

# The Growth of Ecotourism - Ecopreneurship the Means - an Introspection

**Biswajit Bhadra**

Department of Commerce, Netaji Nagar College, Kolkata, West Bengal, India  
Army Institute of Management, Kolkata, West Bengal, India

Corresponding Author's Email: biswajitbhadra09@gmail.com

## ABSTRACT

Ecotourism is now widely acknowledged as a potent instrument for protecting forests, wildlife, biodiversity, and beautiful landscapes. It accomplishes this through developing viable, alternative sources of income for people that depend on forests, as well as public and decision-makers are becoming more aware of conservation. To ensure that the communities are interested in the conservation of forests and wildlife, it is crucial to create a sustainable flow of non-extractive financial advantages from the environment for the communities in order to endorse community control and managing the environment. Perhaps the only way to achieve this is through ecotourism. In order to make ecotourism more attractive and effective, ecopreneurship is one of the most important professions that will provide proper guidelines for the enrichment of ecotourism. In this article, an attempt has been made to explore to what extent ecopreneurship contributes to the growth of ecotourism in India.

**Keywords:** *Environment, Ecotourism, Ecopreneurship*

## Introduction

The first atomic bomb was detonated at Alamogordo in 1945, ushering in a new age for mankind—the era of the social sciences. For the first time in his long battle to extract a living from his surroundings, man now has the promise of nearly unlimited control over his physical reality. Thanks to the remarkable success of those scientists who are engaged in doing research on cosmic energy, they have an idea about the sources of energy in the atom. The man now possesses the ability and knowledge necessary to feed, clothe, and house the entire globe. Nevertheless, millions of people go without food, clothing, or housing despite this knowledge (Combs, 1959).

The greatest problems of the time that the human civilisation is facing, are no longer problems of production and control of 'things' but of communication and cooperation among people. Having won control over the material world, the people of the world are now confronted with a problem that was not known to them earlier, which can be ascribed to 'how to control ourselves!' Human beings are not concerned about the atomic bomb, but the fear lies with the persons who may use it because of the fact that

"Fat Man" and "Little Boy" were dropped in Japan in 1945.

It is of no use to mention that human beings have achieved control over 'things' only to find themselves faced with the equally vital problem of learning to live with one another.

It is of no use to mention that the business of doing business was the mantra of the past century. This meant that profit and shareholder value took precedence over employee welfare and environmental protection. While this laissez-faire may have provided some basis for prosperity, it came with high social costs for many and long-term environmental costs for the planet. Corporate social responsibility has been on everyone's lips for years. This implied that a corporation should integrate social principles into all aspects of its operations. The issue was that this truly only applied to profitable pursuits. The issue was that this truly only applied to profitable pursuits. Anything different would be a breach of the corporation's obligation to maximise profits for shareholders. The current time period that the present generation is passing through is different. There is no real scientific reason to question the fact that the world's major ecosystems are all in decline. Why? As per the observation of the United Nations Millennium Ecological Assessment of 2005, human activities are putting so much strain on the world's natural systems that the earth's ability to support future generations can no longer be taken for granted. Former UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan stated that the entire basis for life on Earth is deteriorating at an alarming rate.

In addition to the statements above, it is wise to refer to the UN's 2015 position. Billions of fellow countrymen continue to live in poverty and are denied a life of dignity. Inequality within and between countries is growing. Large gaps exist in terms of opportunity, wealth, and power. Gender inequality is still a major issue. A big worry is unemployment, especially among young people. Global health threats, more frequent and severe natural disasters, escalating conflicts, violent extremism and terrorism, and related humanitarian crises and displacements reduce the development gains achieved in recent decades. A significant portion may be lost. The depletion of natural resources and the detrimental outcomes of environmental degradation, such as desertification, drought, land degradation, freshwater scarcity, and biodiversity loss, have been added to the list of issues facing humanity and are getting worse. Climate change is one of the most significant issues of present time, and because of its detrimental impacts, sustainable development is becoming increasingly challenging for all nations. A sizable portion of the least developed nations, small island developing states, coastal regions, and low-lying coastal states are negatively impacted by climate change, including sea level rise, ocean acidification, and other effects. There is a conflict between the biological processes of Earth and the survival of numerous societies.

Considering all the risks and to mitigate the same the United Nations in 2015 made an attempt as a universal call to take action for the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and in this call, the UN emphasised on the necessity of its elementary needs of

### *The Growth of Ecotourism*

civilisation which are nothing but –

- to end poverty,
- protect the planet, and
- ensure that by 2030 all people enjoy peace and prosperity.

In this journey, the UN has identified 17 SDGs that are to be integrated in such a way that action in one area will affect outcomes in others, and that development must balance social, economic, and environmental sustainability.

