

Role of Sustainable Tourism in Eastern Regions of India: Prospects and Challenges

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Sustainable Tourism acts as a major weapon for safeguarding natural and physical resources of the environment after bearing all the economic, social, cultural, ecologic and physical constraints and assures a better future with some environmental benefits. Tourism can be sustainable if development meets the needs of tourists and local residents while protecting future opportunities. Sustainable tourism offers benefits for local residents, conservation, development and educational experiences. The Eastern Regions of India holds over 51% of forest areas in the country and it is a high proportion of environmentally sensitive areas. The present study discusses the potentials of sustainable development through eco-tourism.

The paper is divided into three parts. The first part covers the aims and objectives. The aim of the study is to identify the strengths and weakness of sustainable development in this region as well as eco-tourism in the area. The paper is, then followed by literature review and methodology. Various case studies of some selected sites of Eastern India covering North East, West Bengal, Jharkhand and Eastern Part of Uttar Pradesh are discussed. Secondary data have been used to address the objectives in this study. The study reveals that the main potentials of sustainable development in the area through eco-tourism are to increase per capita income, ecological and conservational benefit, improve the life condition, reduce poverty, respectfulness to local culture and positive attitudes of local community, employment opportunity and regional growth. The last part of the paper is summed up by the findings, conclusion and recommendation. There are some obstacles remaining in some famous eco-tourism destinations for sustainable development. These are lack of integrated planning, improper entrepreneurship, inadequate infrastructure, poor community participation and inequitable development. The study has given emphasize on human development, social cohesion, environmental benefit, technological change, proper planning, infrastructure development and proper community involvement for sustainable development through eco-tourism in some famous regions. The prospects and challenges of tourism in these eastern states are discussed. Finally, if collective efforts can be taken for eco-tourism activities in the area, it will ensure the sustainable development in the eastern region of the country.

Key words: *Sustainable-eco-tourism*