

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

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### **INTRODUCTION**

Over the years Tourism has become an integral part of economic, social, psychological and physical development. It is considered as an important source of economy especially in terms of its contribution towards foreign exchange earnings, generation of national income and to promote local employment particularly in remote and backward areas.

Unlike other developing countries India has also entered the tourism industry since independence. It contributes only 0.3 per cent to World tourism. Considering India's wealth of natural resources and rich cultural heritage, tourism can emerge as an important instrument for economic development and employment generation. According to the report of World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC), India could generate 25 million additional jobs in Tourism sector by 2010. After five decades of tourism development India's tourism earnings is US \$1.8 billion while tiny Singapore's is US \$ 3.4 billion and Thailand's US \$6.8 billion. Comparing the earnings from tourism sector the policy makers decided to boost the industry, which is also considered as "passport to development".

Today the whole world, particularly the developing countries, faces a near-crisis situation, both economic and environmental. Policy makers find it difficult to formulate programmes that would work under the present situation of escalating population on the one hand and diminishing resources on the other. The environmental decadence inevitably weakens economy, which in turn leads to social integration.

There is no denying that the earth's environment has been severely compromised in the last 200 years since the beginning of the Industrial Revolution. Ironically, this era of mass production and amassed wealth can account for much of the poverty in the world today. Agro-based industry have displaced family farms; indigenous and communal lands are transferred or sold to corporations and other foreigners and rural residents migrate to urban centers-about 160,000

people everyday—where they face crowded and unhealthy conditions. Concern is extremely high among people living in developed nations over protecting, cleaning and healing our sick environment, but in order to solve the environmental problems of the world, we will have to solve the inequities in all areas of human life (Hargrove, 2002).

Gradually the issue of environmental care has emerged as one of the most important debates in developing countries. In particular, there has been an increased interest in tourism as a potential vehicle for development that is both economically beneficial and environmentally sustainable and this is encapsulated in the buzz word "Eco tourism".

The main objective of eco tourism promoters are to preserve the natural environment and to promote local employment. When preservation is combined successfully with development—the preserve and use mandate—sustainable development is achieved. Keeping this in view, there has been a rapid growth of eco tourism activities in tribal pockets of India as well as in Orissa. Efforts are being taken to use eco-tourism potential for keeping the tribals in promoting their eco-friendly economic pursuits.

Scholars like McKean (1982), Volkman (1990) Picard (1993) and McArthy (1994) reported the impacts of tourism on indigenous peoples. In some areas, economic and cultural benefits to the host community were identified (Jordan, 1980; Silver, 1992) including enhancement and revitalization of local cultures (Jafari, 1992; Bleasdale and Tapsell, 1996). The cultural revitalization argument is based on the premise that societies find niches through tourism that help build group solidarity, pride in traditions and strengthened identity (Rabibhadana, 1992). This in turn benefits tourists, tourist promoters and national culture (Klieger, 1990). Dogan (1989) has pointed out that impacts both positive and negative have varied between localities and with type of tourism. The reactions of indigenous hosts have been diverse, ranging from an active resistance to passive adoption of western culture. At times, local culture

may be treated as a “commodity” as influential western societies interact with less affluent hosts (Rabibhadana, 1992). Alternatively, interactions may be detached primarily economic, rather than social (Esman, 1984). In other circumstances, visitor influx, seasonality and opportunistic investment in real estate that radically affects local land values may indirectly influence host communities (Craik, 1991).

Smith (1989) argued that cultural impact is minimal where the flow of visitors is small and sporadic, while increasing tourist numbers may compromise the cultural heritage of host communities. “To preserve the cultural resources and enhance the economic base, local communities must decide whether to control or restrict tourism to preserve their cultural integrity or encourage tourism as a desirable economic goal and restructure their culture to absorb it” (Smith, 1989; Rabibhadana, 1992).

In the context of sustainable tribal development in a globalised world, cultural dimension can not be neglected (Upali, 1994), rather one has to consider endogeneity (Mangaraj, 2000) at one end and the outside world at the other in order to maintain the pace of development with a changing environment.

