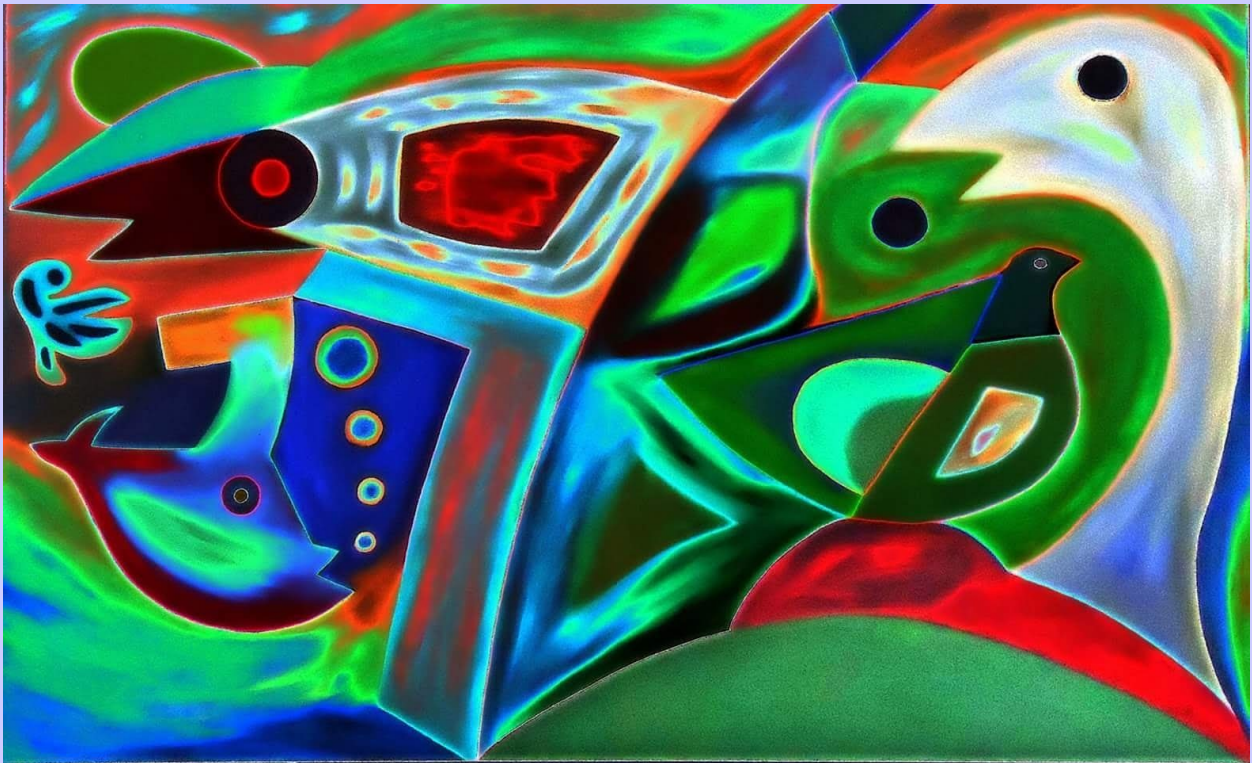


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# Ecotourism Source of Poverty Alleviation and Natural Conservation in Kashmir India

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**Abstract.** Ecotourism is associated with nature and poverty alleviation. Ecotourism is believed to be significant for the generation of income, sustainability of the environment, political enablement of local societies as well as for educational purposes. Ecotourism generates economic benefits at local to national level and thus create incentives to preserve the resources. With its backward and forward linkages with other sectors of the economy, ecotourism is an effective tool for poverty alleviation and ensuring growth with equity. The Jammu and Kashmir has a vast potential to become one of the India's best ecotourism destinations and having numerous attractive and beautiful tourist spots. Ecotourism helps in sustainable development. Ecotourism is believed to be associated with various challenges which are environmental deterioration, inability to contribute to local economy as well as cultural exploitation and deterioration. The study would attempt to explore the potential sites of ecotourism for future development in Kashmir and would examine the correlation between ecotourism and natural conservation with regard to the perception of tourist and conservation agencies. The study is exploratory in nature but empirical tools are also applied to highlight the potential of ecotourism. Jammu and Kashmir is blessed with diverse geographical features, offers a plethora of attractions to tourists. A balance between development and the environment should be created.

**Keywords:** Ecotourism, Poverty Alleviation, Linkages, Environmental deterioration and conservation.

## 1. Introduction

The eco-friendly tourism movement evolved in the 1970s as a reaction to many negative consequences of tourism prostitution, crime, drugs trafficking, and cultural devastation, destruction of natural landscape and natural resources, and economic discrepancies. The movement grew to include cultural organizations, educational groups, ethnic institutions and friendship tours. Active participation and grass root involvement of local communities at different level is felt. Benefit sharing was greatly highlighted where the local community stands at the core of the debate. Conservationists and planners were realized the role of community in controlling the wilderness of the tourist destinations.

The concept of ecotourism was coined in 1981 by Hector Ceballos-Lascurain, a Mexican environmentalist, through the Spanish term "turisimo ecologico". He has been involved in the conservation of rainforest areas by promoting ecological tourism and he was one of the very first promoters of ecotourism. In the 1990s, he took part, along other practitioners and established scholars, in international discussions on the potential of ecotourism, and offered guidelines for active involvement by local communities and on the management of protected areas [1].

