



Subject	Environmental Sciences
Paper Title	Environmental Studies
Course Name	Environmental Studies-I
Course Code	UESTS 104
Module/Unit No	Biodiversity and its Conservation; Unit-II (2.5)
Title	ECOTOURISM
Affiliated Institution: GDC Kishtwar	University of Jammu
Content writer Name: Dr. Sehrish Gazal Designation: Assistant Professor Email: sehrishgazal@gmail.com	Reviewer Name: Designation:

TABLE OF CONTENTS	
S.NO	TOPICS
1.1	LEARNING OUTCOMES
1.2	HISTORICAL BACKGROUND
1.3	TYPES OF TOURISM
1.4	DEFINITION OF ECO-TOURISM
1.5	CONCEPT OF ECOTOURISM
1.6	BASIC PRINCIPLES OF ECOTOURISM
1.7	ADVANTAGES OF ECO-TOURISM
1.8	NEGATIVE IMPACTS OF ECOTOURISM
1.9	ECOTOURISM ACTIVITIES
1.10	SUMMARY
1.11	GLOSSARY
1.12	ASSESSMENTS-SHORT QUESTIONS
1.13	REFERENCES

1.1 LEARNING OUTCOMES

Students will be able to

- ✓ Find out the evolution of the term “ Ecotourism”
- ✓ Explain the objectives and principle of ecotourism
- ✓ Understand the significance of ecotourism
- ✓ Know different types of eco-tourists
- ✓ Find out the positive and negative impacts of ecotourism activities

1.2 HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

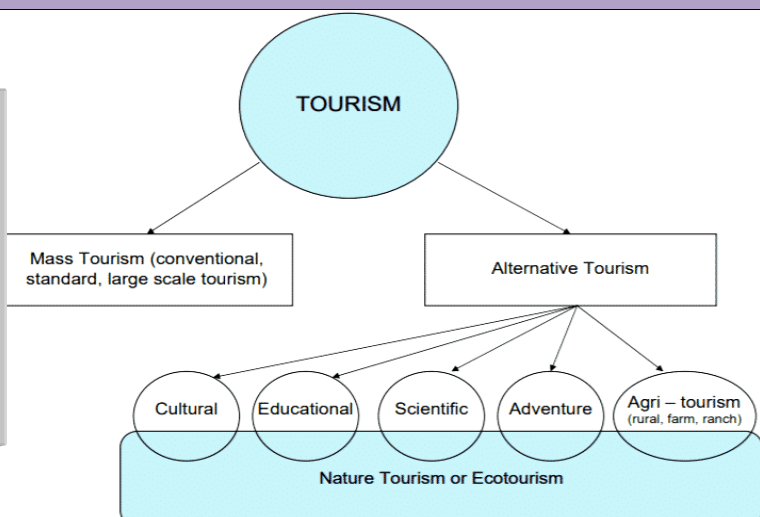
Tourism is one of the most important ways through which potential of various land use patterns can be tapped. Tourism is a collection of activities, services and industries that delivers a travel experience including transportation, accommodation, eating and drinking establishments, and other hospitality services provided for individuals travelling away from home. The World Tourism Organization (WTO) defines tourism as all travel that includes a stay of at least one night, but less than one year away from home.

According to WTO tourism is currently world's largest industry with annual revenues of over three trillion dollars. Despite tourism's economic benefits especially in parts of the developing world, where it is the only source of foreign exchange, the tourism industry can have so many negative impacts on the local ecological, social, and cultural climates of the area. In many developing countries even the financial success of tourism is often overshadowed by effects of tourism on local economy caused due to over exploitation of local natural resources. Moreover, many forms of tourism fail to employ local people and thus contributing little to the local economy. The installation of modern tourist related facilities and infra-structure has led to the aesthetic degradation of the landscape in many areas.

Due to these drawbacks of mass tourism and realizing the uncommon catastrophe that modern tourism generates, the concept of soft tourism or ecotourism was developed in the 1980's with the purpose of controlling tourism and its adverse effects on natural areas. Eco-tourism has become a vital part of sustainable community development and at present is the fastest growing sector of the tourism industry. Though there is a variety of definitions used to describe eco-tourism. In general, they all depict eco-tourism as being in harmony with nature and the opposite of mass tourism. Eco-tourism can also be referred to as nature tourism, alternative tourism, cultural tourism, soft tourism, green tourism, adventure tourism or responsible tourism. Weaver (1998) described eco-tourism as a subset of alternative tourism.

