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DZOMAAL IN DZONGU

A Day of Farming Fervour in Pentong

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Pentong, one of the remotest and most sacred villages in Upper Dzongu in North Sikkim, is located on a picturesque hillside in the upper catchment of Rongyong chu. At an altitude of 2200 m asl Pentong is surrounded by dense broadleaf forests extremely rich in flora and fauna. It is inhabited by 34 Lepcha families who have inherited age-old farming practices and have conserved a number of unique crop varieties such as buckwheat, red paddy, maize and millets etc. Lepchas consider most of these grains as sacred as it is not only relished but also offered to their deities on important occasions.



chants, and a deep sense of cultural pride as the villagers gathered to celebrate their annual festival 'Dzomaal'. The festival is a profound tribute to Lepcha agricultural heritage that displays their unique tradition of red paddy sowing. I was fortunate to witness and participate in this festival. This opportunity came to me as I am documenting Lepcha farming practices in Dzongu area as part of a project, 'Agro-Ecology Climate Resilient Farming and Livelihood Enhancement in Border Villages of the Indian Himalayan Region' funded by the Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change (MoEF&CC), Government of India under the National Mission on Himalayan Studies (NMHS). To witness the event I, along with my field assistant, Ms. Shrijana Sharma had walked for 12 kms the previous day and reached Pentong.



Early morning around 8 am the villagers gathered near a field that had been prepared for sowing the paddy by clearing the field, sweeping and burning the cleared leaves and branches and terrace making. *Oroxylum indicum* locally named as 'Totola' and 'pugo reep' in lepcha

which is recognized as a holy flower was used for Sacred altars adorned with local produce, and offerings, setting the tone for two days of immersive celebration. Highlights included a cultural showcase of traditional songs and dances, culminating in a mesmerizing paddy-sowing narrative dance, a unique performance where graceful movements depicted each stage of rice cultivation, blending ritual with storytelling and reaffirming the community's spiritual connection to agriculture. At the heart of the celebration was the symbolic sowing of red paddy, a rare and culturally significant rice variety cultivated only in this region. This sacred act, passed down through generations, serves not only as a means of sustenance but as a living expression of the Lepchas' harmonious relationship with land, nature and spirit. It commenced with ancestral rituals led by Bongthings (Lepcha shamans), who offered prayers and invocations to the local deities, seeking blessings for a fruitful harvest, peace, and protection from misfortune.

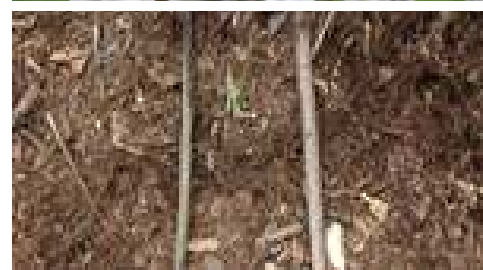


"This festival is not just a tradition; it's our way of remembering who we are and where we come from," said Mr. Yandup Lepcha, an elder from Pentong.

Unlike conventional paddy farming in other parts of Sikkim and north-east India, the red

paddy is cultivated on rainfed steeps which are generally on undulating hill slopes and practices dryland agriculture.

The paddy growing fields are well demarcated and left fallow for one or two years. For dry cultivation, such fields are cleared by removing brushwood and burning plant residue, similar to slash-and-burn agriculture but with a shorter rotational cycle. Pentong village has only 2-3 such slopes where paddy is cultivated on a rotational basis this year, and farmers do not go beyond the village boundary. Cultivation of crops for more than 4-5 years on steep slopes especially in high rainfall areas such as Dzongu results in depletion of nutrients and erosion. Burning of plant residue prior to cultivation also helps in controlling the insect and other pests in the soil. Thus, Lepchas have learnt to manage soil nutrients in the form of humus and they never use pesticides or chemical fertilizers. Once sown, the community relies entirely on natural rainfall, allowing the crop to grow with minimal intervention on steep, cliff-like terrain.