What are those 17 SDGs:

1. No poverty,
2. zero hunger,
3. good health & well - being,
4. quality education,
5. gender equality,
6. clean water and sanitation,
7. affordable and clean energy,
8. decent work and economic growth,
9. industry, innovation and infrastructure,
10. reduced inequalities,
11. sustainable cities and communities,
12. responsible consumption and production,
13. climate action,
14. life below water,
15. life on land,
16. peace, justice, and strong institutions,
17. partnerships for the goals. (<https://www.undp.org/>)

What role an entrepreneur is to play in this connection?

It is known to all that entrepreneurship is considered an important engine for economic and non-economic development because it helps create jobs and improve the quality of products and services. The main goal of an entrepreneur is to fill a gap in the market or

enhance how this need is already being met. Different authors have identified entrepreneurial opportunities according to their own perceptions, and these are: the triple bottom line approach, CSR, social entrepreneurship, environmental entrepreneurship, and mainstream entrepreneurship. All actually fall under the purview of sustainable entrepreneurship.

So, in a nutshell, sustainable entrepreneurship endeavours value creation that will be of immense importance for society through creation of opportunity, and maintainable development in an uncertain environment. This demands a willingness to take risks, an inventive mindset, awareness, and focused ethical considerations, and thereby it will help to encounter challenges with respect to society, the economic situation, and the environment.

## **Literature Review**

In this article, an attempt has been made to explore to what extent ecopreneurship contributes to the growth of ecotourism in India.

### **Ecotourism - the concept**

Focused on the improvement or preservation of natural systems through tourism, ecotourism is a distinct subdivision of the tourism sector. For many people, ecotourism means different things. For some, it's a catch-all phrase for outdoor activities, adventures, cultural tourism, and gentle adventure. Ecotourism was first used by Héctor Ceballos-Lascuráin a Mexican environmentalist, in 1983. He used the term "educational ecotourism" to characterise nature-based travel to comparatively undeveloped places. The responsible use of natural resources is ensured by ecotourism, which also creates employment opportunities for locals (Bhattacharya, Chowdhury & Sarkar, 2012).

According to the International Ecotourism Society (2015), ecotourism is a responsible form of nature tourism that involves interpretation and teaching, protects the environment, and enhances the quality of life of locals. The goal of ecotourism is to benefit communities, the environment, and sustainable travel. One of the key areas that ecopreneurs are involved in is ecotourism, as they work to change the industry so that its practises benefit various fabrics of society, including communities, wildlife, and tourism. Eco-entrepreneurs attempt to realise their dual purposes, which encompass both social and financial as well as environmental value creation, and they aim to address unsolved environmental challenges.

The World Conservation Union (Brandon, 1996) observes that ecotourism relates to visiting relatively untouched natural places in an environmentally responsible manner that encourages conservation, has no detrimental influence on the area's native inhabitants, and offers opportunities for their active and fruitful participation in the local economy.

Authors including Berle (1993) introduced concepts like "green entrepreneur," "environmental entrepreneur," and "eco-entrepreneur," in the early 1990s, which have been summarized to "ecopreneur" since then.

### **Importance of ecotourism**

Travel can teach people more than just geographic facts. It gives them the opportunity to totally immerse themselves in the cultures and ways of other people, and it leaves them with enduring memories that are unlikely to be forgotten. Besides the above, there are other reasons behind the importance of ecotourism, and these are as follows:

- Ecotourism benefits both people and the environment, and it's a great way for everyone to learn about sustainable travel.
- Ecotourism encourages economic stability and makes us more sensitive.
- Carbon footprint is decreased through ecotourism. Animals suffer when people fail to travel sustainably, and it is easier than ever to plan a sustainable trip.

### **Ecotourism - some issues**

The phrase "ecotourism" refers to environmentally friendly travel to remote locations with educational value. For calm, contentment, and enjoyment, people are turning to nature across the world.

Ecotourism is founded on three theories: ecological, marketing, and economics. But the human-centric and bio-centric approaches are becoming less popular. The dominance of man is the foundation of the human-centred approach. This strategy highlighted that God gave man the authority to use the natural resources that are given to him to meet his needs. Human superiority is disproved by a biocentric approach. Man is viewed as only a connecting point in the larger ecological system.

This is built on the ideas of respect and trust for one another. Using these two methods as a foundation, the following are the issues related to ecotourism:

Developing a tourist strategy: A comprehensive strategy would cost a lot of money to implement, creating local community capacity for managing and operating the sector, as well as supporting infrastructure.

**Impact of taxation:** This can be seen from two angles: taxes on visitor spending and fiscal taxes and advantages provided to the ecotourism sector. Since the government of India abolished the 20% spending tax and expanded the income tax benefits offered to infrastructure units and hotels' duty-free imports of consumer goods, including alcohol, the impact of taxes on the tourism industry is very significant.