1.3 TYPES OF TOURISM

The term Ecotourism is **Biocentric** (and can even benefit the environment) **whereas**, Mass tourism is **Homocentric**



Fennell (2002) considers that ecotourism exists within the broader classification of tourism types which, at an initial level, can be divided into the following types:

1. Mass Tourism
2. Alternative Tourism

1.4 DEFINITION OF ECO-TOURISM

The term “ecotourism” was introduced into the English literature by Romeril in the mid 1985 and ever since it has occupied a prominent position within the field of tourism studies.

World Conservation Union’s (IUCN) Commission on National Parks and Protected Areas (CNPPA) defines ecotourism as: “Environmentally responsible travel to natural areas, in order to enjoy and appreciate nature that promotes conservation, have a low visitor impact and provide for beneficially active socio- economic involvement of local people.”

The International Ecotourism Society, 2015 (TIES) defines ecotourism as, “responsible travel to natural areas that conserves the environment and improves the well-being of the local people.”

World Tourism Organization (WTO), defines ecotourism as “tourism that involves travelling to relatively undisturbed natural areas with the specified object of studying, admiring and enjoying the scenery and its wild plants and animals as well as any cultural aspects past or the present, found in these areas”

According to the UNEP, eco-tourism involves travelling to relatively undisturbed or uncontaminated natural areas with the specific objectives of studying, admiring and enjoying the scenery, wild plants and animals as well as the existing cultural aspects (both past as well as present) found in the areas. Ecological tourism implies a scientific, aesthetic, philosophical approach, although the ecological tourists are not required to be professional scientists, artists or philosophers (UNEP, 1992).

From the various definitions given above, it is clear that ecotourism is that tourism which should contribute to the health and quality of natural environment which ecotourists visit and also minimize various negative impacts on the environment.

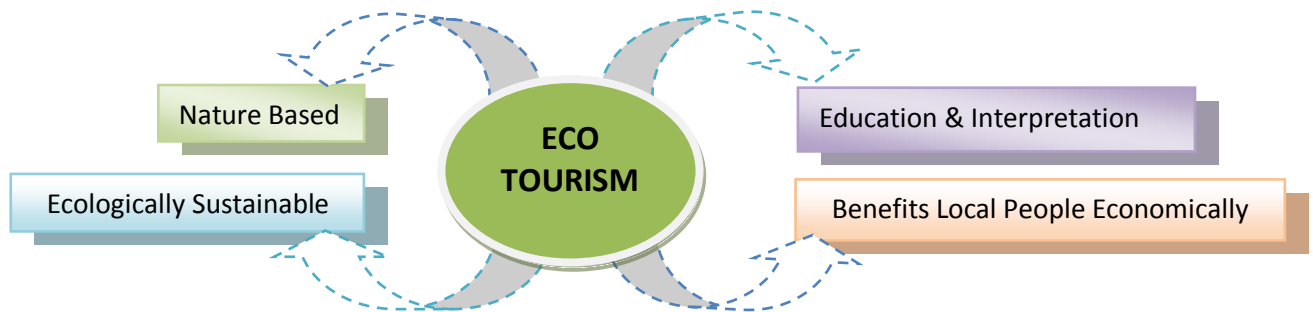
1.5 CONCEPT OF ECO-TOURISM

Ecotourism is a form of tourism that generally involves visiting to fragile, pristine and protected areas. The activities of ecotourism have low negative impact on the ecology and it is often a small scale alternative form of tourism as against mass tourism. As such, the purpose is to provide an interactive environment for both the host and guest to understand each other and the travel to the ecotourism sites can educate the visitors, raise funds and create belongingness for conservation of ecology and ecosystem. Ecotourism typically involves travel to destinations where flora, fauna, and cultural heritage are the primary attractions. It is intended to offer

tourists insights into the impact of human beings on the environment and to foster a greater appreciation of the natural habitats and their relationship.