This indigenous agroecological system is deeply intertwined with the Lepcha worldview, emphasizing respect for nature, sustainable use of forest resources, and gendered knowledge transmission. The practice ensures soil fertility through natural cycles and aligns with low-carbon, climate-adaptive principles, making it an important model for resilient agriculture in mountain ecosystems.

The two-day Dzomal festival was not only a cultural celebration but also an occasion for knowledge exchange and future planning for other activities for IMI's agroecology project. Besides the team of IMI, members from a local NGO (MLAS) and a few members from the Sikkim Tourism Department took part in the festival. At the end of the festival the villagers were requested to assemble at community open ground and the participants discussed a few issues such as values of festivals such as Dzomal in the context of agroecology, importance of community-led land planning in the context of climate change, opportunities for community-based eco-tourism that honours Lepcha traditions, role of research and documentation in preserving indigenous knowledge systems, etc.



Experts, researchers, and facilitators engaged with farmers and youth to explore the scope

of red paddy as a climate-resilient crop, due to its ability to thrive without irrigation, external inputs, and in marginal conditions. Its nutritional value also makes it a potential candidate for high-value niche markets, especially in a world increasingly looking toward sustainable and ethical food sources.

The festival was a collective effort, organized by the villagers in collaboration with local NGOs, the Integrated Mountain Initiative (IMI), and the Sikkim Tourism Department. The festival also served as a platform for intergenerational learning, with youth and children actively participating in performances and rituals. Through Dzomaal, the importance of preserving the exclusive red paddy variety and the indigenous knowledge tied to it was deeply emphasized. Many young farmers were inspired to reconnect with their roots, recognizing the value of conserving traditional seeds and sustainable farming practices.

Set against a breathtaking backdrop of dense forests and snow-capped Himalayan peaks, Dzomaal stood as a powerful reminder of the Lepcha people's deep reverence for nature, ancestors, and cultural identity. The festival drew not only locals but also visitors from nearby villages, sparking dialogues on heritage, resilience, and the need to safeguard indigenous customs in the face of modernization.

As the sun dipped below the horizon and the final chants echoed through the valley, Dzomaal concluded not as an ending, but as a re-formation of a vibrant, living legacy that continues to pulse through the heart of Dzongu.

Acknowledgement

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WHAT IS BLUE ECONOMY?

Phalguni Ranjan

8 April 2025 **India Economy**

- *The blue economy is an economic philosophy that focuses on the sustainable use of marine and coastal resources for economic growth, aiming to balance economic benefits with ocean conservation.*
- *The global blue economy is valued at \$2.5 trillion annually, contributing 5% to global GDP. In India, it contributes around 4% to GDP.*
- *While India's marine resources offer economic opportunities, the initiative needs to be truly 'sustainable', and conserve the marine ecosystem for the non-economic services it*

offers.

Blue economy is an economic model that involves the sustainable use of coastal and marine resources to drive economic growth and livelihoods, while prioritising the health of oceans. It includes all commercial activities related to the oceans and coasts including fisheries, aquaculture, maritime transport and engineering, renewable energy, marine biotechnology, and coastal tourism.

Also referred to as sustainable ocean economy, this model seeks to promote a balanced approach of generating economic and developmental benefits, while safeguarding the ecosystem – unlike traditional economic models that follow a more naturally exploitative path to cater to global demand.

Coined in 1994 by Belgian economist Gunter Pauli, what sets this term apart is the stress on 'sustainability', at least in theory. The term 'blue economy' came more into focus after the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (UNCSD) in 2012, also known as Rio+20, held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. The United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (UN SDGs) were created here, and the blue economy initiative fits under UN SDG 14: Life below water that targets the conservation and sustainable use of oceans, seas, and marine resources.



Fishermen in Myanmar harvest seaweed, which is widely used in the food, cosmetics and medical industries. Image by Philip Nalangan via Wikimedia Commons (CC BY-SA 4.0).

What is the value of the blue economy?