Ecotourism is a subset of the tourism industry that reflects an ethos of responsible involvement with the environment and with local cultures. Ecotourism includes, but is not limited to, nature hiking, diving, wildlife viewing, and cultural tourism, usually with some attention given to the ecosystem, biodiversity education,

or sustainability. Hector Ceballos - Lascurain used to describe nature based travel to relatively undisturbed areas with an emphasis on education. Since then, ecotourism has been one of the fastest growing sectors of global tourism. Ecotourism has been widely promoted as an important conservation tool and one way for people to have a positive impact on the environment. Ecotourism has the potential to improve public education on cultural and biological diversity, conserve wild habitats, and improve economic conditions for host nations. Ecotourism guarantees the sustainable use of environmental resources, while generating economic opportunities for the local people.

The foundation of ecotourism is associated with poverty alleviation all over the world. That is, ecotourism is believed to be significant for income generation, improvement of people's standards of living, sustainability of the environment, political enablement of local societies as well as for educational purposes. The interaction between tourists and poor local communities through ecotourism has an immense potential to enhance the political, economic, social and cultural aspects of those poor local communities [2].

The most accepted and agreeable definition of ecotourism today is defined by, The Ecotourism International Society in North Bennington. By 1989, the International Ecotourism Society was launched and they defined ecotourism as, "responsible travel to natural areas that conserves the environment and improves the well-being of local people".

## **2. Research methodology**

The data for the study was collected from both primary and secondary sources. Primary data was collected from tourists and conservation agencies with the help of structured questionnaires. The survey was intended to understand the perception of tourists and conservation agencies towards Ecotourism and Environmental conservation. Secondary data is collected from government agencies, research reports, statistical reports and articles published in newspapers, electronic media and websites.

The primary information can be used as supplementary in the form of comments, interviews, observations, opinion, site analysis and community analysis etc. Mostly primary data was collected through interviews with the local community and local authorities.

The proposed study would attempt to achieve the following objectives:

1. To explore the potential sites for future development of ecotourism in Kashmir.
2. To examine the correlation between ecotourism and natural conservation with regard to the perception of tourist and conservation agencies.

Data collection process proceeded by an interplay of questionnaire and unstructured interview. Although the data collected is largely based on quantitative research techniques but face to face, unstructured interviews were also conducted simultaneously to substantiate the results obtained from questionnaire. The results were checked for reliability through Cronbach's alpha and the validity was ensured through measurement of total item correlation. As the results fulfilled the given criteria for initial assessment and purification, the researcher proceeded with the updated questionnaire for data collection. The data collected through questionnaires was analyzed using a multi-method statistical approach. Predominantly, statistical methods such as Factor analysis, Principal Component Analysis (PCA), Reliability Analysis, Spearman's correlation, Pearson's correlation and T-Test were used to analyze the collected data.

#### 4. Discussion and Findings

Ecotourism has immense potential to help the global fight against poverty. A WTO initiated study that in developing countries, particularly in the least developed countries, tourism is almost universally the leading source of economic growth, foreign exchange, investment and job creation. Ecotourism has the potential to help reduce rural outmigration to urban areas, increase employment opportunities for the urban poor, and give them additional income to provide for their families in the rural areas. Tourism provides employment opportunities by diversifying and increasing incomes that help reduce the vulnerability of the poor. Through increased national income, additional funds can be diverted to poverty reduction programs.

Ecotourism is accepted as a means that can satisfy local people. "It provides a means of empowerment to disadvantaged groups such as many native people (including women) by opening an economic and management role for them in ecotourism" (Gauthier, 1993). Tourism can contribute in other significant ways to poverty reduction. For instance, it can help communities to reclaim their cultural pride, sense of ownership and control over local development, reduce vulnerability through diversification and develop skills and entrepreneurial capacity.

Ecotourism is now one of the fastest growing segments of the economy in many parts of the world. It signifies travel to relatively remote and undisturbed natural settings where flora, fauna and cultural heritage are seen as the main attractions. Besides protection and conservation of environment, it involves empowerment and participation of the local communities as important beneficiaries of the tourist activity. Earnings from visitors are generally ploughed back into preserving and conserving the natural environs of the destination and enhancing the cultural integrity of the local people. It is now being widely recognized that ecotourism, if properly envisioned, can have a substantial impact on both rural economy and poverty alleviation.

It is essential to involve the local communities in these activities as one of the primary stakeholders, as tourists expect to see ecotourism as a sustainable practice and, besides acquiring new knowledge and experience, they want to ensure that their visit also has a positive impact on the local community and natural resources. This would require formulation of stringent policies across a number of public services, so as to permit a new balance of social forces to meet the needs and aspirations of host communities while at the same time safeguarding the environmental resource base concerned [4].

Kashmir is a land of numerous valleys and places which are very beautiful and attracts and fascinate the tourists throughout world. In this work, the researcher aimed to assess the contribution of ecotourism in alleviating poverty in Kashmir valley, which is covered by the mighty Himalaya blessed with coniferous forests, large lush green meadows, rich wildlife and fresh water bodies in the form of lakes, rivers, streams and springs. The Kashmir Valley has a long list of places (Table 1) which reflects the nature's beauty at its best which attract tourists and ecotourism becomes accessible and conceivable and places are universally acknowledged by different names.