Further, the International Labour Organisation’s (ILO) approach in the area of Indigenous and Tribal people in its Convention No 169 clearly spelt out ..... “Participation of indigenous and tribal peoples in the process that affects them and the need to take into account their cultures, traditions and institutions in the adoption or implementation of programs, activities or legislation that affects them”. An important aim of the convention is to set up the conditions for self-management so that indigenous and tribal peoples can gain greater recognition of their distinct cultures, traditions and customs, as well as gain more control over their own economic social and cultural development (ILO Geneva, July 2001).

Article 7 of ILO Convention No 169 emphasizes that indigenous and tribal peoples have the right to decide their own priorities for the process of development as it affects their beliefs, customs and lands, into exercise control to the extent possible, over their own economic, social and cultural developments.

In this regard 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. From this point of view *Panchsheel* (five principles for tribal development) approach for the tribals pronounced by Pandit Nehru should be taken into consideration where he laid down “These people should be allowed to develop along the lines of their own genius. We should avoid imposing anything on them. We should try to encourage their own way of life, their own traditional arts and culture”.

Against this backdrop this paper critically examines the concept of eco tourism in the context of environmental conservation and economic benefits. This paper also tries to analyze the on going processes of eco tourism and its linkage with tribal economy and cultural practices. The paper also focuses some of the impacts of eco tourism on tribal livelihood. Finally the paper suggests some specific strategies for promotion of eco tourism for the tribal people.

#### ECOTOURISM: CONCEPT AND POLICY

With the growing city culture, the civilized man is slowly moving away from the natural environment and therefore there is an increasing demand for ecotourism’ all over the world. It is an industry that touches almost every other, embodying a synthesis of goods and services, materials and markets, employment and education, politics and ideals. At its best, it empowers women, local communities, diverse cultures and travellers, supports partnerships between governments, NGOs, private sector, funding agencies, and blends the high technology of transcontinental flight and internet communications with ancient dances and sacred sites. At its worst, it robs people of low dignity, culture and control over their lives (Tchamie, 1994; Mc Laren, 1999, Maikhuri et al., 2000).

International tourism arrivals have climbed steadily from 420 million arrivals in 1989 to over 664 million arrivals ten years later in 1999, equaling more than 10 per cent of the global population (Ceballos-Lascurian, 1991; Epler Wood, 2002). In 2001, tourism worldwide recorded 693 million international tourist arrivals; producing \$463 billion in international tourism receipts (WTO, 2002).

Amongst all international visitors who arrive in India, nature tourist comprise 40-60 per cent. As the fastest growing industry in the world (WTTC, 1992), tourism is looked upon by many

governments of emerging countries to develop their natural resources and preserve them at the same time.

The concept to involve local people as beneficiaries and stake holders in the eco tourism process was voiced by the World Bank in 1986 as it promoted “rural development investment that provide farmers and villagers in the vicinity of wild land management areas with an alternative to further encroachment” (Honey, 1999: 16). Ecotourism has finally found its niche – helping the world’s rural and underdeveloped peoples to enter into the mainstream market economy. Keeping in view the global importance, the UN General Assembly in December 1998 declared the year 2002 the International Year of Ecotourism (IYE). It clearly stated that the activities related to the Year should be taken within the broader framework of sustainable development of tourism, with four main criteria.

- Sustainable use of biodiversity and natural resources.
- Impact minimization, especially in terms of change and energy consumption:
- Empowerment and fully informed participation of local stake holders, particularly local communities and indigenous people.
- Awareness raising and environmental education of travelers and hosts (Hillel, 2001)

Ecotourism in these contexts joined the ranks of other sustainable industries which were called to meet global challenges and affect change. The UN had the foresight and courage to place ecotourism on a larger backdrop with global climate change and energy issues and to promote participation of local communities to ensure equity in decision making.

#### DEFINITION OF ECOTOURISM

Debate over the definition of the new term “ecotourism” began in the mid 1980’s and still continues to distract the field today. Many scholars insist to move beyond mere definitions and concentrate on action. Numerous guidelines on how to accomplish ecotourism have transformed from a product into a philosophy (WTO and UNEP, 1992; Manidis Roberts Consultants, 1997; Austrilan Heritage Commission, 2000; Ceballos-Lascurain, 2001).