The global blue economy is currently valued at an estimated \$2.5 trillion annually, contributing around 5% of the world's gross domestic product (GDP) – numbers that are expected to rise in the coming decade.

Ninety percent of global trade is transported via shipping, with the industry contributing 3% to global carbon emissions. The number of ocean-based startups – including those focussing on sustainable seafood, shipping, and renewables – grew by 91% between 2019 and 2022.

The oceans connect all continents and serve as a

lifeline for nearly half the world's population, providing food, employment, and trade opportunities. However, the sustainability of this economy is crucial, especially as climate change, pollution, and overfishing (catching fish at a rate faster than they can reproduce) threaten the health of marine ecosystems. Other factors such as widespread infrastructure development, poor law enforcement, and an ever-increasing demand for resources have been reported to exacerbate the already precarious situation.

What role does blue economy play in India's growth?

India is one of the world's fastest growing economies in the world, with massive momentum for on-ground development. The country is scoping its 11,098 kilometre-long Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) of more than two million square kilometres – which happens to be the world's 18th largest EEZ so far – for its infrastructure development potential.



A fishing vessel and a cargo ship at the Kochi city harbour in Kerala. The model of a blue economy involves the sustainable use of coastal and marine resources, including fisheries and maritime transport. Image by Drajay1976 via Wikimedia Commons (CC BY-SA 3.0).

Currently, India's blue economy, which includes commercial activities related to the ocean, contributes approximately 4% to the national GDP. Ninety-five percent of India's trades are transported by sea, and fisheries employ around 2.8 crore people involved in fishing, aquaculture and related activities. As of 2023, India was the third largest producer of fish and contributed around 8% to global fish production. Coastal and sea-based tourism including SCUBA diving and water-based activities, are also expanding, say multiple media and government reports as well as those working in the sector, though official figures on the same are unavailable.

In 2019, the Indian government indicated that blue economy is part of the 10 core dimensions of growth in the Vision of New India by 2030, by stating that India's coastline and ocean waters would fuel the country's development.

Later, in 2022, the Ministry of Earth Sciences (MoES) produced a dedicated draft Blue Economy Policy to lay down a strategy to improve the contribution of the sector to India's GDP, preserve marine biodiversity, and maintain the national security of marine areas and resources. The policy prioritises several initiatives including deep-sea exploration, eco-tourism, sustainable fisheries development, and enhancement of maritime infrastructure.

The 2022 draft Blue Economy Policy, a revised edition of an older version, includes some existing initiatives and new projects under the framework.

One such initiative is the Samudrayaan Programme or the Deep Ocean Mission was launched in 2021, aimed at exploring deep-sea resources within India's exclusive economic zones and continental shelf, the submerged edge of a continent extending into the ocean. The mission's primary objective is to send a human-operated submersible to map the seafloor for polymetallic nodules, deep sea bioresources, potential for offshore alternative energy, and develop technologies for the sustainable utilisation of the same.



A view of Chennai port. The maritime infrastructure of India's ports is set to be revamped and revitalised under the Sagarmala Project that seeks to boost the efficiency of the shipping industry. Image by Alexey Seleznev via Wikimedia Commons (CC BY-SA 3.0).

Coastal and marine tourism is a focus area under India's Blue Economy policy framework. The initiative aims for sustainable ecotourism models in coastal areas and islands, seeking to bolster the economy while safeguarding and supplementing the community's livelihoods and the environment. The National Coastal Mission Scheme focuses on mangrove and coral reef conservation, research and development in these areas, sustainable development of beaches, and conservation outreach programmes for coastal states and Union Territories.

The Sagarmala Project was established by the Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways in 2015 to modernise, enhance, and revamp the existing ports and shipping infrastructure, and coastal community development to boost the efficiency of India's maritime sector.

Included under the Blue Economy Policy framework, the focus continues to be on developing the maritime sector, with new funding allocated for its development.

