

# ROLE OF ECOTOURISM IN SOCIO ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

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## Introduction: Perspectives of tourism

The word 'tourism' is derived from the word 'tour' which in turn derived from the Latin word "tornos" which means eternal compass or wheel, signifying circular motion. Tourism is composite of activities, services, shops, entertainment, activity facilities and other hospitality services available for individuals or groups that are travelling away from home.<sup>1</sup> Tourism has become a popular global leisure activity. Tourism is currently the world's largest industry and source of foreign exchange. Internationally, tourism occupies a very important place in the socio-economic development of several countries. Ecotourism is the latest addition in tourism industry represents the growing sector of this market.

**Table No 1: Contribution of Travel and Tourism to GDP and Employment**

<b>Contribution of Travel and Tourism to GDP and Employment.</b>	<b>World Average (%)</b>	<b>India</b>
Contribution of Tourism and Travel Economy to GDP.	10.7	5.5
Contribution of Tourism and Travel Industry to GDP.	4.2	2.5
Contribution of Tourism and Travel Economy Employment.	9.5	5.5
Contribution of Tourism and Travel Industry Employment	3.1	2.3

(Sources: WTTC forecast of India, 2007. (Marketing Mastermind, 2007 the ICFAI press.)

## Conceptual Framework of Ecotourism - A Modern Development Ideology

Ecotourism has received increasing attention as it has potentials for generating income while creating incentives for conservation. Ecotourism is travel to natural areas to experience rare and beautiful ecosystems. The central attraction is the quality and uniqueness of the natural environment. Ecotourism is defined as "nature-based tourism that involves education and interpretation of the natural environment and is designed to be ecologically sustainable".

"Responsible travel to natural areas that conserves the environment and sustains the well-being of local people. -The International Ecotourism Society, TIES 1992. (<http://www.ecotourism.org>.) According to the International Ecotourism Society, the ecotourism market has been growing since the 1990's at rate of between 20-34% every year. Although this varies from destination to destination, the average figure is still three times the growth rate of the industry as a whole.

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<sup>1</sup> "Tourism management" -Trade wings institute of management, Page No.1