Ecotourism continually evolving as evaluations of successes and failures are incorporated into the knowledge base of worldwide ecotourism

practices. Studies by Epler Wood (2002) reveal that “Like all other sustainable tourism, ecotourism is a dynamic field, with new techniques and approaches.....every year” (Epler Wood, 2002: 7-8).

The Ecotourism Society (TES) defined Ecotourism as a “purposeful travel to natural history of the environment, taking care not to alter the integrity of the ecosystem, while producing economic opportunities that make the conservation of natural resources beneficial to local people. The International Ecotourism Society (TIES) defined ecotourism, “responsible travel to natural areas that conserve the environment and improves the welfare and to sustain the well being of local people” (Wester, 1993; Epler Wood, 2002).

“Ecotourism is environmentally responsible travel and visitation to relatively undisturbed natural areas, in order to enjoy and appreciate nature (and any accompanying cultural features-both past and present) that promotes conservation; has low negative visitor impact; and provides for beneficially active socio-economic involvement of local populations”.

Center of Ecotourism (CES) defined “Ecotourism as an enlightening, particularly travel experience to environments, both natural and cultural, that ensures the sustainable use, at an appropriate level of environmental resources and, whilst producing viable economic opportunities for the tourism industry and host communities making the use of these resources through conservation beneficial to all tourism role players”.

Further UNEP focused on these aspects:

- Positive contribution to the conservation of sensitive ecosystems and protected areas, through financial and political support.
- Active participation from and economic benefits to, local communities and indigenous people.
- Environmental education of hosts, professionals and guests (Hillel, 2001).

The concept of ecotourism stands alive and well after being tested in 2002 at two major world fora, the World Ecotourism Summit (WES) and the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD), and numerous preparatory conferences. Ecotourism has become a major thrust of the common wealth government’s tourist’s strategies (DOT CWITH) 1992, 1994. Ecotourism mainly emphasizes “a set of principles and how to put them into practice” (Honey, 1999: 21). It espouses the same principles of sustainable tourism, but

simply on a smaller localized human scale, while remaining committed to the larger ecological scale.

In the International Year of Eco tourism 2002 (IYE), proclaimed by United Nations (UN) eco tourism was both hailed for preserving dwindling cultures and biodiversity and blamed for degrading both environment and human dignity.

The Draft National Environment Policy (NEP) 2004 (Government of India), (A policy for promoting eco tourism and private Investment) appears to be a comprehensive document covering a wide range of issues. The policy content and approach take their cue from the myriad International agreement India is a party to, and does not in anyway stem from a genuine interest to protect the interests of the poorest sections of Indian Society who are most dependent on the environment for their livelihood and survival.

The draft policy openly plays to the demands of the World Bank and other multilateral bodies such as the WTO and is clearly aimed at privatizing the environment and natural resources. Emphasis has been given for public-private partnership. The polluter will pay concept, commodifications and commercialization of biodiversity and culture, the concern for "eco tourism" as a means of earning state revenue.

These are the driving engines of this policy and clearly concern the peoples and their livelihood. The symbiotic relationship and socio-cultural constraints are not a priority.

The policy will only hasten the all out sale and auctioning of India's natural resources and in doing so systematically marginalize those who are most dependent on those sources- the tribals, the dalits, the pastoralists, other small and marginal farmers- particularly women from these communities.

The deep concern about the aspects of this policy (NEP, 2004): under the Principles 4 (V-A) tribals engaged in *shifting cultivations would be told they have to pay for the perceived damage to the environment and the production of "smoke" and "Carbon dioxide". Farmers would be told that a tax is being levied on them for the "CO<sub>2</sub> and Methane emissions" produced by dung of their animals and their burning paddy fields. Woman who collects fuel would be told she has to "pay" for having access to the forests.*

Polices have been formulated for the overall development of a society when poor sections of that society don't avail the fruits of development, then policy for whom?