Several existing programmes like the Swachh Bharat Mission were replicated for coastal areas as "Swachh Sagar, Surakshit Sagar to conduct a 75-day long clean-up drive of 75 beaches along the Indian coast in 2022. Schemes like the Pradhan Mantri Matsya Sampada Yojana (PMMSY), which was introduced in 2015-2016 under the Blue Revolution Scheme continues to focus on boosting the fisheries sector by expanding sustainable aquaculture production and sustainable fishing.

Aaron Lobo, Head, Marine Programme, Wildlife Conservation Society-India says that a key strategic avenue for a sustainable blue economy is ensuring the production of sustainable seafood from both, wild capture and aquaculture. "In fisheries, there needs to be a stronger emphasis on higher quality standards for both marine life and people throughout the seafood supply chain," he adds "Certain fishing practices such as trawl fisheries, can have a high collateral impact on marine ecosystems and significantly affect the livelihoods of small-scale fishers."



A fish market in Kakinada, Andhra Pradesh. Image by Pranayraj1985 via Wikimedia Commons (CC BY-SA 4.0).

A 2022 marine fish stock assessment by Central Marine Fisheries Research Institute (CMFRI) states that 86.7% of the Indian fish stocks are being fished sustainably with only around 12.6% being under pressure or overfished, causing fish populations to decline to unsustainable levels. However, the ground reality seems to be more dire, and fish stocks have declined significantly – enough to fuel sustained conflict among fishers from different coastal states.

"There are approximately 3,500 fishing villages along India's coastline," says Lobo. "The lives and livelihoods of the communities are strongly coupled with healthy ecosystems. Maintaining a thriving marine ecosystem is crucial to the country's food [seafood] and nutrition security. Keeping these communities at the heart of this process would be an advisable way forward."

Can India balance economic growth and marine conservation?

The success of India's blue economy depends on implementation of government policies, industry participation, and community engagement to ensure long-term prosperity without compromising marine ecosystems.

On adopting global best practices to suit the Indian context, Lobo explains, "Integrating green infrastructure to reduce environmental impact, improving waste management systems to tackle marine pollution, and introducing capacity-building initiatives to promote sustainable fishing practices would be a pragmatic approach to ensuring a truly sustainable blue economy."



Turbinaria sp. are among the most resilient and tolerant corals. Goa's corals face suffocation due to heavy sediment runoff, affecting their health and growth. Image by Phalguni Ranjan.

Venkatesh Charloo, proprietor of Barracuda Diving, Goa says that the biggest challenge is climate change and warming waters. "It is only March and the water temperature is already around 30 degrees, which we expect will get worse by May when peak summer hits. If this continues, we might see another wave of coral bleaching here." He adds that the previous bleaching event in Goa started early, at the end of April 2024, and corals started recovering only by October-November 2024.

Charloo is also the Founder-Trustee of Coastal Impact, an NGO focussing on marine conservation. Speaking on the impacts of possible coastal and offshore development activities that might increase sediment runoff, Charloo adds, "Sedimentation due to runoff from the river and mining is quite bad here (in Goa). The sediments form a layer on the coral, suffocating them. Grande Island's corals are quite resilient but now, we see even *Turbinaria* sp. – among the more resilient coral species – disappearing at one of our dive sites because of sedimentation, and subsequent algae takeover. Further sedimentation will be extremely detrimental to Goa's reefs."

While India has the potential to position itself as a global leader in sustainable ocean economy, non-economic ecosystem services such as climate regulation, carbon sequestration, and nutrient cycling need to be considered just as

much. The blue economy vision requires urgent action to combat climate change, safeguard marine resources, and consider the coastal population that is directly impacted, as well.

Source:

<https://india.mongabay.com/2025/04/what-is-blue-economy-explainer/>



ECO-TOURISM IN INDIA: NURTURING NATURE THROUGH RESPONSIBLE TRAVEL JAI RAJ SINGH SHAKTAWAT

COO | Social Entrepreneur | Media Relations Expert | Independent Journalist | Shaping Narratives for Impact | Building Communities | Driving Change | Experimental Farmer |
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"Take Only Memories, Leave Only Footprints": Why India's Next Great Journey Is Inward

Let's face it—our vacations have become a strange paradox. We escape the chaos of city life only to bring the chaos with us. We climb mountains to find peace, but leave behind plastic wrappers. We chase serenity in forests, then blast Bluetooth speakers under the trees. Somewhere along the line, the selfie outshined the scenery.