Table 1. Places to visit in Kashmir

Places to visit	Description
<b>Srinagar – Heaven On Earth</b>	Srinagar is undoubtedly one of the most beautiful and <b>famous places to visit in Kashmir</b> as well as in India. From boating to trekking, bird watching to water skiing, Srinagar place has it all. Srinagar is a first stopover for every traveler and there are long list of <b>places to visit in Srinagar</b> . This city is enclosed by the green mountains and the main highlight being the Dal Lake which is the gem of the city. This place gives a close outlook to the Kashmiri cuisine and the state's culture.
<b>Gulmarg – Ski Your Way</b>	Famously known as the 'Meadow of Flowers', Gulmarg is a treat to the eyes with its spread of vibrant flowers against snow capped mountains as backgrounds. Gulmarg is considered to be one of the <b>best places to visit in Kashmir</b> for all right reasons.

	This region of Kashmir is also known as the adventurer's paradise because of its vast options of skiing in the snow while enjoying the views around. The <b>best time to visit Kashmir for snowfall</b> is in winter season i.e. December-January.
<b>Sonamarg – The Land Of Gold</b>	Sonamarg, as the name suggests, is famous as the 'Meadow of Gold'. An endless stream of stunning flowers and undulated trekking routes are its attractions. The <b>best season to visit Kashmir</b> would be in summer i.e. May-June.
<b>Pulwama – All About Natural Springs &amp; Apple Orchards</b>	Famously named as the "Rice Bowl Of Kashmir", this quaint village in Jammu and Kashmir is a great place to witness the nature's real beauty. Situated at a distance of 40 Kms from Srinagar, this place has many tourist sites. This multi-hued city offers amiable weather, pleasant odor saffron fields, and malleable citizens.
<b>Pahalgam – Get Allured By Picturesque Views</b>	Pahalgam is considered as an illustration of the heaven on earth which is situated at an altitude of 2740 m. It is situated at a distance of 95 Kms from Srinagar and surrounded by dense forests, beautiful lakes and meadows of flowers. Tranquility and serenity are the other names of Pahalgam. This tiny town is known to suck out all the stress of every visitor and is therefore counted amongst the <b>best places to visit in Kashmir</b> .
<b>Anantnag – Home To Temples</b>	Adorned with flourishing gardens and freshwater springs, Anantnag is a divine destination. There is a number of famous tourist places such as Verinag and Daksum which everyone comes Kashmir visits here.
<b>Nishat Garden – Perfect For A Laid-Back Day</b>	This one is considered to be amongst the largest Mughal Gardens located on the banks of Dal Lake. Nishat Garden is also known by the name the Garden of Bliss and rightly so, as there are breathtaking Zabarwan Mountains in the backdrop. This garden is historically famous and Asaf Khan, who was the brother of Nur Jahan designed it.
<b>Shalimar Garden – Photographer's Paradise</b>	This garden was established in the year 1616 by the well-known Emperor Jehangir especially for his wife, Nur Jahan. After some time, another garden named Faiz Baksh was added to this one. One sees a canal inside the garden that has been embellished with polished stones at the boundaries.
<b>Yusmarg – Sit In Tranquility</b>	This is considered to be the best place when it comes to observing the natural aspects of Kashmir. This is one of the top <b>tourist places in Kashmir</b> that is not much explored. 4 kilometers downhill from this place, one sees the beautiful Nil Nag Lake.
<b>Vaishno Devi – Haven For Pilgrims</b>	Nestled in Trikuta Hills, Vaishno Devi is a town famous for the temple that goes by the name of the town. It is said that Vaishno Devi is a manifestation of Goddess Durga from Hindu mythology. This place is sacred as it is counted among one of the 108 Shakti Peeth. Services like palanquins, ponies, and helicopters are also available for those who cannot walk or wants to read early.
<b>Patnitop – Picture-Perfect Paradise</b>	Endless meadows and picturesque views describe Patnitop the best. Blanketed by the sky-high Himalayas covered with snow, Patnitop has created a niche in the tourism industry due to its surreal beauty. Along with this, the place also offers some thrilling activities. It proves to be one of the top <b>tourist places in Kashmir</b> .
<b>Amarnath – Marvel At The Natural Occurrences</b>	Amarnath is a haven for pilgrims and is counted among the top places to visit in Kashmir. Worshippers of Lord Shiva visit this place every year to take blessings and witness the enshrined image of Shiva. People from all over the world resort to this place and indulge 'Amarnath Yatra'. It is believed that this is the same cave where Lord Shiva told about the secret of life and eternity to Goddess Parvati.
<b>Dachigam National Park – Flora &amp; Fauna</b>	Kashmir not only has an abundance of beauty but also has abundant flora and fauna. Dachigam national Park is where you will find indigeneous species of plants and animals. Even the landscapes of this place are truly mesmerizing. It is only 22 km from Srinagar and can be reached easily by taking a private taxi. Its natural beauty makes it one of the most-visited <b>Kashmir tourist places</b> .
<b>Khilanmarg – Paradise For Skiing</b>	Only those who have visited Khilandmarg will agree that it is the <b>most beautiful place in Kashmir</b> . The valley put you in a trance because of its alluring landscapes and breathtaking panoramas. It is 6 km ahead of Gulmarg and only a few people dare to visit this place. In summers, the aromatic flowers are the major attraction while skiing in winters lures tourists to this place.

The list of beautiful places to visit in Kashmir is quite long. These places are quite famous and boast nature's finest beauty. These tourist places that one must visit strengthen and revitalize tourism industry and enlighten and appraised ecotourism.