### TRIBAL ECOSYSTEM: INTERLINKED ECONOMIC AND CULTURAL PRACTICES

From time immemorial tribal communities all over the world live close to nature. They have in course of time made a long adjustment to the decay of nature, and derived a traditional and primitive way of living. Hence a distinctive culture gets established obviously owing to their own peculiar ways in order to meet their basic needs. The totality of these interactions within them is known as ecological system or ecosystem.

We have empirical ethnographic data outlining the nature of relationship and interactions the tribals have with various elements of creation. An over acknowledgement of the "gifts" received from nature finds its expressions in their worship of its various manifestations-plants, animals, hills, rivers and many other objects. In closer analysis of the tribal world view, it came to limelight that objects of nature are not seen as an inanimate entities by them, but persons, as fellow human beings. This concern institutionally finds its expressions in "totemism" a practice that refers to a cultural phenomenon in which human groups and individuals occupy defined positions in a network of relationship with the objects of eco system. They have a strong belief system, which states that this Universe is the creation of a supreme power meant for the benefit of all his creations. Each individual must, therefore learn to enjoy its benefits by forming a part of the system in close relation with other species. Let not any one species encroach upon the others rights. Thus they have a lot of respect for nature and its objects.

As Prof Radhamohan an eminent environmentalist rightly points out, "The relation between the tribals and forests is like that of fish and water". Forests are not only one of the major sources of their subsistence, but are significantly related to their religion and mythology for e.g. the tribal people of Orissa worship nature and believe that nature is to be kept satisfied if it is so to provide all their needs. Most tribes believed that "Sun God" is the creator and master of the Universe and call it by many names. The Juanga and Bhuiyans call it "Dharam Devata" the Kolha and Sanatal "Sing Bonga". The worship of the earth is commonly called "Basumata" by Santals, Bhuiyan and Juanga "Dharani Panu" by Kondhs 'Basuki Thakurani' by Kolha. The worship of the earth Goddess acquires special significance since

every cultivation is started by rituals of worship, for a good harvest.

The Tribals not only worship the forests, but revel in religious ceremonies and festivals connected with it. Bhinjals and Parajas call their forest god "Danger Devata" Bondas. "Uga" and "Remngbori", Kolha "Bura Bonga", Kondhs "Laipenu" and so on. Considering nature as their creator, sustainer and provider, the tribals have imbibed a deep love for nature that is primeval and instinctive. The Kondhs of Ganjam claim descent from a woman, whose body parts are supposed to be made of "Bel" Fruit, "Satal wood" and Kawals' mushrooms (Elwin, 1964). Tribals of Kalahandi believe that their ancestors' survived by drinking the juice of the "salap" tree, after a catastrophe and therefore rivers are sacred. (Fernandes et al., 1988). Above all the Universal concept of "Vana Debta", the forest as a God, to be appeased, ensures the renewal of the species, while working a self imposed law against destruction of forests (ibid).

Tribal societies operate with an indigenous knowledge very effectively with the help of which not only they eke out a living but also solve the problems of their day to day social living. These healers occupy a significant socio-cultural and health related importance in their societies. They have their own knowledge in health care practices that are ecologically and culturally deep-rooted. The tribal health care system even now largely depends upon the locally available natural resources. Further the tribal healers are the potential resources of indigenous knowledge on health care, which is the only alternative to enrich the health care access of tribes.

The tribal people are well known for their "exotic" customs and practices. A substantial part of the tribal lore, myth, legends, folk tales, folk songs and folk dances reaffirms the concerns of a tribal community for its eco-system and culture.

It is not surprising to see that most of the forests are in tribal areas or vice versa. The reason is obvious. Generally, the tribal has a symbiotic relationship with the forest as they can not visualize a life without jungle that provides them food, fodder and fruits and have deep rooted sentiments and socio cultural needs (Jha and Sen, 1991). The subsistence characteristics of the way tribal people in the area make their living access to the natural resources is vital for maintaining and possibly improving, their livelihood.

