that time this tourism allowed people to indulge in the practice of hunting and they were not at all punished for such type of practice such as hunting elephants for ivory and another type of species such as lions, leopards, etc. So, in the period of 1970 it became quite clear that animals are not protected from hunting and in the near future their population will become extinct. This somehow contributed to the development of the ecotourism concept where people started to understand the significance of protecting natural resources in which environment is considered as an integral part (Erb, 2014).

It was realized that animal hunting with the help of adventure tourism is having the adverse impact on ecotourism along with the animal population. Further, it is a well-known fact that if natural surroundings are damaged on the continuous basis and for the longer period of time, then it directly has the adverse impact on the people living in the society as natural calamities can easily take the life of several individuals. Generally, eco-tourism is considered as the exciting new venture where the main focus is on conservation and protection of natural along with the cultural dimensions (Ballantyne and Packer, 2013).

This concept is generally affected by a large number of factors that involve politicians, tour operators, investors, developers, etc. In the year 1970, the eco-friendly tourism movement evolved where main stress was on managing several negative aspects that involve destruction of natural landscape, damaging natural resources, etc. Apart from this, the movement started also undertook

educational groups, cultural enterprise and different type of ethnic groups present. With the rise in the level of awareness other communities and nations also started to adopt the concept of ecotourism at the faster pace (Carreira and do Amaral, 2017).

Further, various objectives were set that were associated with ecotourism, and this involves protecting the environment, contributing to world conservation strategy, saving natural resources that involve animals, plants, trees, etc. The range of organizations that are working in favor of environment introduced the first model of ecotourism in the market of Africa and Latin America by collecting large amount funds for supporting conservation activities. In short, the concept of ecotourism is only successful when the proper support of local people present in the society is possible and this in turn proves to be the development tool for the entire nation (Lin, Liu, and Yeh, 2017).



Fig 1. Factors associated with Ecotourism (Tai, 2017)

A large number of valid factors were present that supported in the rise of ecotourism in the ancient times. One of the most significant factors was sustainable funding for conservation, awareness in relation to protection of natural areas, the rise of global environmental movement, the popularity of adventure tourism, etc. The World Ecotourism Summit was formed in the year 2002 in which 8 key assumptions were present that are linked with the ecotourism. The key assumptions involve focus on the development of natural areas that can provide experience to the visitors,

delivering proper education to the visitors, highlighting best practices in ecological sustainability, respecting the culture of different areas, conservation of natural heritage and promoting honesty. So, these are some of the main postulates as formed by the World Ecotourism Summit (Tai, 2017).

1.1.3. Factors for attracting tourists towards eco-tourism

Wide ranges of factors are present that are associated with the ecotourism concept and through this it has become easy to influence tourists. Further, it is a well known fact that in every type of tourism some influencing factors are present that attract tourists from different areas and nation. In case of ecotourism also some valid factors are present that have played significant role in attract tourists. **Natural ecological condition** is one of the most significant factor that takes into consideration set of values, conserved and promoted by the individuals as water, climate, land etc; a valuable material that can be exploited by the people and in turn can assist in serving their purpose (Holden, 2016). This represents the key attributes present in the ecological condition like various areas are popular due to presence of unique climate along with the natural resources that enhances the tourism demand.

Another key factor is **infrastructure that highlights the overall facilities through which need of travelers** can be satisfied efficiently and it involves recreation, accommodation, sports, cultural exchanges etc. All the destinations that promote ecotourism are unique in terms of infrastructure where all the essential facilities are rendered to the tourists so that it can provide them remarkable experience. Along with this, some form of attractive features are present in every destination fine art, **cultural characters, values and other form of features that are considered to be highly unique**. Highlighting the range of attractive features is necessary as it provides reason to the tourists to visit particular place (De Vos, Cumming, Moore, Maciejewski and Duckworth, 2016).

Behavioral controlled perception is also significant which is associated with the perception, thought and concept linked with the tourism industry. Local authorities along with the other private players are indulged into the practice of utilizing the range of natural resources of the destinations that involves tourism infrastructure, environment, tourism, natural resources etc. **Further, local residents are also significant that attracts other individuals both at local and foreign level towards ecotourism**. For this, awareness is required where local residents must have proper knowledge regarding the concept of ecotourism so that they can deliver the same to other tourists. In short, the local people are considered as the tourism maker and also one of the main components of the community ecotourism (Asadi and Kohan, 2011). In case the range of initiatives taken by the local community is not up to the mark then in such case it can act as hurdle in

development of the ecotourism concept. These are the main modes of attracting different type of tourists towards the ecotourism and in turn it can lead to development of the entire economy.

In past people living in the society were not at all aware about the ecotourism concept with the increasing environmental concern and declining natural species and habitats it became necessary to focus on this area. Further, the main benefit associated with ecotourism is that it has allowed people to know about the local culture along with the environmental by delivering proper education. People have started to take initiatives for conservation of natural areas so that traditional identity can be well maintained with the help of this (Wearing and Neil, 2009).

1.1.4. Benefits of ecotourism to local community

Large number of benefits is associated with the concept of ecotourism where it provides wide range of advantages to the **local community**. In short, for developing the ecotourism concept the overall importance of local people is high and **they have taken initiatives for promoting various destinations from ecotourism point of view**. The ultimate objective of this concept is conservation where it has been identified that people who are living in the city prefers to visit mountains and other form of places with natural beauty. In the modern era, local communities have started to perceive their natural resources as the main source of income and they are taking large amount of initiatives so as to protect them. In many cases it has been seen that local people are working as guides and their jobs directly relies on conservation efforts (*What Are the Benefits of Ecotourism for Local Communities? 2014*). Working as tourist guide allows them to promote various destinations in front of local tourists and local people also. In case if the range of natural resources present are not at all conserved then in near future they will not be present and it will surely lead to occurrence of various type of natural disasters. Due to this reason local community is working hard for conserving natural resources.

Government funding is another benefit associated with the ecotourism concept to the local community. In every nation government has taken various measures for promoting this concept and the regulatory authorities are indulged into the practice of providing assistance for safeguarding natural resources (*What Are the Benefits of Ecotourism for Local Communities? 2014*). Without proper support of government it is not at all possible to work in favor of developing ecotourism as various types of challenges are present. With the growing popularity of this concept the main outcome has been witnessed in the form of development of national parks and reserves etc.

Apart from this, proper funds are provided for the maintenance of ecotourism sites and destinations as poor infrastructure can decrease the demand for ecotourism. In country like India

government is playing active role in promoting ecotourism where area such as kerela, Goa and other destinations that are eco-friendly are promoted all around the globe. This is directly providing knowledge and information to the people and in turn they are easily attracted towards the natural places. In short, the overall initiatives taken by the government can be easily appraised and they are supporting the local communities along with the agencies that are promoting this concept (*HOW DOES ECOTOURISM HELP THE LOCAL COMMUNITIES? 2016*). Local businesses are also benefitted through ecotourism where it has been found that the range of destinations that are associated with natural resources benefits the local restaurants, hotels and other form of facilities that are linked with the tourism. Other form of tourism is no more profitable for the businesses in the market and due to this reason heavy reliance is on ecotourism concept where it has allowed various businesses to operate efficiently and has become one of the main reasons behind their success.

Cultural exchange is considered as another sort of benefit that is linked with the concept of ecotourism. Educations along with rise in level of awareness are considered to be the main benefits of ecotourism where knowledge is provided to different individuals so that they can know about this concept in better manner. Without delivering proper knowledge it is not at all possible to work in favor of this concept (Straford, 2013). Further, the local people living in the society are efficient enough in promoting ecotourism concept so that it is possible to understand the challenges associated with the environment and in turn corrective measures can be taken through this concept. With the presence of cultural exchange the entire society is benefitted along with the tourists who are arriving from different areas.

There is no such doubt that **travel and tourism industry plays most significant role in generating the foreign exchange income, creating employment** and also leads to more economic development. Further, ecotourism is regarded as one of the key concept that supports in conserving **the environment and contributes a lot for the welfare of the society**. The year 2002 is witnessed as International year of Ecotourism by the United Nations by considering the overall importance of this concept (*International Year of Ecotourism, 2002*). Further, with the rise in level of interest in this concept has allowed various parties to indulge into the practice of sound and sustainable tourism development. The concept of ecotourism not only benefits the environment but it also assists local community to transform in positive manner.

Apart from this, the national ecotourism plan that is developed has supported the local community for the sustainability of the tourism. The direct benefits of this concept can be perceived in the form of social-cultural, physical and economic. Further, it has been identified that local

communities that are living in the areas promoting nature have low income. Therefore, in this case ecotourism is regarded as one of the most favorable concept that leads to development of the areas that are nature based and people living in that area can easily **earn high income through ecotourism** (*Benefits of Ecotourism for Local Communities, 2010*). This is the basic reason due to which local communities are taking high initiatives. Before the introduction of ecotourism concept in different societies, the main source of income for these communities were mining, forest lodging, and land cleaning for agriculture purpose. So, in this way ecotourism is considered as one of the most sustainable development strategy that has contributed a lot in the conservation of the natural resources.

Considering the socio-cultural benefits it has been identified that large number of travelers expects obtaining some unique form of experience from the tourism sector and this has provided advantage to the local community where **they can retain their traditional heritage along with the lifestyles with the motive** of long term viability (*What Are the Benefits of Ecotourism for Local Communities? 2014*). This directly takes into consideration art and crafts, preservation of religious architecture, music, dance and other form of activities that can surely attract large number of tourists in every possible manner. Therefore, in this way the key elements associated with the ecotourism are unique and it delivers advantage to every area where natural resources are present in abundant.

In nation like India where concept of ecotourism is quite popular and large amount of initiatives are taken by the local communities so as to promote this concept in every possible manner. The tourism sector is one of the key component of service sector in India and various targets have been set that focuses on the growth of the service sector during the 12th Five Year Plan. The presence of projected growth of 9 to 9.5% and it is required to match the overall growth of 12% plan period (Sinha, 2011). In order to match this growth target it is mandatory to accomplish the targets set that involves enhancing the share of India in International tourist arrival by at least 1% by the end of 12th Plan and ensuring that proper facilities are present with the domestic tourism to accomplish the growth of 12.16% during the 12th plan.

No doubt the entire tourism sector generates large amount of employment opportunities. The total number of jobs in the year 2016 from tourism sector is likely to be 77.5 million as compared with 53million in the year 2010. Every year growth has been witnessed in the employment opportunity where it has been identified that tourism is providing appropriate job opportunities to the local residents. Same applies to the concept of ecotourism where its development is generating job opportunities for the people in the society. For accomplishing the sales target associated with the

tourism various initiatives have been taken within India that involves skill development where various universities and colleges are working hard so as to deliver proper knowledge to the people linked with tourism such as institutes of hotel management and along with this private sector initiatives are present in large amount (Tai, 2017). Further, **development of infrastructure is taking place at faster pace** where it has been witnessed that various villages and other areas are identified that have unique craft, architecture and through this ecotourism is supported in every possible manner. Moreover, main stress is on other key areas that involve hygiene and sanitation where solid waste management, sanitation and other form of measures are taken for developing the tourism sector.

Marketing, branding and promotion of tourism is taking place at faster pace so that people can gain knowledge about different concepts such as ecotourism destinations and other form of sites that can provide them unique experience. Further, it is a well-known fact that concept of ecotourism can only be promoted if right type of branding and marketing activities are undertaken so that large number of tourists can be attracted easily (Erb, 2014). Involvement of states and other authorities is must in the tourism development like in promotion of ecotourism government initiatives are quite high along with the local authorities that ensures that all the main destinations are properly maintained. This has allowed India to adopt the ecotourism concept in short period of time through assistance of regulatory authorities.

The laws and regulations introduced for developing ecotourism concept in India are effective which takes into consideration PATA code for eco-friendly tourism, Himalayan code of conduct that has been introduced by Himalayan Tourism Advisory Board, guidelines for the enhancement of the protected areas for the tourism of UNWTO etc (Honey, 2008).

Various policies have been framed within the nation like for protection of wildlife and other natural species that leads to better environmental protection. One of the best ways to work in favor of this concept is with the help of public private partnership that takes into consideration the major significant parties such as local communities, tour operators and the forest department. The concept of eco can be applied on different type of tourism that are adventure, nature, wildlife, community etc. The overall attributes of every type of tourism varies from each other and it is required to gain proper knowledge about the same. Few popular places present in India possess capability to attract tourists from various areas such as Andaman and Nicobar Islands, North-east region, Lakshadweep Island etc that contains some unique attribute and in turn they attract tourist all over the globe. Further, the range of ecotourism resources are present in proper amount within India where it has

been found that large number of national parks, zoological and botanical gardens are present that have very less impact on environment due to presence of low carbon footprint (Riasi and Pourmiri, 2015). They are generally regarded to be key resources of the eco-based tourism through which environment can be protected in every possible manner.

Further, government of India has identified 8 major categories of the eco-tourism resources that involves mangroves, biosphere reserves, deserts, coral reefs, flora and fauna, mountains and forests, caves and seas, lakes and rivers. All these categories are efficient enough in understanding about the ecotourism concept and has played major role in the development of the tourism sector. Different type of ecotourism projects are in development stage where large amount of funds have been allocated in the same (Asadi and Kohan, 2011). In every region and area development is taking place at faster pace so that large number of people can understand about the same and it can contribute to higher growth.

This highlights the effectiveness of the government initiatives in working towards the favor of ecotourism. No doubt the popularity of traditional form of tourism has declined in the modern era where tourists prefer to visit site that are nature based and initiatives are taken for conservation of natural resources. Further, some other issues are present with the ecotourism of India where it has been found that poor infrastructure is one of the key challenge faced where the range of places present are not fully developed and it is acting as main hurdle in the promotion of ecotourism (Tai, 2017). It is a well known fact that in case if infrastructure of any specific destination is not up to the mark then it leads to decline in demand for tourism for that specific place. Due to this basic reason proper maintenance is necessarily required and it contributes in attracting tourists towards that destination in every possible manner.

1.1.5. Key parameters of ecotourism

Different parameters of ecotourism are present on the basis of which progress of ecotourism can be judged easily. Further, in order to know about any concept some parameters are present on the basis of which it is judged in proper manner.



Fig 2. Parameters of Ecotourism (Asadi and Kohan, 2011)

The first key parameter associated with ecotourism is reduced impact on environment where it has been identified that at the time when any ecotourism attraction is judged then firstly its impact on the environment is judged. In case if the direct impact is very low then in such case that specific place or destination is contributing in protecting surroundings in every possible manner. Type of tourism that is having adverse impact on the nature is not at all regarded as ecotourism. From the nature point of view no type of tourism is the ideal tourism option. In order to prove this concept various parks and reserve areas are present when tourists are not allowed to enter. With the presence of very low influence on the environment this practice can be regarded as environmental sustainability.

It can be stated that ecotourism is considered as one of the fastest growing industry of the world and it is striving robustly in the market (Asadi and Kohan, 2011). No doubt, the traditional form of tourism has adverse impact on the surroundings where it has not played significant role in protecting the natural resources. Therefore, due to this reason it is necessary to identify some areas or destinations that can contribute in safeguarding natural species, wildlife, environment etc. Further, measuring environmental impact of the entire hospitality sector is must and determining the corrective ways to reduce it is required in every possible manner. Reduced environmental impact can be in the form of less pollution, conservation of key resources, plantation of trees etc.

Another significant parameter is interaction with the nature **where it is a well-known fact** that ecotourism takes into consideration some form of physical activity in a natural surroundings.

The range of well known activities present involves cycling, scuba diving, hiking etc that possess capability to attract large number of tourists. They are directly associated with the nature and are regarded as one of the most integral element in the ecotourism. Each and every activity is ranked on the basis of the experience it provides to the tourists such as visiting waterfall, taking experience of scuba diving or any other activity.

In short, the attribute of each and every activity differs from each other and its proper management is must so that promotion of ecotourism can take place in proper manner. In short, the concept of interaction is associated with impact. Rise in the level of interaction indicates more impact. The concept of ecotourism became more popular in the 20th century with the rise in global environmental movement (Fennell and Dowling, 2003). It has to be ensured well in advance that interaction with the nature takes place in positive manner as all the range of inhuman activities present damages environment and in turn it is not at all considered to be ecotourism. Large numbers of destinations are present like in India that allows tourists to interact with the nature and it provides them platform to know about that specific place along with the culture which is quite interesting.

The third most significant parameter is **involvement of community and interaction with people where it has been found that local people are integral part**. Further, they hold responsibility of delivering proper **knowledge and information** to the tourists linked with this concept so that they can understand this in better manner. Many people in their local areas are **working as guides** where they are indulged into the practice of promoting local culture and the areas that are environmental friendly. This is directly bringing favorable results for the entire economy as local culture is promoted. Apart from this, interaction with the people is also significant where different individuals interact with the local residents and they know about their culture, values etc. So, this also plays most significant role in the development of ecotourism concept. It can be stated that ecotourism is a unique concept which allow different travelers and tourist to understand local culture and nature around the world (Wood, 2002).

The range of activities associated with ecotourism aids in delivering unique form of interaction between the local people and the visitors from different areas. Sometime if visitors like the destinations then in such case they prefer to appreciate the local people especially when they are provided unique experience as a guest. It is also one of the main sources of income for the local people as they work as a guide to render tourism services to the visitors. In developing nations where people are not able to earn to live normal life they highly depend on promoting their local cultural and the destination sites that are environmental friendly such as natural parks, wildlife

sanctuaries etc. So, it directly benefits the entire area where such place becomes famous at global level and in turn tourists from all around the globe are attracted easily. However, it can be critically argued that businesses are still facing issues to reach the most potential market segment to sell products and services linked with ecotourism (McKercher, 2001).

The fourth major parameter is **the environmental activities where it is a well-known fact that any specific tourism attraction** must be used for nature conservation so as to qualify as ecotourism. Many regulatory bodies and private players are taking initiatives for indulging into the practice of promoting environmental activities where it has been found that **tasks such as tree sponsorship programs** and other form of tasks are effective. Moreover, development of museums that promotes environment is also taking place and this is contributing a lot in promoting ecotourism concept. So, all these activities are required to be carried out on continuous basis as they provide a base in reducing the environmental burden and in turn all the tourists perceive destination as environmental friendly. The facilities with regards to ecotourism include eco-lodges, Eco-attractions, Eco-information and Eco-tours. All these facilities are being offered to customers who seek for valuable and eco friendly travel experience (Dowling and Page, 2001).

Apart from this, in case if such initiatives are not at all taken then tourists will not able to gain proper knowledge regarding ecotourism as it is one of the major sources for delivering knowledge. Through development of natural sites such as museum, parks, garden etc various nations are working on this concept and it has supported in developing positive image in front of tourists from all over the world. Some examples can be taken from India where wildlife sanctuaries, national park, museums are famous due to their natural beauty. Ecotourism is also considered as one of the most potential tool to cultural, social and environmental benefits at both international and domestic level (Riasi & Pourmiri, 2015).

The last key parameter is **economic sustainability where it has been identified to reduce environmental impact** is one of the main issue of every industry but it is required to take initiatives for environmental protection. It is a well known fact that negative impact of companies on the surroundings are quite high in the form of **pollution, disposal of waste etc** and this needs to be managed for protecting the surroundings. No doubt ecotourism can provide economic benefits to the country and different areas also but it necessary for every part that involves industry, local community to take active participation in the same.

Considering all these five parameters it is easier to know the overall success of ecotourism concept in the society and whether it is acceptable in that particular area or not. It can be also stated

that it is very important for businesses in the travel and tourism industry to opt for sustainable and satisfactory environmental practices. The rationale behind this is that areas such as guest loyalty are directly affected by the kind of environmental practices employed by organizations (Yusof, Rahman and Iranmanesh, 2015).

1.1.6. Components of the successful ecotourism

In order to understand the key components of the entire ecotourism sector where it has been identified those non-governmental bodies, local businesses, communities and medium sized companies are promoting the concept of ecotourism. Furthermore, ecotourism is considered as the most suitable activity which can assist in promoting the concept of sustainability all across the world (Stephenson and Al-Hamarneh, 2017). The industry consists of tour operators who are indulged into the practice of providing the niche marketing and they book services for proportion of organized eco-tour at global level.

The Eco-tours are also very helpful in understanding the characteristics of the landscape while travelling and thus, it offers a valuable experience to travelers and tourists (Fennell, 2014). With the motive to implement the ecotourism concept in proper manner it is necessary that stakeholders present at the national and international level develop effective policies where main stress is on protecting natural resources and protection. Further, the role of government board and the ministries is also crucial where they are focusing on building reputation and brand recognition of the nation as one of the ecotourism destination. The range of stakeholders that are most significant in the ecotourism industry involves tour agents, outbound tour operators, inbound tour operators, eco-lodges, nongovernmental organizations and the communities.

Furthermore, kingfisher Eco-lodge in Laos, Jemby-Rinjah Eco-lodge in Australia, Kosra village in Micronesia, Red Capital Ranch in China are considered as some of the most popular eco-lodges in the world (Conti, A, 2008). Role and responsibility of every stakeholder differs from each other and they need to carry out the same in proper manner. In case if the range of initiatives taken by the bodies are not up to the mark then developing this concept will not be possible. In short contribution of each and every stakeholders needs to be maximum so that benefits associated with the ecotourism can be obtained easily and in turn it can lead to high growth of the nation or the particular area.

It can be expressed that travel agents plays very important role in the overall growth and development of the entire tourism industry. Furthermore, satisfactory services by the travel agents help in creating more and more demand of tourism related products and services among people in

the market. However, it can be critically argued that till now the travel agent has not played a crucial or critical role in promotion and marketing of products and services within the entire industry.

The use of internet can be carried out by travel agents to carry out effective marketing and promotional eco-tourism among people in the market. This will directly help in generating high demand of eco-tourism products within the market.

Promotion of products and services linked with ecotourism is not an easy task for all the stakeholders. It can be stated that adequate support and corporation is required from both internal and external stakeholders. The tour operators in the industry have certain roles and responsibilities which need to be accomplished in the best possible manner. For example, creating more and more awareness with regards to environmental and cultural protection is the key responsibility of all the stakeholders. This can be done by passing information and providing appropriate education to all clients. However, it can be critically argued that the tour operators are not taking active participation in promotion of eco-tourism and the key reason behind this is lack of interest (Swarbrooke, 1999).

On the other side of this, the tour operators in the industry are responsible to ensure that the activities related to tourism does not have negative impact on the environment and society in which the businesses are operating. It is more suitable for the tour operators to opt for more sustainable practices in their operations and activities. In the present scenario, the growing demand of travel and tourism has resulted in the development of many small and big tour operators in the country.

However, it can be critically argued that nowadays the tourism practices have emerged as the big threat for environment and the society. It is the responsibility of tour operators to respect the local cultures and promote the same in front of travelers and tourists. Furthermore, they need to ensure that direct benefits in terms of finances are provided to all the conservations present in the country.

It can be expressed that the activities linked with travel and tourism are carrying out exploitation of local culture and businesses to a great extent. Here, the tour operators are responsible to promote the concept of ecotourism in order or protect local culture and businesses in the best possible manner. It is the responsibility of tour operators to make sure that parks and protected areas in the local community get adequate support and assistance. These operators can take initiative and can offer training sessions to the local guides for carrying out promotion of ecotourism related products and services.

Tour operators in the travel and tourism industry can be broadly classified into two different categories which are outbound tour operators and inbound tour operators. Furthermore, both of these

operators can play a significant role in the development of ecotourism within the country. For example, the marketing and sales practices within travel and tourism industry are highly dominated by outbound tour operators and thus, these operators can play a vital role in the development of ecotourism within the country. This can be done with the help of different strategies and action plan. For example, the products and services linked with ecotourism can be promoted and sold by creating and using brand name.

The result of this is that it will help in creating awareness among customers and at the same time, it will also generate demand of ecotourism tourism products and services among all travelers and tourist. Use of ecotourism product catalogues, brochures and pamphlets can be also carried out by outbound tour operators to carry out marketing and promotion of ecotourism within the country. On the contrary of this, it can be critically argued that the most common and wrong perception of outbound tour operators is that they are only taking care of tour details within the trip. However, this is not true as there are large number of activities and tasks which are being accomplished by outbound tour operators. For instance, the outbound tour operators work closely with the inbound tour operator to carry out marketing and promotion of products and services. Nowadays, the tour operators are encouraged to contribute a lot in sustainable development of places or tourist destinations (Leslie, 2016).

The role of inbound tour operators is to handle day to day operations and activities within the industry. Here, different types of support services are offered by these operators to ensure and attain higher degree of satisfaction among all travelers and tourist in the best possible manner. The prime responsibility of inbound tour operators is to satisfy the clients during the entire tour and this can be done by delivering quality and effective services. It can be expressed that during tours, inbound tour operators can carry out promotion of ecotourism products and services to different tourists and travelers.

Country like India is full of natural places, destination and thus it is very potential market for development of concept such as ecotourism. India is also considered as the most dynamic and potential segment of the tourism and travel industry of the world (Verma, 2003). As compared to the traditional tourism practices, the concept of ecotourism is more effective as it emphasize on protection local culture, communities and environment. The efforts of internal and external stakeholders can results in development and establishment of ecotourism products and services within the nation.

The overall concept of eco tourism can benefit the entire country in several ways. For example, it can help in protecting the natural resources and destination of India in the best possible manner. In addition to this conservation of wildlife is another key benefit which is associated with the use of ecotourism concept in the country. The Indian tourism consists of various activities such as accommodation, transport, catering, entertainment etc. Furthermore, the activities and operations of tourism are having adverse impact on the destinations in India (Mishra, 2004).

