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## **Eco-Tourism for So-Called Tribal Development: A Critical Assessment from an Anthropological Perspective**

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**ABSTRACT** There has been a rapid growth of eco-tourism activities in tribal dominated pockets in India during the past two decades. However, such endeavors of the state have adversely affected the local environment and culture of the tribal people. The most unfortunate thing is that the tribal people who are the supposed beneficiaries of the eco-tourism are never consulted while designing or implanting such projects. Increasing inflow of tourists to the tribal area has affected their eco system and culture. Implementation of Conservation Act, code of practice, has deprived them from enjoying some of their customary rights over land and forest resources. Unfortunately the so-called eco-tourism has turned them practically into specimen of a zoo. Further the commercialization of different aspects of their culture in the name of eco-tourism both by the state and the local NGOs has created a condition of cultural genocide. An attempt has been made in the paper is to critically analyze some of such efforts undertaken by different agencies to promote eco-tourism in tribal areas. The tribal people are well known for their “exotic” customs and practices. A substantial part of the tribal lore, myth, legends, folktales, folk songs and folk dances reaffirms the concerns of a tribal community for its eco system and culture. The inflow of the tourists into these natural habitats may destroy the fragile eco system and tribal culture. It is very important for the outside agencies to understand the cultural dynamics of the people before introducing eco-tourism to the region in the name of development. It is felt that such interventions may destabilize the cultural regulators and thereby contribute to the further marginalisation of the already marginalized people.