### FOREST POLICY AND ITS IMPACT ON TRIBAL ECONOMY

The drive towards better forest management and development led the National and State Governments to enact stringent laws and policies with regard to forest, there by gradually enhancing and monopolizing their power over it. Far from recognizing the relationship of tribals to the forests, these laws squarely blamed the tribals for its degradation. Moreover instead of legalizing existing rights and privileges of the tribals and the dwellers of the forests, the law deprived them of it. After the enforcement of forest protection Act, tribals who enjoyed vast rights and privileges over the forest has now limited use of it. Tribal Land rights are almost a non existent concept. The status of tribals with regard to land rights is clear from the fact that in government records, the tribal is an "encroacher" of the land he has been occupying through the ages. Whether he lives deep in the forest or in accessible hilly regions, he has no legal right over the place.

Collection of minor forest produce has become very difficult for tribals. Hard pressed to meet their needs for food from forests, the tribals have become more dependent on the local market (Hats). The changes have not only altered the tribals food habitats but also ethos of their life and culture. A study on Tribal Economy and its dependence upon minor forest produce and agro forestry system in six major tribal intensive districts of Orissa conducted by the center for Development Studies in its report, entitled "State of Orissa's Environment: A Citizen's Report" (CPSW..1994), reported that the seclusion of forest life is no more visible. The ecological interdependence of the tribals is declining. The tribals are being ousted perforce from their own homes. Now-a-days the very self sufficient economy of the tribal is undermined. Interferences of the intruders in the vicinity of the tribal area by the name of development have affected their local economy.

Incapable of bargaining for a better price for their own commodities has left the tribal economy virtually bankrupt. The phenomenon of developmental projects displacing people especially tribals, is clearly beyond doubt. But it is pitiable to note that in spite of providing so much of input for development and earning much for the state exchequer, the lot of the tribals has not improved. The bane of development projects has not only

been in terms of displacement, but also in terms of the failure to ameliorate the lot of tribals. It is a paradox that the tribals are the poorest lot even though for centuries they have been occupying regions rich in resources.

The importance of the above mentioned discussion is that developmental planners, in order to widen their view had to be aware of not only epistemological aspects, but also of cosmologies. Incorporating the former in development planning implies incorporating cultures and culture perspective. The cultural categories that people use to classify and understand their environment should therefore be important to all those interested in its management. But environmental conservation is not a new concept for tribal people. By the name conservation the basic concern of the human being should not be forgotten. Eco tourism has been proposed by a number of interest groups as a new way forward for environmentally sustainable development. In particular, it asks, whether eco tourism constitutes genuine sustainable development with minimal negative social, political, environmental and economic impacts.

### **IMPACTS OF ECOTOURISM ON TRIBAL LIVELIHOOD**

The impact of eco tourism on tribal life has caused much concern among anthropologists with a view to commercialization of their culture and economy. Several case studies show that the profit from such an enterprise goes to the exchequer or the private parties and never to the local people. There is a strong lobby that feels that eco tourism has alienated the local people.

#### **Negative Socio-economic and Environmental Impacts**

- Tribals live very close to nature. Their 'economy' revolves around nature. They depend on forest for their survival. For promotion of eco tourism different codes of practice, Conservation Act will be implemented and interferences of Environmental Activists have deprived them from enjoying some of their customary rights over land and Forest resources which adversely affect their traditional economy.
- The relation between the tribals and the Forest is 'Symbiotic'. From the time immemorial the

tribals occupy a central position in the ecological niche and the primary dependence of man on forest hints several strands of thought-ecological determinism, ecological possibilism and culture (man shapes his environment through culture). Their socio-cultural life is linked with forest. Many rituals are performed to worship the forest. By the name of conservation and economy the natural resources are being auctioned where the basic concerns of human beings are forgotten. This adversely affects their socio-economic condition.