Kashmir attracts lots of tourists to visit the religious and historical sites due to great cultural heritage and social cohesion. The annually holy Hindu pilgrimage

traditionally culminated on the auspicious day of Shraavan Purnima as per Hindu Calender depicted from 2001-18 chanting of religious hymns and prayers (Table 2).

**Table 2. The annually holy Hindu pilgrimage  
Pilgrims Visited Amarnath Shrine from 2008 to 2018 (lakhs)**

Year	Pilgrims Visited Amarnath Shrine
2001	1.91
2002	1.10
2003	1.70
2004	4.00
2005	3.88
2006	3.47
2007	2.96
2008	5.33
2009	3.81
2010	4.55
2011	6.21
2012	6.35
2013	3.54
2014	3.72
2015	3.5
2016	2.2
2017	2.60
2018	2.85

Sources: Deccan Herald (DH) News Service, Srinagar, July 27, 2019, www.deccanherald.com

Ecotourism resulted into participation of local communities in tourism sector which has improved the socio-economic condition of people in Kashmir and helped in reduction of poverty. It can lead to social, educational, economic and technological empowerment in Kashmir [5].

Ecotourism promotes an enhanced appreciation of natural environments and environmental education by exposing visitors and locals to nature and conservation. It encourages travelers to protect the environment and contribute to local communities. Tourism meets the needs local residents while protecting future opportunities. The valley of Kashmir is dotted with the places of great tourism potential. However, natural resource depletion and environmental degradation associated with tourism are often serious problems in tourism rich region of Kashmir. There is a greater need to regulate tourism and the environment, not only to preserve environment for future generation but in the interest of tourism business and quality of life of local residents.

**Table 3. Tourist Arrivals to Kashmir Valley since 1955**

Year	Indian	Foreign	Total
1955	48190	2830	51020
1965	35700	7430	43130
1975	148320	19300	167620
1985	465600	38020	503620
1995	320	8200	8520
2005	585700	19680	605380
2010	701504	25984	736488
2015	1274276	37666	1311942

Source: Directorate of Tourism Kashmir

The current status of ecotourism development in Jammu and Kashmir is still

young and very small. It has gradually grown since eighties. The potential ecotourism activities attractive to different type of visitors/ tourist in Jammu and Kashmir are presented in Table 4.

Table 4. The potential ecotourism activities

<b>Forest based activities</b>	Travelling to natural areas, taking part in treks and long excursions, trekking, jeep safari jungle tours, camping, wildlife viewing, bird watching and visit to wetlands.
<b>River bound activities</b>	Viewing of river borders wildlife, rafting, canoeing, fishing, boating.
<b>Culture bound activities</b>	In view of the immense possibilities and spread of cultural riches in the state, we also propose that some cultural visits can be involved within the larger framework of ecotourism activities. These include visitations to temples located within parks and so on.

Ecotourism is accepted as a means that can satisfy both local people in need of gainful economic activity as well as conservationists. Tourism can contribute in other significant ways to poverty reduction. For instance, it can help communities to reclaim their cultural pride, sense of ownership and control over local development, reduce vulnerability through diversification and develop skills and entrepreneurial capacity (WTO, 2002).

Ecotourism to some degree and other forms of tourism have been successful in reducing poverty in the areas where this business is established. With sufficient care and planning ecotourism has great potential for poverty alleviation. It can be a tool not only for the economic improvement of local host economy but also the country as a whole. It can also help address other dimensions of poverty and complement conservation efforts (Richard, Paul & Trent, 2017).

Ecotourism has become an important strategy for local development in underdeveloped regions. Many studies show that tourism development has significant impacts on impoverished rural communities where the option for development is limited. Development of ecotourism impact poorer positively and help them to come out of poverty. It is an approach to open opportunities for the poor. There is a need for enhancement of the linkage between ecotourism and poor so that they can reap the benefits of tourism development. Evidence shows that sustainable tourism is a great tool for development and poverty alleviation in developing region. Forecasts of high tourism growth in developing regions, where widespread poverty exists, has led to considerable interest in tourism as a tool for poverty alleviation (Wear & Neil, 2009).

It is a powerful tool for growth in developing countries. Tourism creates important opportunities to diversify the local economy by providing jobs, generating income, diversifying the economy, protecting the environment, and promoting cross-cultural awareness. Many international initiatives have revealed that tourism can make a substantial contribution to socioeconomic development and help to improve living conditions for local people in different destinations (WTO, 2004). The study reveals that tourism has not only provided a supplementary income and new employment opportunities to the rural community, but also has increased the appreciation of local culture and rural lifestyle. The following ecotourism sites have been explored that act as a Catalyst of Poverty Alleviation.