On the contrary of this, it can be critically argued that adoption of ecotourism practices is not an easy task and there are different factors which need to be taken into consideration. For example, if the projects linked with ecotourism are not managed properly then it may become a threat for entire wildlife and local communities.

It can be stated that tour guides play a significant role in growth and development of ecotourism. The statement can be justified by the fact that guides help in building awareness about environment and protection of local communities. At the same time, the respect provided to local culture by tour guides can play a vital role in development of eco-tourism. Furthermore, there are different types of tour guides and each of them can contribute effectively in terms of promoting the concept of eco-tourism. For example the tourism industry includes on-site guides who conduct different types of tours usually for one or several hours in a day. The services provided by these kinds of tour guides are limited to particular areas.

On the other hand, city guides, professional tour guides, staff guides, private or personal guides, specialized guides, community tour guides, step on guides are some different types of tour guides which operate in the travel and tourism industry. In context of eco-tourism, it can be expressed that these tour guides can work closely with government and other regulatory bodies to develop action plans and strategies to promote eco-tourism.

At the same time, these tour operators can create awareness among travelers and tourists in terms of protection of environment and natural resources during the tours. The tour guides can also play a vital role in creating demand for eco-tourism related tours, products and services by carrying out effective marketing practices of the same.

On the other side of this, the travel agents can contribute to the success of eco-tourism by putting efforts and resources in the same. Here, the travel agents can use the internet as a medium to promote the products, services and eco-tourism destinations. The benefit of this is that it will create high demand for eco-tourism among different international and domestic travelers. The travel agents can also design and develop attractive tour packages linked with eco-tourism. However, it can be

critically argued that the travel agents are required to ensure that adequate food, accommodation and infrastructure facilities are integrated in the travel or tour package. It will help in developing a strong sense of satisfaction among travelers and tourists.

To make the concept of eco-tourism successful, the travel agents can focus on making use of social media channels as a potential platform of marketing and promotion. For example, the travel agents can promote the eco-tourism destinations, products and the benefits associated with the same on social media channels such as Twitter, Facebook and Instagram. The rationale behind this suggestion is that it will allow more people to understand the overall concept of responsible tourism. Apart from this, the travel agents can work closely with government and local NGO's to develop plans and strategies linked with visitor's management. The advantage of this collaboration is that the action plans and strategies will help in protection of local communities and environment in the best possible manner.

1.1.7. Positive and negative impact of ecotourism on local people livelihood

In order to understand the concept of ecotourism in better manner it is necessary to understand about its positive and negative impact. Further, the impact from ecotourism on the host environment and community can be both in positive and negative manner. No doubt, ecotourism concept is favorable for the local community where it is favorable for them to highlight their local culture, values and other form of places that highlights the nature in every possible manner. Further, in order to understand the cost and benefits associated with the ecotourism it is required to undertake large number of factors that involves economic, environmental and socio-cultural factor that are most crucial. The positive impact of ecotourism from economic point of view can be witnessed in the form of revenue that is being received. In every nation it has been analyzed that ecotourism is generating high amount of revenue as compared with the traditional tourism. This requires huge focus on conservation success; thus local support is vital (Bennett and Dearden, 2014).

In short, the concept of traditional tourism is no more popular and majority of the tourists are focusing on ecotourism that surely provides them remarkable experience by visiting sites that are adventurous and are nature based. Establishment of the local employment is the another economic advantage where it has been found that it is providing appropriate employment opportunity to the local people and they are able to obtain right platform so as to promote their local culture in every possible manner. Households expenses are getting increased; therefore local people are highly affected (Clements and Milner-Gulland, 2015). Especially the rural economy is benefitted where in rural areas people are not able to earn high income and there is no such effective source of

employment. Therefore, with the development taking place in ecotourism concept it is generating more employment opportunities. These economic benefits are advantageous for the community and it has contributed a lot in the development of the entire economy.

In country like India the rural areas that are situated in Kerala, Andhra Pradesh are benefitted with ecotourism where large number of tourists from global and national level arrives to visit various destinations. So, this has provided platform to the local residents where they are able to highlight key elements such as art and craft, architecture etc. Further, it is a well known fact that the main motive behind ecotourism is highlight the local community culture so that large number of tourists can understand about it and in turn it can become famous. On the other hand some negative influences of ecotourism are present associated with economic factor. People are also required to emphasize on reducing the threats to conserve the natural resources (Roe and et.al., 2015).

Considering the environmental impact of ecotourism to the local society it has been identified that the positive impact has been witnessed in the form of taking initiatives for the environmental protection. Without undertaking the concept of ecotourism it is not at all possible to take initiatives in favor of the surroundings and it is the only effective way of safeguarding the natural environment in every possible manner. Apart from this, it is a well-known fact that tourism adverse impact on the surroundings is quite high and due to this reason some corrective measures are required to taken so that natural resources can be promoted in best possible manner and it can act as development tool for the entire society. Ecotourism greatly contributes in sustainable development; therefore most often it enhances the living standard of people (Dejene, Seyoum and Ready, 2014).

The assistance of ecotourism with the habitat enhancement is another key attribute of this concept where it has been identified that natural habitats and species can be easily protected with the ecotourism and along with this it is possible for the tourists and other individuals in the society to understand the significance of protecting species as they are not present in adequate amount. Some of the species have become extinct in the modern era and this main reason behind the same was hunting and other form of inhuman activities that is a kind of disadvantage to the local surroundings. Hence, because of efforts on green economy, tourism segment requires more focus on environment protection (KC, Rijal and Sapkota, 2015).

Apart from this, another key advantage associated with the ecotourism concept is the education in the protected areas where it has been found that contribution of ecotourism is quite high in delivering education to the tourists regarding the need for protecting natural surroundings. In

protection of natural resources there is a need to educate people living in the society so that they can apply higher efforts in protecting the environment and this in turn can act as development tool for the entire society in every possible manner. On the other hand some negative impact of ecotourism on the environment is present where it has been identified that tourism causes damage and stress on the surrounding.

Local tourism also contributes in improving the quality of life of people (Hunt, Durham, Driscoll and Honey, 2015). Considering the social-cultural influence it has been identified that the positive aspect involves spiritual experience that is associated with some specific religion. It has been found that ecotourism allows in understanding about different culture and religion of specific nation. Further, it enhances the awareness level among the residents and the ecotourists. This is the main reason due to which concept of tourism is worldwide accepted at faster pace and has contributed a lot in the development of the society. This clearly highlights the positive attribute of the ecotourism that totally makes it different from other type of tourism.

In short, it has changed the scenario of the entire tourism industry as in past people were not at all aware about the practice of safeguarding environment and natural species. But with the development of the ecotourism concept more initiatives were taken so that environment can be protected in best possible manner. Instead of having scare resources, the economies are putting efforts in protecting natural resources (Kausar, Mirza and Akhtar, 2015). Apart from this without proper knowledge this concept is of no use where it has been identified that delivering proper information the tourists in relation with this concept is highly effective.

On the other hand it has been identified that the development charges associated with this concept are quite high and it is not possible for every area or particular society to allocate large amount of funds in development of specific ecotourism place and promoting it from nature view point. Another key challenge is that the revenue level is not fixed where there is no surety that specific amount of income can be obtained by indulging into the practices of ecotourism. Apart from this, the activities such as acquiring land for establishing protected areas, restoration cost and this is the direct cost. Poverty is another challenge that comes while protecting ecotourism (Hugo and Nyaupane, 2016).

Along with this, the additional cost involves is the development of the infrastructure where it has been found that development of roads, waste disposal units, energy systems etc are costly and this sometime acts as hurdle in the overall development of the ecotourism concept. Several costs are incurred on the maintenance of different type of facilities such as habitat protection, upgrading

skills, promotion of site on continuous basis. Further, it is also ascertained that government has implemented many policies such as ban on hunting activities to protect life of rural people (Mbaiwa, 2017).

Considering the adverse impact on the environment it has been identified those environmental costs from the removal of native vegetation along with other type of footprint facilities. It has been identified that with the establishment of different ecotourism projects various adverse impact takes place to the surroundings in the form of pollution, soil erosion, impairment of plant and animals etc. The adverse impact of ecotourism from socio-cultural point of view is cultural intrusion that can take place when tourists come into contact with the native workers.

In order to promote sustainable ecotourism it is necessary that ecotourism concept may satisfy several issues that takes into consideration it must not have adverse impact on the surroundings, it must not exploit the local people living in the society and the social along with the cultural traditions of the host country must be promoted. For effective development of this concept it is necessary to ensure well in advance that ecotourism is financially viable or not and along with this other additional facilities must be present such as convenience, vital facilities that are must in tourism sector. Tourism is regarded as a critical driver that leads the economy to bring social and ecological changes (Aswani, Diedrich and Currier, 2015).

In case if it is not ethically and culturally acceptable then in such case local residents will not be benefitted through this and it will not assist in the development of the society. There exist large number of factors that acts as hurdle in the development of the ecotourism concept. It has been identified that careful planning, management etc that directly contributes a lot in the popularity of the concept. In case if planning in relation with ecotourism is carried out in proper manner then it is quite possible to work for the development of the society and large number of tourists can easily know about the ecotourism concept.

Hence, it is clear that through eco-tourism environmental movements can be facilitated especially with mass tourism (Cobbinah, 2015). Moreover, it has to be ensured that sustainable tourism must undertake different type of activities such as it may satisfy needs of the host population such as it can assist in enhancing the living standard of the people for long and short period of time. It is necessary that ecotourism must satisfy the growing demand for tourism where large numbers of customers are easily attracted. Apart from this, it must satisfy the natural environment in terms of protecting the natural environment along with different species.

1.2. Role of Resident attitude

Resident attitude plays a vital role in growth and development of eco-tourism concept within the country. It can be stated that adequate and active participants of residents is vital to make the concept successful in the market. **To develop and promote the concept of ecotourism, the views and opinions of residents in the country should be encouraged.** Furthermore, the development and process should be based on the views and opinions provided. Active participation of residents and people living in local community will provide a potential opportunity to understand the way in which sustainable practices can be developed more effectively. However, it can be critically argued that even the tourist and travelers appreciate the support and assistance provided by residents in India to promote the concept of eco-tourism (Verma, 2003).

In addition to this, the role of residents and their attitude is also vital in terms of minimizing the chances of future issues and conflicts. It can be asserted that active participation of people in local community or residents helps in developing more satisfactory plans to promote the concept of ecotourism. Another benefit of positive resident attitude in India is that it can assist in enhancing the overall welfare of local community (Working with Local Communities, 2017).

Over the past few years, the eco-tourism has emerged as the most popular and important component of the international travel and tourism industry. The concept of eco-tourism mainly emphasize on prompting responsible tourism which can help in protecting the lives of local community and environment. However, achieving success in the concept of eco-tourism is not an easy as all the stakeholders within tourism industry are required to contribute effectively in the same. Here, the role of resident attitude become highly important as it is directly associated with making the concept of eco-tourism successful. For example, positive and supportive attitude of residents allows the government and tourism authorities to implement the strategies linked with eco-tourism more effectively.

It can be also expressed that in the past few years, the local residents have understood the importance of promoting responsible tourism among different traveler and tourists. It can be termed as a major reason behind growing number of visitors in eco-tourism destinations. The residents also initiate in terms of interacting with the visitors and make them aware about the need and benefit of responsible tourism (Sinha, 2011). The positive attitude of residents and their active participation has resulted in the development of self-financing protected areas in the country. For example, the revenue generated in the form of entry fees in wildlife sanctuaries and parks is used to finance the management and protection of areas which are environmentally sensitive. Furthermore, it is the

active participation and positive attitude of residents which has supported in implementing this strategy and achieving desired outcomes.

It can be expressed that the residents perceives eco-tourism as a concept which can offer several kinds of economic benefits. For instance, the growing popularity of responsible tourism can results in creating job opportunities and at the same time it can enhance the overall degree of national income of a particular nation. However, the attitude of residents is not only positive and some of the residents also consider eco-tourism as a threat to the entire society. The positive attitude towards eco-tourism emphasize on the fact that eco-tourism helps in minimizing the negative impact of tourism activities on environment and local community.

On the other side of this, the negative attitude of residents towards eco-tourism reflects the fact that eco-tourism has emerged as a major threat to the rich biodiversity and natural habitats in the wild areas (Risks and Benefits of Eco Tourism, 2017). The residents believe that eco-tourism is beneficial for local communities as it supports them in enhancing their income level. The concept should be marketed effectively so that the travelers and tourists can understand the need and benefits of responsible travel. Some residents believes that eco-tourism has resulted in social disharmony as now the competition among different groups has become very intense in terms of obtaining higher income from eco-tourism.

In the last few years, there are many eco-tourism places developed in the country and some residents believe that the development of tourism in some areas has resulted in damaging the existing landscape and natural environment. It can be stated that to develop a natural place as an eco-tourism destination or site, it is required by the government and tourism authorities to focus on areas such infrastructure, food and accommodations facilities. Furthermore, eco-tourism sites generally lie in remote areas where facilities linked with food, accommodation and transportation does not exists (Sharma, 2016).

It is required by different authorities to work on development of basic facilities and amenities in these remote areas which sometimes ends in destroying the natural beauty of the destination. In addition to this, overcrowding of travelers and tourists from different places of the world is also considered as a threat to overall environment and local communities by the residents (Local Residents' Attitude toward Sustainable Rural Tourism Development, 2016). Other than this, some residents view eco-tourism as a very positive concept as there are several benefits associated with the same. Eco-tourism results in enhancing the recreational opportunities for people living in local

communities. The overall standard of living is increased by promoting the concept of eco-tourism in natural and remote areas of the country.

The success and failure of eco-tourism relies heavily on the participation and support provided from the residents. It can be expressed that active participation of residents can directly support in the formulation and implementation of more effective policies and plans linked with eco-tourism. In addition to this, the residents also want that the income or revenue generated from eco-tourism activities and visitors should be used for future development (Straford, 2013).

It is also required by the tourism industry to adapt and implement open communication channels where all stakeholders can present their views and opinions about how the concept can be promoted among travelers and tourists. The benefit of using open communication channels in decision making and policy formulation is that it will help in developing more effective and satisfactory policies with regards to the overall concept of responsible tourism. The issues and challenges faced by residents and their negative attitude towards the concept should be also taken into consideration while making policies and actions plans for eco-tourism. Different types of surveys and studies can be carried out at international and domestic level to understand the existing attitude of residents towards the concept of eco-tourism. At the same time, effective strategies should be developed to transform the negative attitude of resident to positive one. It will directly contribute to the long term growth and sustainability of eco-tourism concept. In addition to this, positive attitude and active participation of residents will also allow the tourism authorities to understand different types of sustainable practices which can be taken into considered for developing an area into eco-tourism destination for different travelers and tourists. Thus, the role of resident's attitude becomes very important in terms of making the concept of eco-tourism successful (Tai, 2017).

The overall role of resident attitude is quite important in understanding about the concept of ecotourism in better manner. Further, to achieve success in the concept of eco-tourism and to save the environment for future generation, the positive attitude of local residents is very crucial. The rationale behind this is that development objectives cannot be accomplished until and unless the local residents are not actively involved in the same. The residents and people living in local community needs to understand the fact that their positive attitude and active participation will directly contribute in providing economic benefits and protection of the environment in the best possible manner.

2. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research focuses on analyzing the resident attitude and demand for ecotourism in India. The phenomenology research strategy has been undertaken in order to accomplish the main goals of the study. The main reason behind selecting this strategy is to understand the key factors that assist in development of this concept along with the main ecotourism destinations in India. Phenomenology is directly feasible for conducting the entire research. Researcher has approached various tour operators, guides and Indian residents so as to obtain right amount of primary data. Through this research strategy it is possible for researcher to understand the concept of ecotourism in better manner.

The key methods that have been adopted for collection of primary information involve questionnaire and interview. Further, researcher has collected secondary information with the help of books, journals and online articles.

Interview is conducted for recording the information that is beneficial for the research. Further, the few tour operators operating in India have been approached so as to obtain information in relation with the ecotourism practices. Through interview tour operators have been asked several questions in order to know their perception towards ecotourism practices and what initiatives have been taken by them for promotion of this concept. Further, it is a well-known fact that contribution of tour operators in developing this concept is must. It is believed by the interviewer through available contacts and references it is possible to take interview of the tour operators in proper manner. Tour operator from Kerala and Kochi were selected as they are famous in the particular area. Apart from this guides were selected on the basis of experience where all the guides selected have experience of more than 4 years in the field of ecotourism.

Questionnaire as one of the tool consists of various questions with the motive to obtain data from the respondents. In the present study all the respondents i.e. Indian residents are based in India. So, obtaining data with the help of questionnaire is beneficial in order to know attitude and demand of Indian residents towards ecotourism. This tool has been undertaken for obtaining information as it is considered to be more convenient as compared with other technique such as survey or any other.

The present questionnaire comprised of closed ended questions also where participant has to select one suitable option provided by the interviewer. Some of the questions are open ended where it is possible for the respondents to give their own opinion and this is significantly beneficial for the research in every possible manner. Total 12 interview questions have been formed in order to obtain

response of guides and tour operators. 23 questions have been framed for obtaining response of local Indian residents.

Researcher has obtained information from the articles that are recently published and provides insight relation the ecotourism industry of India. Further, information has been obtained only from the reliable and authentic sources so that it may enhance validity of the study. Researcher is required to read history and current trends of ecotourism in India.

Research approach

The entire research has been carried out especially on Indian ecotourism market where main focus is on understanding resident attitude and demand for ecotourism. Inductive approach has been selected where the research focuses on ecotourism in India from point view of the India residents. Specific information has been collected from the Indian residents in order to explore the ecotourism market of India.

Research philosophy

The facts and figures that are associated with the ecotourism concept have been interpreted in order to understand them in better manner. Interpretivism philosophy has been selected where results have been interpreted so as to obtain meaningful findings. According to the nature of the study this philosophy was most suitable so that readers can understand the concept and elements of ecotourism in better manner.

Research design

Exploratory design has been selected for exploring new ideas that are associated with the study. Through this design new ideas have been explored linked with ecotourism like what are the real factors due to which demand for ecotourism is growing along with the attitude of Indian residents towards ecotourism. The main motive behind undertaking this design is to explore new ideas and facts linked with ecotourism.

Data collection

Data collection can be defined as a systematic process where different techniques and sources are used to gain adequate, accurate and reliable information with regards to the variables of the study. The process of data collection is also considered as the most vital part of a research and the rationale behind this is that the process enables the researcher to answer the research question in the best possible manner. Apart from this, the process of data collection also plays a critical role in testing the hypothesis and evaluating various outcomes of the study. It can be expressed that to

accomplish the aim and objective of a study, it is crucial for researcher to focus on ensuring the appropriateness and overall accuracy of data collected.

At the same time, the researcher may face issues and difficulties in answering the research questions in case if the data is not collected appropriately. The information regarding the topic and variable of study can be gathered with the help of two major sources which are primary and secondary.

The information collected from primary sources is considered as new, fresh and first-hand information as it has been gathered for the first time. Furthermore, primary data is considered as more reliable, accurate and upgraded information with regards to topic selected for investigation. However, it can be critically argued that collection of primary data is not an easy task as the researcher is required to invest large amount of time, efforts and resources.

On the other side of this, it can be asserted that the secondary sources of data provide information which has been already collected by other researchers. The data is considered as old, less accurate and reliable as compared to the information provided by primary sources. However, the benefit of using secondary sources of data collection is that it consumes less time, money, efforts and other valuable resources.

The main aim behind conducting the present study is to analyze the resident's attitude towards eco-tourism in India. To gain adequate and accurate data, the researcher has used both primary and secondary sources of data collection. Here, the primary information has been collected through such as survey and observation.

The reason behind using primary sources of data collection is that it has supported in collecting more accurate, authentic and reliable information about the perception and attitude of India residents on eco-tourism in the country. At the same time, the overall process of data analysis and interpretation has become effective with the help of primary data. The researcher has been able to address the research questions in more accurate manner with the help of primary data. On the other side of this, the researcher has preferred book, journals and reliable online sources to collect secondary information. The rationale behind using secondary sources of data collection is that the researcher has been able to save time and resources to a certain extent.

The overall quality and outcomes of present study has been enhanced by using both the sources of data collection. It can be also expressed that there are various reasons which has encouraged the researcher to use both sources of data collection. For example the research was having limited amount of time and other resources thus, it was not suitable to not opt for primary

sources for gathering information about resident's attitude on Indian eco-tourism. At the same time, the researcher was looking forward to gather reliable, accurate and fresh information. Thus, the use of secondary sources only was not appropriate as per the need and requirement of the researcher.

The researcher has preferred to use both primary and secondary sources of data collection to carry out the present study in best possible manner and within the available amount of resources. However, it can be critically argued that selection of right and accurate sources from where data can be collected was a very challenging task. The research has been able to gather quality information which has further supported in carrying out the process of data analysis more effectively. The selection of right sources has enhanced overall validity and reliability of the present research.

Data analysis

The section of data analysis can be termed as the most important part of research as it highlights the key tools and techniques employed by researcher to carry out evaluation of information gathered from various sources. In this section, the researcher tries to explain the way in which data will be evaluated to obtain valid and suitable findings. Another objective of data analysis is to identify the relationship between different variables and forecast the outcomes. The techniques of data analysis can be classified into two main categories which are qualitative and quantitative method of data analysis.

In qualitative method of data analysis, the purpose of researcher is to understand and carry out interpretation of social interactions. Here, the sample is relatively small and the sample is selected intentionally by the researcher. The data collected from different sources is presented with the help of different images, words and objects in qualitative method of data analysis. It can be stated that this method is mainly used in researches where data is collected from participant observations, interviews, open ended questions and field notes. Patterns, features and thematic analysis can be the three main ways through which the information is evaluated in qualitative method. However, it can be critically argued that the findings derived from qualitative method of data analysis are less generalized and more specific in nature.

On the other hand, quantitative methods of data analysis focus more on testing the hypothesis and check the cause and effect of the study. The method is used in the studies which include large samples that are selected randomly. Here, the data collected from various sources is represented through statistics and numbers. In quantitative methods of data analysis, the researchers are required to use validated and structured instruments for the process of collecting reliable, useful

and valid information. The findings derived from quantitative methods of data analysis are more generalized in nature.

In context of the present study both quantitative and qualitative methods of data analysis are taken into consideration. The rationale behind using mixed method is that it has supported in the carrying out better evaluation of the information which has been gathered from various sources. Apart from this, mixed methodology has also helped the researcher to gain breadth and in-depth understanding of the topic undertaken for investigation. However, it can be critically argued that the adaption of mixed methodology in the present study has also assisted in achieving triangulation in research. The benefit of achieving triangulation in research is that it provides the researcher with an opportunity to examine and analysis the same phenomenon by different tool, techniques and methods. In qualitative data analysis, the researcher has presented information with the help of different charts and themes. On the other hand, numbers and statistical data have been used in quantitative methods of data analysis. Another benefit of using mixed methodology in the present study is that it has provided strength to the existing research by offsetting the weakness which lies in quantitative and qualitative methods of data analysis. The researcher has been able to gain better understanding of the research problem by employing mixed methodology.

Sampling

Data has been collected from 400 Indian residents so as to know their attitude towards ecotourism. Creating questionnaires in google drive further, data was collected through social media channel where Facebook has been used as one of the tool. Indian residents were selected on the basis of their frequency to travel different destinations based in India. On the other hand, the information is also collected from 3 tour operators through a well-structured questionnaire which was forwarded to them on their respective email Id. Further, 3 guides were approached and interview was taken through video conferencing (Skype). These tour operators were selected on the basis of their popularity in terms of delivering ecotourism services. Guides were selected on the basis of their experience in the field of ecotourism.

Limitations

Research limitations can be defined as the key elements which create obstacles for researcher in terms of carry out the study successfully and accomplish its objectives. The interpretations of findings are also affected by the research limitations. Acknowledgement of research limitations is essential for success of study and accomplishing its objectives. In context of the present study, limited availability of reliable and authentic information can be termed as the major limitation of the

present study. To determine the resident's attitude and demand towards Indian eco-tourism, limited data was available in front of the researcher. Lack of authentic and reliable information has also resulted in limiting the overall scope of data analysis to gain reliable and valid outcomes. On the other side of this, lack of prior research and studies with regards to the topic under investigation can be termed as another major limitation linked with the present research. The present study heavily relied on people and individuals and getting the access of desired number of people can be termed as another major limitation which has created obstacles for the researcher in terms of carrying out the present study.

3. DEVELOPMENT OF ECOTOURISM IN INDIA

3.1. Worldwide practice of Ecotourism

Ecotourism is regarded as the multidimensional practice where main stress is on accomplishing economic gain with the help of natural resource preservation. In the developing nations the concept of ecotourism is developing which can be represented by the smaller scale infrastructural needs and less sophisticated the need of consumers. There has been a implementation of several policies to protect the environment (Costa and Furtado, 2015). The local businesses along with the entrepreneurs can efficiently need the requirement of the ecotourism especially in the case of food and lodging services. Due to this basic reason the concept of ecotourism has become popular as it mainly focuses on simulating economic development.

The promotion of ecotourism in each and every part of the country has positive influence on the economy and the environment. It has allowed in the natural preservation of the areas that are most crucial from ecotourism point of view. Moreover, the best practices of ecotourism can be witnessed from point view of India where it has been identified that many destinations have been developed that have played significant role in the economic development of every nation. Hence, because of global consideration, eco-tourism has been experiencing rapid growth (Ly and Bauer, 2016).