But what if travel could be more than just ticking places off a bucket list? What if your next trip not only calmed your mind but also healed the planet?

Enter **eco-tourism**—a quiet revolution unfolding along the riverbanks, hill paths, desert dunes, and mangrove roots of India. It doesn't come with infinity pools or buffet breakfasts. Instead, it offers morning tea brewed over a wood stove in a tribal homestay, forest walks where birds are your only playlist, and stories that stay with you long after your luggage is unpacked.

This isn't some hipster trend designed to make you feel morally superior for skipping room service. It's a return—to roots, to responsibility, to the raw and untamed soul of India that still whispers through its jungles and dances in the folk songs of its villages. Eco-tourism is travel as it was meant to be: immersive, enriching, and deeply respectful.

And make no mistake—this is no small detour. With a country that cradles **four biodiversity hotspots, over 90 national**

parks, and hundreds of indigenous communities, India is poised to become the world's classroom on how to travel with care and curiosity.

So, before you book another trip that ends in souvenir shops and spammed photo dumps, read on. Because the real journey doesn't begin at the airport—it begins with awareness.

Eco-tourism, a blend of ecological awareness and responsible travel, has emerged as a vital counter to mass tourism that often strains natural environments and local cultures. In India, a country rich in biodiversity, traditional knowledge, and cultural heritage, eco-tourism offers an opportunity to explore nature sustainably while empowering local communities. From the Himalayan valleys and Western Ghats to coastal mangroves and desert oases, India's diverse landscapes are home to numerous eco-tourism hotspots. But what makes eco-tourism different is not just the destination—it's the mindset of conservation and community engagement that comes with it.

What is Eco-Tourism?

Eco-tourism is defined by the International Ecotourism Society (TIES) as "responsible travel to natural areas that conserves the environment, sustains the well-being of the local people, and involves interpretation and education." It emphasizes:

- Low-impact travel
- Conservation of biodiversity
- Community involvement and benefit
- Education and awareness for both tourists and locals

In India, eco-tourism has gained momentum as a response to the ecological degradation caused by unchecked tourism in sensitive areas.



Why Eco-Tourism Matters in India

India is home to four biodiversity hotspots: the Himalayas, the Indo-Burma region, the Western Ghats and the Sunderland. With over 90 national parks and 500 wildlife sanctuaries, the country's ecological richness is immense—but also fragile.

- Unchecked mass tourism has led to:
- Deforestation and habitat loss
- Pollution of lakes, rivers, and trails

- Disruption of wildlife
- Cultural dilution
- Waste accumulation in high-altitude and coastal areas

Eco-tourism aims to reverse this damage by limiting the footprint of visitors, promoting local ownership, and protecting indigenous knowledge systems. It supports sustainable livelihoods and helps create environmental stewards out of communities and travellers alike.

Communities Leading Eco-Tourism in India

One of the most inspiring aspects of eco-tourism in India is how local and tribal communities have taken the lead, blending conservation with cultural pride.

1. Spiti Valley, Himachal Pradesh

The high-altitude desert of Spiti has become a model for community-driven eco-tourism. Locals have partnered with NGOs like Ecosphere to promote homestays, waste management, and carbon-neutral travel.

- Homestays reduce the need for concrete hotels and provide direct income to locals.
- Travelers are educated about fragile mountain ecosystems, reducing their impact.

1. Sundarbans, West Bengal

The largest mangrove forest in the world and home to the Royal Bengal Tiger, the Sundarbans is ecologically sensitive. Community-run eco-lodges and solar-powered boat tours help maintain the balance between tourism and protection of wildlife

1. Mawlynnong and Cherrapunji, Meghalaya

The Khasi tribe in these regions practices deep-rooted conservation. Mawlynnong, often dubbed as "Asia's Cleanest Village," showcases how eco-tourism can flourish without damaging cultural integrity. Waste segregation, traditional farming, and bamboo architecture are part of daily life.