**Roads:** Faster and more effective transportation of tourists and related goods from airports, stations, and tourism properties requires quality roads. The condition of the

roadways has been terrible.

**Airports:** They provide a visitor with their first direct experience. But regrettably, India's airport infrastructure has much to be desired, including crowded airports, unsuitable layouts, and the country's airport authority's monopoly. Proper amenities, including utilities, shopping centres, and lengthy delays in immigration processing, are lacking. Clean airports that make it easy to arrive are a must-have for international tourists, as are accessible information and tour guides and clean public utilities.

**Ecotourism project funding and sustainability:** The development and upkeep of flora and fauna as well as other components of solely bio-physical habitats like natural parks, wildlife refuges, or wet areas are required.

### **Ecopreneurship - the concept**

The phrases "ecological" and "entrepreneurship" are combined to form the term "ecopreneurship." Sometimes an entrepreneur pursues success by taking advantage of market possibilities despite the repercussions. This may be viewed as at odds with the desire to protect the environment and stop environmental harm brought on by market forces. Hence ecopreneurship, which refers to venture activity that involves environmental consciousness, is frequently considered sustainable entrepreneurship (Galkina, 2021). Since the late 1990s, ecopreneurship has become a well-liked area of tourism research. Some scholars have used the word "ecopreneurs" to refer to small-scale business sectors built on the principles of sustainability that supply green services or products while also fostering the economic well-being of nearby communities. Therefore, ecopreneurs handle environmental issues in addition to achieving the economic goals of their communities.

### **Ecopreneurs - their role**

In the adoption of more environmentally friendly business practices, entrepreneurial people and their businesses have a great role to play. Growing environmental awareness is creating one of the largest new worldwide marketplaces as the first decade of the twenty-first century comes to a close. This phenomenon is known as a "clean tech boom," and some believe it will last longer than the dot-com boom that came before it. This development has been motivated by the realisation that business has a crucial role to play in addressing issues like climate change because the traditional response of many environmentalists and governments (namely, to encourage behavioural and attitudinal change among the general population) is insufficient in and of itself to ultimately produce desired environmental outcomes. A crucial part of the sustainability movement, market-based solutions have significantly increased the number of new, so-called green businesses. For academics and decision-makers trying to comprehend the nature of "green" corporate operations, this represents a new stage. Environmental business management has typically concentrated on the how and why

of current companies going green. It has invested a lot of time and effort in researching the resources that can be used to help businesses become more environmentally friendly and sustainable, classifying and categorising how current businesses are responding to sustainability and environmental agendas, and identifying the challenges and incentives that can be used to encourage businesses to "go green."

**Developments:** Ecopreneurship differs from traditional entrepreneurship because it also forges links between environmental advancement and commercial success. Ecopreneurs can profit from environmental concerns by maximising energy and resource use, reducing waste, and utilising and respecting ecosystem services. This initiative therefore began with the notion that environmental issues could be solved by creating environmentally friendly goods and services that offered both commercial opportunities and environmentally sustainable solutions. The Ecopreneurship philosophy is an effective technique to train aspiring entrepreneurs to use their businesses to not only make money but also to contribute to solving major environmental issues. It is a deliberate action with the objective of preserving and enhancing the condition of an environmental resource impacted by human activity. Contrary to what the word implies, it involves managing how human cultures interact with the environment and how their actions affect it. Environmental resource management makes an effort to guarantee that ecosystem services are saved and maintained for fair use by future human generations as well as maintain ecosystem integrity as an objective in itself by taking into account moral, financial, and ecological issues.

### **Ecopreneurship - the mechanism to create ecotourism**

It is plausible that implementing environmentally friendly company practices will present entrepreneurs with a wider variety of opportunities. The transition to a maintainable business framework offers a variety of advantages that resourceful people and businesses can effectively discover and exploit. These include, among other things, the creation of new goods and services, enhancements to the effectiveness of current businesses, fresh approaches to marketing, and alterations to current business models and procedures. However, green entrepreneurship is essential because it may play a big role in the general change to a more sustainable economic paradigm, as well as because it can open up new opportunities for the brave pioneers who recognise and seize them. Entrepreneurs in market-based economies play a critical role in the eventual adoption of green business practises by the greater business community through the leadership they provide to other enterprises. Ecopreneurs serve as a "pull" element that encourages other businesses to aggressively go green, generating competition for the survival of the market by displaying the financial rewards that come from being more environmentally friendly. Several microfinance and company funding programmes have been created for seasoned business owners in order to supply start-up and expansion money for green firms.