Further, the concept of ecotourism captures \$77 billion of the global market and it supports a lot to the nations in dealing with the environmental concerns such as global warming etc. As per the statistics of United Nations World Travel Organization it has been identified that in the year 2007 ecotourism captured 7% of the international market. This concept is significantly beneficial for the developing nations where the developing market has grown at an average rate of 6 to 8% over the previous year. The green and the environmental trends in the travel and tourism industry is rising at faster pace where three main reasons are present for putting efforts into the sustainability. Along with this, wildlife tourism is also increasing at the same time which plays primary role in natural area tourism management (Newsome and Rodger, 2013).

First and the most important one is preservation of environment for the future generations. It is well known fact that in case if the natural resources are not protected then it will surely diminish in the future. Because, it is an alternative form of tourism; hence its impacts the economy on greater extent (Ekanayaka, 2013). This is the main reason due to which corrective actions are required to be taken for the preservation of environment so that entire economy can be significantly benefitted with the help of this. Second reason is that it adds extra dimension to the guest satisfaction and the third

one is saving cost and enhancing the profitability level. It has been identified that businesses are earning high income by indulging into the practice of promoting ecotourism where it has been identified that customers are easily attracted towards this tourism and in turn demand for nature based sites is very high. Further, recreational activities are considered as important while enhancing demand for eco-tourism (Ballantyne and Packer, 2013).

Several efforts are required to be added so that sustainable benefits can be attained suitably (Hill, Hill and de Sausmarez, 2014). At global level ecotourism has been highlighted in terms of responsibility towards the nature to protect it and taking every corrective actions so as to safeguard natural resources that are most important. Moreover, it has been identified that in the year 1970 the ecotourism concept emerged as the new global environment movement where it is one of the fastest growing concept in the tourism industry and it supports in knowing the impact of tourism on commodities and the nature. Due to this basic reason this concept is gaining popularity in fast period of time. However, the concept of eco-tourism has many uncertainties as well due to increasing concern towards technological requirements; hence it also changes the nature of eco-tourism (Fennell, 2014).

3.2. Ecotourism in India

Ecotourism is a type of tourism that involves visit to pristine, fragile and natural areas. It involves conservation of natural places so living standard of local people can be improved. Ecological conservation is essential in ecotourism because that greatly contributes in economic development of India. On the basis of historical aspects, in the year 1980s, ecotourism is regarded as a critical process that mainly focuses on protecting the environment through developing new measures (*Eco Tourism in India*. 2008). Tourism in India is economically critical; hence this increases the number of visitors and as a result, Indian tourism is growing rapidly. In the year 2016, The World Travel and Tourism Council recorded that tourism industry of India has contributed around 14 lakh crore in nation's GDP.

This is also useful in generating employment opportunities which contributes in overall development of the economy. Eco-tourism is a new approach in tourism which helps in preserving natural environment of the country. It requires efforts on safeguarding the ecosystem through integration several aspects of the environment. Natural resources like forest, desert and heritage places are required to be protected under ecotourism (Mishra, 2004). Therefore, ecotourism is a nature based ecologically sustainable constituent wherein local people are benefitted through promoting the tourism aspects of the country. While traveling to different places, visitors expect to

get satisfaction as that can only enhance the value of tourism. In India, people worship nature as a major part of its tradition which also depicts the conservation of natural resources.

There are several aspects through which ancient civilization of India is nurtured through people by considering the philosophical approach of oneness of life. It is being mentioned in the Indian tradition that people need to consider the importance of each other; hence they should value all creation with love and dignity. However, currently natural resources are being exploited because of commercialization which is reducing the importance of ecology balance. It is also observed that today, the entire world is experiencing deep crisis and this is also amending the danger of being doomed (Chandra, 2017). Forest area is getting converted into concrete walls; thus biological aspects are getting affected. India has different geographical tourist destinations which not only aids people to relieve the stress; but also it helps in providing knowledge about heritage facets. However, political and neoliberal policy affects the concept of ecotourism (Hannam and Reddy, 2016).

India is rich in heritage tourism; thus old places are being visited in higher extent. Most of the destinations of India give knowledge about social and cultural norms; therefore people find it worthy visiting. In this respect, the ongoing denuding of forest area brings impact on global warming and greenhouse effects. This also requires participation of industrial stakeholders (Ghodeswar, 2013). At the same time, this seems to be beneficial for the economy because this safeguards natural resources from destruction. In addition to this, this also encourages humans to know about their responsibilities towards protection of nature (Ahmad and Khan, 2013). Therefore, it can be said that because of global warming, people are putting more efforts to conserve natural places. This not only promotes tourism; but also it leads to boost the economic trends of the subsequent country. In India, there are several places to enjoy the nature such as Kerala, Himalayan, northeast India and Andaman & Nicobar Islands (Chand, Singh, Parappurathu, Roy and Kumar, 2015).

All the mentioned places give perfect definition about protection of natural resources which should be preserved for future tourism. The most common example in this domain is Thenmala in Kerala which is regarded as a first ecotourism destination explored in India. The destination is engaged in catering better knowledge about nature which attracts many people in different ways. Additionally, Indian topography depicts an abundant source of flora and fauna because of range of such places (Chitre, 2015). At the same time, there are various species in India which enhances the value of tourism; however it is counted under wildlife areas. It is being analyzed that national parks

and wildlife areas have captured the interest of people which not only increases demand for tourism; but also it promotes India's tourism.

In India, there are around 80 national parks and 441 sanctuaries which are involved in protecting and conserving wildlife resources of India. Several laws are being developed in this area which also works with varied Botanical and Zoological Gardens. All such entities typically work in protecting the ecosystem. This also includes several provisions to protect animals from hunting and other illegal activities. Hence, it includes welfare activities that safeguards natural areas (Ashok, Tewari, Behera and Majumdar, 2017). Thus, in this context value of tree plantation is also enhanced to promote greenery in the economy. In this relation, there are numerous non-profit organizations that are forwarding support towards environmental education. In India, tourism is called as one of the fastest growing industries because it involves wide range of activities that is essential in economic development. Thus, India has been focusing on eco-tourism because it offers sustainable benefits through environment protection (Kumar and Rao, 2016).

On the basis of past scenario, it is ascertained that during 70s and 80s, people had the desire to travel different places to experience new things. Hence, they started moving varied places which gradually promoted the value of tourism. Thus, after that tourist business came into limelight and afterwards agriculture industry, tourism industry became the fastest growing. Currently, tourism is an economic activity that has huge importance (Das and Hussain, 2016). It is also analyzed that today more than 550 million people travel to different destinations to enhance cultural and historical knowledge. This has also enhanced frequency of international visitors and it is also expected to double in the upcoming years. Tourism is rapidly growing; hence undoubtedly it has direct impact on environment, ecology and its people.

Natural imbalance is one of the major problems that not only affect value of the economy; but also it impedes tourism industry. There are several controllable and uncontrollable factors that lead to natural disasters and that impact the overall industry. Modern tourism requires proper infrastructure; hence on that basis only development takes place. However, environmental concern is important from social aspects and this is being appreciated from old civilization (Banerjee and Shiva, 2014). There exists a direct relationship between tourism and environment degradation; hence all the associated aspects should be suitably managed. The main aim of ecotourism is to fulfill the visit to natural places to get historical and cultural knowledge; hence it directly integrates with ecosystem. Among all the international holidays, ecotourism holds the most vital place which

enhances the degree of visiting. Hence, it is useful in reconnecting people with the nature (Curtin and Kragh, 2014).

India seems to have a large treasure of natural beauty including hill stations, resorts, rivers and mountains; hence because of such places, Northern India became popular. Places like Taj Mahal, the Himalayas, Kashmir Valle and the Ganges are popular for tourism purpose. The western region of India also has several places that encourage visitors to visit India frequently. On the other hand, Southern region also has many places which attract religious and cultural heritage tourism (Mandal, Dandapath and Shukla, 2013). Apart from this, India has several beaches which provide lazy sun bathing and wind surfing.

Biodiversity is the major factor on which tourism of India is dependent. In India, tourism was probably started as a cultural procedure in which enticed many people from diverse nations. Prior, tourism was an organized activity which use to include only specific activities; however due to technological development, the value of tourism has changed a lot. Moreover, it is also giving importance to development of rural tourism because it has growing potential (Sharma, 2016).

Hence from the overall analysis it is quite clear that natural places are present in India that supports in promoting ecotourism. Further, different national parks, wildlife sanctuaries and beaches are present in India that possesses capability to deliver remarkable experience to the Indian residents. India's natural beauty and different geographical location can provide heritage tourism to visitors. This makes Indian tourism more unique and creative. India's richness in heritage and cultural tourism attracts most of the visitors from diverse nations. Environment plays crucial role in tourism development; hence it is the foremost requirement under tourism management. No doubt development of ecotourism is taking place at faster pace in India and along with this contribution of India residents is high in promoting this concept.

3.2.1. Initiatives taken by government

In country like India development of ecotourism is taking place at faster pace where the overall initiatives taken by the government can be highly appraised. Further, ecotourism guidelines have been framed where this concept is considered as a significant educational and economic activity in best possible manner. Apart from this, different principles have been framed that are linked with the ecotourism concept. One of the main principles is that it is regarded as low impact tourism where it assists in protecting ecological integrity of areas associated with wildlife and allows in protection of natural areas in best possible manner (*GUIDELINES FOR ECOTOURISM IN AND*

AROUND PROTECTED AREAS, 2011). Ecotourism in India is highlighting the overall heritage value of the protected areas along with the wildlife. Further, environmental along with the cultural awareness is possible in best possible manner. One of the main advantage is that it provides livelihood opportunities to the local community that positively influences each and every individual living in the society.

Considering the role of state government **State Level Ecotourism Strategy** has been developed that takes into consideration various plans such as participation of the local community, conservation of wildlife ecologically, continuous monitoring of the impact of ecotourism activities, education and training, sound environmental design etc. In short, the strategies framed at state level are quite effective as it focuses on the ecological sensitive land use policies. More and more awareness is taking place in the society regarding ecotourism concept and it is directly benefitting environment in best possible manner. State government is ensuring that the first benefit of ecotourism is going to the local people in the society and also main focus is on partnership between different kinds of authorities that involves tourism professionals, local communities and forest department (*GUIDELINES FOR ECOTOURISM IN AND AROUND PROTECTED AREAS, 2011*). All the range of ecotourism activities are taking place in the ecotourism zones and it is benefitting the individuals who are living in the society. **Proper financial assistance has been provided to the communities and the individuals who owns lands that are located outside the protected areas.** Through this it has become quite possible to enhance value of such lands for wildlife and in turn it can surely deliver high income for the landowners from ecotourism point of view. **A local advisory committee has been developed** whose main responsibility to review the strategies developed by the state ecotourism in relation with the protected areas and they provide suggestions to the state government so that overall development of ecotourism can take place at faster pace.

Apart from this **proper advise is provided by the local advisory committee that are linked with the issues linked with the development of the ecotourism** such as in non-forest areas of ecological tourism zone etc. All the key tasks that are carried out by the tour operators are monitored on continuous basis with the motive to ensure that their activities are not disturbing animals while visitors are entering into the protect areas. So, all these tasks are most crucial and has assisted a lot for promoting the overall concept of tourism and the main benefit is to the local community in the form of income, employment etc (Stephensonand Al-Hamarneh, 2017).

The role of government is critical in terms of marketing and promoting eco-tourism in any country. The government and other regulatory bodies can make use of different tools and

techniques which can assist in creating awareness about eco-tourism related products and services among different travelers and tourists. In addition to this, government initiatives also play a critical role in generating demand of eco-tourism within domestic and international travelers. The Indian government works closely with different stakeholders in the tourism industry and here the objective is to develop strategic and marketing plans for eco-tourism. On the other side of this, it can be critically argued that it is the key responsibility of Union territory and State government to carry out promotion and development of eco-tourism.

It can be expressed that government bodies such as the Ministry of Tourism provides adequate support in the growth and development of eco-tourism. It can be justified by **the example that Ministry of Tourism offers financial aid to promote eco-tourism through financial programs such as the Central Financial Assistance** (Eco-tourism, 2017). **These financial resources are mainly used for the development of infrastructure and for carrying out marketing.** On the other side of this, it can be stated that the government has **also taken initiatives eco-tourism such as development of Evolved and adopted Comprehensive Sustainable Tourism Criteria for India.** The criteria are applicable on major segments of tourism such as rivers, backwaters, beaches, lakes, accommodation and tour operators. In a country such as India, the promotion of eco-tourism is also carried out with the help of **social awareness campaign under the initiative of “Atithi Devo Bhavah”.** The English translation of Atithi Devo Bhavah is that the guest is equivalent to god. The objective behind this initiative was to promote the culture, food, traditional, heritage and eco-tourism of the country.

Apart from this, **the government of India has also taken initiative to promote the concept of eco-tourism through its national parks and wildlife sanctuaries.** However, it can be critically argued that till now the country has no set eco-tourism guideline and this can be termed as the biggest obstacle in the growth and development of eco-tourism in the country. Now, the Indian government is looking forward to frame complete new guidelines which will emphasize on promoting India as a popular eco-tourism destination. The government is working closely with Union Ministry of Environment and Forest to set new guidelines which will promote responsible tourism within the country (Adak, 2017). In addition to this, the government is also looking forward to ban tourists and tourism related activities in Odisha's Gahirmatha Beach during the tenure when the Olive Ridley Turtles comes to lay eggs. This can be termed a very satisfactory initiative which will help the government to carry out promotion of responsible tourism within the country. It can be also expressed that there was a time when only few travelers and tourists used to prefer visiting

wildlife sanctuaries and parks in the country but now wildlife safari is contributing approximately one third in the revenue generated from tourism in the country.

To carry out the promotion of eco-tourism, the **government also emphasize on participation of local communities in process such as decision making and strategy formulation.** Here, the people or residents in local community are encouraged to get actively involved in promotion of responsible tourism within the country. The secondary objective of the government behind this initiative is to carry out overall economic development of eco-tourism areas or local community. Another initiative taken by government of India for promoting eco-tourism is linked with managing the conflict between resources used of eco-tourism and for the livelihood of people living in local community (Ministry of tourism, 2015). Here, the government focuses on identify the conflict between use of available resources and at the same time, the government also makes efforts to minimize this conflict of interest in the best possible manner. The initiative also play critical role in developing a strong sense of satisfaction among the people living in local community. On the other side of this, the government also emphasize on the fact that scale and type of eco-tourism development carried out should be compatible with the social cultural characteristics and environment existing with the local community.

The government of India is also looking forward to invest 2 Crore INR with an objective to carry out conservation and development of rock Fossils in Kaimur Wildlife Division. The strategy will help in development of the area and attracting travelers from different places of the world. The Uttar Pradesh Forest Corporation is also working with the government to develop special and attractive eco-tourism packages to increase the demand of eco-tourism among different travelers and tourists (Singh, 2013). It can be expressed that various circuits have been developed and tourists are provided with an opportunity to visit these circuits and enjoy the treasure of natural wealth. Here, different eco-tourism development communities, local community and NGO's have been collaborated with each other to promote the concept of responsible tourism among different travelers and tourists. At the same time, the objective here is to carry out economic development of local community with the revenue generated from tourism related activities.

The government of India has also taken initiatives to protect the rich flora and fauna wealth within different destination. Now, the country's government is actively involved in placing efforts and resources to protect nature and wildlife in the best possible manner. For example, the government in Kanpur is now looking forward to develop some new wildlife sanctuaries to protect the wealth of flora and fauna (Siddiqui, 2012). In addition to this, the government of Kanpur is also

investing financial resources and efforts to face lift the existing wildlife sanctuaries and national parks in the country. The government is developing a master plan which will include several small and large projects to promote responsible tourism within the destination.

Over the past few years, eco-tourism has emerged as one of the most popular and gaining momentum in India. Furthermore, there are several reasons behind promoting the concept within the travel and tourism industry of the country. For example, the concept assists in preservation of animal's natural habitat and wildlife in the long run. In addition to this, the surroundings of remote areas can be developed more effectively with the help of eco-tourism. However, it can be critically argued that the main and most important benefits which can be derived from promoting eco-tourism is that it provides a potential platform to bring the people living in local community into limelight (Sharma, 2015). The concept offers opportunity to local communities in terms of earning livelihood and sustain in the long run. Another benefit which can be derived from promoting this concept is that it will help Indian to enhance its long term economic prospects. Nowadays, different NGO'S and government authorities are placing efforts and resources to protect the natural destinations and their beauty.

3.2.2. Main ecotourism region destinations in India

India is considered as one of the most popular country which has a diversified range of eco-tourism destinations. From sand dunes of the Thar Desert to the backwaters of Kerala, India has always been the favorite eco-tourism destination among different travelers and tourists. Furthermore, the nation is also full of flora and fauna species and this attracts travelers from different areas of the world.



Fig 3. Main ecotourism region destinations in India (Wearing and Neil, 2009)

The backwaters of Kerala are considered as one of the most popular eco-tourist destination in the country. In addition to this, Kerala is also considered as the first planned eco-tourism desalination in India (European Journal of Tourism Research, 2011). Over the past few years, the destination has grown really well and the rationale behind this can be termed as the combine efforts of local community and forest department.

Kerala has been able to attract large number of travelers and tourists from different countries of the world. It can be stated that effective marketing and promotion of the destination is a major factors in attracting high volume of tourists and travelers. All the stakeholders have carried out active participation in marketing and promotion of Kerala as an eco-tourism destination. On the other side of this, Kerala also participated in different international travel fairs which were held in west Asia and Europe. This strategy has supported Kerala to differentiate itself from the other

destinations in the country. Many destinations are present in Kerala that are mainly known for their natural beauty and it is considered as one of the main greenest destination in India. Thenmala is regarded as one of the first planned destination promoting ecotourism (Wearing and Neil, 2009). All the destinations situated in Kerala are well-known for its natural beauty and it contributes a lot in attracting tourists from different areas. Basically three main zones are present that take into consideration adventure, culture and leisure one. In the culture zone it is possible for the tourists to enjoy music and they can dance. Further, in leisure zone various gardens are present and in adventure tourism different adventure activities are carried out that can easily provide remarkable experience to the tourists from different areas.

The silent valley national park is quite popular in Kerala that has spread across in 238 square kilometers. The rainforest is mainly

The state has always been aggressive in terms of marketing and promotion of eco-tourism areas such as Backwaters of Kerala. Furthermore, both modern and traditional marketing tools have been employed by the state to create the demand of eco-tourism among domestic and international tourists. The promotion is also carried out with a Tagline of “God’s Own Country” and this helps in attracting different travelers and tourists (*Best Eco Tourism Destinations in India.*, 2017).

Kerala is also considered as a green heaven for travelers and visitors who prefer eco-tourism. For people who love greenery and nature, Kerala is a paradise for them. It is also suggested that travelers who prefer eco-tourism must visit places such as backwaters of Kerala and The Rajamala National Park. The destination offers an exceptional and ideal experience of nature and wildlife. Ernakulam Junction railway station is nearest railhead which the travelers can take to visit the destination. On the other hand, people can also reach the mentioned above eco-tourism destination through airports which are Cochin, Thiruvananthapuram and Madurai airports (Sharma, 2016).

Kodaikanal, **Tamil Nadu** is another popular eco-tourism destination in India. The stakeholders and regulatory authorities in the country have played a very important role in promoting Kodaikanal as an eco-tourism destination of India. The climate in Kodaikanal is usually tropical cool climate and the highest during summers 19 degree centigrade and the minimum temperature during winters is 17.30 degree centigrade. The climate of Kodaikanal can be considered the major factor which creates temptation among travelers and tourists to visit this destination. In addition to this, Kodaikanal is a paradise for people who prefer and love to stay close with the nature.

Kodaikanal also consists of deep valleys and mountains which attracts travelers and tourists from the different places of the world. However, it can be critically argued that to explore the nature and eco areas of the destination, it is more beneficial for the visitors to opt for unknown paths and opposite turns (Kodaikanal, 2017).

The destination still holds some virgin places and areas which need to be explored by visitors to have a high quality of travel experience. Some common places of eco-tourism in Kodaikanal are Berijam Lake, Waterfalls, Kodai Lake and Guna Caves. It can be stated that the visitors can witness Mother Nature and can have a refreshing travel experience at Berijam Lake (Soundarapandian, 2007). On the other side of this, waterfalls located at drench of hills can offer a magnificent view of entire Aura.

Goa is another destination which can offer a quality and satisfactory eco-tourism experience to the individuals. Majority of travelers and tourist believes that Goa is famous for its party life, beaches and good accommodation facilities. In addition to this, the destination is also popular because of rich cultural heritage and churches (Singh, 2010). On the contrary of this, it can be critically argued that majority of the people are not aware of the fact that Goa also consists of different eco-destinations. It can be stated that more than 20% of overall land area in Goa consists of wildlife conservation.

The destination also consists of various eco-parks which attract people who like to experience nature in its best form. Dudhsagar, spice plantations, Baravalem waterfalls are considered as the key eco-green getaways from Goa. The Dudhsagar waterfall located in Goa is the second highest waterfall of the country (Goa, 2017).

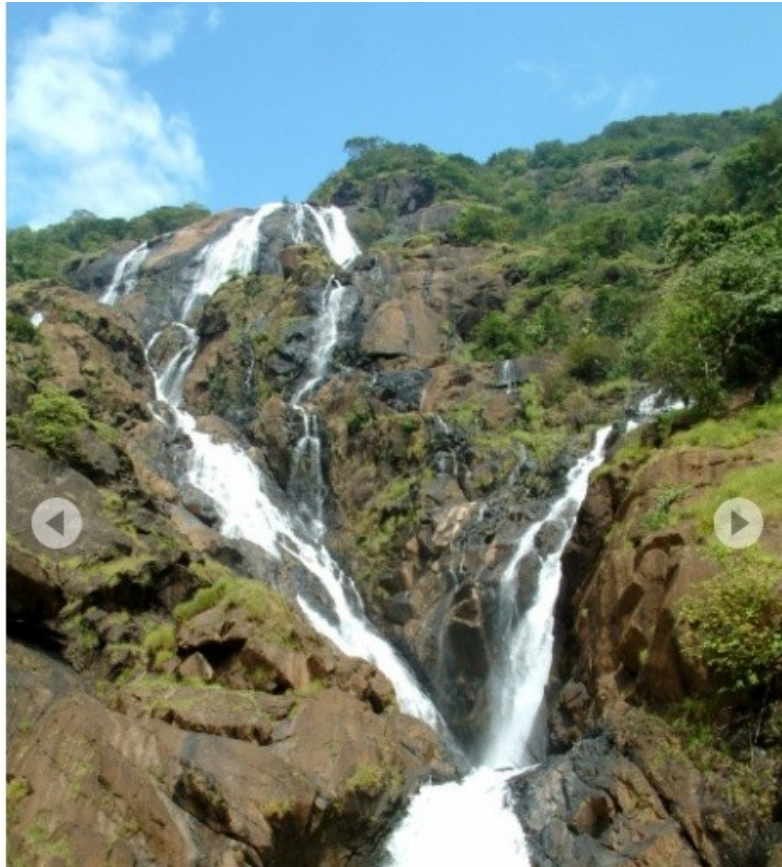


Fig 4. Dudhsagar Waterfall, Goa (Goa Tourism Development Corporation. A Govt. of Goa Undertaking, 2012)

On the other side of this, the Galgibaga Beach in Goa is another famous place for people who prefer to have high quality experience of eco-tourism. The key quality of this beach is that it is the cleanest beach in the country and thus, it catches the attention of travelers and tourists. Some lucky tourists are even able to witness the eggs and nests of turtle and this is a very pleasant experience.



Fig5. Galgibaga Beach, Goa (Galgibaga- Turtle Beach in South Goa, 2017)

India's **Andhra Pradesh** is also another destination which can offer a great eco-tourism experience to individuals. It can be expressed that the Andhra Pradesh forest Development Corporation has played a key role in growth and success of eco-tourism in this area. The corporation has developed certain aim and objectives with regards to the promotion of eco-tourism (Andhra Pradesh Forest Development Corporation Ltd. 2017). For example, the corporation emphasize on the promoting more responsible travel among different domestic and international tourists. At the same time, the authority also focuses on the conservation of environment and enhancement of local community. Andhra Pradesh is very popular because of its biodiversity and natural places which promote eco-tourism.

Places such as Tyda and Mareduilli are considered as two areas where people can witness nature and its surroundings. Tyda is a small village located in Andhra Pradesh and it is considered as one of the most unexplored destinations in India. Furthermore, the government and other regulatory authorities in Andhra Pradesh decided to develop this place for carrying out eco-tourism related activities and operations. Tourists and travelers are attracted towards this destination because of its

exotic flora and fauna. Apart from, the visitors are also provided by facilities such as trekking, forests trails and campaign. This creates a sense of satisfaction among visitors as they are able to get a variety of facilities and experience under one roof.



g 6. Tyda, Andhra Pradesh (Tyda, Araku Valley, 2015)

On the other side of this, Mareduhilli, Andhra Pradesh is another eco-tourism destination located in Andhra Pradesh. The key characteristic of this destination is that it is full of evergreen forest. Here, dense woods, rich biodiversity and grasslands are some major attractions for travelers and tourists. The destination has been developed with the corporation of people living in local tribal community within Mareduhilli and Andhra Pradesh Forest Department. People get amazed when they see bubble streams, waterfalls and jungles with deep woods. Mareduhilli also include places such as Madanikunj-Vihara Sthal, Karthikavanam, Nandanavanam, Vali Sugriva Medicinal Plants Conservation Area etc. and these places promotes the concept of eco-tourism within the country (Mareduhilli Eco Tourism, 2017).