1. Periyar Tiger Reserve, Kerala

Here, eco-tourism is managed jointly by the forest department and tribal communities. Activities like bamboo rafting, nature walks, and jungle patrols provide employment to indigenous groups while keeping tourists engaged in non-invasive exploration.

1. Khonoma, Nagaland

India's first green village, Khonoma banned hunting and logging in 1998 and turned to eco-tourism for income. The Angami tribe now runs homestays, treks, and nature tours that teach visitors about their sustainable lifestyle.

Role of the Government and Policy Support

Understanding the possibilities of eco-tourism, the Ministry of Tourism has integrated it in the Incredible India campaign. Most states have their own Eco-Tourism Development Boards, like:

- Kerala Eco-Tourism Society
- Madhya Pradesh Eco-Tourism Development Board
- Some key policies and schemes include:
- Swadesh Darshan Scheme: Focuses on integrated development of theme-based tourist circuits, including eco-tourism.
- National Strategy for Sustainable Tourism (2022): Lays out guidelines for balancing environmental concerns with tourism growth.

However, implementation often falls short, and community-led initiatives remain the most effective on the ground.



Being a Responsible Eco-Tourist: What Can You Do?

Eco-tourism is not just about where you go; it's also about how you behave when you're there. Here are some ways to ensure your travel supports sustainability:

1. Choose Homestays and Local Lodges

Skip the large resorts. Stay with families or locally-owned eco-lodges that reinvest your money into the community.

1. Minimize Waste

Avoid plastic. Carry your own bottle, cloth bags, and reusable cutlery. Always leave the place cleaner than you found it.

1. Respect Local Customs and Culture

Dress appropriately, ask before taking photos, and engage respectfully with community members. Attend cultural programs as a learner, not a spectator.

1. Avoid Wildlife Exploitation

Say no to elephant rides, tiger selfies, or any tourism that exploits animals. Choose safaris and treks that are ethically run and approved by conservation authorities.

1. Conserve Water and Energy

Especially in remote villages and arid zones, resources are scarce. Use water judiciously and turn off lights and geysers when not in use.

1. Educate Yourself and Others

Understand the challenges the community faces and share their stories. Awareness is the first step toward advocacy.

Eco-Tourism and Economic Empowerment

Eco-tourism doesn't just protect nature—it also uplifts people. Communities involved in eco-tourism often experience:

- Better education as earnings fund local schools.
- Improved infrastructure like roads and sanitation.
- Increased pride in cultural heritage and traditions.
- Reduced migration, as youth find opportunities in their hometowns.

By linking livelihoods to nature conservation, eco-tourism creates a mutually beneficial relationship.

Challenges to Eco-Tourism in India

Despite its promise, eco-tourism in India faces several hurdles:

1. Some resorts label themselves "eco" without following sustainable practices.
2. Even eco-destinations can become overcrowded, negating their ecological benefit.
3. There are few enforcement mechanisms to ensure true sustainability.
4. Tourists and tour operators alike may not fully understand what eco-tourism entails.

Addressing these challenges requires greater coordination between governments, NGOs, and community organizations, along with stricter certification and monitoring mechanisms.

The Road Ahead: Eco-Tourism as a Way of Life

India's future lies in preserving its ecological and cultural wealth, not exploiting it. Eco-tourism is not just an industry—it's a philosophy of coexistence. With climate change, biodiversity loss, and urban stress becoming more acute, nature-based travel grounded in responsibility will be more relevant than ever. India's rich tribal traditions, reverence for nature, and spiritual connection to the land position it uniquely to lead the eco-tourism revolution. The success stories of places like Spiti, Khonoma, and Mawlynnong show that it is possible to build a model where tourism thrives without harming the Earth. Eco-tourism in India is a movement. A movement towards sustainability, inclusivity, and mindful living. For tourists, it's an opportunity to not only observe the world, but heal it. For local communities, it's a means to preserve their heritage and secure their future. While for the planet, it's a path of hope. As we tie our boots and stuff our backpacks, let us

recall: we are visitors in nature's home.

