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Ecotourism: Nature and Prospects in Current Scenario

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ABSTRACT: Probably when man has learned to walk, he is travelling for food, safety and to earn resources (trade). Each improvement in technology increased opportunities for individuals to travel. Tourism is one of the largest industries in the world, which is connected to many other major sectors of the world's Economy. Although Ecotourism have short history when this term first appeared about 40 years ago. It changed its appearance over time. However Ecotourism, as a field of academic inquiry, is still in a state of adolescence. It has been a matter of discussion since the beginning due to the inclusion of two key words inside it i.e. tourism and conservation. Tourism is a matter of interest while conservation is a matter of responsibility. Due to its inclusive nature, it has attracted tourists as well as governments, bloggers, environmentalists and even a common traveller. Currently, the impression that Ecotourism has left is that all the developing countries are including it in their financial plans. Ecotourism norms are needed to protect the interests of indigenous people, and to preserve the beautiful, fragile environment where they live. In this article author compares these two concepts i.e. tourism and ecotourism and have tried to explain its nature and philosophical basis of ecotourism which has changed with the passage of time.

KEYWORDS: Ecotourism, Tourism, philosophical basis, Economy.

I. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Definition

Ecotourism became an official definition in 1982 when it was included in the Oxford Dictionary as "Organized holidays that are designed so that the tourists damage the environment as little as possible, especially when some of the money they pay is used to protect the local environment and animals. "

According to The International Ecotourism Society (TIES) Ecotourism is defined as "Responsible travel to natural areas that conserves the environment, sustains the well being of the local people and involves interpretation and education". (TIES 2015)

1.2 Origin of the term Ecotourism

Ecotourism was first conceptualized in the early 1980s as a kind of travel in which people enjoy it without harming nature and to study the culture of that tropical place. As Weaver and Lawton (2007) state, the term ecotourism began to appear in tourism magazines in the late 1980s and there has been minimal attention in the critical areas like quality control, the industry, external environment even as the components and the parameters of ecotourism are being extended. Ecotourism, as a field of academic inquiry, is still in a state of adolescence. Ecotourism has reached in juncture in its development (Arlen 1995).

II. TOURISM

Tourism is one of the largest industries in the world (WTO 1991; WTTC 1993); but its environmental related issues are poorly studied (Buckley and Pannell 1989; Butler 1991; Westcott and Molinski 1993; WTTTC 1993). Ecotourism is arguably its fastest growing subsector (Matthews 1993), but poorly defined. At 4.1% growth rate, tourism is expected to generate 1.6 billion tourists by the year 2020 (Christie, Fernandes, Messerli, & Twining-Ward, 2014).



III. ECOTOURISM

Environmental organizations have generally emphasized that only tourism Nature-based, continuously-managed, conservation-supported and environmentally-educated should be described as ecotourism (Baez and Rovinski 1992; Boo 1990; Ceballos-Lascurain 1992; Eber 1992; EAIPR 1992; Figgiss 1993; Lee and Snepenger 1992, Richardson 1993a, 1993b; Swanson 1992; Young 1992; Young and Wearing 1993; Ziffer 1989)

IV. COMPARISON

When we talk about Ecotourism, we are talking about preserving the place, community and promoting active participation with hosts where we are travelling to make meaningful contribution in their economy is well. As we know it contains travel and conservation in itself, so a brief comparison of these terms is necessary. There are a lot of confusions here in formal Tourism and Ecotourism, so we first find the differences in them. However ecotourism is now consider as a type of tourism under sustainable tourism.

Table 4.1. Comparison

Sr.no.	Points of Discussion	Tourism	Ecotourism
1.	Meaning in terms	Journey to a place of interest.	Responsible tourism
2.	Economic Benefit	benefit Only corporate	Economically beneficial to hosts as well as corporate
3.	Effect on Environment	Does not benefit nature in any way but harm it.	Not only conserves natural habitats but also sustains them.
4.	Cultural integrity	Restrict tourists to travel and enjoy the natural areas only.	This emphasizes and promotes their language, knowledge and culture.
5.	Subsector affected	Resort owners, bus companies , airlines, hotel chains	Local people, surrounding environment, cultural heritage
6.	Growth and size	Big size, growing rapidly	Medium size, currently growing rapidly
7.	Discriminative features	Focus on revenue generation, beneficial to government	Mainly focus on environment, culture, beneficial to local people

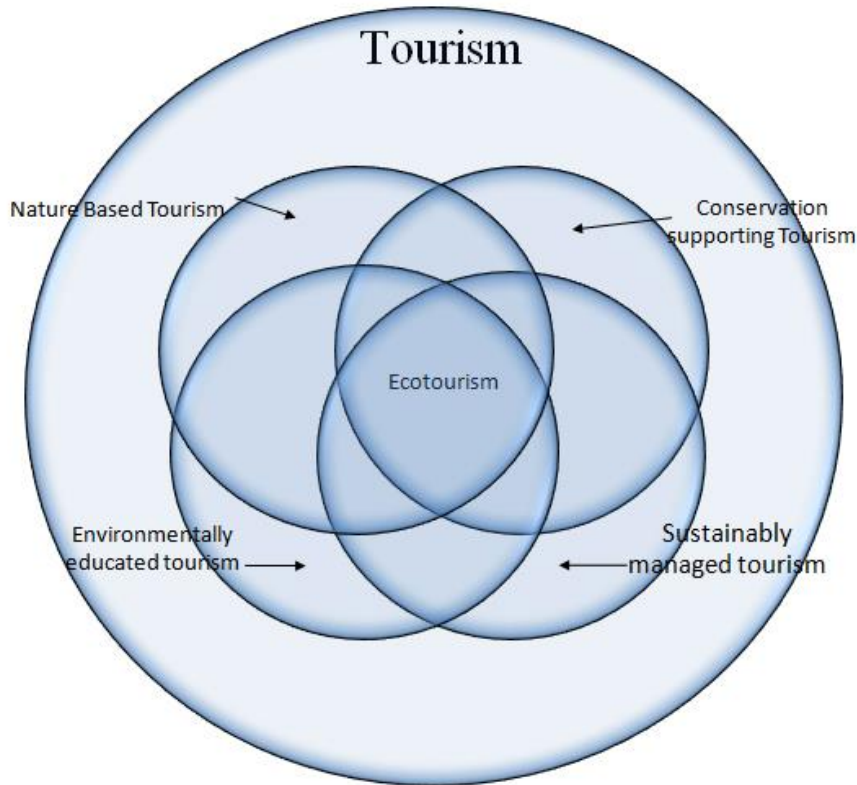


Figure 1. Ecotourism Framework

V. CONCLUSION

Everyone who involved in tourism should take responsibility of environmental issues. The comparison done in table 1 to differentiate ecotourism from tourism and is clearly only one of many possibilities. This could be expanded and elaborated indefinitely. The paper develops an ecotourism framework drawing on the works of Ralf Buckley(1994). Although it integrates the various topics that have been raised in the previous discussion of tourism, environment and ecotourism. Much of this applies to broad sectors of the tourism industry, including ecotourism.

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