- By the name of eco tourism the private investor will enter and occupy a key position in market economy. As a result, there will be a large-scale migration of non-tribals to the tribal areas, which would adversely affect their local economy.
- Increased tourism activities have both direct and indirect negative impacts on natural environment-air, water, noise pollution environmental degradation etc. Eco-tourism activities demand some structural construction-roads, hotel complexes; restaurants, which invade the natural beauty and there by affecting it.
- Tribals have their unique cultural identity. Regular interferences of intruders to the tribal life is unethical. Increasing flow of tourists to the tribal area has affected their eco-system and culture. Unfortunately the so-called eco-tourism has turned them into a specimen of zoo. Further the commercialization of different aspects of their culture in the name of eco-tourism both by the state and the local NGOs have created a condition of cultural genocide.
- Tribal lore, myth, legends, folktales and folk songs always have a unique position in their habitat and culture. The regular inflow of tourists into these natural habitats may destroy the fragile ecosystem and tribal culture.

#### **Socio-Economic and Environmental Benefits of Ecotourism**

- Tourism revenue generated can be channelled to the management of protected areas.
- It can diversify the local economy, particularly in rural areas where agriculture employment may be sporadic.
- It serves as an effective tool for visitors by creating awareness and helps in instilling in them a degree of concern for their ecosystem.

## CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Development is a concept of western society (Davidson, 2000; Escobar, 1995). What takes place now-a-days in the name of development can be viewed as “anti-development” because the process of development is always incomplete and relative. It is only growth-mania, belief in the commodifications and commercialization of economy and culture and vulgar display of consumer materialism. This kind of development has caused irreparable damage to the poor. It has caused the further marginalization of the already marginalized people and pushed to the periphery of the society. They are forced to pay the cost of the rich and the powerful people’s urge and craze for so called development. The irony of the fact is that the cost is paid by the people who are least able to afford and who will not share the fruits of development.

In recent times the tribals have been exposed to various external forces and conditions that hamper their growth and development. As more and more tribal dominated pockets are drawn to the process of modernization in the so-called development, there is the less and less social space for the tribals to participate in the process of decision making affecting their life. As a consequence, they have not able to protect themselves and preserve their rich cultural heritage. Both their cultural identity and human dignity have been under constant threat. The government policy of “integration not assimilation” is intended to live an autonomous cultural space for the tribals, while bringing them into political economy of the national mainstream. But such a policy has been problematic in its conceptualization and more so in its implementation.

Eco tourism or nature based tourism is already a popular concept, which is considered to be one of the growth areas of the tourism industry. But many people have different interpretations and connotations. It is like a big bag where people throw everything into it and create a big confusion in its understanding. It is time that we should have a correct and thorough understanding of the word eco tourism and bring much needed awareness.

To a host population eco tourism can be a mixed blessing. It is no doubt that tourism industry brings about changes in local communities. These changes are cultural, environmental and socio-economic. The introduction of tourism in the local communities affects the traditions and

social life of villages. The tourists themselves become a social burden to villagers in the sense of introducing new kinds of behaviour, there by challenging traditional codes of behaviour.

Furthermore the eco tourism industry depends on the natural environment that the villagers traditionally depend on for their on-farm and off-farm activities. Introduction of tourism in the villages has brought about changes and natural resources have come to the access of villagers. These changes imply increased competition and degradation of natural resources. Ultimately this is threatening villager’s livelihoods and the villagers ask for alternative means of income to meet their needs.

The eco tourism industry does create some jobs for the villagers. Hence, some have engaged them in tourism related business, either as their only source of income or as additional income generating activities. Therefore, job opportunities are beneficial for the livelihood of villagers. However, local employment effects from the tourism sector have been less significant than assumed. By the local population tourism is first of all appreciated as a new area for income generating activities in the informal sector. This new income activity which tourism implies, comes in addition to other more traditional activities and hence it is increasing the local risk diversification which is perceived very important in these communities.

The Draft National Environmental Policy 2004 is outlined to promote eco tourism through private investor ignoring the tribals who are most dependent on environment and natural resources. Environment is primarily for the people. It is the human element that gives meaning to ecology and the question of environment becomes relevant to society only to the extent that is viewed in relation to the people who are affected by it. Hence any development linked to environment has to be its relationship with tribal people who mostly depend on it for survival. 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. It is an urgent need to work for the restoration of a balance between nature and human needs.