Table 5. Ecotourism sites as Catalyst of Poverty Alleviation

<b>Hokersar</b>	This wetland is located close to Srinagar and can be developed as a popular ecotourism site with basic accommodation for overnight guests. This will provide an opportunity for the birdwatcher to make the most of the visit rather than travelling back and forth to Srinagar. In conjunction with Dachigam, this site holds great potential for further development and transformation into an ideal ecotourism venture. The wetlands of
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	Hokersar and Shallbaug could be used for bird watching by the bird lovers by travelling through Shikaras. Watch towers at strategic locations should be planned.
<b>Dachigam National Park</b>	Dachigam is a beautiful National Park with lush forests, fast flowing rivers, stunning landscapes and of courses the dramatic seasonal changes. The park is proximate to the popular tourist destinations of Gulmarg and also not very far from Srinagar city. The park has tremendous tourism potential considering the diversity in terrain and its proximity to Srinagar. With the revival of tourism over the past few years, there has been an unprecedented increase in the flow of tourists to this National Park The famous Mughal Gardens Nishat, Shalimar and Cheshmashahi are located near to the Dachigam National Park.
<b>Gulmarg Wildlife Sanctuary</b>	Much of the sanctuary is suitable for mountaineering. Sites like Alphatri, Khilanmarg, etc. located in this area have since a long time remained favourite destinations for rock climbers and trekkers. The sanctuary, therefore, can have a vital role in boosting the tourism potential of the area. Gulmarg like Pahalgam is also a popular tourist destination. However, the Gulmarg Wildlife Sanctuary needs a large-scale infrastructure development for habitat improvement/protection/conservation and management for developing as an ecotourism spot.
<b>Bangus Valley</b>	An unexplored region, <b>Bangus Valley</b> is situated in the northwestern region of <i>Tehsil Handwara</i> in the Kupwara district. <i>128 kilometres away from Srinagar</i> , this pristine site is perched at an altitude of 10,000 ft above the sea level. A unique blend of ecological systems can be found here including <i>grasslands, flora, fauna, Coniferous forests</i> etc. Sprawling over an area of more than 300 square kilometres, <i>the valley is bifurcated into two: the main valley, known as "Bodh Bangus", and the smaller valley or "Lokut Bangus"</i> .
<b>Sattbarran Kalaroos</b>	Located in the gorgeous Lolab Valley in Kupwara, Sattbarran Kalaroos is a unique sight. A beautiful place bathed in the ancient architecture, it is situated in the region of Kalaroos on the outskirts of the <i>Madmadav village</i> . The ancient caves dating back to the stone-age are located on the backside of Sattbarran, where one can witness the hand paintings done on the walls dating back to the period of stone-age. It is believed that these caves hold tunnels which lead till Central or North Asia, all the way up to Russia.
<b>Wayan</b>	<i>Wayan</i> is a beautiful place, which is a famous picnic spot for the locals in Kupwara. Recently Kashmir University Satellite Campus has been established here.

Source: - Ecotourism Development Plan for Jammu and Kashmir, 2015

These Ecotourism sites has become a major source of income for local people either through direct employment such as managers, guides, housekeepers, and boat drivers, or from sales of foods, handicrafts, transportation or other services (Fig. 1). Eventually have implications in the livelihoods of local people; particularly of those whose paid work opportunities and income sources are somehow limited.

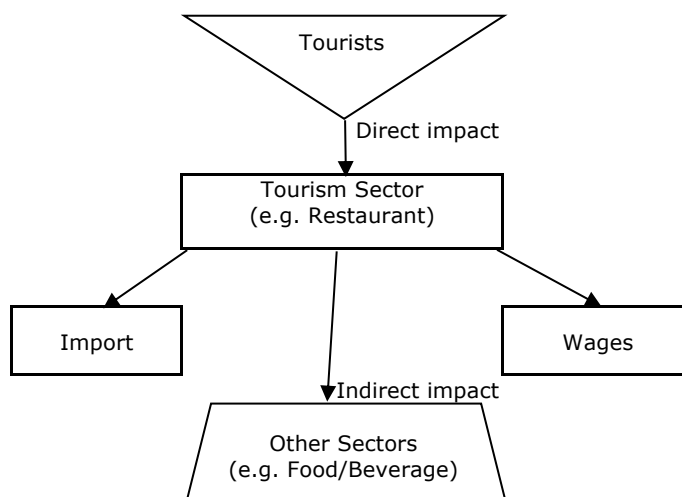


Fig. 1. Ecotourism's Economic Impact and Leakage.

Source: WTO (2000) cited in UNEP, 2001.

The main objective of study is to analyze the correlation between Ecotourism and natural Conservation based on primary data collected from tourists and Conservation Agencies. Keeping in mind the mentioned objectives, a structured questionnaire was developed and used as an instrument to gauge the factors measuring Ecotourism and natural Conservation. For this purpose, factor analysis was done to extract various constructs. In the present study Spearman’s and Pearson Correlation is used to study the correlation between Ecotourism and natural Conservation with regard to the perception of Tourists and Conservation agencies.

Table 6. Demographic profile of respondents

Demographics	Category	Frequency	Percent
Gender	Male	210	52
	Female	198	48
	Total	408	100
Type	Tourist	378	92.6
	Conservation Agency	30	7.4
	Total	408	100
Nationality	Indian	366	89.70
	Foreigner	42	10.29
	Total	408	100
Age	20 - 39	342	83.8
	40-59	62	15.2
	60-79	4	1
	Total	408	100
Education	Primary school	11	2.6
	High school	28	6.8
	College	72	17.64
	University	297	72.8
	Total	408	100
Income	Below Rs. 50000	152	37.25
	Rs. 50000 - 99999	168	41.17
	Rs. 100000 -149999	48	11.76
	Rs. 150000- 199999	40	9.80
	Total	408	100

As shown in Table 6, it is observed that the gender composition of the tourists was nearly even, male (52%) and female (48%). The large number of the respondents were tourists (92.6%) followed by conservation agency (7.4%). More than half of the respondents were Indian (89.70%) and the rest (10.29%) were foreigners. Majority of the respondents (83.8%) were of the age group of 20-39 years while only 1% of the respondents were above 59 years of age. Most of the respondents had an education till university level (72.8%) followed by the college level (17.64%), only a handful had been to primary school (2.6%). The majority of the respondents had an income between Rs. 50000 – 99999 below (41.17%).