Fig7. Maredumilli, Andhra Pradesh (Maredumilli, 2017)

To explore and experience the concept of eco-tourism, places such as Great Himalayan National Park, Himachal Pradesh, Sundarban National Park, Tsmoriri Wetland Conservation Reserve, Ladakh are some other destinations which offers experience linked with eco-tourism in the country (Dewda, 2016). Tsmoriri Wetland Conservation Reserve, Ladakh is located approximately 15000 feet above the sea level and thus, it offers exceptional experience to all the visitors and travelers. The Tsmoriri Wetland Conservation Reserve is also considered as one of the most popular unique habitat in the country.



Fig 8. Tsmoriri Wetland Conservation Reserve, Ladakh (Tsmoriri Wetland Conservation Reserve, 2016)

Karnataka is considered as one of the most significant ecotourism place and different initiatives have been taken where main focus is on protecting wildlife, encouraging eco-tourism, enhancing awareness level, forest safari and protecting the entire ecosystem from different type of damages. In the year 2013 the eco-tourism development board has been introduced in Karnataka where the main reason behind the same is to develop guidelines, policy, awareness and education etc. Separate ecotourism board has been developed where it holds different reasons behind its development.

- One of the main reason is to develop awareness in the society that are directly linked with conservation of wildlife along with the natural resources that are most significant (*Karnataka ecotourism, 2017*).
- To encourage tourism activities in India and in the state of Karnataka is another aim.
- To provide assistance in different areas such as laws, guidelines, formulation of policies for the overall development of ecotourism activities in the entire state
- To indulge into the activities of promoting ecotourism as a front line consumption task of the forest department
- To deliver training to the nature guides
- To introduce some form of good practices that can be undertaken by tour operators
- To facilitate linkage between the private and public operators so that they can contribute in conservation of wildlife
- To facilitate and maintain the range of ecotourism activities inside the forest areas and different parks

So, these are the main objectives that have been framed by Eco-tourism board of Karnataka and it will surely contribute in the development of this concept in every possible manner. No doubt ecotourism is regarded as the heartbeat of Karnataka and it possess capability to provide lifetime benefits to the individuals who are living in the society. The range of positive attributes that are associated with the ecotourism concept takes into consideration ivory beaches, twinkling rivers, sweeping landscape etc (Bhalla, Bhattacharya and Gupta, 2015). So, these all the places directly attract visitors as they are associated with nature and are effective enough in promoting the concept of ecotourism. Different architectural splendours of the bygone era are present such as the ruins of the Vijaynager Empire, monuments of Pattadakal that are included into the list of UNESCO world heritage site.

Apart from this, some other sites such as rock cut temple and Badami are also on top of the list of must visit. These sites contains some unique attributes that possess capability to attract large number of visitors. Apart from this, the Karnataka ecotourism contains some resorts and jungle lodges that are effective enough in preserving wildlife along with the ecology. Through this it is possible for the community to understand its responsibility towards preserving natural resources and in turn it is supporting a lot in safeguarding environment in best possible manner. The main tourist spots like eco garden Gulbarga, Bandipur national park holds capability to attract visitors from different areas and promoting ecotourism in every possible manner. This directly supports in knowing that the range of ecotourism destinations present in Karnataka holds capability to influence the behavior of visitors in every possible manner.

The Western ghats situated in Karnataka are considered as the 25 most priority hotspots at global level (Ramchurjee, 2014). It has been found that concept of ecotourism is highly popular in Karnataka where it is considered as the first state in India that tapped the potential of ecotourism. Karnataka has high population in terms of Gaur bison and elephant population. Further, in near future overall population of these species is getting extinct and for effective management of these species it is quite necessary to promote ecotourism concept in best possible manner. Majority of the ecotourism sites present in Karnataka covers river rafting, wildlife safaris, organized treks etc. This directly becomes one of the major sources of attraction and visitors from all over the globe prefer to visit site.

The main ecotourism spots present in Karnataka involves

- Wildlife that involves Bandipur, Nagarhole and kabini backwaters situated near Mysore
- Fishing camp on the Cauvery near Bangalore
- White water rafting that involves river tern near chickmaglur

- Beach and water sports that take into consideration malpe, udupi, gokarna and devbagh.

These are the main ecotourism destinations present in Karnataka that contributes a lot in exploring the concept of ecotourism and allow in enhancing its popularity.

3.2.3. Management of ecotourism

In country like India the ministry of tourism which is the branch of government of India holds responsibility associated with formulation and development of laws and regulations linked with the promotion and the overall development of tourism in India (*ROLE AND FUNCTIONS OF MINISTRY, 2017*). Further, the overall head of the ministry is the minister of tourism, a Minister of state that is mainly held by Shri Alphons Kannanthanam since September 2017.

The **Ministry of tourism** is present in India that holds responsibility to build various policies and procedures for the co-ordination of different activities of state, central government along with this they are indulged into the activity of tourism promotion. Apart from this, the entire ministry is headed by Union Minister of state of tourism. The administrative head of the overall ministry acts as secretary where in some situations secretary also acts as director general of tourism. The directorate general of tourism holds duty to form 20 offices within the country. The range of overseas offices that are present are responsible for promotion and marketing in their particular areas (*ROLE AND FUNCTIONS OF MINISTRY, 2017*). The range of policies areas that are undertaken takes into consideration incentives, external assistance, investment facilitation, manpower development, promotion and marketing etc. All these areas are quite crucial as they are associated with the development of tourism in India.

The main functions that are carried out by the Ministry of tourism are as follows:

- Planning and policy making is one of the major roles of ministry where different policies and procedures are framed by the ministry for the overall development of tourism. Along with this their major role also involves implementation and review of the policies in collaboration with the stakeholders. So, it directly contribute a lot in development of the entire tourism sector and in turn leads to favorable results (*Ministry of Tourism, 2016*).
- Overall co-ordination is the major function of the ministry where it has been found that ministry of tourism coordinates with local, regional and international institutions with the motive to resolve the issues linked with tourism in best possible manner
- Resource mobilization is also key function where internal and external resource mobilization takes place in consultation with the treasury for the overall development of the tourism (*Ministry of Tourism, 2016*).

- Product development and diversification takes place on continuous basis through which community participation is encouraged in best possible manner
- Capacity development takes place where different standards are set by the ministry of tourism in India.

So, these are the main functions of the ministry that are conducted by them in order to regulate the overall activities of the tourism in India.

Considering the concept of ecotourism it has been found that the **Union Ministry of environment and forest** that holds main responsibility to develop new guidelines for responsible tourism in the entire nation where 733 different wildlife sanctuaries are present along with the national parks that takes into consideration coastal parks, reptiles, bird habitats, flower valleys etc (Adak, 2017). Till now no strict laws and regulations for enhancing the concept of ecotourism in the society. The chief wildlife wardens of the protected areas have direct control over the regulations of the visitors. Apart from this, at present two existing laws are being practiced that involves forest conservation act introduced in 1980 and another one is wildlife protection act 1972. Both the laws are quite effective in working towards the ecotourism concept and has acted as development tool in every possible manner. No doubt the union ministry of environment has faced many issues while promoting ecotourism concept due to less awareness in the society.

Every state in India is setting up its own authority whose main responsibility is to regulate all the activities that are linked with ecotourism. Further, in India Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate change is present (Adak, 2017). The wildlife division of the ministry, director General of forests and the wildlife preservation is overall head of the wildlife wing. Mainly the wildlife wing has two divisions that take into consideration wildlife and the elephant division where each one is headed by the officer. The Deputy inspector general of forest and the assistant inspector general provides technical assistance to the wildlife wing. Apart from this, three state bodies are present that takes into consideration central zoo authority, wildlife authority of India and wildlife research & training whose main responsibility involves management of zoo, conservation and national tiger conservation authority.

Government of India is indulged into the practice of providing financial and technical assistance to the state government where the main aim behind the same is wildlife conservation with the help of centrally sponsored scheme (*Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate change, 2017*). The scheme that has been developed mainly focuses on three main aspects that are:

- Protection of the wildlife that is mainly located outside the protected areas
- Recovery programs with the motive to safeguard species and habitats

- Supporting the protected areas(*Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate change, 2017*)

In the modern era, the concept of eco-tourism is growing with a very good pace and there are various reasons behind the same. The key reason why eco-tourism is getting more and more popular is that it offers an opportunity to generate high tourism revenue and at the same time, it supports in maintaining the natural places in the best possible manner. It can be stated that to carry out effective management of ecotourism, efforts of all stakeholders are required. Furthermore, the concept is entirely new for travelers, and huge amount of resources along with efforts are required to manage eco-tourism. For example, it is the responsibility of government and other regulatory authorities to develop effective plans and strategies for the promotion of eco-tourism.

In addition to this, these bodies are also required to ensure that the plans are implemented appropriately and their monitoring is carried out in the best possible manner. On the other hand, effective management of eco-tourism can be done with the help of travel agents and tour operators in the country. These stakeholders can carry out marketing and promotion of eco-tourism products and services to create high demand among travelers and tourists. The marketing can be generally carried out with an objective to reduce the negative impact of tourism related activities and operations on environment. Furthermore, management of eco-tourism can be also done by promoting the concept of responsible travel among the visitors.

3.2.4. Feedback of tourists

Different sites have been undertaken in order to understand the perception and attitude of local people towards different ecotourism destinations

Table 2.

Trip advisor reviews (*Trip Advisor India, 2017*)

Region	Total reviews	Positive review	Negative review
Kerala (Eravikulam National Park)	1460	36% (525) Excellent, 30%(439) very good, 20% (291) average	8% (118) poor and 6%(87) Terrible
Andhra Pradesh (Indira Gandhi Zoological Park)	190	32.10% (60) excellent, 43.68%(84) very good, 20% (38) average	4.22% (8)poor and 0% terrible
Goa (Dudhsagar waterfalls)	1041	61% (635) excellent, 28% (291) very good, 7% (73) average	2% (21) poor and 2%(21) terrible
Goa (Cotigao wildlife sanctuary)	24	16%(4) excellent, 35% (8) very good, 33% (8) average	12% (3) poor and 4% (1) terrible
Karnataka (Bhadra	130	31% (40) excellent,	6% (8) poor and

wildlife sanctuary)		36% (47) very good, 23% (30) average	4%(5) terrible
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On considering the positive negative reviews of different ecotourism destinations of India where four states have been undertaken such as Goa, Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh and Kerala it has been found that Dudhsagar waterfalls is one of the most popular destination as compared with other ecotourism places located in other states. This location has maximum amount of positive reviews that makes it different and the range of unique attributes of this place makes it different from others in every possible manner. Further, dudhsagar waterfall has very less negative reviews as compared with the other places that have been taken into consideration.

Kerala (Eravikulam National Park)

Eravikulam National Park situated in Kerala holds some positive attributes that attracts large number of tourists towards it. In the site such as trip advisor 36 (%) of the travelers have given excellent rating to this place, 30 (%) very good, 20 (%) average and they are highly satisfied with the same. Further, tourists recommend this place to others and tourists have highlighted its unique attributes such as Eravikulam National Park promotes nature. Tourists have highlighted the range of facilities available to them in Eravikulam National Park such as food, lockers/storage etc due to which they recommend visit to Eravikulam National Park to others. Undertaking the reviews of the tourists it is possible to know the actual perception of the local residents towards that particular site (*Trip Advisor India, 2017*).

Tourists consider this as one of the heavenly place that it is recommended to everyone to visit as it provides proper information and knowledge linked with ecotourism. The unique attribute of this place involves silver threads of water and the lush green that supports in attracting large number of visitors towards this place. It is situated in the area of 97sq km and the overall trips are organized by the forest department where no such private vehicles are allowed. Further, the overall site is well maintained and this acts as main source of attraction. Due to presence of all these valid sites all these sites are quite popular from ecotourism point of view and has supported a lot in understanding about this concept in better manner. On the other hand, 8 (%) travelers gave poor and 6 (%) terrible rating to this ecotourism place.

Andhra Pradesh (Indira Gandhi Zoological Park)

Indira Gandhi Zoological Park Andhra Pradesh is another famous ecotourism destination situated in Andhra Pradesh. 32.10 (%) people have given excellent reviews, 43.68 (%) very good, 20 (%) average to Indira Gandhi zoological park and it helps in knowing that the zoo has very nice and

rare collection of animals and it is wonderfully located in the outskirts of the city. This destination is considered to be perfect from point view of family picnic and other type of gathering. Feedback of the tourists have supported in knowing that it is possible to reach this place easily through buses or other mode of transportation (*Trip Advisor India, 2017*). The park provides some special sections for small mammals, reptiles, lesser carnivores etc. Apart from this, it is a natural habitat for tortoise, pythons, elephant, spotted deer and sambar. These are the main attributes that makes this destination different from others and in turn more number of tourists prefer to visit this destination that promotes nature and providing education to other people in best possible manner. Tourists are able to see different type of animals in the zoo and different activities are present that involves joy of capturing snapshot of lazy lion in the midst of afternoon siesta. Apart from this, different varieties of animals and birds are present that can surely provide remarkable experience to the tourists in best possible manner. On the other hand residents that are not satisfied with the Indira Gandhi Zoological Park gave 4.22 (%) poor rating to the park.

Goa (Dudhsagar waterfalls)

Dudhsagar waterfalls situated in Goa also provide remarkable experience to the tourists and are one of the ecotourism destinations that promote nature in best possible manner. Considering the feedback of the tourists where 61 (%) people have given excellent reviews, 28 (%) very good, 7 (%) average and it is considered as sea of milk where these waterfalls are imposing. They are quite impressive especially in the rainy season but sometimes due to heavy rain road is inaccessible. Apart from this, tourists replied that Dudhsagar is one of the hidden gems in Goa and is one of the centre places of attraction for Indian tourists. It is located 60kms from the panaji city and is the 5th tallest fall at 310 metres. One of the best things is that government has provided life guards and life jackets at the swimming zone. Majority of the tourists are highly satisfied with the overall experience that they have gained after visiting dudhsagar waterfalls (*Trip Advisor India, 2017*). They prefer to recommend this place to others and this is the main reason due to which popularity of Dudhsagar waterfalls is quite high in India. On the other hand 2 (%) residents gave poor rating and 2 (%) terrible reviews to this destination where they are not satisfied with the kind of experience provided by this place.

Goa (Cotigao wildlife sanctuary)

Another destination promoting ecotourism of Goa is Cotigao wildlife sanctuary where it has been identified that the science of this place is good and greenery is effective that allows in attracting large number of visitors. 16 (%) of visitors have given it excellent review, 35 (%)

excellent and 33 (%) average. On the other hand, 12 (%) travelers have given poor review and 4 (%) terrible. Further, it is located in the south of Goa and is one of the most appropriate places for birding. Tourists have to walk for long distance so as to reach watch tower. Apart from this, majority of the tourists are in favor of visiting this wildlife sanctuary in the morning (HolidayIQ, 2017). In short all the tourists who have visited this wildlife sanctuary are highly satisfied with the overall experience that this ecotourism place has provided to them. Visiting Cotigao wildlife is worth and it contributes a lot in giving knowledge to the tourists regarding the concept of ecotourism and is effective in every possible manner.

Karnataka (Bhadra wildlife sanctuary)

The Bhadra wildlife sanctuary located in Karnataka is also most popular where 31% of visitors have given it excellent review, 36 (%) very good, 23 (%) average and this sanctuary provides remarkable experience to the tourists. Further, it has fantastic connect with nature where tourists can easily see different type of birds and animals. They can gain good knowledge about wildlife along with the birds that are present in the sanctuary. Tourists can easily gain knowledge about carnivores and they can easily share the experience gained with others. On the other hand 6 (%) tourists gave poor review and 4 (%) terrible. Feedback of tourists supports in knowing that Bhadra wildlife sanctuary is beautiful green forest with good chances of spotting wild animals (*Trip Advisor India, 2017*). Apart from this, the animals like sambar deer, different type of birds, elephants etc can be easily found and they are the major source of attraction.

Kodikanal as one of the ecotourism destination in Tamil Nadu is considered to be highly effective and unique too. Further, it is considered to be one of the most popular weekend in South India with an altitude of approximate 2130 meters. It is a hill station located in South India that comprise the montane rainforests that assists in knowing about flora and fauna, waterfalls and perennial streams cutting through the valley. Kodaikanal Lake is famous for its own natural beauty where majority of the tourists prefer to visit due to presence of unique attributes (*Trip Advisor India, 2017*).

Hence from this it can conclude that different famous ecotourism sites are located in India that mainly satisfies need and expectations of the tourists. Different destinations provide remarkable experience to the Indian residents where they are able to gain knowledge about different culture and in turn enhances their knowledge level linked with the ecotourism. Most popular ecotourism destinations are present in Goa, Kerala, Karnataka and Tamil Nadu where majority of the Indian residents prefers to visit. The famous place situated such as national park, waterfall, wildlife

sanctuary contributes a lot in attracting visitors towards ecotourism. In short, in India the main reason behind rise in the demand for ecotourism is the presence of different natural parks, wildlife sanctuaries, waterfall, beaches etc.

4. PRESENT ATTITUDE AND DEMAND OF ECOTOURISM IN INDIA

4.1. Demand and attitude of residents

The demand of tourism in India is growing with a very good pace and this has provided adequate growth opportunities to the businesses operating in the hospitality industry. In the year 2015, the tourism industry of India has contributed approximately 6.3% of the overall GDP. Apart from this, the sector is also contributing a lot by creating employment opportunities within the country. According to the current trend in India tourism, the demand of Indian tourism is growing among the low budget travelers. The demand of boutique hotel within the industry is also growing with a very good pace (*Latest Tourism Trends in India, 2017*). These boutique hotels are creating high demand among different travelers and tourism by offering fast, effective, unique and satisfactory services to all customers. It can be also expressed that the tourists in India now prefer to explore new areas and destinations within the country.

Over past few decades, tourism industry has experienced long term growth and deepening diversification because also enhanced the opportunities of growth. Apparently, modern tourism is closely associated with development of a number of tourist destinations. Thus, these dimensions have turned tourism industry into a key driver that amends socio-economic progress.

In current scenario, the business volume of tourism has reached to the equivalent position of oil exports and automobile sector. Furthermore, tourism industry is also regarded as one of the chief players in international commerce which is also another driver that leads to develop the country.

Henceforth, it enhances the opportunities of diversification and alongside it also develops the ratio of competition among different destinations. In the year 2015, around 1184 million international tourists came to India and in the same year this has generated US\$ 1.5 trillion in the form of export earnings. UNWTO forecasted a growth in international tourist arrivals which has enhanced economic value of tourism from 3.5% to 4.5% in the year 2016. This is the reason travel and tourism sector is getting huge recognition from international visitors (*Why tourism. 2017*).

There are a number of countries that consists of popular tourism destinations which enhances the demand for tourism services in the world. Demand for tourism has been increasing since people have huge purchasing power to spend on luxury services. Economic aspects of the country have been increasing which drives people to visit different countries and as a result it leads to amend the value of tourism.

Tourism in India has been on a steady position for the past few decades because of the major destinations (Taj Mahal, Himalayan range, beaches and coral reef). Demand for Indian tourism has been increasing because of the fascinating destinations like- the jungles of Madhya Pradesh and Chattisgarh, the beaches of Goa, the backwaters of Kerala, the mangroves of Sunderbans and mountains of Himalayan. In India, inbound tourism has shown growth in past years which happened due to economic development.

In this respect, service industry and corporate travel are turning tourism into a lucrative business. This trend is also expected to increase in the upcoming years. In India, foreign tourist arrivals reached to 5.6 million as compared to previous years. India is also ranked as 14th best tourist destinations in the world because of human, cultural and natural resources.

For the next 10 years, the industry is expected to grow with 8.2%; hence it will be counted as the fifth largest tourist destination in the world. Furthermore, hospitality industry of India contributes in enhancing tourism value through renowned hotels. In this respect, Indian government is also supporting tourism through varied campaigns. The government of India also ensures to develop healthy and sustainable growth in tourism sector through implementing several initiatives (*Demand for tourism in India. 2012*).

Incredible India Campaign is one of the most popular initiatives through which people are encouraged more to visit different countries of India. However, on the other hand there are various tourist destinations in Europe that enhances demand for tourism services. Places like France, Italy, Amsterdam and Germany are rich in tourism; therefore every year people visit such places. Most of the people in Europe take trips for holiday, leisure or recreation purposes by residents. As per the data, EU residents have taken inbound and outbound tourism in higher extent in the year 2015.

In 2015, demand for tourism by EU residents was 12.7% which keeps on increasing in the peak months. Thus, the number of trips was higher during that time. European residents seem to get different pattern of trips such as one trip for four nights. However, there are varied seasonal trips as well which are taken by EU residents and which are also taken for longer period like 6 to 7 days (*Seasonality in tourism demand. 2017*). In addition to this, it is also identified that in the year 2015, EU residents made nearly 877 million trips in their own Member States and almost 296 million trips in abroad.

This shows the difference between domestic and outbound trips during peak times. Moreover, around 3% trips are categorized as business trips which are made by EU residents to different parts of the world. Along with this, demand for tourism is also increasing in developing

countries because it promotes varied unexplored places. Business trips have showed a different distribution in diverse countries which encourages people more towards tourism services.

Therefore, here it can be said that demand for tourism has been increasing because of involvement of varied amenities and services. This not only drives people towards tourism; but also it leads to enhance economic dimensions of the country. The trend in tourism services have been changing because of the changing needs of customers. This also aids in adding new amenities in the service line which amends the value of travel and tourism sector. People are encouraged towards tourism services due to involvement of innovative, luxury and recreational activities.

Statistics

Unfortunately, statistics about ecotourism is not available on the secondary sources and there is no such source published through which demand for ecotourism in Indian can be known. That's why author use results of questionnaire to give understanding about existing demand for ecotourism in India. Different questions have been framed with the motive to know demand for ecotourism and this mode is quite appropriate for accomplishing the aim of the research.

The present research also is analyzing **attitude of Indian residents towards ecotourism**. Data has been taken through social media channel where information has been taken from 400 Indian local residents. Further, different type of questions have been framed that supports in knowing about awareness level linked with ecotourism in India along with taste and preference of Indian residents towards ecotourism.

Different questions have been asked to Indian residents in order to know their demand. Further, the main motive is to know the preference of Indian residents in relation with whether they prefer to visit ecotourism destinations or not. Apart from this main focus is on knowing the real demand for ecotourism in Indian that has been done with the help of primary analysis. By knowing the attitude of Indian residents it is possible to know whether they prefer to visit ecotourism destinations in India or not and apart from this it can be known which the most popular ecotourism destination in India is. Moreover, response from different states have been undertaken so as to know the real growth of ecotourism. Apart from this, Indian residents have been asked about what type of ecotourism sites they are aware about in order to know the real awareness level. Residents' attitude and demand can only be known after obtaining data from the Indian residents.

Majority of the respondents are males

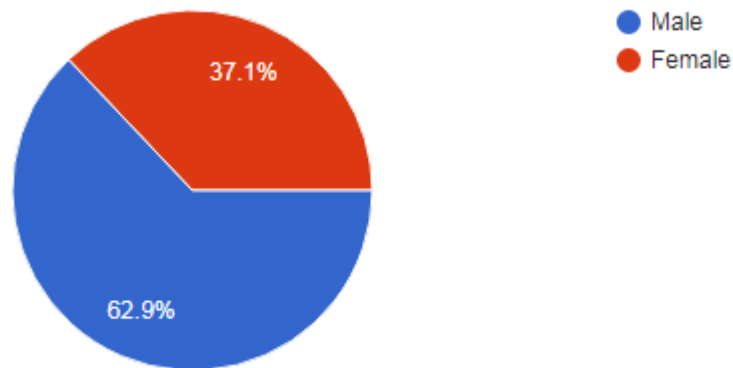


Fig6. Gender

Table 3.

Sex

Sex	Numbers	Percentage
Male	251	62.9%
Female	149	37.1%

The topic selected for investigation was to determine the attitude of Indian residents towards ecotourism. Here, Indian residents have been selected for the purpose of collecting primary data for the study. It can be stated that out of the total respondents, majority which is 251 were male and the remaining 149 were females.