The fundamental function of eco-tourism is the protection of natural and cultural resources as well as income generation, education, local people participation and capacity building. Such ecotourism is low impact, educational, and directly benefits the local communities.

The concept of eco-tourism can be explained diagrammatically as under:



There are four key characters identified, which are fundamental to ecotourism (Ross and Wall, 1999):

- 1. Nature based activity:** Ecotourism is based on the natural environment with a focus on its biological, physical, and cultural features. The conservation of the natural resource is essential to the planning, development and management of ecotourism.
- 2. Ecological Sustainability:** The very incorporation of 'eco' in its title suggests that ecotourism should be an ecologically responsible form of tourism. Ecological sustainability advocates leaving to future generations, a stock of natural resources, not less than that inherited by the previous generations. This means, preventing irreversible changes to environmental assets, which have no substitute, preventing the loss of the ozone layer, living species and damage to the essential functions of ecosystems.
- 3. Environmentally Educative:** The educative characteristic of ecotourism distinguishes it from other forms of nature-based tourism. Ecotourism normally attracts people, who wish to interact with the environment, in order to develop their knowledge, awareness and appreciation of it. Ecotourism education can influence tourist, community and industry behaviour and assist in the long term sustainability of tourist activity in natural areas.
- 4. Locally beneficial:** Since ecotourism is generally conducted in forests and Protected Areas, the local population of there should be made involved in the planning and implementation of ecotourism activities. Otherwise, without having adequate awareness and co-operation, they may destroy these areas by cutting trees, hunting animals etc. When they are involved in ecotourism activities, they will get employment and income from ecotourism and support the conservation efforts for their existence.

1.6 BASIC PRINCIPLES OF ECOTOURISM

Ecotourism attracts people who wish to interact with the environment and, in varying degrees, develop their knowledge, awareness, and appreciation of it. The basic principle of ecotourism is to unite conservation, communities and sustainable travel. The practice of ecotourism essentially involves the following elements:

1. To provide compatible and sustainable tourism.
2. To adopt low-impact tourism that protects ecological integrity of wilderness areas, secures wildlife values of the destination and its surrounding areas.
3. To preserve local culture, flora and fauna.
4. To highlight the heritage value of the wilderness and protected areas.
5. To build environmental and cultural awareness and respect.
6. To use indigenous, locally produced and ecologically sustainable materials for tourism activities.
7. To impart nature education to different target groups such as children, teachers, bureaucrats, media persons, rural people and politicians who have influence in the policy-making decisions at local, state and national level.

1.3 OBJECTIVES OF ECO-TOURISM

The main objectives of preparing such accounts are as:

- 1) To provide park or sanctuary interpretation facilities to generate conservation awareness among the visitors by discovering wonders of nature and its intricate relationship; and by bringing about change in perception about one's own natural and cultural environment.
- 2) To strengthen the staff and infrastructure for managing the ecotourism and interpretation programmes
- 3) To create employment opportunities for local people to cater to the needs of visitors in raising taxi, hotels, engagement in rest houses, lodges etc.
- 4) To generate sufficient revenue and make the activity of eco tourism self-sustaining as far as possible.
- 5) To involve local people in recycling the revenue from tourism for improvement of resources and facilities in the villages by subsidizing alternate energy devices, improving educational and medical facilities.

1.7 ADVANTAGES OF ECO-TOURISM

The main advantages of departmental accounting may be stated as follows:

- 1) Educates the traveller on the importance of conservation

- 2) Directs revenues to the conservation of natural areas and the management of protected areas
- 3) Brings economic benefits to local communities and directs revenues to local people living adjacent protected areas
- 4) Emphasizes the need for planning and sustainable growth of the tourism industry and seeks to ensure that tourism development does not exceed the social and environmental “Carrying capacity”
- 5) Retains a high percentage of revenues in the host community by stressing the use of locally owned facilities and services
- 6) Increasingly relies on the infrastructure that has been developed sensitively in harmony with the environment – minimizing use of fossil fuels, conserving local plant and wildlife and blending with natural environment