In the current study, factor analysis was carried on two data sets i.e. Ecotourism and natural conservation to reduce the variables and to determine the underlying factors of two constructs. Moreover, it explained the dimensions associated with data variability.

#### Measures of Ecotourism

20 items (20 Questions in questionnaire) of ecotourism were explored retained by pilot study statistics. All the preliminary number of items (20) was subjected to factor analysis, which later got reduced to 18 items and were retained for attaining

reliable results. After initial refinement and purification, 5 factors were produced by PCA.

### Comprehensive Process of Factor Analysis on Ecotourism

The process of factor analysis conducted has been explained below:

Table 7. KMO and Bartlett's Test (Against items that measure Ecotourism)

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy		0.594
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	1952.511
	Df	191
	Sig.	0

From the above table it can be seen that the dataset understudy is suitable for Exploratory Factor Analysis, as the KMO value is 0.594. The dataset indicates that the sample is adequate and we may proceed with the Factor Analysis. For Factor Analysis to be recommended suitable, the Bartlett's Test of Sphericity must be less than 0.05. Bartlett's Test of Sphericity in the table above also indicates that our results are statistically significant. Bartlett's Test of Sphericity relates to the significance of the study and thereby shows the validity and suitability of the responses collected to the problem being addressed through study. Therefore, Factor Analysis can be used for the dataset. Principal Component Analysis (PCA) has been used as Extraction Method. PCA is an extraction procedure that tries to reduce the number of variables to a smaller set of variables. With the help of this method unique results may be determined. Thus, the original data may be reconstructed from the result. As this method takes the total variation among the variables, therefore, the solution generated will include as many factors as there are variables although it is unlikely that they will meet all the criteria for retention. In other words, the variables which have over 30% extracting are included to study further. PCA uses an orthogonal transformation to convert a set of observations of possibly correlated variables into a set of values of linearly uncorrelated variables called principal components that are interpreted as dimensions. ECET... is the item code of the statements used in questionnaire.

Table 8. Communalities (Ecotourism)

	<b>Initial</b>	<b>Extraction</b>
ECET4	1	0.554
ECET5	1	0.563
ECET6	1	0.476
ECET7	1	0.411
ECET8	1	0.534
ECET10	1	0.383
ECET11	1	0.675
ECET12	1	0.519
ECET13	1	0.563
ECET14	1	0.694
ECET16	1	0.608
ECET17	1	0.415
ECET18	1	0.531
ECET21	1	0.391
ECET22	1	0.623
ECET23	1	0.489
ECET24	1	0.307
ECET46	1	0.411
ECET48	1	0.552
ECET57	1	0.655
Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis		

Since there is no single variable in Table 8 that is less than 30%, all the items

will be considered for making the factors.

Table 9. Total Variance Explained (Ecotourism)

Component	Initial Eigen values			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings			Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative, %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative, %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative, %
1	3.757	18.784	18.784	3.757	18.784	18.784	2.297	11.486	11.486
2	1.923	9.614	28.397	1.923	9.614	28.397	2.157	10.787	22.273
3	1.785	8.926	37.323	1.785	8.926	37.323	2.125	10.626	32.899
4	1.546	7.729	45.052	1.546	7.729	45.052	1.916	9.581	42.48
5	1.353	6.766	51.818	1.353	6.766	51.818	1.867	9.337	51.818
6	-	-							
19	0.29	1.448	98.751	0.29	1.448	98.751			
20	0.25	1.249	100	0.25	1.249	100			

As per the methodology of PCA, the total factors that will be made are 5 as there are five Eigen values greater than 1 and those 5 factors will comprise of 51.818% of the total information. Another important aspect that needs mention is the Rotated Component Matrix. While deciding how many factors one would analyze is whether a variable might relate to more than one factor. Rotation maximizes high item loadings and minimizes low item loadings, thereby producing a more interpretable and simplified solution. The rotated component matrix is one which helps to inspect the extracted factors from different angle to see if the inference from all of them points to one output. On the basis of this matrix, the factors are constructed; that is, a specific variable gets a place in a particular factor. In the present study PCA with Varimax rotation is used. Varimax is an orthogonal rotation that from the perspective of individual subjects measured on the variables, seeks a basis that most economically represents each individual—that is, each individual can be well described by a linear combination of only a dimensions. Varimax is so called because it maximizes the sum of the variances of the squared loadings (squared correlations between variables and dimensions).