Majority of the respondents are Master's degree holder

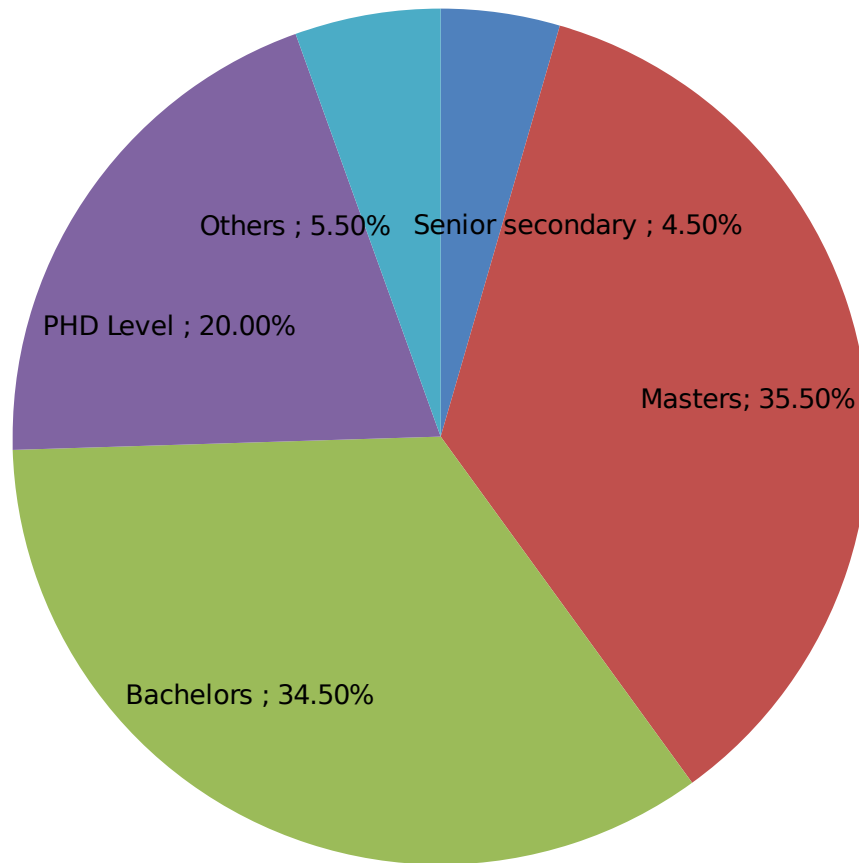


Fig 7. Education level of respondents

Table 4:

Educational level of respondents

Education level	Numbers	Percentage
Senior secondary	18	4.5%
Masters	142	35.7%
Bachelors	138	34.4%
PHD Level	80	20%
Others	22	5.5%

The mentioned above chart and table represents the educational level of the respondents from whom the data in this study has been collected. Here, majority of the respondents which is 142 have completed their master's level of education while 138 respondents were bachelor degree holders. It can be stated that 80 respondents were PHD holders whereas 18 respondents completed their senior secondary education. The remaining 22 respondents were having other educational qualification.

Majority of the respondents are from Telangana

Table 5.

Indian States

Indian States	Response of Residents	Response of Residents (%)
Andhra Pradesh	18	6%
Assam	6	2%
Rajasthan	6	2%
Madhya Pradesh	11	4%
Uttar Pradesh	16	5%
Punjab	19	6%
Chattisgarh	2	1%
Delhi	7	2%
Goa	14	5%
Gujarat	19	3%
Haryana	15	5%
Himachal Pradesh	4	1%
Telangana	56	17%
Jammu and Kashmir	5	2%
Jharkhand	8	3%
Karnataka	22	7%
Kerala	29	9%
Maharashtra	14	5%
Manipur	2	1%
Meghalaya	2	1%
Mizoram	4	1%
Odisha	6	1%
Sikkim	4	1%
Tamil Nadu	15	5%
Uttarakhand	2	1%
West Bengal	9	3%
Others	75	24%

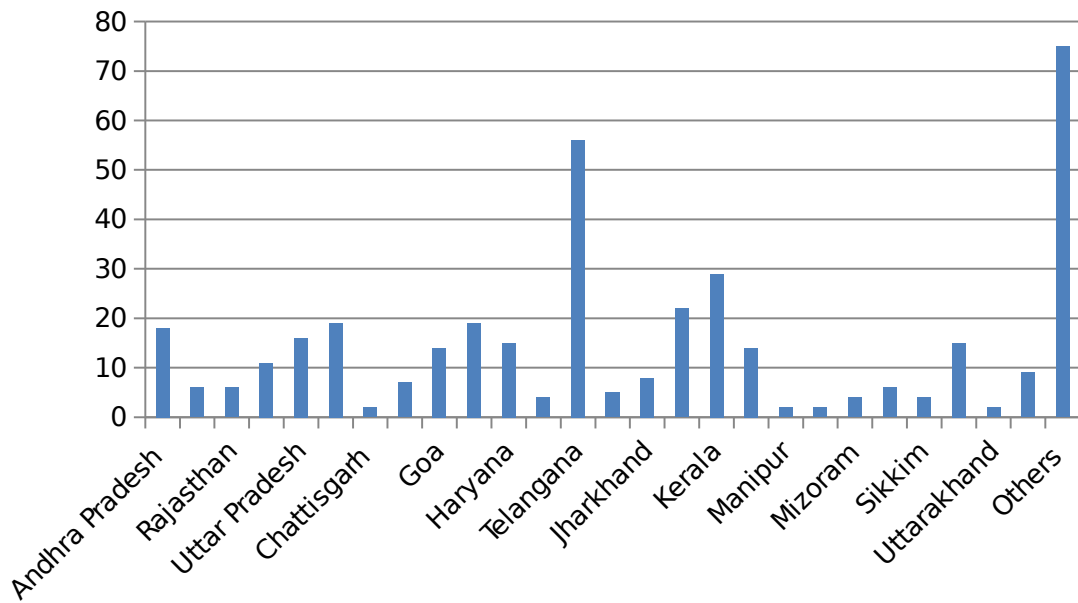


Fig 8. States

Above data represents that majority of the respondents belong to Telangana who have given response linked with the attitude. Overall information has been obtained from the different states of India such as Delhi, Goa, and Maharashtra etc. Indian residents from different states perceive concept of ecotourism positively and they strongly prefers to visit different ecotourism sites.

Majority of the respondents falls under the income group of 35000-55000 INR

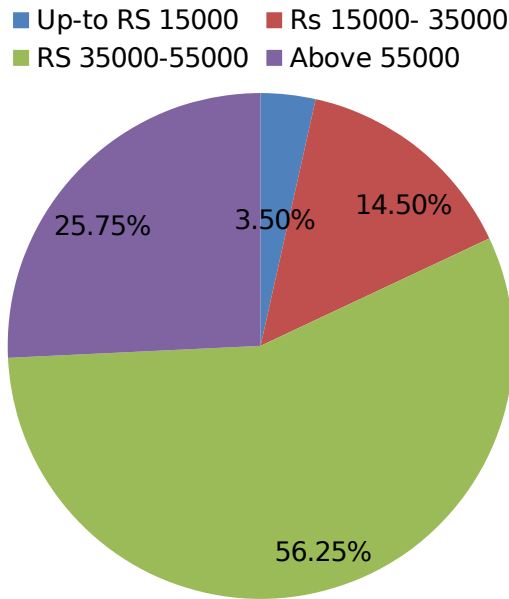


Fig 9. Respondents Income Level

Table 6.

Analysis of Respondent’s income level

Income level	Number	Percentage
Up-to RS 15000	14	3.5%
Rs 15000- 35000	58	56.8%
RS 35000-55000	225	13.6%
Above 55000	103	26%

From the information collected, it has been analyzed that most of the respondents falls in the group with monthly income between 15000-35000 INR. It can be stated that majority which is 58 under the income level between 15000-35000 INR. Higher average monthly income allows the respondents to spend their money on activities linked with travel, tourism and leisure. On the other side of this, 103 respondents have income level of above 55000 INR per month. The data collected from the primary sources indicates that the per capital income of people in India is growing. This provides adequate support to the entire travel and tourism industry in terms of achieving growth and development. Furthermore, 225 respondents lie in the income level between INR 15000-35000 while the remaining 14 falls in the income level which is up-to INR 15000.

Most of the respondents are aware about ecotourism

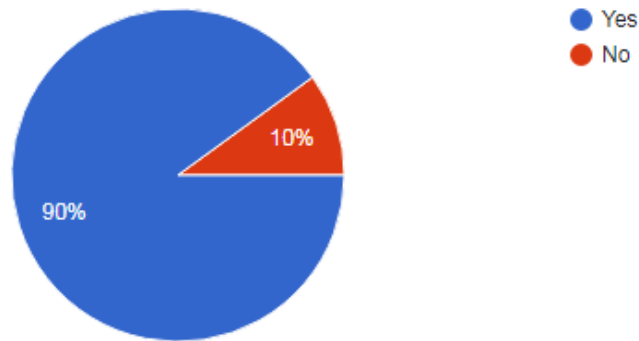


Fig10. Ecotourism awareness level

Table 7.

Respondent's awareness about ecotourism

Do you know about ecotourism	Numbers	Percentage
No	40	10%
Yes	360	90%

The information collected from primary sources with the help of questionnaire indicates that majority of respondents are aware about the concept of eco-tourism. It can be expressed that majority which was 360 respondents agreed with the fact that they are well aware of the eco-tourism concept. Furthermore, they stated that eco-tourism is about protecting the interest of local community and conservation of environment in the best possible manner. In other words, the concept of eco-tourism is also considered as responsible tourism.

At the time of providing information, the local residents also explained that eco-tourism is now a critical aspect of tourism industry as it helps in protection of natural resources. In addition to

this, the respondents stated that the conservation of environment, natural resources and economic benefit to society are the common objectives of eco-tourism.

The same results have been gathered from the data collected through secondary sources. Author such as Fennell, (2014) explained that the concept of eco-tourism is gaining popularity because it emphasizes more on conserving natural resources in every possible manner. In the modern era, even the travelers and tourists are well aware of the fact that the activities linked with tourism are adversely affecting the environment and local communities. The promotion of eco-tourism helps in dealing with this particular issue of the industry.

From the information collected, it can be also analyzed that the key and most important feature of eco-tourism is that here the people living in local communities are involved in the process of decision making and strategy formulation. Slocum and Kline, (2015) explained that promoting responsible tourism becomes more effective when the local communities are involved in process of decision making. At the time of collecting information, the respondents argued that they do not have in-depth knowledge about the concept but they have overview of the eco-tourism concept. The primary data collected through questionnaire reflects Eco-tourism results in attaining higher degree of customer satisfaction along with providing financial or monetary benefits to the people living in local community. However, it can be critically argued that 40 respondents asserted that they do not have information about the concept of eco-tourism. According to the respondents lack of marketing and promotion of eco-tourism is the major factor due to which they are not aware of the concept.

Majority of the respondents have visited to eco-tourism destination

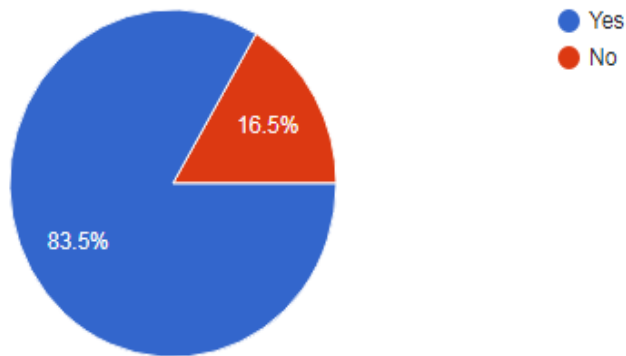


Fig11. Visit to ecotourism destination

Table 8.

Analysis of respondents visit to eco-tourism destination

Have you visited any eco-tourism destination	Numbers	Percentage
Yes	334	83.5%
NO	66	16.5%

The information collected from primary sources indicates that majority of respondents have visited eco-tourism destinations in India. Majority which is 334 respondents agrees with the mentioned above statement. Furthermore, they explained that for a country like India which is full of natural resources and destination, the concept of responsible tourism is now essential.

The visit to eco-tourism destinations in the country has supported these respondents to explore the natural surroundings and at the same time, the tourism activities have provided various financial benefits to the people living in local community. On the other hand, the Indian residents also visited different eco-tourism places in the country with an objective to identify how the eco-tourism activities minimize the negative impact of travel and tourism related activities on environment. The same results have been collected from the data collected from secondary sources. Author such as Cheia, 2013 stated that the concept of eco-tourism includes different eco-friendly features which are favorable to the environment and surroundings.

On the other side of this, 66 respondents stated that they have never visited any eco-tourism destination in the country. These respondents are not even aware about the different eco-tourism

destinations in India. Furthermore, the respondents are more interested in visiting historical monuments and cultural destinations in the country.

Trekking is the most popular ecotourism activity

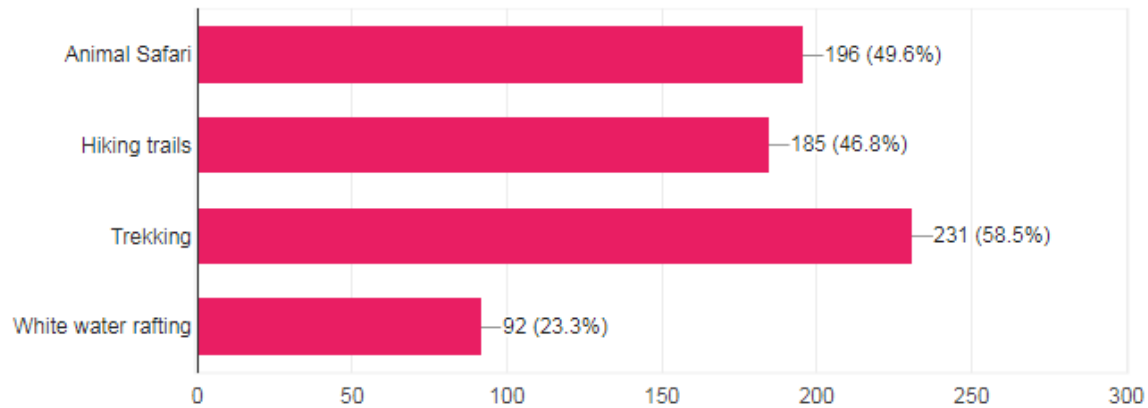


Fig12. Awareness of Ecotourism activities

From the information collected, it can be analyzed that animal safari and trekking are the most famous eco-tourism activities among Indian residents. Animal safari is also considered as a very good measure to save natural habitats and animals from getting exploitation. The reason why Indian residents prefer animal safari is that it allows the residents to carry out close observation and stay connected to the wildlife. The respondents explained that animal safari provides them with the best and most venerable experience with regards to eco-tourism. At the time of providing the response the Indian residents explained that internet is the key source which offers them potential and adequate information about different types of animal safari tours in the country along with their charges and facilities offered.

On the other side of this, trekking is also a popular eco-tourism activity which allows the Indian residents to explore the nature and wildlife. The respondents explained that both soft and hard trekking tours are present in the country. In soft trekking tours, the respondents were allowed to trek for 3-4 hours and adequate refreshment was offered to them. On the other hand, hard trekking is a kind of tour where the respondents were required to trek the entire day to gain the most delightful experience of nature, surroundings and wildlife. The data collected from primary sources reflects that hiking trails and white water rafting are some other eco-tourism activities which the Indian residents are aware about.

The same results are presented in the section of literature review where different authors have presented their views about different eco-tourism activities present in the country. The section highlights white water rafting in Karnataka is a very popular eco-tourism activity in India.

Wildlife sanctuaries is the most preferred eco-tourism destination

■ Natural Parks ■ Wildlife sanctuaries ■ Biosphere reserve
 ■ Tiger reserve ■ Other

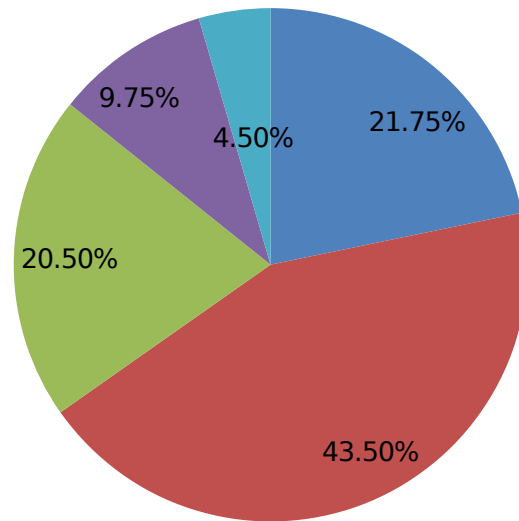


Fig 13. Respondent preference towards ecotourism

Table 9.

Analysis of respondent preference towards ecotourism

What type of ecotourism place do you prefer to visit	Number	Percentage
Natural Parks	87	21.6%
Wildlife sanctuaries	174	43.3%
Biosphere reserve	82	20.9%
Tiger reserve	39	9.7%
Other	18	4.5%

The information collected from different sources highlights that visiting wildlife sanctuaries are the most preferred that place of eco-tourism among the residents of India. Furthermore, in simpler terms wildlife sanctuary can be defined as an area which emphasize on protecting nature and wildlife species from getting exploited. These areas are also considered as designated territories developed by government and private organizations/individuals with an objective to protect environment in the best possible manner.

The country India is considered as highly rich in terms of wildlife sanctuaries and national parks and the respondents also stated that there are more 450 wildlife sanctuaries and approximately 100 national parks present in the country. In addition to this, Corbett, Khangchendzonga, Gir Wildlife Sanctuary and Periyar are the most popular wildlife sanctuaries present in the country. The respondents from whom primary data has been collected also highlighted the fact that the wildlife sanctuaries present in India are also considered as a home to many wildlife species, birds and animals in the country.

On the other side of this, 87 respondents explained that natural parks in India are the key the ecotourism places which they prefer to visit. However, 82 respondents said that they prefer biosphere reserves whereas 39 respondents favored tiger reserves in the country as their favorite eco-tourism destination. Here, majority of the respondents which was 174 respondents stated that wildlife sanctuaries are their most preferable ecotourism destination. The remaining 18 respondents were in the favor of other eco-tourism places in the country.

The data collected from secondary sources reflects that Kerala and backwaters are the most renowned eco-tourism destination in the country. The section of literature review has also highlighted the fact that Kerala is the first officially planned eco-tourism destination of India. Some other popular eco-tourism destinations in the country are Tamil Nadu, Goa and Andhra Pradesh. Most of the time, people visit these places with an objective to explore the nature and its beauty.

Several factors are considered before visiting any ecotourism site

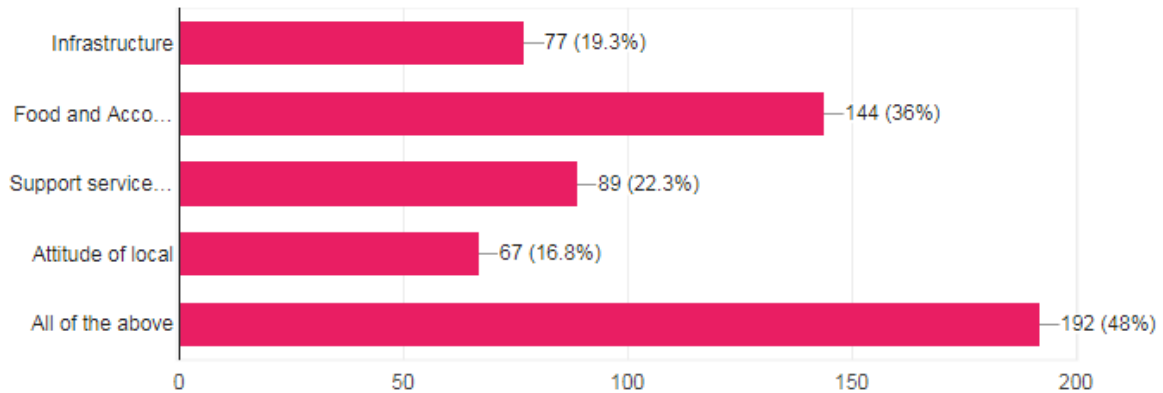


Fig 14. Residents preference towards several ecotourism factors

Table 8.

Analysis of factors considered by Indian residents while selecting ecotourism site

What factors do you consider at the time of visiting any ecotourism site	Number	Percentage
Infrastructure	77	19.3%
Food and accommodation	144	36%
Support service from tour operators	89	22.3%
Attitude of local residents	67	16.8%
All of the above	192	48%

The information collected from different sources indicates that Indian residents considered various factors at the time of the visiting any sort of eco-tourism destination. For example, they considered facilities such as attitude of local residents, infrastructure, food and accommodation etc. before going to any eco-tourism destination. From the data collected, it has been analyzed that 89 respondents explained that support services are a key factor which they considered before visiting such destination. It can be stated that the additional support services helps in creating higher degree of satisfaction among the respondents.

Further, it also encourages them to carry out word of mouth publicity of these destinations. 77 respondents favored that the adequate infrastructure facility is the major thing which they considered while visiting any eco-tourism site. Here, these respondents explained that facilities such as water, recreational, healthcare, transportation, communication etc. are the key components of the infrastructure facilities which the residents seeks before selecting any eco-tourism destination.

At the time of providing information, the residents also explained that the government and other regulatory authorities are still required to work on developing infrastructure facilities within the eco-tourism sites. Till now satisfactory development in context of infrastructure facilities has not been carried out. The result of this is that high degree of dissatisfaction is developed among the Indian residents.

From the information gathered it can be also analyzed that food and accommodation facilities offered by eco-tourism destination is another factor which is considered by Indian residents at the time selecting destination. Out of the total respondents, 144 respondents explained that facilities linked with food and accommodation is the most important thing which they considered at the time of visiting eco-tourism site in the country.

The result of this is that it creates obstacles for the Indian residents in terms of selecting eco-tourism destination over normal tourism destination in the county. It is required by government private players and other regulatory bodies to develop strategic plans for developing satisfactory food and accommodation facilities in eco-tourism destination. The benefit of this is that it will help in making the concept more popular among travelers and tourists in the country.

It has been found that the attitude of local residents also plays a vital role in influencing the overall decision making of visitors. It can be stated that 67 respondents explained that they considered attitude of local people as a key and important factor in selecting eco-tourism site. These respondents explained that they prefer to visit eco-tourism destinations where local people are helpful and supportive. Furthermore, the number of visitors increases drastically where local people participate in the growth and development of destination. However, majority which is 48% of the total respondents said that all the factors are important and considered before visiting the eco-tourism destination.

The same results have been gathered from the secondary sources of data collection. Here, authors such as Holden, (2016) explained that before visiting any eco-tourism destinations, there are various factors which are taken into consideration by the travelers and tourists. For example, De Vos, Cumming, Moore, Maciejewski and Duckworth, (2016) argued that overall infrastructure facility is one of the critical factor which is considered by travelers before selecting the eco-tourism site. The authors further explained that a destination needs to have various attractive features which can develop sense of satisfaction among travelers by providing them with exceptional travel experience.

Kerala most popular ecotourism destinations in India

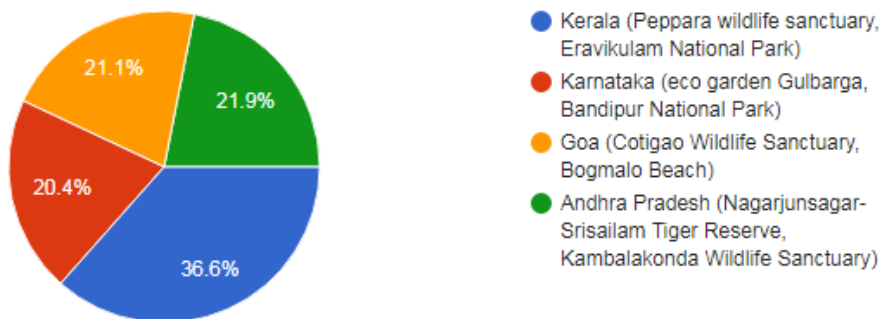


Fig 15. Indian resident's attitude toward popular ecotourism destination in the country

Table 9.

Analysis of most popular ecotourism destinations in India

In your view what are the most popular ecotourism destinations in India	Number	Percentage
Kerala	147	36.6%
Karnataka	82	20.4%
Goa	85	21.1%
Andhra Pradesh	88	21.9%

The data collected from primary and secondary sources reflects that backwater of Kerala is the most popular eco-tourism destination in India. Majority of the respondents which is 147 stated that backwater Kerala is very popular in terms of offering eco-tourism related products and services.

However the other 88 respondents favored Andhra Pradesh as a famous eco-tourism destination of India while the other 85 respondents favored Goa in terms of the most popular eco-tourism destination in the country. The remaining 82 respondents were in the favored Karnataka as the most popular destination.

The same results have been gathered from secondary data collected which indicates that India is a country which is full of eco-tourism destinations. The data published in European Journal of Tourism Research in the year 2011, reflects the fact that Kerala is officially first planned and one of the most famous eco-tourism destination in the country. It can be expressed that the forest department of Kerala and people living in community integrated together to make the destination famous in terms of eco-tourism.

On the other hand, the marketing carried out to create awareness about Kerala as an eco-tourism destination is also quite effective. The participation of Kerala in different international travel fairs also contributed in enhancing the image of Kerala eco-tourism among different travelers and tourists. The marketing of Kerala has resulted in attracting both international and domestic tourists to the destination.

The data presented in section of literature review also indicates that Goa is also a very popular eco-tourism destination of India. Here, authors such as Singh, 2010 asserted that eco-tourism within Goa is popular because of good accommodation facilities, better transportation and wildlife conservation. The core eco-green gateways present in Goa are spice plantation, Dudhsagar and Baravalem waterfalls. Even beach such as Galgibaga Beach provides exceptional experience to travelers and tourists in terms of eco-tourism.

Over the past few years, Andhra Pradesh has also emerged as a famous eco-tourism destination in India. Here, the role played by Andhra Pradesh Forest Development Corporation is highly critical in context of promoting the site as an eco-tourism destination. However, it can be stated that the corporation has well taken care of factors such as improving lives of local community and environment protection. Maredumilli and Tyda in Andhra Pradesh are very popular in terms of eco-tourism destination in India.

The data collected from secondary sources also reflects the fact that Karnataka is a famous eco-tourism destination in India. Here, the government and people living in local community are now focusing on areas such as protecting environment, developing awareness among people in the society and protecting the eco-system of area with the help of various measures and actions. As compared to other destinations, the measures taken to promote Karnataka as an eco-tourism destination are quite effective.