1.8 NEGATIVE IMPACTS OF ECOTOURISM

1. Effects on natural environment which can be divided into five parts – effects on fauna flora pollution, erosion, depletion of natural resources and visual impacts
2. Effects on built environment which can be classified into three main classes- architectural facade, change of land use and burden on infrastructure
3. Impact on tourists, which leads to deterioration in quality of recreation.
4. Impacts on host population, which may lead to reactions, like resistance, retreatism, and boundary maintenance.
5. Overcrowding of tourist area or tourist resource
6. Pollution (Noise, litter, air, land, water)
7. Feeding animals

1.9 ECOTOURISM ACTIVITIES

Sustainable tour packages are offered on nearly every continent in the world. All activities related to ecotourism should be site specific. Following activities are to be undertaken for promoting an area as an ecotourism destination:

1. Nature Walk

Ecotourism is better known for its priority for providing opportunities of jungle or forest walk. The walks along the forest trails with local nature guide offer wonderful opportunities of watching a range of birds, butterflies and wildlife habitats in the natural environment. In addition, nature lovers also understand the rich biodiversity and its impacts on human existence. It is soft form of ecotourism activities conducted for shorter distance about four to five kilometres with a maximum number of five to seven persons. It is a regulated tour with well-designed programmes that include interaction with indigenous tribes and their occupational activities. The chirping of birds and nature’s whispers along with sighs enhance the experience of nature walk.

2. Trekking

One of the most preferred activities of ecotourism is the participation of eco-tourists in the trekking. Trekking is a soft form of organized adventure activity that is programmed to provide services like camping, food, escort-cum-guide, binoculars, reading materials, torch lights, etc. The primary purpose of participating in trekking or hiking is to see, enjoy and admire the grasslands, evergreen, deciduous and riverine forests, wildlife and tribal hamlets. Professional ecotourism operators conduct trekking tours with varied durations and most of the ecotourism are all-inclusive packages. Activities of trekking include photography, watching wild animals, taking bath in the hot-sulphur spring water, camp fire, watching folk dance, taste of local cuisine, paintings, etc.

3. Jungle Patrolling

Participation in the protection of tiger or other endangered animals is an activity in the jungle patrolling. This activity involves younger visitors with physical stamina, good health, experience and commitment to contribute to the conservation of plants, wildlife and cultural resources of ecotourism sites. This jungle patrolling programme is conducted in the fringes of eco-development zones of the animal reserve and the visitors are accompanied by armed forest guards. Visitors are given some short training and tips to be alert in the night patrolling in the jungle. This is quite popular in Africa and it has been introduced in Periyar Tiger Reserve in Kerala.

4. Hiking

Hiking is an important adventure activity of many visitors. Unlike trekking, participants or eco-tourists need to have experience in doing hiking in different altitudes. Generally, the altitudinal ranges between 300 to 1,500m with many ups and downs in the hiking trails. The hikers or trekkers can have clear views of lofty mountain peaks, valleys, terrains, watersheds, waterfalls, rivers, gorges, animals, plants and people. More interestingly, meeting the local people, for example Sherpa of Nepal or Darjeeling and interacting with them add to the pleasant experience of the participants. It is neither a soft or hard form of ecotourism, but it is not less than hard-core adventure activity. Participants undergo several rounds of physical fitness test before they are included in the all-inclusive package tour. The adventure or eco-tour operators conducted the tours with give job opportunity to local porters.

5. Jungle Camp

Temporary huts and camps are pitched against the backdrop the hill terrains or in the bank of rivers and lakes or in the midst of farm land to provide off-the-beaten-track experience to the eco-tourists. This is a secondary type of tented accommodation that provides bed, attached toilet and bathroom, mosquito net and solar light. The activities include walking leisurely, viewing animals and birds, visiting local villages, viewing the traditional cultivation, boating or rafting, etc. Local community members are hired to serve in the jungle camp and guests are served local cuisine to have authentic tastes of local food.

6. Wilderness

Hard-core eco-tourists with much interest in nature and wildlife do take part in the wilderness activities. This is clearly non-conventional activity that requires special permission from the authority to trek through the protected areas to study, understand, appreciate and enjoy the natural environs and its settings. For those eco-tourists who wish to show interest in experiencing the wilderness must be prepared to adjust with minimal facilities and foods in the jungle. These eco-tourists are dedicated and committed to see the undisturbed, uncontaminated and unpolluted deep forests.