Table 10. Rotated Component Matrix (Ecotourism)

	Components				
	1	2	3	4	5
ECET5	0.739				
ECET57	0.685			0.346	
ECET6	0.567				
ECET46	0.487				
ECET22		0.684		0.336	
ECET8		0.666			
ECET17		0.607			
ECET21		0.488			0.334
ECET48	0.429	0.486			
ECET13	0.345	0.409		0.384	-0.335
ECET11			0.795		
ECET23			0.627		
ECET12			0.555		
ECET10			0.489		
ECET14				0.817	
ECET7				0.472	
ECET24				0.447	
ECET4					0.729
ECET16	0.413				0.649
ECET18			0.472		0.504

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.  
 Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization  
 a. Rotation converged in 12 iterations

Principal component analysis with varimax rotation was used to factor the belief

statements of the respondents. This analysis yielded five factors with Eigen values greater than 1. The factors on the basis of Rotated Component Matrix by using Varimax with Kaiser Normalization method are:

- FACTOR1: ECET5, ECET6, ECET46, ECET57 explained 18.784% of the total variance.
- FACTOR2: ECET8, ECET17, ECET21, ECET22 explained 9.614 % of the total variance.
- FACTOR3: ECET10, ECET11, ECET12, ECET23 explained 8.926% of the total variance.
- FACTOR4: ECET7, ECET14, ECET24 explained 7.729% of the total variance.
- FACTOR5: ECET4, ECET16, ECET18 explained 6.766% of the total variance.

**Measures of natural Conservation**

Initially it was performed on all 29 items that were explored and retained by pilot study. But based on the initial exploratory results, preliminary number of items (29) was further reduced to 21 for attaining reliable results. After initial refinement and purification, only 5 factors were produced by Principal Component Analysis.

**Comprehensive Process of Factor Analysis on natural Conservation**

The process of factor analysis conducted by the researcher has been explained below

Table 11. KMO and Bartlett's Test (Against items that measure Ecotourism)

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy	0.817	
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	5816.666
	Df	406
	Sig.	0

From Table 11 it can be seen that the dataset understudy is suitable for Exploratory Factor Analysis, as the KMO value is 0.817. The dataset indicates that the sample is adequate and we may proceed with the Factor Analysis. This also gets satisfied as the Bartlett's Test of Sphericity in the table above indicates that our results are statistically significant.

In case of factor analysis of natural conservation Principal Component Analysis (PCA) has been used as Extraction Method. With the help of this method unique results were determined. The variables which were extracted over 30% were included to study further.

The table 12 indicates that all the variables may be considered for constructing factors because all extractions are over 30%.

Table 12. Communalities (Natural Conservation)

	Initial	Extraction
ECET15	1	0.514
ECET20	1	0.635
ECET26	1	0.476
ECET27	1	0.673
ECET28	1	0.557
ECET29	1	0.407
ECET30	1	0.593
ECET31	1	0.507
ECET32	1	0.648
ECET33	1	0.678
ECET34	1	0.491
ECET35	1	0.636
ECET36	1	0.66
ECET37	1	0.393
ECET38	1	0.593
ECET39	1	0.654
ECET41	1	0.449
ECET42	1	0.572
ECET43	1	0.637
ECET44	1	0.58
ECET47	1	0.511
ECET50	1	0.484

ECET51	1	0.492
ECET52	1	0.505
ECET53	1	0.613
ECET54	1	0.387
ECET58	1	0.667
ECET59	1	0.639
ECET60	1	0.526
Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis		

Table 13. Total Variance Explained (Natural Conservation)

Component	Initial Eigen values			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings			Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative, %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative, %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative, %
1	9.015	31.086	31.086	9.015	31.086	31.086	5.278	18.199	18.199
2	2.341	8.072	39.157	2.341	8.072	39.157	3.231	11.142	29.341
3	1.843	6.356	45.514	1.843	6.356	45.514	2.931	10.106	39.447
4	1.642	5.663	51.177	1.642	5.663	51.177	2.684	9.255	48.703
5	1.327	4.576	55.753	1.327	4.576	55.753	2.045	7.05	55.753
--									
20									
Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis									

Since there are five Eigen values which are greater than one in table, this indicates that one may construct five factors by using PCA approach of extraction. The constructed five factors explained 56.22% of the variations as a total. On the basis of this matrix, the factors were constructed; that is, a specific variable was placed in a particular factor. In the present study PCA with Varimax rotation was used.

Table 14. Rotated Component Matrix (Natural Conservation)

	Components				
	1	2	3	4	5
ECET32	0.723				
ECET27	0.698			0.301	
ECET15	0.682				
ECET33	0.673	0.301			0.364
ECET20	0.662				-0.404
ECET28	0.651				
ECET39	0.639	0.305	0.37		
ECET26	0.609				
ECET44	0.547	0.373		0.303	
ECET42	0.541	0.34			
ECET29	0.522				
ECET53		0.709			
ECET41		0.614			
ECET36		0.6			0.53
ECET52		0.596			
ECET51		0.533		0.3	
ECET38			0.706		
ECET30			0.652		
ECET31			0.645		
ECET60			0.506	0.396	
ECET59			0.501	0.464	-0.341
ECET47		0.434	0.445		
ECET58				0.79	
ECET50	0.322			0.522	
ECET43	0.378	0.493		0.497	
ECET37				0.452	
ECET54			0.327	0.348	

ECET35				0.302	0.665
ECET34	0.349				0.561
Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.					
Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization					
a. Rotation converged in 10 iterations					

The Rotated Component Matrix helps us to construct factors as given bellow.

FACTOR1: ECET15, ECET20, ECET26, ECET27, ECET28, ECET29, ECET32, ECET33, ECET39

FACTOR2: ECET41, ECET51, ECET52, ECET53

FACTOR3: ECET37, ECET50, ECET58

FACTOR4: ECET30, ECET31, ECET38

FACTOR5: ECET34, ECET35

## 5. Reliability Analysis

The purpose of a reliability analysis is to determine how well a set of items, i.e., observed variables, go together into a single scale. Reliability analysis also reveals how strongly each item in the scale is associated with the overall scale. This is called item-total correlations.