The statement can be justified by the fact that in Karnataka the focus is laid on facilitate linkage between the private and public operators so that they can contribute in conservation of wildlife. At the same time, training sessions are delivered to local and natural guides so that they can promote eco-tourism more effectively. It can be expressed that the Eco-tourism board of Karnataka is actively involved in development and promotion of eco-tourism within the destination. The ivory beaches, twinkling rivers, sweeping landscape present within Karnataka is considered the major eco-tourism features which attracts travelers and tourists from different places of the world.

Ecotourism provides income to local residents

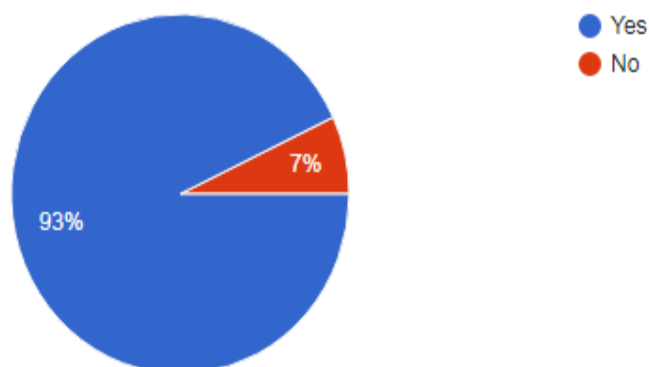


Fig16. Ecotourism enhances income level of local residents

Table 10.

Analysis of ecotourism contribution to income level of local residents

In your view does ecotourism provides income to local residents	Numbers	Percentage
Yes	378	93%
No	29	7%

The data collected from primary sources highlights that eco-tourism provides income to the local residents. It can be stated that majority which is 378 respondents agreed with the mentioned-above statement. On the other side of this, 29 respondents said that eco-tourism does not contribute in providing income to the local residents. Furthermore, most of the respondents explained that the local craftsmen's, innkeepers and restaurateurs are able to get employment and income opportunity through eco-tourism. It can be stated that eco-tourism destinations attracts travelers and tourist from different areas. These travelers purchase products and services offered by the local residents and thus, they are able to enhance their income level. The same results have been gathered from the section of literature review which reflects that eco-tourism supports in providing potential employment opportunities to the local people living near destination.

Tour operator's provides most relevant information on ecotourism

■ Tour operators ■ District promotional council
■ Information Brochure ■ Websites
■ Others

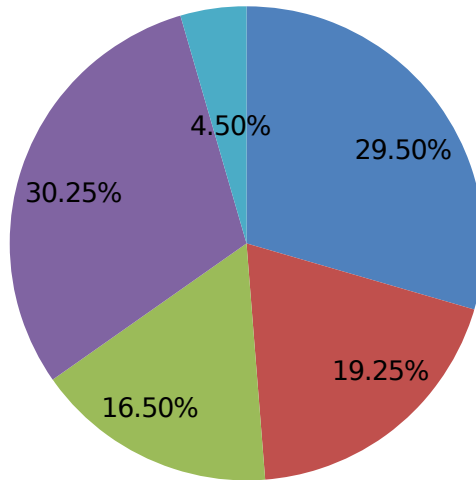


Fig 17. Ecotourism information providers in India

Table 11.

Analysis of eco-tourism information providers in the country

Which mode provides you the most relevant information on ecotourism	Number	Percentage
Tour operators	118	29.5%
District promotional council	77	19.3%
Information Brochure	66	16.5%
Websites	121	30.3%
Others	18	4.5%

From the data collected, it has been found that websites are considered as the most relevant sources of getting information about the eco-tourism. Majority of the respondents which was 121 explained that they prefer websites for getting information about the eco-tourism. These respondents further explained that websites are effective as they help in providing information about the destination, ways to reach the destination, facilities available, and reviews from other travelers and visitors etc. On the other hand, 118 respondents favored tour operator as a mode of getting relevant

information on eco-tourism. It can be stated that 77 respondents were in favor of district promotional council whereas 66 respondents favored information brochure as a source of collecting accurate and reliable information on eco-tourism. The remaining 18 said that they consider other sources for collecting data on about the eco-tourism destinations in the country.

Development of infrastructure is the main expectations of local residents from government and private players from point view of ecotourism

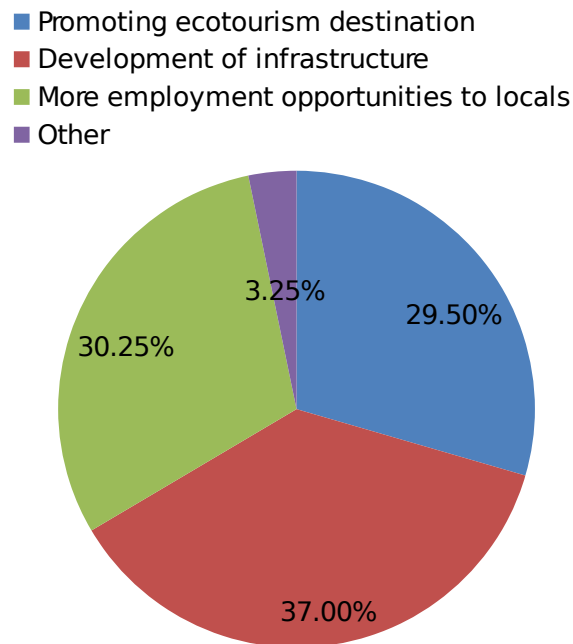


Fig18. Expectations of local residents from government and private players

Table 12.

Analysis of local resident’s expectations

What are the expectations of local residents from government and private players from point view of ecotourism	Number	Percentage
Promoting ecotourism destination	118	29.6%
Development of infrastructure	148	37.1%
More employment opportunities to locals	121	30.3%
Other	13	3%

It can be expressed that 121 of the total respondents said that the local residents expects that private players and government should create more employment opportunities for them. Increasing

employment opportunity will help the local residents to enhance their income level and overall standard of living. However, 118 respondents said that the private players and government should emphasize more on promoting eco-tourism among different travelers and tourists. Majority which is 148 respondents said that the local residents wants that government and private players should focus more on developing infrastructure within the existing eco-tourism destination in the country. These respondents explained that better infrastructure facilities will help in getting access to the ecotourism destination more effectively. The remaining 13 respondents said that the local residents expect other things from the government and private players in the industry.

Enhancing awareness to protect nature is the key benefit associated with ecotourism in India

- Provide knowledge about local culture and community
- Enhance awareness level to protect nature
- Enhance knowledge level
- Additional income for local
- Others

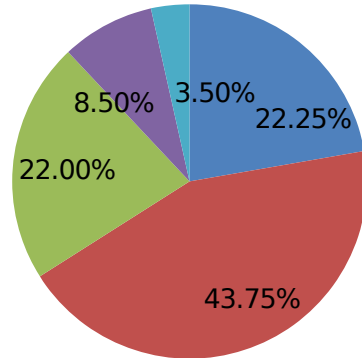


Fig19. Benefits of ecotourism

Table 13.

Statistical data representing benefits of ecotourism in India

In your view what are the key benefits associated with ecotourism in India	Number	Percentage
Provide knowledge about local culture and community	89	22.3%
Enhance awareness level to protect nature	175	43.9%
Enhance knowledge level	88	22.1%
Additional income for local	34	8.5%
Others	14	3.3%

It has been found that the key and most important benefit associated with eco-tourism is that it helps in creating awareness among travelers and tourists to protect the nature. Majority of the respondents which is 175 were in the favor of mentioned above statement. They explained that over the past few years, the activities of travelers and tourists have emerged as a major threat to nature and environment. Here, the concept of ecotourism plays a critical role in enhancing the awareness level to protect nature. The other 89 of the respondents said that ecotourism is beneficial as it provides knowledge about local culture and community. The other 88 stated that ecotourism helps in enhancing their knowledge level whereas the other 34 respondents said that the advantage of ecotourism is that it offers additional income to local residents. The remaining 14 respondents stated that there are other benefits which are provided by eco-tourism.

Ecotourism respects local culture

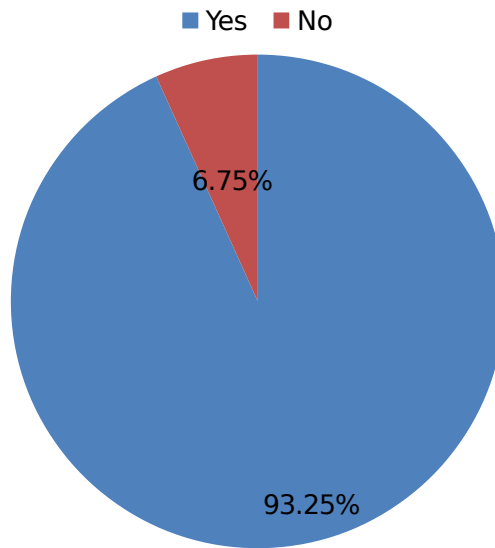


Fig 20. Ecotourism respects the local culture

Table 14.

Analysis of eco-tourisms respects towards local culture

In your view the existing practices of ecotourism respects local culture	Number	Percentage
Yes	373	94.7%
No	27	5.3%

It can be analyzed that the existing practices of ecotourism in India focuses on providing respect to local culture and community. Out of the total respondents, majority which is 373 agrees with this statement. Furthermore, they believe that the tourism authorities and government have taken corrective measures to protect and promote the local culture within eco-tourism destinations in the country. They also explained that when they visited ecotourism destination in India, they were able to witness the local culture existing within those sites. The data collected through secondary sources also reflects that the concept of ecotourism emphasize on promoting responsible tourism and respecting the local culture.

On the other hand, 27 respondents disagreed with this statement and they stated that local culture is getting exploited because of ecotourism practices and policies.

Ecotourism has enhanced the living standard of local communities

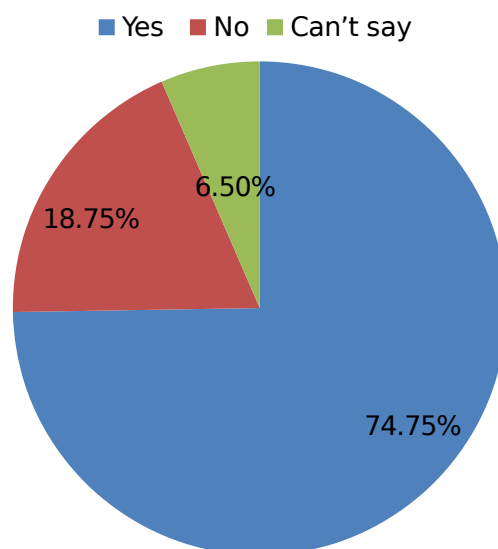


Fig 21. Enhancement of living standards due to ecotourism

Table 15.

Analysis of ecotourism contribution in raising living standard

In your view does ecotourism has enhanced the living standard of local communities	Number	Percentage
Yes	299	75.5%
No	75	5.6%
Can't say	26	18.9%

It has been analyzed that the concept and practices of ecotourism has enhanced the living standard of local communities. The primary data collected reflects that majority which is 299 are in the favor of the statement that the living standard of people in local communities has been enhanced thorough eco-tourism. It can be also analyzed that at the time of developing a site as an ecotourism destination, local people are provided with opportunity of employment and enhancing their income level. However, 26 respondents said that they do not have adequate knowledge whether ecotourism has enhanced the living standard of people in local communities or not. The remaining 75 respondents said that ecotourism has not enhanced the living standard of local community.

Providing employment opportunities to local is the key measure that can be taken to encourage participation of community in ecotourism promotion

■ Highlights benefits of ecotourism ■ Providing employment opportunities
■ Delivering more education ■ Others

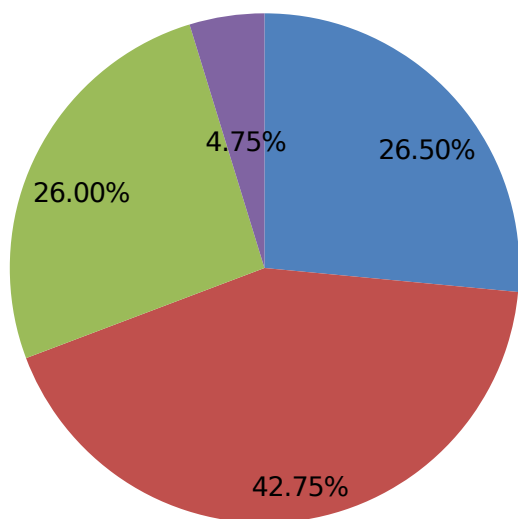


Fig 22. Measures to promote ecotourism

Table 16.

Analysis of measures which can be taken to promote ecotourism

What are the measures that can be taken to encourage participation of community in ecotourism promotion	Number	Percentage
Highlights benefits of ecotourism	106	26.8%
Providing employment opportunities	171	43.3%
Delivering more education	104	26.3%
Others	19	3.5%

From the information collected, it has been found that there are several measures which need to be taken to encourage communities in participating in promotion of ecotourism. Out of the total respondents, majority which is 171 believes that providing employment opportunities to people living in local communities can encourage them to participative and promote the concept of ecotourism. In addition to this, 104 respondents agreed that highlighting benefits of ecotourism is a potential strategy which can support in encouraging participation of local community. On the other side of this, 106 respondents were in favor of delivering more education whereas the remaining 19 said that there are other measures which need to be taken to encourage participation of local community in promotion of ecotourism.

Most of the respondents prefer to visit more ecotourism destinations in India and recommending the same to others

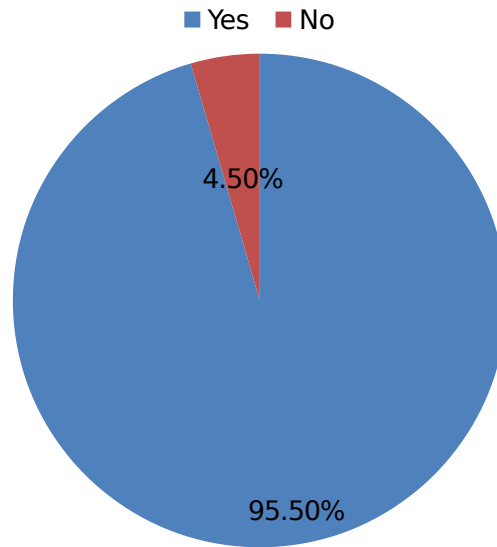


Fig 23. Indian resident's preference towards visiting ecotourism destination in future

Table 17.

Views on resident's attitude towards visiting ecotourism destination

Do you prefer to visit more ecotourism destinations in India and recommending the same to others?	Numbers	Percentage
Yes	382	96.5%
No	18	3.5%

On obtaining information from the Indian residents it has been found that 382 respondents replied that they will prefer to visit more ecotourism sites in India and will recommend to others also. 18 respondents said that they will not visit any ecotourism site and will not recommend to others also. On the basis of the overall data it has been found that majority of the Indian residents are satisfied with the kind of ecotourism destinations present in India and this is the main reason due to which they prefer to recommend different destinations to others also. This is directly contributing to the growth of ecotourism in India where this concept is gaining popularity at faster pace and in turn has contributed in the economic growth of the nation also.

Knowledge about different culture is the key factor which attracts tourist towards ecotourism

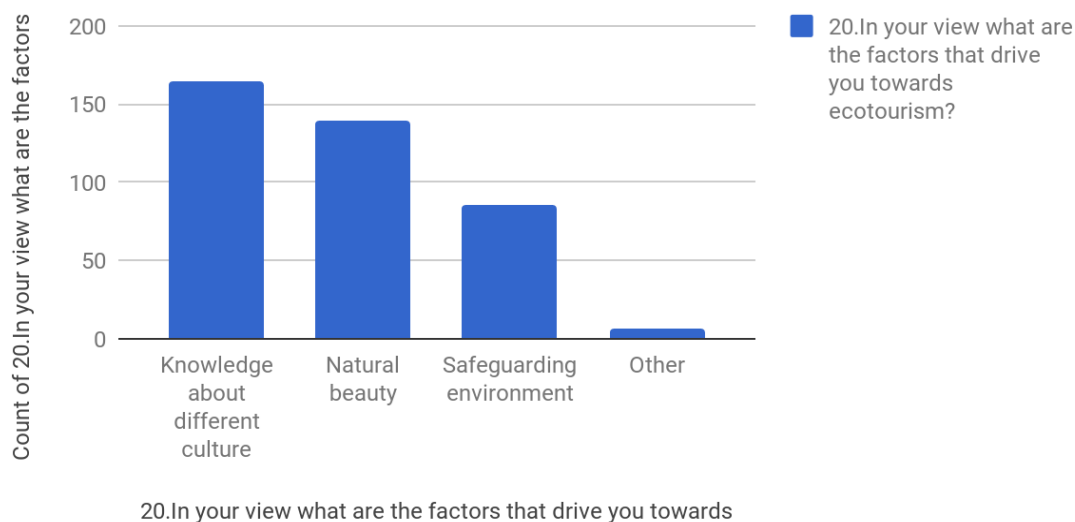


Fig 24. Factors driving Indian residents towards ecotourism

Table 18.

Measures which can be taken for community participation in ecotourism

What are the factor which attracts tourist towards ecotourism ?	Number	Percentage
Knowledge about different culture	165	41.5%
Natural Beauty	140	35.2%
Safeguarding environment	86	21.6%
Others	9	1.8%

Obtaining information from the Indian residents it has been found that large numbers of factors are present that drives residents towards the concept of ecotourism. Further, it has been found that the range of factors involve natural beauty that attracts Indian residents where 140 residents were in favor of this as they have seen various ecotourism destinations that promotes nature and provides unique experience to the tourists in every possible manner. Apart from this, Indian residents are in favor of factor associated with knowledge about different culture. 165 Indian residents replied that concept of ecotourism has supported them in knowing about different culture as it is well known fact that tourism does not highlights the attributes of different culture but ecotourism contributes in

knowing about different culture and it directly contributes in development of this concept. Other Indian residents replied that safeguarding environment is another key factor that drives them towards ecotourism.

Majority of the residents perceive it as one of the good option through which natural environment can be protected along with the species that are rare. Overall activities of human beings are adversely affecting surroundings due to this reason Indian residents perceive ecotourism as one of the favorable concept through which environmental protection can take place. Overall Indian residents are favor in all the factors such as natural beauty, safeguarding environment, knowledge about different culture etc.

Before visiting ecotourism destination people were not at all having proper knowledge of different culture but with the development of this concept people are able to know about different culture and in turn every culture is popular. Culture is known in the form of living style, food etc. This has contributed in enhancing popularity of this concept in every possible manner and has contributed in the growth of entire nation. 86 residents replied that with the growing concept of ecotourism in the society local residents have started to take more actions in order to safeguard environment along with the natural areas that have become major ecotourism spots. This represents the brighter side of ecotourism along with the key attributes that supports in attracting Indian residents towards it.

Indian resident's recommendation towards ecotourism

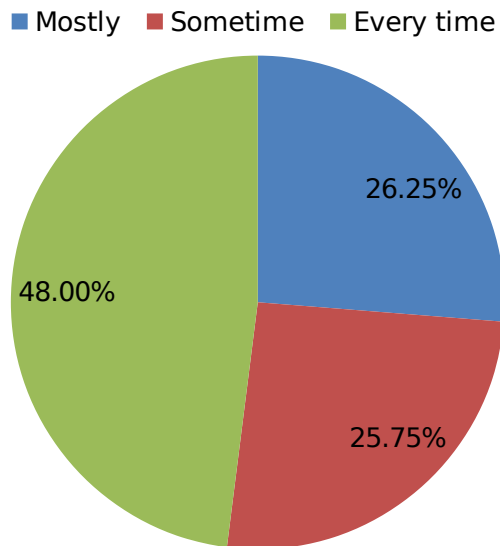


Fig25.Indian residents recommend ecotourism to others

Table 19.

Recommendations of Indian residents towards ecotourism

How often do you recommend ecotourism to others	Numbers	Percentage
Mostly	105	26.4%
Sometime	103	25.4%
Every time	192	48.2%

On obtaining data from the Indian residents it has been found that people recommend ecotourism to others every time. Further, it is a well known fact that this recommendation is only possible when the individuals who have visited ecotourism site are satisfied with the same. 192 Indian residents prefer to recommend others every time. Moreover, every Indian resident has visited different ecotourism sites in the nation that have provided them remarkable experience in every possible manner. 105 respondents replied that they recommend ecotourism mostly and other said sometime.

So, it directly depends on person to person but majority of the Indian residents replied that their recommendation in relation with the ecotourism destination takes place every time and in turn the mouth to mouth positive publicity is quite effective for this type of tourism in the nation. 103 respondents said that they recommend ecotourism sometime. With the rising level of

recommendation awareness in relation with the ecotourism is rising at faster pace in the overall society where more people prefers to visit ecotourism site and this is contributing in the development of this concept which is the main motive in India.

In case if the present Indian residents does not recommend ecotourism destinations to others then in such case it will act as main hurdle in the development of the ecotourism concept. Due to this reason proper recommendation is necessarily required in case of ecotourism where by providing suggestion in relation with this concept can surely assist to work in favor of ecotourism in best possible manner. Majority of the respondents replied that they are continuously recommending ecotourism destinations located in India to other individuals and this has somehow played crucial role in raising demand for ecotourism in India. In short, recommending ecotourism destinations on continuous basis is one of the best alternatives through which people in India can know about this concept and in turn they can be easily attracted towards it. So, with the help of this data it has been identified that visiting ecotourism site is favorable for the people and in turn it has played significant role in raising demand for the ecotourism destinations that are present in India.

Ecotourism concept provides employment opportunities to local residents

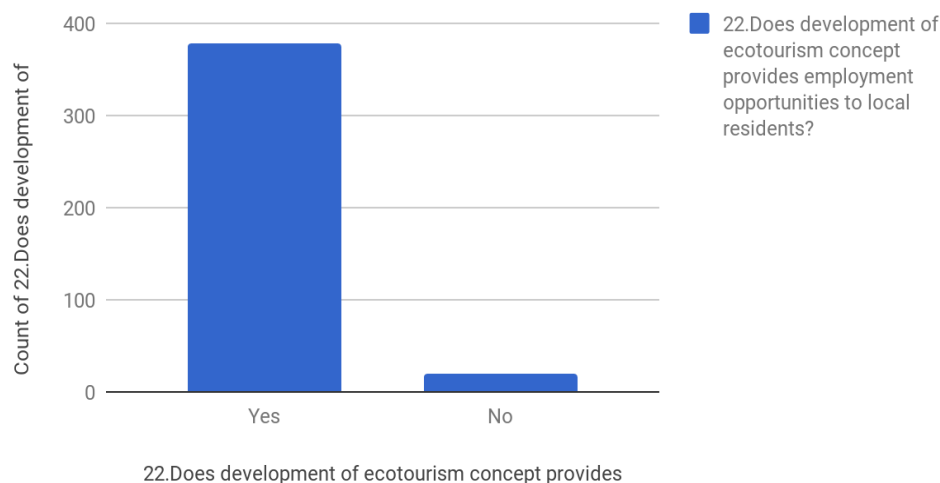


Fig 26. Ecotourism contribution towards employment

Table 20.

Ecotourism contribution towards employment

Does development of ecotourism concept provides employment opportunities to local residents	Number	Percentage

Yes	378	95.2%
No	22	4.8%

Considering the attitude and perception of Indian resident towards ecotourism it has been found that development of ecotourism concept provides employment opportunities to the local residents where 378 respondents are in favor of this fact and 22 respondents are not in favor. Further, it has been found that with the rising demand for ecotourism in India people who are living in the country are getting more jobs as tour operators and in other different areas. So, this has directly created favorable opportunities for the people living in the society in terms of employment and has contributed in the development of the economy. Apart from this, the people who are getting job are given proper chance to deliver knowledge and information about the ecotourism concept and this is also beneficial for the entire community in best possible manner. Majority of the respondents are in favor of this fact that ecotourism concept has provided favorable employment opportunities to the local residents.

Further, it is a well known fact that in country like India employment related challenges are present in large amount and in order to deal with the same it is necessary to work in the development of ecotourism concept. Apart from this, secondary analysis has also shown same results where it has been found that main advantage of ecotourism to the local community is employment where it provides proper job opportunities to the people and in turn enhances their standard of living in every possible manner. If in case if any type of activity contributes in employment generation then it is directly considered to be most effective and same is applicable in case of ecotourism concept.

So, with the help of this data it can be clearly stated that ecotourism has directly provided proper employment opportunities to the local residents from point view of Indian. This has raised their standard of living and in turn they are easily attracted to indulge into the activities of ecotourism in best possible manner. People are getting more job opportunities as per their real expectations such as they are working as tour operator; many individuals have set up their own tour agency etc.

Improvement needed in ecotourism destinations within India

I got 217 Responses about improvement needed in ecotourism destinations within India it's a open question for Indian residents to find out the most recommended measures, author has grouped them in groups and reflected in Table 21. To range them in table according number of response marketing and promotion 28, then 10 is development of destinations, 9 is destination maintenance etc.

Table 21.

Recommendations of Indian residents

Group of recommendations	No of Responses
Marketing and promotion	28
Safety and security	5
Employment	7
To aware the people about ecotourism, importance and beauty of nature	3
Development of policies	7
Save forests	2
Development of destinations	10
Food and accommodation	8
Transportation	10
Infrastructure	4
Government	2
Education	4
Training need for tour operators and guides	8
Destination maintenance	9
More plantation	8
Stop deforestation	8
Other	109

Above shows the main

recommendations provided by the Indian residents. One of the main recommendations is associated with marketing and promotion where it is required to promote ecotourism related activities so that people can know more about it. Apart from this, Indian residents have provided some other recommendation which they feel important such as food and accommodation, training for guides

and tour operators, transportation etc. Through all these recommendations it is possible to work for the development of ecotourism and can bring favorable results for the entire nation.