Building a Sustainable Future: Partnerships and Innovations

To scale the positive impact of eco-tourism, collaboration between stakeholders is essential. Governments, private enterprises, local communities, and travellers must work together to innovate and invest in sustainable practices.

Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs) can provide the capital and technical expertise required to develop eco-tourism infrastructure without damaging natural ecosystems. From green buildings to waste treatment systems, such innovations can raise the standard for tourism facilities in sensitive areas.

Technology and Eco-Tourism also make a powerful combination. Mobile apps that guide tourists on low-impact behaviour, platforms that connect travellers to verified eco-stays, and digital storytelling that shares community voices can all help shift mainstream tourism towards conscious travel. Blockchain-based traceability in funding local conservation efforts, AI-driven tourist flow management, and virtual reality experiences of protected zones (where physical presence may be harmful) are just a few emerging tools.

Youth and Eco-Education: The Heart of the Movement

No sustainable movement can thrive without educating the next generation. Eco-tourism presents a living classroom for young minds to understand biodiversity, indigenous knowledge, and the importance of harmony with nature. Schools and universities can integrate eco-tourism modules and encourage field visits to model villages and sanctuaries.

Volunteer tourism or voluntourism—where youth travel to contribute to conservation or community projects—can play a vital role in spreading awareness and inspiring lifelong environmental commitment.

Call to Action: A Shared Responsibility

As custodians of a diverse and ancient land, every Indian—traveller, policymaker, business owner, or local inhabitant—shares a role in nurturing eco-tourism. It begins with awareness and leads to action:

- **Tourists** must travel consciously, ensuring their experiences don't come at the cost of local life or ecology.
- **Local governments** must prioritize regulation and transparency in eco-certifications.
- **Communities** must continue to lead with dignity, backed by the right tools and platforms.

- **Corporates and tour operators** must integrate ESG (Environmental, Social, Governance) principles into their tourism models.

Final Thoughts: Travel That Heals

Eco-tourism is not a niche – it's the future of all tourism. India's natural and cultural treasures can only survive the pressures of a

changing world if they are treated with respect, patience, and understanding. As we reimagine our relationship with nature, let our journeys be more than escapes – they must be engagements. With each eco-trip, we write a new chapter of coexistence, resilience, and regeneration.

Let us move from being mere sightseers to

conscious participants. For when we travel with care, we don't just explore the Earth – we protect it.

Source:

<https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/eco-tourism-india-nurturing-nature-through-travel-shaktawat-zcabc>

Sustainable Tourism Practice In Uttar Pradesh: A Study Of Tourist Attractions And Eco-friendly Initiatives

Promoting tourism practices in states: a path towards sustainable development

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ABSTRACT -1

This paper explores sustainable tourism practices in Uttar Pradesh (U.P.), a state in India renowned for its cultural, historical, and religious significance. With growing tourism numbers, the state face challenges related to environmental degradation and resource depletion, particularly in key destinations such as the Taj Mahal, Varanasi, Ayodhya, and Dudhwa National Park. The research highlights various eco-friendly initiatives undertaken by the state, including the Taj Trapezium Zone (TTZ), which restricts pollution around the Taj Mahal, and the Namami Gange Program, focused on cleaning and rejuvenating the Ganges River. Additionally, the paper discusses government policies, such as the Uttar Pradesh Tourism Policy (2023), which promotes investments in sustainable tourism infrastructure through subsidies and public private partnerships. Despite these efforts, challenges such as overtourism, inadequate infrastructure, and insufficient enforcement of environmental regulations continue to hamper the effectiveness of sustainable tourism initiatives. The paper concludes with recommendations for stronger governance, enhanced tourist awareness, and greater community participation to achieve long-term sustainability in U.P.'s tourism sector.

