

Community Development through Eco-tourism: With Reference to Nicobar Islands of India

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Tourism development is a priority for the Andaman administration. Still, tourism industry is in the infant stage in these Islands. Only a few Islands in the Andaman group are open for tourists and they are reaping the benefit of tourism industry. Nicobar groups of islands, which are bestowed with bounty of natural and unique cultural resources are not yet opened for tourism and reaping the benefit of tourism. This makes them dependent on the subsidies and meager traditional opportunities for the community to develop themselves. The objectives of the study are to identify trends in eco-tourism in the Andaman and Nicobar Islands and assess the perceptions of its community towards eco-tourism and development. The study is falling to an empirical research domain and used survey approach for primary data collection. A detail questionnaire was prepared for this purpose of research and 150 respondents were interviewed by using face to face approach.

Few people are involved in eco-tourism development. (Who are they and what their characteristics are) Nicobar Island has both natural and cultural resources for eco-tourism promotion. The potential includes water based adventure tourism, village stay, rich indigenous culture, tradition, dance, fairs and festivals, ethnic food, indigenous handicraft etc. However, these tremendous opportunities are yet to be translated into a reality for tourism. The study established that more residents are willing to participate in eco-tourism development and planning in Car Nicobar.

Key words: *Eco-tourism, Sustainable development, Community, Islands, Indigenous people*