7. Wildlife Viewing

Wildlife viewing is an important ecotourism activity in the protected areas. Watch towers are erected at the key locations to view the flora and fauna. Many hard-core wildlife tourists spend longer duration to follow the trails of animals and understand their behaviours. Many wildlife enthusiasts and activists participate in the tiger, elephant, crocodile and rhinoceros census with the wildlife officials in the protected areas in India. Wildlife tourists stay in the Forest Rest House (FRH) and enjoy the wildlife viewing from the tower and learn the natural ecosystem.

8. Soft Adventure Activities

Soft adventure activities include kayaking, canoeing, rowing, sailing, horseback riding, river rafting, scuba diving, angling, rock climbing, ropeways, river crossing with rope or swinging bridge, searching for wild orchids, etc. These activities offer more of fun and frolic than studying. Conversely, these activities have moderate impact on the ecosystems of lakes, rivers, soil, sea, etc.

1.0 SUMMARY

Ecotourism is a form nature travel that is based on several activities related to the nature, indigenous people & culture of the place. Eco-tourists or nature traveler are primarily interested for enjoying, studying and admiring the natural beauty and cultural heritage of primitive or rural people. Ecotourism activities can be as soft as walking, bird watching and painting the nature and can be as hard as trekking, rock climbing, river rafting, scuba diving, etc.

1.11 GLOSSARY

Domestic visitors: any person who resides in a country, who travels to a place within the country, outside his usual environment for a period not exceeding 12 months, and whose main purpose of visit is other than the exercise of an activity remunerated from within the place visited.

Inbound tourism: involving non-residents travelling in the given country. It is often useful to classify visitors by country of residence, rather than by nationality.

International tourism: consists of inbound and outbound tourism

Outbound tourism: involving residents travelling in another country.

Sameday visitors: visitors who do not spend the night in collective or private accommodation in the place visited.

Tourism: the activities of persons travelling to and staying in places outside their usual environment for not more than one consecutive year for leisure, business, and other purposes.

Tourist: a person travelling to and staying in places outside his or her usual environment for not more than one consecutive year for leisure, business, and other purposes.

Visitor: a person who visits the land and waters of a park or protected area for purposes mandated for the area. A visitor is not paid to be in the park and does not live permanently in the park. Typically, the mandated purpose for the visit is outdoor recreation for natural parks and cultural appreciation for historic sites.

1.12 SELF ASSIGNMENTS QUESTIONS

1. What do you understand by term ecotourism?
2. What are the objectives of responsible tourism?
3. Give in detail various positive and negative impacts of ecotourism.
4. What are the principles of sustainable tourism?
5. Discuss various activities that ecotourism promotes?

1.13 REFERENCES

1. IUCN (International Union for the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources), 'World Conservation Strategy: Living Resource Conservation for Sustainable Development Gland', Switzerland, IUCN, London.
2. The Ecotourism Society (TES), 'Ecotourism Statistical Fact Sheet', North Bermington, V.T, The Ecotourism Society, 1998.
3. Weaver, D. (2001), THE ENCYCLOPEDIA OF ECOTOURISM, *CABI Publication*.
4. Fennel, D. A. (2002), ECOTOURISM POLICY AND PLANNING, *CABI Publishing, USA*
5. Sukanta K Chaudhury, CULTURAL, ECOLOGY AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT, *Mittal, Delhi*.
6. Ralf Buckley (2004), ENVIRONMENT IMPACTS OF ECOTOURISM, *CABI, London* Shankala Pradeep, "Ecotourism : Dynamic Tour", Lecture Notes, Kerala Institute of Travel Studies, Thiruvananthapuram.
7. Vijaya Kumar. B, "Sustainable Development of Ecotourism in Kerala", Ph. D. Thesis, University of Kerala, 1995.
8. Weaver, D. (2001), THE ENCYCLOPEDIA OF ECOTOURISM, *CABI Publication*.
9. Sampad Kumar Swain, "Ecourism", Semester III, MBA Tourism, Directorate of Distance Education, Pondicherry University.