Keywords: Sustainable tourism, Uttar Pradesh, eco-friendly initiatives, Taj Trapezium Zone, Namami Gange, public-private partnerships, overtourism, cultural heritage, community-based tourism

Source: <https://www.ijcrt.org/papers/IJCRT2504745.pdf>

Climate Change and Tourism: A Comprehensive Analysis

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ABSTRACT -2

Tourism in every nation is a key contributor of foreign currency, enhancing the economy and leaving a lasting impression on visitors. Tourism plays a pivotal role in generating employment opportunities for youth and fostering cross-cultural understanding. However; in recent decades the start of the twenty-first century was marked by numerous climate challenges such as heightened temperatures, flooding, wildfires, drought, higher sea levels, and landslides due to heavy rainfall, to name a few. These challenges serve as an obstacle for the tourism and hospitality sectors. This paper aims to understand the various environmental challenges caused by climate change. It emphasizes how vulnerable certain regions are to climate-induced changes and highlights the urgency for adaptation and mitigation strategies. Some strategies for management have been proposed to support the tourism industry. The study employs primary data collected from stakeholders in the tourism industry and secondary data sourced from reputable government publications, academic journals, and internationally recognized websites. A statistical method has been used for data interpretation. The paper recommended a few strategic management solutions to promote sustainable tourism and minimize environmental degradation. These include infrastructure resilience, eco-friendly tourism practices, community engagement, and integrated policy frameworks. By adopting such strategies, the tourism industry can better navigate the evolving.

Keywords: Climate Change, Management, Sustainability, Tourism

Source: https://www.irjms.com/wp-content/uploads/2025/04/Manuscript_IRJMS_03944_WS.pdf

Exploring The Potential Of Bastar Tourism: Cultural Heritage, Natural Beauty, And Sustainable Development

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Bastar, a tribal-dominated region in Chhattisgarh, India, is renowned for its rich cultural heritage, vibrant festivals, and pristine natural landscapes. This paper examines the tourism potential of Bastar, highlighting its unique tribal culture, natural attractions like Chitrakote Waterfalls and Kanger Valley National Park, and the challenges hindering its growth as a global tourism destination. By analyzing opportunities for sustainable tourism, the study proposes strategies to balance economic development with cultural preservation and environmental conservation. The findings suggest that Bastar's tourism sector can thrive through community-based initiatives, improved infrastructure, and targeted marketing, provided socio-political challenges are addressed.

Keywords: Bastar Tourism, Tribal Culture, Sustainable Tourism, Chhattisgarh, Eco-Tourism

Source: https://www.irjmets.com/uploadedfiles/paper//issue_4_april_2025/73512/final/fin_irjmets1745390686.pdf

Eco-tourism Development in Sundarbans: Challenges and Opportunities

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Tourism is currently the largest industry in India, accounting for 15% of foreign exchange earnings, with eco-tourism emerging as the fastest-growing sector. While offering significant economic benefits, global tourism has been linked to environmental degradation and human rights concerns. It is essential to optimize the positive impacts of tourism in India while ensuring responsible management to protect the integrity of natural resources inclusive of forests and flora and fauna. The research reveals that millions of people in the Sundarbans impact one heavily relies on its resources, including forests and wildlife. However, the study observed that the forest degradation is escalating, leading to an increase in endangered and extinct species due to the unsustainable utilization of its resources. In practice, the Sundarbans and its surrounding areas offer significant potential for ecotourism. While the inhabitants of the Sundarbans-dependent surroundings are eager to develop various handicrafts, cultural activities, and processed food items that has a giant fee for the improvement of sustainable eco-tourism. It's far determined that fifty five percent families are at once depending on woodland assets at special ranges and consequently they are able to earn around 15% extra money in compare to their common annual income from the eco-tourism activities. The paper aims to offer an outline of the imaginative and prescient and present practices of ecotourism. For this reason, ecotourism has to be delivered with right monitoring, evaluation and management of ecotourism sites for boosting long term conservation.

Keywords: Sundarbans, environmental degradation, tourism, resources

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