When government considers, eco tourism as a beneficiary industry, who actually benefits from eco tourism has remained an unresolved debate. Several case studies show that profit from such an enterprise either goes to state exchequer or

the private investor and never to the local people. The question of sustainability arises when those who plan eco tourism activities without the involvement of the local people. Eco tourism can be sustainable if local people are taken into confidence. The local people should be made one of the important stakeholders in any eco tourism project. Most projects have failed to understand the concept that the local people have a better understanding of their eco system and can thus play a key role in conservation activities. More important than that they have an inborn sense of responsibility to protect the environment for the simple reason that their existence depends on it. So while introducing eco tourism in the region by the name of development, it is important to take into account the local, social, cultural and natural environments of tourism investments. Local livelihoods can only be secured by a higher degree of local participation in tourism planning.

In the present context we must pay respect to Anthropologist Verrier Elwin's approach of isolationism "to allow the tribe man to live their life with utmost possible happiness and freedom and where missionaries of any sort were not to be allowed to break the tribal life". From the anthropological perspective any development for tribals to be implemented in the tribal areas should have a "tribal touch" or "tribal bias" which meant looking at things through tribal eyes and from the tribal point of view, respect and recognize their way of doing things. It can be concluded that for the name of eco tourism, tribal culture and tribal economy should not be exploited. If at all eco tourism is going to be promoted in tribal areas they should have the *right to decide their own priorities*. In case of requirement government, NGOs, Stake holders, funding agencies, private investors may act as facilitators.

Considering the afore-said background some suggestions can be proposed in the strategies of sustainable eco tourism development in tribal areas.

- Specific guidelines concerning eco tourism can be adopted using local talents, as no two places are alike. The module specially designed for eco tourism must be "site specific" and "selective" whether sanctuary, park, conservation projects etc.
- Local authorities and local communities can organize themselves to start the measurement and assessment before introducing the projects. The measurement progress can be

related to social auditing and monitoring technique including indicators, targets, and sustainability reporting and eco foot- print analysis.

- There should not be unrestricted entry into the tribal areas in the name of eco tourism. Agencies promoting eco tourism should take care to orient the tourist to interact with the environment and people without disturbing the local norms.
- When the tribal areas are exposed to outsiders, certain items like tribal art and crafts as well as items not available else where are exposed to market forces. Situation needs to be created for the tribal people to sell their products directly without the intervention of the middleman, so that a proper regulatory mechanism can be obtained where, the local people can get the direct benefit from the tourist.
- Emphasize participatory approach, inviting participation of the people not only at the implementing level but also the designing of the same. The co-partners in the process of development should be equal partners.
- Local (tribal) educated youth may be appointed nature guides. Local people should be encouraged and expected to undertake leadership role in planning and development with the assistance of government, business, financial and other interests.
- Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) study is a tool for any type of developmental project, so EIA must be conducted before introducing eco tourism.
- A steering committee may be constituted comprising the representatives from concerned Departments, District authorities, Stakeholders and community members. The committee will be held responsible for constant monitoring of the process. Considering the environmental impact in the process, Environmental Management Plan (EMP) could be worked out for further course of action.
- Ecotourism should try to avoid a clash between conservation and the people. The end benefit of ecotourism should go both to the community and the natural environment and it is imperative that local communities should be involved in the ecotourism activities.
- A networking and practical mechanism for tour operators should be adopted. They must provide visitors information and interpretation



and services covering particularly, what to see, how to see, how to behave.

### LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CES	- Centre of Ecotourism
CWLTH	- Common Wealth
CPSW	- Council of Professional Social Worker
EIA	- Environmental Impact Assessment
EMP	- Environmental Management Plan
ILO	- International Labour Organisation
IUCN	- The World Conservation Union
IYE	- International Year of Ecotourism
NEP	- National Environmental Policy
NGO	- Non Government Organisation
TES	- The Ecotourism Society
TIES	- The International Ecotourism Society
UN	- United Nations
UNEP	- United Nations Environment Programme
WES	- World Ecotourism Summit
WSSD	- World Summit on Sustainable Development
WTO	- World Trade Organisation
WTTC	- World Travel and Tourism Council

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**KEYWORDS** Eco-Tourism. Bio-Diversity. Sustainable Development. Indigenous People. Cultural Genocide

**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.

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