4.2. Evaluation by tour operators and guides

Overview

Interview has been taken from three guides as they are one who are responsible for rendering ecotourism services to the local residents. The main reason behind obtaining information from the tour guide is to know what are their responsibilities towards ecotourism and what are the initiatives taken by them for demand of ecotourism. Apart from this, through this interview main motive to know the real demand and attitude of ecotourism in India. Further, three different guides have been interview through Skype and they have been asked different interview questions related with the aim of the research. By knowing the views of tour guides it is possible to know how popular is the concept of ecotourism in India and what are the ways through which this concept can be developed in proper manner.

Guides Response Analysis

Key responsibilities in ecotourism demand

First guide replied guide is responsible to provide education to individuals in terms of protecting the environment, second guide replied responsibility to respect local culture and offer travellers the education linked with environment protection and third guide replied managing the tourism related activities in sustainable manner. Thus from this it is clear that responsibility of every guide is different. The guides need to understand their role in demand and growth of the concept of ecotourism. In addition to this, these individuals are also required seek for ways and strategies through which can support in lowering down the negative impact of tourism activities on environment

Present demand for ecotourism destinations

First guide replied that over the past few years, the travellers and tourist have become more conscious towards protection of local communities, culture and environment. Second guide replied demand of ecotourism destinations has increased more among domestic travellers and tourists. Third guide replied little bit increase in the demand of ecotourism destination with the country. Thus from

this it is clear that concept of ecotourism is gaining popularity in India and growing demand of ecotourism among the domestic tourists is good for the entire travel and tourism industry

Contribution of outbound tour operators

First guide replied that the outbound tour operators are playing a critical role in the growth and development of the ecotourism concept in the country. Second guide replied role played by outbound tour operators can be termed as critical in terms of carrying out the development of ecotourism. Third guide replied development of ecotourism has now been the core responsibility of the outbound tour operators. Thus from this it can be concluded that the outbound tour operators are also contributing in the development of ecotourism through different methods that are effective in ecotourism.

Benefits of ecotourism

First guide replied ecotourism is not at all about protecting the environment but the concept is also beneficial for the people living in local community. Second guide replied that creating awareness with respect to environmental protection and conservation of natural resources is another strategy which can be employed to build positive perception of local community. Third guide replied understanding conservation of natural resources and community participation can be termed as the two most important benefits. From this it can be concluded that different benefits of ecotourism are present such as conservation of natural resources, protection of wildlife etc.

Support provided by government

First guide replied financial support, second guide said discussion and meetings with the tour guides and operators and third guide replied government is more inclined towards supporting the needs of local residents directly instead of using any middle man. Through this it can be concluded that support provided by government is highly appreciable and it is leading to development of this concept

Preference of ecotourism activities

First guide replied campaign and guide service can be termed two major ecotourism activities which are preferred by the local residents. Second guide replied no specific ecotourism activity which is commonly preferred by the domestic travellers. Third guide replied campaign and guide service can be termed as the two major and most common type of ecotourism activities. Through this it can be concluded that guide related and camping activities are mostly preferred by Indian residents

Preference regarding service

First guide replied that various services which are demanded by the local residents with regards to ecotourism. Second guide replied that guide at tour is the most common the service which is preferred by the local residents. Third guide replied that the common services which are being preferred by local resident are related to their visit to nature based sites and tour guide. Through this it can be concluded guide related service is most popular

Type of demand

First guide replied that demand of ecotourism has grown significantly over the past few years. Second guide replied that demand of ecotourism among local residents is moderate and the reason for this is lack of adequate marketing and promotion activities. Third guide replied that local residents have witnessed high demand over the past few years with respect to the ecotourism services. Through this it can be concluded that local Indian residents prefer to visit different ecotourism sites and demand for such sites is quite high

Attitude of locals when they look foreigners

First guide said attitude of local people can be termed as very supportive and helpful when they look at foreigners. Second guide said people are impressed by living style of foreigners. Third guide said local people behave in a very professional manner when they look at foreigners. Thus from this it can be concluded that attitude of local is positive when they view foreigners

Most popular destination in India

First guide replied that local communities do not see ecotourism sites as the most popular destination in the country. Second guide said that the ecotourism sites in the country have gained high popularity. Third guide said that local residents believe that ecotourism sites are getting more and more popular along with the passage of time. Through this it can be concluded that ecotourism sites based in India are mostly preferred to be visited and they are considered as popular destination

Difference in perception of local residents

First guide said that people in local community are more interested in dealing with international tourists as compared to the local ones. Second guide said that perception of local residents completely gets changed when they see international tourists. Third guide said the local residents are more interested in dealing with domestic tourists as compared to the international tourists. Thus through this it can be stated that perception of local residents differs in both cases when they see local and international residents

Recommendations with regard to development of ecotourism

First guide recommended strict action plans and strategies needs to be formulated. Second recommended marketing and promotion activities and third recommended more awareness should be created among travel and tourists.

From every guide different type of response was gained. Guide one was less interested in sharing information linked with the ecotourism but several questions were asked by author in order to accomplish the aim of the research. Further, Guide one answered the question linked with demand for ecotourism in comparison with past in proper manner as it can be seen in Appendix 2. Through response of this guide it became possible to know that Indian residents are easily attracted towards ecotourism destination. Apart from this Guide one clearly highlighted the benefits of ecotourism which is also mentioned in the Appendix 2 and this enhanced the quality of the entire research. Apart from this, in case of second guide who gave response in proper manner.

Author's conversation with the second guide was quite interactive. Each and every question was answered by the second guide in proper manner as it can be seen in Appendix 2. Through response of the guide it has been identified that government is providing full support to the guide for the development of ecotourism. Proper meetings are carried out timely and various policies are framed that is contributing a lot in making this concept popular. Apart from this, as per the view of second guide the ecotourism sites that are present in India are the most popular destinations that have totally changed the tourism market of India. Further, the guide recommended that it is required to design marketing activities in proper manner so that Indian residents and other type of travelers can be provided information linked with ecotourism and in turn it is possible to satisfy the need of the tourists.

In case of third guide who also actively participated in providing response. Through response of this guide it become quite easier to know the kind of services that local residents prefers to access which is visit to nature based site and tour guide. It is one of the best response that has been gained from the third guide as shown in Appendix 2. Apart from this, recommendation was provided by the guide in proper manner where individual suggested that more awareness is needed so that more residents can know about this concept and this will surely support in raising demand for ecotourism in India. So, in this way response of three guides were taken successfully and in proper manner.

Tour operator Response Analysis

Key responsibilities in ecotourism demand

First tour operator replied environment education along with managing tourism related activities in a sustainable way is the main responsibility. Second tour operator said operator is in favor of respecting local culture. Third tour operator said that main responsibility in ecotourism demand lies in managing tourism related activities in a sustainable way and supporting park and protected areas. So, through this it can be stated that main responsibility is linked with protecting environment and delivering knowledge to the local people

Demand for ecotourism

First tour operator said demand for ecotourism in past 3 years has raised from the domestic tourism. Second tour operator replied demand from international tourist is also up to the mark in relation with the ecotourism sites like they prefer to visit Goa, Karnataka, and Kerala. Third tour operator said that demand for ecotourism has increased with the help of domestic traveler in the past 3 years. So, with the help of this it can be stated that domestic tourists plays most significant role in raising demand for ecotourism in India

Contribution of outbound tourists

First tour operator replied that promotion through catalogue is one of the main contribution in development of ecotourism within India. Second tour operator said developing film and video tapes along with making use of internet with the motive to develop awareness in the market. Third tour operator said promotion with the help of catalogue. So through this information it can be stated that contribution of outbound tourist is playing significant role in development of ecotourism

Benefits of ecotourism

First tour operator said it builds positive perception of the local community is raising environmental awareness. Second tour operator said community participation along with the nature education is the most significant benefit. Third tour operator said most significant benefit of ecotourism is raising environmental awareness and conservation of natural resource. So, through this it can be concluded that most significant benefit is environmental protection and conservation of natural resources.

Type of government support

First tour operator replied development of laws and regulations. Second tour operator said financial, building laws and promotion of ecotourism services. Third said financial, promotion of ecotourism services, development of laws and regulations for the development of this concept. So through this it has been identified that major support is in the form of financial, building laws and regulations etc

Preference of ecotourism activities

First tour operator said ecotourism activity that local residents prefer is guide service and camping. Second operator replied camping activity and third said guide service and camping. So the mainly preferred activities involves camping and guide services that are popular

Preference of ecotourism service

First tour operator said most preferable service is visit to nature based sites. Second operator replied tour operator guide at tour and third said visit to nature based site. So, through this it can be concluded that visit to nature based site is the main preferred ecotourism services preferred by local residents

Type of demand witnessed

First tour operator replied moderate demand from the local residents, second said medium demand and third replied high demand has been witnessed. So, through this it has been analyzed that every tour operator has witnessed different type of demand

Attitude of local

First tour operator said local residents feel excited in case if they look any international tourist. Second tour operator replied when local residents look foreigners then they are quite excited as the ecotourism destinations of India are promoted at international level. Third operator said attitude of local people in India is positive when they view foreigners. So, through this it can be said that local residents behave positively when they see international tourists

Ecotourism sites are the most popular destinations in India

First tour operator said ecotourism sites that are based in India are the most popular destinations. Second tour operator also said that ecotourism sites are most popular destination and third tour operator is also in favor of this fact. This information clearly represents that all the ecotourism sites based in India are quite popular and local residents prefer to visit them

Difference in perception of local residents

First tour operator replied local residents perceive domestic and international travelers differently. Second tour operator said local residents prefer to entertain foreign residents. Third operator replied perception of local residents is positive in both the cases when they view domestic and international tourists. Through this it can be said that perception of local residents is positive in case of both Indian and international tourists

Recommendation

First tour operator recommended it is necessary to involve the local residents, second said training of guides and third said proper maintenance is required in relation with the ecotourism destinations. So,

through this it has been found that all these recommendations are quite important in development of ecotourism concept.

All the three operators took active participation in the entire research and provided adequate amount of information that was fruitful for the entire research. In case of first tour operator who was from Alappuzha who has high knowledge in the field of ecotourism. One of the best answer provided by the first tour operator was linked with the contribution of outbound tour operator in promotion and marketing of ecotourism.

The response provided by tour operator 2 and 3 was highly satisfactory as it has directly contributed in making the study successful. However, it can be stated that there were some areas where tour operator 2 has provided more effective and suitable information as compared to the third tour operator whom I interviewed. For example, while providing the response to question i.e. the key responsibility of tour operator in ecotourism promotion, the second tour operator has provided more detailed information. This shows that the second tour operator holds more experienced and knowledge level about the concept of ecotourism. To the above mentioned question, the response provided by second tour operator was more specific and short.

On asking question such as benefit on ecotourism, **the third tour operator** has provided with some general information which was linked with conservation of resources and protecting natural areas. On the other side of this, the second tour operator as shown in appendix 3 has provided the information which is more professional and specific. According to the second tour operator the benefits of ecotourism were linked with community participation and enhancement of living standard of local people. However, it can be argued that the in terms of handling tourist, the third tour operator was focused more on domestic travelers whereas the second tour operator was taking care of both international and domestic tourists in the country. In question such as recommendation for promotion of ecotourism, the third tour operator emphasized more on maintenance of the area. However, the second tour operator said that training to guides is the best way to promote ecotourism. The recommendation provided by second tour operator is more feasible.

Table 22.

Summary about demand to ecotourism of research

Information Sources	The Most Important Points
Interview of Guides	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Domestic tourists are arriving more as compared with

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> International Growing demand of ecotourism among the domestic tourists is very good news for the entire travel and tourism industry
Interview of Tour Operator	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The best possible support provided by the government involves financial, building laws and promotion of ecotourism services As compared to the international tourists, the demand of ecotourism destinations has increased more among domestic travellers and tourists
Questionnaire of Indian resident	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Resident Consider various factors at the time of the visiting any sort of eco-tourism destination such as infrastructure, food and accommodation Backwater of Kerala is the most popular eco-tourism destination in India

Above table represents the key points that have been provided by guides, tour operators and the Indian residents from whom data has been collected. Further, guides have provided information related with demand of domestic tourists where they have witnessed high demand from the domestic tourists as compared with international one. Further, in case of tour operators their important points involves the support provided by government such as financial etc. Apart from this important points linked with Indian residents involves the most popular sites that are preferred by them.

Table 23.

Summary about resident attitude of ecotourism

Information Sources	The Most Important Point
Interview of Guides	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The attitude of local people can be termed as very supportive and helpful when they look at foreigners Local communities see ecotourism sites as the most popular destination in the country
Interview of Tour Operator	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local residents preference is guide service and camping Local residents feel excited in case if they look any

	international tourist
Questionnaire of Indian resident	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Indian residents explained that they prefer websites for getting information about the eco-tourism • Most important benefit associated with eco-tourism is that it helps in creating awareness among travelers and tourists to protect the nature

Above table represents the important points that are linked with the attitude of the residents. As per the response provided by guide attitude of the local residents is very supportive and demand for ecotourism service is high. In case of tour operators important points involve local residents prefer to access guide service and in case of Indian residents they perceive important benefit of ecotourism linked with awareness among travelers and tourists to protect surroundings. So, these are the main important points identified in the research that are associated with the attitude of local residents.

CONCLUSIONS

The present study carried out has supported in knowing about the demand and attitude of Indian residents towards ecotourism. Below are the main valid conclusions from the entire research:

1. In India the main role of famous ecotourism destinations present involves Goa, Karnataka, Kerala and Tamil Nadu where majority of the Indian residents have visited the popular ecotourism sites that promotes nature and provides them knowledge in relation with different culture.
2. Demand of Indian residents have supported in knowing that they prefer to visit different ecotourism destinations located in India on continuous and they recommend the same to others also.
3. Demand for ecotourism has increased where role of domestic tourists is quite high as compared with the international one
4. Considering the viewpoint of tour operator and guide the main benefit associated with ecotourism is the rising environmental awareness along with the conversation of natural resources through which it is quite possible to work in favor of environment
5. Considering the role of government where political parties have played significant role in development of ecotourism concept and proper assistance is provided to the tour operators and the guide in the form of financial, development of laws and regulations, maintenance of site etc
6. Ecotourism service linked with guide is the most preferred service that is accessed by the local residents and through this they are able to obtain unique experience in the field of tourism
7. The local residents who prefer to visit ecotourism destinations more frequently recommend the most famous ecotourism destinations to others and through this it can be concluded that awareness level in relation with ecotourism is rising at faster pace within India
8. Through the overall analysis it has been found that local residents prefers to visit natural parks, wildlife sanctuaries and other form of reserves on continuous basis
9. The key benefits associated with the ecotourism as per perception of local community involves employment opportunities to locals, knowledge about different culture etc.
10. Considering the response of the tour operator majority of the respondents prefers to recommend ecotourism sites to others and through this it can be concluded that with the rise in recommendations level more people prefer to visit ecotourism destinations on continuous basis.
11. Cooperation of guide and tour operator is quite high in managing ecotourism activities where they promote ecotourism activities and assist government in development new plans and policies.

12. Ecotourism destinations based in India holds ability to attract large number of Indian residents where the unique sites that are associated with beaches, wildlife sanctuaries are quite effective in satisfying need of the residents.
13. The main positive aspect linked with ecotourism is that it provides information and knowledge linked with different culture and people in India are able to know about culture of each other.
14. The perception of Indian residents varies when they view domestic and International resident. Considering viewpoint of Indian residents when they view International residents they view it positively as International residents may recommend ecotourism sites at international level to other individuals.
15. From the past three years demand for ecotourism has grown in India and the reason behind the same is high involvement of government, tour operators, guides and other parties associated with this concept.

RECOMMENDATIONS

From the above conducted study, it can be stated that ecotourism is a very potential concept and will provide adequate growth to the entire travel and tourism industry of India. However, the study reflects that there are certain improvements which need to be done to make the concept more popular and achieve the desired outcomes. The improvements in form of recommendations are mentioned below as:

1. It can be suggested that more efforts needs to be placed in context of marketing and promotion of ecotourism destinations within the country. The rationale behind this is that still majority of the travellers and tourists are not aware about the concept of ecotourism and related destinations in India. Marketing will support in increasing awareness of ecotourism sites, products and services among the domestic as well as international travellers. On the other side of this, marketing will also play critical role in creating demand of these sites among both international and domestic travellers.
2. It is also suggested that more efforts needs to be placed in context of increasing the employment opportunities within the ecotourism destination. It can be stated that the government and other stakeholders can come together to develop effective strategies through which more employment opportunities can be created with the sites. For example, training and development programs for local people can be conducted so that they can become more effective in terms of marketing and selling the local products and services to different travellers and tourists.
3. It is also recommended that strict laws and regulations should be developed with regards to protecting the local communities, culture and environment. It has been observed that most of the time, the travellers and tourists make the destination polluted by throwing garbage and other related things. The natural beauty of many places is getting exploited because of these activities and practices. Strict laws and imposing fines/penalties can help in making the From ecotourism destinations free from all form of garbage.
4. the above conducted study, it has been found that the improvement is also required in areas such as infrastructure, food and accommodation. Thus, it is suggested that the government, tourism authorities and other related stakeholders should integrate their efforts and resources in enhancing the overall infrastructure facilities within the destination. In addition to this, improvements can be also done with regards to food and accommodation facilities within the destinations.
5. As per the suggestions of tour operators, it can be said that the value of eco-tourism can be promoted through adding more provision of tourism services. Cultural and historical places

should be prevented through adequate measures so that people can find more opportunities to visit different Indian destinations. Along with this, range of different facilities shall also be added in the service provision.

6. Tour Guide suggests that local people should participate more in enhancing value of cultural and heritage tourism. This can also attract visitors towards urban and rural tourism. Participation of local people can depict the consideration to satisfy the visitors through delegating different types of knowledge.
7. Tour operator recommends that word of mouth publicity can be facilitated when accurate and right information is being given to the tourists about different tourism aspects. Further, tourists must also be stern in abiding all the laws that are being developed for the purpose of protecting diverse destinations of India.
8. Indian residents suggest that the local citizens should emphasize more on environmental balance so that green efforts can be enhanced. In this respect, they are recommended that they should implement steps to protect the environment through protecting the greenery of the state. This will also reduce the level of deforestation in the country.

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APPENDICES

Survey Questions

This is Shashikanth Reddy Kotha, the master's student in the Strategic Tourism Management Program. I have made survey form of my Diploma paper and it would be highly appreciable if you take active part in this survey. It's my guarantee that your data will be kept confidential and it will only be used for academic purpose. In case if you have any type of query then feel free to approach author of this work.

shashikanth49reddy@gmail.com

QUESTIONNAIRE (Indian Residents)

1. **Age:**
 2. **Sex**
 - Male
 - Female
 3. **Education**
 - Senior Secondary
 - Masters
 - Bachelors
 - Phd Level
 - Other (Please specify)
 4. **Which state do you belong**
-
5. **Average family income**
 - Upto Rs. 15,000
 - Rs 15,000-35,000
 - Rs 35,000- 55,000
 - Above Rs 55,000
 6. **Do you know what ecotourism is?**
 - Yes
 - No
 7. **Have you visited any ecotourism destination in India?**
 - Yes
 - No
 8. **What type of ecotourism activities are you aware about?**
 - Animal Safari
 - Hiking trails
 - Trekking
 - White water rafting
 9. **What type of ecotourism place do you prefer to visit?**
 - Natural parks
 - Wildlife sanctuaries
 - Biosphere reserve
 - Tiger reserve

- Other (Please specify)
- 10. What factors do you consider at the time of visiting any ecotourism site?**
- Infrastructure
 - Food and accommodation
 - Support service like tour operator
 - Attitude of local
 - All of the above
- 11. In your view what are the most popular ecotourism destinations in India?**
- Kerala (Peppara wildlife sanctuary, Eravikulam National Park.)
 - Karnataka (eco garden Gulbarga, Bandipur National Park)
 - Goa (Cotigao Wildlife Sanctuary, Bogmalo Beach)
 - Andhra Pradesh (Nagarjunsagar-Srisailam Tiger Reserve, Kambalakonda Wildlife Sanctuary)
- 12. In your view does ecotourism provides income to local residents?**
- Yes
 - No
- 13. Which mode provides you most relevant information on ecotourism?**
- Tour operators
 - District promotional councils
 - Information brochure
 - Websites
 - Others
- 14. What are the expectation of local residents from government and private players from point view of ecotourism?**
- Promoting ecotourism destinations worldwide
 - Development of infrastructure
 - More employment opportunities to locals
 - Other
- 15. In your view what are the key benefits associated with ecotourism in India?**
- Allows you to know about the local community and culture
 - Enhances awareness level to protect nature
 - Enhances knowledge level
 - Additional Income for local
 - Other
- 16. In your view the existing practices of ecotourism respects local culture?**
- Yes
 - No
- 17. In your view does ecotourism has enhanced the living standard of local communities?**
- Yes
 - No
 - Can't say
- 18. What are the measures that can be taken to encourage participation of community in ecotourism promotion?**
- Highlighting benefits of ecotourism

- Providing employment opportunities
- Delivering more education and knowledge
- Other

19. In near future would you prefer to visit more ecotourism destinations in India and recommending the same to others?

- Yes
- No

20. In your view what are the factors that drive you towards ecotourism?

- Natural beauty
- Knowledge about different culture
- Safeguarding environment
- Other

21. How often do you recommend ecotourism to others?

- Mostly
- Sometime
- Every time

22. Does development of ecotourism concept provides employment opportunities to local residents?

- Yes
- No

23. In your view what improvement is needed in the ecotourism destinations within India?

?

TRANSCRIPTS OF INTERVIEW WITH GUIDES

1. Interviewee: Karan Bhandari

Interviewer: Shashikanth Reddy Kotha

Mode of interview: Skype

Date: 30/10/2017

Duration: 30 Minutes

What are your key responsibilities in ecotourism promotion?

Interviewee: According to my views, there are several roles and responsibilities of tour guide in promoting the concept of eco-tourism. I believe that a guide is responsible to provide education to individuals in terms of protecting the environment in the best possible manner. At the time of offering tourism related services, it is the responsibility of guide to spread environmental education among travellers and tourists and this will results in promotion of ecotourism. On the other side of this, I believe that respecting local culture and managing tourism related activities are the other key responsibilities of the tour guides. The guides need to understand their role in promotion and growth of the concept of ecotourism. In addition to this, these individuals are also required seek for ways and strategies through which can support in lowering down the negative impact of tourism activities on environment and local communities.

Do you think present demand for ecotourism destinations has increased in past three years?

Interviewee: I have observed that over the past few years, the travellers and tourist have become more conscious towards protection of local communities, culture and environment. In addition to this, the demand for ecotourism destination has grown really well specially in context of the domestic tourists. The Indian residents are now asking the guides to make them aware about different ecotourism destinations in India and they also encourage us to conduct ecotourism tours. It can be also expressed that the growing demand of ecotourism among the domestic tourists is very good news for the entire travel and tourism industry. On the other side of this, the demand ecotourism related products, services and tours have also increased among the international tourists visiting India. I think such kind of demand will contribute a lot to the development of ecotourism concept within the country. At the same time, it will play critical role in increasing the awareness of ecotourism among other travelers and tourists in India.

How outbound tour operators are contributing in development of ecotourism in India?

Interviewee: In my view, the outbound tour operators are playing a critical role in the growth and development of the ecotourism concept in the country. It can be expressed that here, the outbound tour operators are selling different products and services of ecotourism through a brand name and this results in creating strong demand among travellers and tourists. Selling products and services under brand name indicates high quality and thus, helps in increasing the sale of these products and services. On the other hand, the outbound tour operators are also contributing in the development of ecotourism through promoting the concept with catalogues. Nowadays, different types of videos tapes and films on the concept of ecotourism are also developed by these outbound tour operators and this supports in creating awareness among domestic and international travellers about the concept of ecotourism.

In your view what are the benefits of ecotourism that builds positive perception of local community?

Interviewee: I am working as a tour guide from the past 5 years and based on my overall experience, I can say that ecotourism is not at all about protecting the environment but the concept is also beneficial for the people living in local community. The rationale behind this is that the concept encourages participation of local communities in the development of action plans and strategies. The result of this is that high degree of satisfaction is developed among these individuals. On the other hand, conservation of natural resources and rising environment awareness are the other benefits associated with ecotourism. These benefits can directly support in enhancing the lives of people living in local communities in the best possible manner.

What kind of support is provided by government to you for satisfying local residents?

Interviewee: I completely agree with the fact that over the past few years, the government of the country and tourism authorities have provided adequate in meeting the needs of local communities living near the ecotourism destination. You know, the biggest aid which we tour operators receive from government is in the form of the finance. The government always initiate in offering financial support to the local residents which further supports in enhancing their overall standard of living. However, the government does not provide direct financial support to the local residents and the entire procedure is carried out through intermediaries such as tour operators and guides. Promoting ecotourism services and building laws, regulations are some other form of support which is provided by the government to guides and operators in terms of satisfying the needs and demand of local residents.

What type of ecotourism activities do local residents prefer to access the most?

Interviewee: According to my viewpoint, campaign and guide service can be termed two major ecotourism activities which are preferred by the local residents. I am tour guide and usually people approach me and ask about different ecotourism places in India. In addition to this, they also ask whether I can provide them with guide services for ecotourism destinations or not. On the other side of this, the Indian residents also demands for campaign related activities in the ecotourism destinations in the country. However, it can be critically argued that activities such as boating are less preferred by the domestic travellers and tourists.