Entrepreneurs are looking for possibilities to make remarkable profits, notably those related to the environment. There wouldn't be any entrepreneurs if there weren't lucrative prospects. Since there are many entrepreneurs, it stands to reason that there are a lot more of these profitable chances. Since environmental concerns have gained importance in recent years, a surprisingly large number of lucrative options have been discovered to reduce environmental pollution. Contrary to what is taught by neoclassical economics, free markets are in fact characterised by a persistent disequilibrium that permits the emergence of spectacular gains. The drivers of this disequilibrium are the entrepreneurs who innovate and improve their technology, organisational structure, and business processes. This market imbalance is caused by entrepreneurship's creative destruction as well. They also have multiple "market failures" as their source. For instance, businesses and consumers haven't always chosen the best energy technology, even at the present price. Entrenched oligopolies or monopolies, well-respected regulatory bodies, institutional segregation between decision-makers and the paying customers, and a lack of technical expertise are the most likely reasons for failure.

The market is yet another arena where chances for products and services that are environmentally friendly can be found. Customers are willing to pay more for ecologically safe products. Customers who are concerned about the environment and what they eat are driving up demand for eco-friendly products and services. This served as the main impetus for several businesses to adopt the "green concept" in its entirety. The cosmetics sector may be the model for this innovative strategy that takes into account the components, production, packaging, promotion, and overall image. A variety of inter-organizational collaborations and networks have been established over the past 20 years to increase awareness, share best practices, and coordinate action. The Social Ventures Network, Business for Social Responsibility, and the World Business Council for Sustainable Development are a few examples of these networks. There have also been instances of businesses collaborating with non-profits to advance both business and the environment. For example, Ben & Jerry's and The Body Shop collaborate with Cultural Survival on projects including rainforests. Aside from business collaborations, a number of companies have come forward to emphasise environmental protection. In India, the Tata group of industries is an example. International criteria for sustainable business practices greatly influence the operations of Tata Group enterprises. However, a larger part of the group's actions in this area are motivated by conviction and decision. Its support for initiatives to preserve plant and animal species, enhance the use of land and water, and preserve large expanses of forest and natural areas stems from this. Some examples of ecopreneurship that can be cited under the Tata group are as follows:

### **The Taj Group's 'reef recharge' project**

In order to expand coral coverage close to the resort and promote healthy coral growth



on the nearby reefs, Taj Exotica Resort and Spa and Ocean Dive Maldives collaborated on this initiative in 2011. The diversity of wildlife in the area has already increased.

### **The botanical reserve at Tata Chemicals**

Tata Chemicals built a 150-acre reserve that is home to more than 114 kinds of exotic plants and 21 types of native plants on the side of its soda ash facility in Mithapur, Gujarat. Over 70 different bird species, some of which are endangered, can be found there, along with monitor lizards, the rare star tortoise, jackals, wild boars, and the Neelgai.

### **Habitat of wetlands at tata motors**

Tata Motors has converted a scrubby, desolate area inside its 1160-acre facility in Pune's densely populated Pimpri-Chinchwad industrial district into a natural wetland ecosystem that spans 245 acres. This urban green space acts as both a natural source of oxygen and a haven for migratory birds.

Two categories can be used to categorise the efforts of different Tata companies, both big and small, to preserve and improve the environment in and around their operational areas. First, there is the philanthropic focus of the Tata Trusts, which supports a variety of non-governmental organisations working in fields like the management of natural resources, community development, and livelihoods. The second is the group's contribution to conservation (<https://www.tata.com/community/environment>).

### **Conclusion**

Entrepreneurship is a unique form of existentialism, but ecopreneurship is not just anybody's existential philosophy. Businesses that are not built to be sustainable harm people's health, shorten one's time on Earth, and waste the legacy people wish to leave for future generations, regardless of where they are on the globe. The initiatives taken by different Tata companies, big and small, to safeguard and improve the environment in and around their operational areas can be divided into two groups: first, there is the philanthropic focus of the Tata Trusts, which supports a variety of non-governmental organisations working in fields like the management of natural resources, community development, and livelihoods. The group's involvement in conservation comes in second.

The theoretical possibility that any one or more of the forces covered in this study has the potential to influence change and promote ecoentrepreneurship. Whether such transformation can be maintained over extended periods of time will depend on the aid obtained from other forces. Going green offers few competitive and financial advantages; therefore, it can take some time before ecological ideas find a voice in business. At the grassroots level, where the stakes are lower economically, it appears that there are fewer restrictions on the expression of these values. This is also true at the

higher end of industry, where large industrial enterprises and multinationals must abide by international standards in order to remain competitive.

In the end, the conclusion is that the economy based on fossil fuels that has been in use since the industrial revolution is no longer capable of sustaining the expansion of humanity. The planet's ecosystems, climate, forests, rivers, and oceans would all suffer irreparable harm. Because history has reached a tipping point, the environmental consequences of our global actions must be carefully assessed. Through ignorance or indifference, the earthly environment can be seriously harmed, which is necessary for humankind's existence and well-being. There is a need for a fresh, green energy infrastructure that can grow the economy and foster a secure environment.

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