Which service do the local residents prefer to access the most in ecotourism?

Interviewee: Over the past few years, the demand of ecotourism within the country has grown with a satisfactory pace. Based on my overall experience as a guide, I can say that there are various services which are demanded by the local residents with regards to ecotourism. For example, the local travellers and tourists seeks for services such as tour guide who can access the travellers to ecotourism destination and can support in getting access to facilities such as food and accommodation. The services of tour guide are also used with an objective to gain knowledge and understanding about the ecotourism destination. On the other hand, services such as a visit to nature based sites are also in high demand among the local travellers and tourists. It is very good news for the entire travel and tourism industry of India that the demand of responsible tourism is increasing. I believe that the profit margin in ecotourism is very less but the concept is good for long term sustainability of local communities and environment.

What type of demand you have witnessed from local residents in relation with ecotourism services?

Interviewee: There was a time when the demand of such services was quite low and there were only few residents who used to ask for ecotourism related services. However, the demand has grown significantly over the past few years. I believe that at present the demand of such services is high in the marketplace as tourist are getting aware of the fact that it is their responsibility to take care of environment and local community. On the other hand, there are still many areas which needs to be improved to make the concept and ecotourism services popular as per the desired extent. For example, more efforts in areas such as marketing and promotion are required as it will help in creating more awareness and demand among different travellers and tourists. In my views, social media can be termed as a very potential platform for marketing the destinations, services and

products linked with ecotourism. Other than this, combined efforts of all the stakeholders and active participation from all is also needed to make the concept more popular.

What is the attitude of locals when they look foreigners?

Interviewee: The attitude of local people can be termed as very supportive and helpful when they look at foreigners. These individuals always look forward to provide support and assistance to foreigners in terms of making them aware about local tradition and culture. In addition to this, people are also amazed by the way these foreigners are dressed and live their life. However, the issues mostly arise when these local residents are not able to communicate their ideas because of language barriers. Most of the times we mediator (tour guides) play the role of intermediary between local people and foreigners.

From point view of local communities is ecotourism sites are the most popular destinations in India?

Interviewee: I don't think that local communities see ecotourism sites as the most popular destination in the country. Most of the place lacks facilities linked with infrastructure, food, accommodation and this restricts the growing popularity of these destinations. Still many developments are required in these places or sites to make these sites more popular in the country. I believe that participation from local communities should be also encouraged to enhance the overall popularity level of the ecotourism destinations in India.

What is the difference in perception of local residents when they view international and domestic tourists?

Interviewee: The difference in perception of local residents when they view international and domestic tourists is very wide. It can be stated that the people in local community are more interested in dealing with international tourists as compared to the local ones. Furthermore, an aggressive approach is adapted by these local residents to sell the products and services to the international tourists. I must say that as compared to the domestic tourists, the local residents are more inclined towards international tourists.

What are your recommendations with regard to development of ecotourism?

Interviewee: The concept of ecotourism is growing with a satisfactory rate but there are still certain areas where the development needs to be done. I recommend that strict action plans and strategies needs to be formulated and implemented to protect the resources in the best possible manner. In addition to this, I suggest that more efforts should be placed to develop education among travellers and tourists in terms of how they can promote responsible tourism.

2. Interviewee: Rajshekhar Reddy

Interviewer: Shashikanth Reddy Kotha

Mode of interview: Skype

Date: 31/10/2017

Duration: 40 Minutes

What are your key responsibilities in ecotourism promotion?

Interviewee: Well, the ecotourism concept is still new in the country and it is required by the tour guides to promote the same. I think that as a tour guide, I am responsible to respect local culture and offer travellers the education linked with environment protection.

Do you think present demand for ecotourism destinations has increased in past three years?

Interviewee: As compared to the international tourists, the demand of ecotourism destinations has increased more among domestic travellers and tourists. It can be expressed that nowadays, the travellers especially youngsters are focusing on responsible tourism and this is good for the entire industry. However, the demand of Indian ecotourism destination among international travellers is relatively less and the international tourists are more interested in visiting other international ecotourism destinations around the world.

How outbound tour operators are contributing in development of ecotourism in India?

Interviewee: The role played by outbound tour operators can be termed as critical in terms of carrying out the development of ecotourism in the country. I think that there are certain strategies which these tour operators can adapt to carry out more aggressive marketing and promotion of ecotourism destinations in the country. For instance, Indian ecotourism destinations can be promoted with the help of catalogues which can be distributed among different travellers and tourists. On the other side of this, internet can be also used by these outbound tour operators to carry out marketing and promotion of ecotourism destinations within the country. I think internet is beneficial as it is cost effective and will support in generating more demand among travellers.

In your view what are the benefits of ecotourism that builds positive perception of local community?

Interviewee: I believe that the concept of responsible tourism cannot be made successfully until and unless adequate and support is achieved from the local community. Yes, Of course there are certain benefits of ecotourism which builds positive perception of local community. For example, encouraging more and more participation from the people living in local community can change the

existing perception level of individuals. On the other side of this, creating awareness with respect to environmental protection and conservation of natural resources is another strategy which can be employed to build positive perception of local community.

What kind of support is provided by government to you for satisfying local residents?

Interviewee: Nowadays, the government has become very strict and serious about protecting the environment and natural resources. Furthermore, the government officials and tourism authorities now carries out discussion and meetings with the tour guides and operators to develop strategies how we can satisfy the needs and requirements of the best possible manner. The support from government is provided in the form of financial aid and development of strict regulations and laws. In addition to this, the government is also taking active participation in promotion of ecotourism services within the country.

What type of ecotourism activities do local residents prefer to access the most?

Interviewee: Well, there is no specific ecotourism activity which is commonly preferred by the domestic travellers and tourists. Actually, the thing is that the demand of each tourist differs from others and we are required to provide services according to those demands. However, I can say that guide services are mostly demanded by the domestic travellers.

Which service do the local residents prefer to access the most in ecotourism?

Interviewee: The concept of ecotourism is not so popular in the country and thus, guide at tour is the most common the service which is preferred by the local residents. The responsibility of guide is to provide adequate knowledge to the tourists about the destination along with local traditional and culture of that ecotourism destination. Even, the domestic travellers approach to me and ask me to arrange their visit to nature based sites.

What type of demand you have witnessed from local residents in relation with ecotourism services?

Interviewee: In my opinion, the demand of ecotourism among local residents is moderate and the reason for this is lack of adequate marketing and promotion activities. I believe that there are many sites which can be transformed into ecotourism destination with the combined efforts of all stakeholders. I strongly agree that the country has very potential opportunity to become the best ecotourism destination in the world and in the next 5 years, the demand can be converted from medium to high.

What is the attitude of locals when they look foreigners?

Interviewee: When the local residents within ecotourism destination see foreigner, the people are impressed by their living styles. Apart from this, the residents also look forward to learn new things and concepts from these foreign visitors.

From point view of local communities is ecotourism sites are the most popular destinations in India?

Interviewee: Yes, over the past few years, the ecotourism sites in the country have gained high popularity. This kind of awareness can be termed as very effective for the future growth of the industry along with protecting the environment in the best possible manner. However, I must argued that lots of improvements are still required to enhance the popularity level of these destinations among domestic and international travellers.

What is the difference in perception of local residents when they view international and domestic tourists?

Interviewee: The perception of local residents completely gets changed when they see international tourists. Furthermore, international tourists are also considered as more potential customers by the local residents as compared with the domestic tourists.

What are your recommendations with regard to development of ecotourism?

Interviewee: I my view the recommendation would be to increase the marketing and promotion activities with respects to the ecotourism destination. Furthermore, the marketing activities should be carried out strongly at both international and domestic level to attract more travellers and make the concept successful.

3. Interviewee: Rajesh Verma

Interviewer: Shashikanth Reddy Kotha

Mode of interview: Skype

Date: 31/10/2017

Duration: 25 Minutes

What are your key responsibilities in ecotourism promotion?

Interviewee: In terms of my responsibilities to promote ecotourism, it can be stated that I can contribute by managing the tourism related activities in sustainable manner. The tour guides can also create awareness among the tourists with regards to respecting local culture and at the same time we can support park and protected areas to promote ecotourism.

Do you think present demand for ecotourism destinations has increased in past three years?

Interviewee: In the past three years there has been a little bit increase in the demand of ecotourism destination with the country. However, you must note that the demand is still not up to the desired or expected level and high efforts are still required in this area of the travel and tourism sector. I think the major contribution in this increasing demand is from the domestic tourists of India.

How outbound tour operators are contributing in development of ecotourism in India?

Interviewee: The development of ecotourism has now been the core responsibility of the outbound tour operators. These operators can make use of aggressive strategies to sell ecotourism products through strong brand name and this will attract tourist from different places of the world. The operators are also responsible to use internet and generate the demand of ecotourism sites within the country. Here, techniques such as email and social media marketing can be employed to carry out cost effective marketing of different ecotourism sites in the country.

In your view what are the benefits of ecotourism that builds positive perception of local community?

Interviewee: As per my understanding conservation of natural resources and community participation can be termed as the two most important benefits which can support in building the positive perception of local communities. It can be stated that the mentioned above two strategies will help in developing strong sense of satisfaction among the people living in local communities and at the same time, it will encourage them to give their best in the development and growth of ecotourism destination.

What kind of support is provided by government to you for satisfying local residents?

Interviewee: The support from government to tour guide still lacks in terms of satisfying the local residents needs and demand. I think the government is more inclined towards supporting the needs of local residents directly instead of using any middle man. However, a little bit support is provided by government in the form of developing laws and promoting the services linked with ecotourism.

What type of ecotourism activities do local residents prefer to access the most?

Interviewee: Campaign and guide service can be termed as the two major and most common type of ecotourism activities which local or domestic travellers prefer. The queries and concern of tourists are generally related to services such as guide and camping. Furthermore, activities such boating is rarely preferred and used by the local tourists.

Which service do the local residents prefer to access the most in ecotourism?

Interviewee: The common services which are being preferred by local resident are related to their visit to nature based sites and tour guide. Furthermore, the tour guide supports residents in making them aware about the destination and the culture of people living out there. Visit to nature based sites are mostly preferred to stay connect with nature, wildlife and gain lasting experience.

What type of demand you have witnessed from local residents in relation with ecotourism services?

Interviewee: I believe that the local residents have witnessed high demand over the past few years with respect to the ecotourism services. Nowadays, people are getting more aware of the fact that the tourism related activities and operations have emerged as the biggest threat to the environment and people living in local communities. Thus, the domestic travellers are now looking forward to responsible tourism so that they can protect the nature and lives of local people in the best possible manner.

What is the attitude of locals when they look foreigners?

Interviewee: The local people behave in a very professional manner when they look at foreigners. These people always look forward to provide information about local culture and tradition to these foreign visitors.

From point view of local communities is ecotourism sites are the most popular destinations in India?

Interviewee: The local residents believe that ecotourism sites are getting more and more popular along with the passage of time. The rationale behind this is that they are witnessing increasing number of international and domestic tourists within these sites. I can say that the popularity of

ecotourism sites have also supported the local communities in enhancing their income level along with living standards.

What is the difference in perception of local residents when they view international and domestic tourists?

Interviewee: I think that the local residents are more interested in dealing with domestic tourists as compared to the international tourists. The key reason here is that language barriers restricts these individuals to deal with international tourists. Furthermore, the local residents also face hesitation in communicating with international tourists and making them aware about local products and services.

What are your recommendations with regard to development of ecotourism?

Interviewee: Firstly I would recommend that effective action plans and strategies are required to be developed by tourism authority and government to promote the concept of ecotourism. In addition to this, it is also suggested that more efforts needs to be placed on marketing of ecotourism destinations within India. Third and last recommendation is that more awareness should be created among travel and tourists with regards to the fact that it is their duty to protect the environment and lives of people living in local communities.

TRANSCRIPT OF INTERVIEWS WITH THREE TOUR OPERATORS

Data has been taken from the three tour operators through email with the motive to gain more insights about ecotourism. Further, the main aim behind undertaking data from the tour operators is to know what are the real preferences of local residents with respect to ecotourism and through this it is possible to know the resident attitude and preferences towards ecotourism which is the main aim of this research.

Name and Agency

Tour operator 1:

Name: Sandeep Menaria

Agency: Jai Maruthi Holidays and Travels in Alappuzha

Key responsibilities in ecotourism promotion

On obtaining information from the tour operator through email individual replied that environment education along with managing tourism related activities in a sustainable way is their main responsibility. Further, they prefer to share information linked with environment protection and sharing other form of useful insights through which it is possible to protect surroundings in every possible manner.

Demand for ecotourism

Considering the view of tour operator it has been found that demand for ecotourism in past 3 years has raised from the domestic tourism where tour operator is in favor of this fact. Tour operator replied that Indian residents prefer to visit different ecotourism sites on continuous basis and demand regarding these types of sites is quite high from their side.

Contribution of outbound tour operators

Information obtained from different tour operators has supported in knowing that contribution of tour operators is maximum. Further, the tour operator replied that promotion through catalogue is one of the main contribution in development of ecotourism within India where promotional catalogues are designed in which images and attributes of ecotourism sites are displayed. Through this it has become to develop more awareness in the market linked with the concept of ecotourism.

Benefits of ecotourism

As per view of tour operator the most significant benefit of ecotourism that builds positive perception of the local community is raising environmental awareness and the conservation of the natural resources that are getting extinct. Further, local residents have started to know more about

the importance of conserving natural resources and they are encouraging other residents so as to take part in the concept of promoting ecotourism.

Support provided by government

The most effective support provided by the government to the tour operator is development of laws and regulations where laws are linked with the development of infrastructure, maintenance of ecotourism site etc. Apart from this financial assistance is also provided where proper funds have been allocated for the maintenance of the site and this is quite supportive for the tour operators.

Preference of ecotourism activities

The most preferred ecotourism activity that local residents prefer is guide service and camping. Further, the tour operator replied that guide service is one of the most important activity in case if the tourist is not aware about the ecotourism place. Through assistance of guide it becomes easy for the local resident to visit different ecotourism place such as Goa, Karnataka, etc and it is possible for them to gain knowledge about that places in proper manner.

Preference regarding ecotourism services

Data obtained from the tour operator has supported in knowing that the most preferable service is visit to nature based sites that local residents prefer to access the most. Further, it has been found that tourists prefer to visit different sites that promotes and in turn they are able to gain knowledge regarding the same in best possible manner.

Demand from local residents

Tour operator has witnessed moderate demand from the local residents in relation with the ecotourism services. Further, on continuous basis they prefer to visit different sites that provide them remarkable experience in every possible manner.

Attitude of locals when they look foreigners

Tour operator replied that local residents feel excited in case if they look any international tourist. The reason behind the same is that it plays most crucial role in developing the tourism industry of India and in turn more and more people knows about the concept of ecotourism and the most popular nature based sites located in India.

Ecotourism sites are the most popular destinations in India

Considering the view of tour operator it has been identified that ecotourism sites that are based in India are the most popular destinations that tour operators have analyzed through the attitude of local residents. Further, majority of the Indian residents focuses on visiting nature based sites as

compared with the other destinations. So, through this information it can be said that preference in relation with visit to ecotourism destination is high

Difference in perception of local residents when they view international and domestic tourists

Tour operator replied that local residents perceive domestic and international travelers differently. In case if they view any domestic traveler then in such case they are little bit more happy as ecotourism destinations situated in India are getting popular at global level. Further, it has been found that ecotourism places such as Goa, Karnataka are getting popular at international level as foreign tourists are visit different nature based places, wildlife sanctuaries etc.

Recommendation

Tour operator replied that in order to develop the concept of ecotourism in better manner it is necessary to involve the local residents like more awareness is needed so that they may take initiative on their own for protecting the natural environment, species and other form of areas that are covered under ecotourism.

Tour operator 2:

Name: Gautam Singh

Agency: Kerala Holidays Pvt. Ltd. In Kochi

Key responsibilities in ecotourism promotion

On obtaining response of Tour operator it has been found that operator is in favor of respecting local culture where tour operator also contributes in promoting different type of culture so that large number of local residents along with different type of tourists can easily know about it.

Demand for ecotourism

Tour operator replied that demand from international tourist is also up to the mark in relation with the ecotourism sites like they prefer to visit Goa, Karnataka, Kerala and other type of destinations. So, with the help of this it can be concluded that demand for ecotourism at local level is quite high and as compared with the past this demand has increased due to rising awareness.

Contribution of outbound tour operators

Tour operator replied that the most significant contribution is developing film and video tapes along with making use of internet with the motive to develop awareness in the market. Through these modes it has quite easy to share information linked with ecotourism with the local residents along with the international tourists also.

Benefits of ecotourism

The data obtained from the tour operator has supported in knowing that community participation along with the nature education is the most significant benefit of ecotourism as per the response of the tour operator. Further, tour operator replied that every local resident living in India is involved in the promotion of ecotourism concept and in turn it has brought favorable results for the entire nation.

Support provided by the government

Considering the view of tour operator it has been found that the best possible support provided by the government involves financial, building laws and promotion of ecotourism services. Further, through this kind of support tour operators are able to work efficiently like through promotion of ecotourism services their profit margin has increased and they have to apply lesser efforts in attracting tourists.

Preference of ecotourism activities

Camping is one of the most significant activity that tourists prefer to access the most as per the perception of the tour operator. Further, they replied that in India many places are present where camping is possible like Goa, Kerala etc and it provides unique experience to the tourists. Due to this basic reason preference of this activity is quite high

Preference of ecotourism service

As per view of tour operator guide at tour is the main service that tour operator prefer to access. Further, mostly every tourist prefers to take personal guide as they are knowledgeable and supports them to visit different sites that promote nature.

Demand from local residents

Tour operator has witnessed medium demand from local residents in relation with the ecotourism services and replied that still scope of improvement is present where awareness is required so that local residents can participate more in relation with the ecotourism activities.

Attitude of locals

Tour operator replied that when local residents look foreigners then they are quite excited as the ecotourism destinations of India are promoted at international level. Further, the local residents prefer to interact with the foreigners and share knowledge regarding different culture and areas.

Ecotourism sites are the most popular destinations

Response of tour operator has supported in knowing that ecotourism sites that are located in India are considered to be the most popular destinations in India. Further, they are highly preferred to be visited as compared with other sites.

Difference in perception of local residents

Local residents prefer to entertain foreign residents as they are not at all aware about the ecotourism concept and in case when local residents view domestic tourists then they do not prefer to proper support as they are based in India only. So, with the help of this it can be concluded that international tourists are perceived more positively as compared with domestic tourists.

Recommendations

For the development of ecotourism concept training of guides is needed as at present they are not having proper knowledge and skills so that they can entertain different type of tourists. So, there is a need to work on this area.

Tour operator 3:

Name: Prakash Kuttu

Agency: Adventure Goa

Key responsibilities

On obtaining data from the tour operator it has been found that the main responsibility in ecotourism promotion lies in managing tourism related activities in a sustainable way and supporting park and protected areas. Further, tour operator tries to highlight ecotourism from sustainable point of view and they highlight the unique attributes of the natural parks that are situated in India.

Demand for ecotourism

Considering the viewpoint of tour operator the demand for ecotourism has increased with the help of domestic traveler in the past 3 years. Further, on continuous basis Indian tourists prefer to visit different nature based sites and they recommend it to other also.

Contribution of outbound tourists

The main contribution of the outbound tour operator is promotion with the help of catalogue where they are providing proper information regarding ecotourism site through this mode.

Benefits of ecotourism

As per the response of tour operator the most significant benefit of ecotourism is raising environmental awareness and conservation of natural resource. With the rising environmental

awareness more people living in India have started to take initiative to protect environment along with the surroundings.

Type of government support

Considering the viewpoint of tour operator it has been found that government provides every type of assistance that involves financial, promotion of ecotourism services, development of laws and regulations for the development of this concept. So, this type of government support is quite fruitful in working towards favor of ecotourism.

Preference of ecotourism activities

The main activity that local residents prefer to access the most is guide service and camping. Demand for both these activities is high and they play most significant role in delivering remarkable experience to the tourists in every possible manner.

Preference of ecotourism service

As per view of tour operator the most common service accessed by the local resident is visit to nature based site where they search for different ecotourism sites located in India and they plan their tour accordingly.

Type of demand witnessed

High demand has been witnessed especially in the past three years where Indian residents prefer to visit different ecotourism destinations in continuous basis. Apart from this, they are easily attracted towards new and new sites that promote nature.

Attitude of local

On obtaining response of tour operator it has been found that attitude of local people in India is positive when they view foreigners. Further, they consider it as positive aspect in the development of ecotourism concept. Through this it is viewed that demand for ecotourism destinations that are located in India is increasing at faster pace.

Ecotourism sites are the most popular destinations in India

As per the response of the tour operator in the present era ecotourism sites are the most popular destinations in India and its popularity within India is quite high. Local residents know about different ecotourism places and their preference to visit different sites is quite high

Difference in perception of local residents

As per the view of tour operator the perception of local residents is positive in both the cases when they view domestic and international tourists. It directly allows them in knowing that concept of ecotourism is growing and large amount of people are knowing about it

Recommendation

As per the recommendation of tour operator proper maintenance is required in relation with the ecotourism destinations where they need to be properly maintained as it is one of the most significant factor on which demand depends.

Recommendations of Indian residents improvement is needed in the ecotourism destinations in India.

227 responses

Yes (5)

Marketing and promotion (4)

Safety and security (3)

Marketing (3)

Destination marketing (3)

clean and green (2)

Delhi (2)

To aware the people about ecotourism, importance and beauty of nature (2)

Food and accommodation (2)

Development of policies (2)

Maintenance of destination (2)

Marketing of destinations (2)

Promotion of destinations (2)

Promotion of destination (2)

Safety of tourists (2)

Transportation (2)

Development

Employment for the youngsters

Save forests

Employment

I am expecting from Government plz save the nature, wild life and protect the parks etc.....

1.providing employment opportunities 2.Take care of parks

Provide more information about destinations and improve the methods to preserve existing natural resources thus enhance eco tourism

More accommodation facilities

More advertising

Hkjfyujcfkoiryhfkjfcjkiufb

So many are there. . Government have to involve and take responsibility to do improvement and save our nature and save earth

Educate people about eco tourism

The tour operators should be more alert in providing the secured trekking and specially white water rafting

Nature beauty

Educate the people how important is an environment and social climate, mainly raising awareness to save the ecosystem with local guide without disturbing the life cycle of nature.

Lack of promotion and good management

Should not construct any buildings in surrounding areas of forests, if constructions are made,the nature will get spoiled or polluted.so we should protect natural environment.

As everyone is responsible for their surrounding nature people should not be allowed to thought their garbage in the ecotourism sports and people should not plough the plants as it results in environment imbalance

more publicity and more conservation methods to protect nature

Dnt know

Some changes

More initiatives taken by government

Respect

Marketing should be improved

Much more

We want to clean everywhere

Preserve the Natural beauty and follow the minimum discipline when we visit those places to keep clean.

The government need to provide more support and aid to the locals.

Government is supporting

.....

Many environmentalists have argued for a global standard of accreditation, differentiating ecotourism companies based on their level of environmental commitment, creating a standard to follow. A national or international regulatory board would enforce accreditation procedures, with representation from various groups including governments, hotels, tour operators, travel agents, guides, airlines, local authorities, conservation organizations, and non-governmental organizations. The decisions of the board would be sanctioned by governments, so that non-compliant companies would be legally required to disassociate themselves from the use of the ecotourism brand.

Kerala

I don't know

Government have need to improve the infrastructure.

Health , knowledge, professional life should improve

Educate society about the nature

Best guides to be appointed be govt and also need to arrange basic amenities for tourist who visit the places and also the saying aatidi devo bava need to totally implemented by locals in these places

To get develop all the sides

Traditional

Promote culture environment and natural beauty of the earth

Many improvements depending on the place we choose, different places need different types of improvements cannot judge until and unless we visit

More Plantation

Much improvement Require To Develop Ecotourism Awareness to Public about it to safeguard Natural resource And Beauty Environmental

Na

Awareness of ecotourism to all people

Safeguarding the environment at a wider range

More publicity

More promotion of ecotourism and adding more activities in it.

Greenery

You need to change few questions.

Awareness in public about ecotourism. Entertainment to public in ecotourism. Best transport to ecotourism. Quality food has to provide in ecotourism.

Don't know about ecotourism

more marketing and promotion needs to be done

More information should be provided to the tourists about the benefits of ecotourism through medium like websites, blogs, tv and newspaper advertisements

Ecotourism can be improved through by imparting knowledge to the tourist about how they can protect the environment without disturbing the ecological balance.

Good accommodation facilities should be provided near ecotourism destination for driving more tourists in future.

Sustainable development

More advertising and proper guidance makes ecotourism much better

Ecotourism destinations should be advertised to reach country wide .and the specialties of each ecotourism destinations should be highlighted and publicly informed.

Good transportation facilities and services

Stop deforestation reduce global warming

govt need to maintain good roads to eco tourism sites

safe

More awareness

Increasing promotional activities of ecotourism destination

Everything we have now has to improved

Infrastructure

Infrastructure

Maintenance of every destination

Infrastructure development

Training to tour operators

Marketing of destination

Development of destination

Development of Infrastructure

Development of effective policies and procedures

More popularity

Ecotourism marketing

Destination Maintenance

Maintenance of Destination

Promotion

Tour operation training

marketing of destination

infrastructure development

developing facilities for food and accommodations

Other (103)