Reliability analysis is usually based on reliability coefficient which is named as Cronbach's alpha. This coefficient has a maximum value of 1.0. Generally speaking, when a collection of items (i.e., a scale) has a Cronbach's alpha of .70 or larger; the scale is considered to be reliable. The value of this measure shows the percentage of reliability of the data. It has been proposed that Cronbach's measure  $\alpha$  can be viewed as the expected correlation of several tests that measure the same construct. By using this definition, it is implicitly assumed that the average correlation of a set of items is an accurate estimate of the average correlation of all items that pertain to one construct. In the current study, the researcher has run a separate reliability analysis for the items related to Ecotourism and a separate reliability analysis for the items measuring natural conservation.

### ***Reliability Analysis (For items that measure Ecotourism)***

The dataset under study comprises of the reliability analysis of the items that measure "Ecotourism" and the same have been shown below. Throughout the analysis the researcher bears in mind that for a scale to be considered sufficiently reliable, the Cronbach's measure  $\alpha$  must be greater than 0.70.

Table 15. Scale and Reliability Statistics (Against items that measure Ecotourism)

No. of Items	Mean	Variance	Std. Deviation
20	38.64	45.393	6.737

Table 16. Reliability Coefficient (Against items that measure Ecotourism)

Total Cases	No. of Valid Cases	No. of Exclude Cases	No. of Items	Cronbach's Alpha ( $\alpha$ )
408 (100%)	364	44	20	0.749
	-89.20%	-10.80%		

As  $\alpha = 74.9\%$ , one may conclude that the study (data set) is reliable.

Table 17. Item- Total Statistics (Ecotourism)

	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item Total Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
ECET4	36.51	42.627	0.167	0.751
ECET5	36.85	42.054	0.325	0.738
ECET6	36.92	41.954	0.33	0.738
ECET7	36.59	42.884	0.20	0.747
ECET8	36.2	41.077	0.244	0.747
ECET10	36.83	41.899	0.348	0.737
ECET11	36.99	41.911	0.301	0.74
ECET12	36.87	41.459	0.366	0.735
ECET13	36.67	41.161	0.342	0.737
ECET14	37.09	42.737	0.221	0.745
ECET16	36.44	39.96	0.356	0.735
ECET17	36.61	42.173	0.354	0.737
ECET18	36.68	42.143	0.308	0.739
ECET21	36.42	41.008	0.307	0.74
ECET22	36.26	38.129	0.497	0.721
ECET23	37.02	41.917	0.374	0.736
ECET24	36.37	41.075	0.231	0.748
ECET46	36.77	41.391	0.339	0.737
ECET48	36.87	40.027	0.416	0.73
ECET57	37.15	42.58	0.306	0.74

Table shows the correlation between each item and a scale score that excludes that item (uses all the other items, but not that one). The maximum item- total correlation is of ECET22 which is 0.497 and minimum item-total correlation is of ECET4 which is 0.167. One may look for items that, if deleted, will lead to substantial increase in the scale of  $\alpha$ .

**Reliability Analysis (For items that measure Natural Conservation)**

The dataset under study comprises of the reliability analysis of the items that measure "Natural Conservation" and the same have been shown below. Throughout the analysis the researcher bears in mind that for a scale to be considered sufficiently reliable, the Cronbach's measure  $\alpha$  must be greater than 0.70.

Table 18. Scale Statistics (Against that measure Natural Conservation)

No. of Items	Mean	Variance	Std. Deviation
29	47.81	137.121	11.71

The mean value of 29 items is 47.81 with of 11.710 average distances from mean.

Table 19. Reliability Coefficient (Against that measure Natural Conservation)

Total Cases	No. of Valid Cases	No. of Exclude Cases	No. of Items	Cronbach's Alpha ( $\alpha$ )
408 (-100%)	386	22	29	0.92
	-94.60%	-5.40%		

As  $\alpha = 92\%$ , one may conclude that the under-study data set is reliable.



Table 20. Item-Total Statistics (Natural Conservation)

	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item Total Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
ECET15	46.17	127.889	0.511	0.918
ECET20	46.41	131.587	0.378	0.919
ECET26	46.12	126.97	0.472	0.918
ECET27	46.34	128.568	0.588	0.917
ECET28	46.21	128.238	0.604	0.916
ECET29	46.48	130.782	0.496	0.918
ECET30	46.16	126.965	0.517	0.918
ECET31	46.19	128.267	0.49	0.918
ECET32	46.33	127.577	0.672	0.916
ECET33	46.24	127.287	0.602	0.916
ECET34	46.16	129.653	0.445	0.918
ECET35	46.08	128.301	0.503	0.918
ECET36	46.02	129.916	0.389	0.919
ECET37	46.31	130.611	0.467	0.918
ECET38	46.08	125.739	0.495	0.918
ECET39	46.39	126.853	0.663	0.916
ECET41	45.84	128.997	0.329	0.922
ECET42	46.1	124.954	0.709	0.915
ECET43	46.1	126.416	0.622	0.916
ECET44	46.28	125.819	0.666	0.915
ECET47	46.01	129.333	0.468	0.918
ECET50	46.07	127.453	0.606	0.916

Table shows the correlation between each item and a scale score that excludes that item (uses all the other items, but not that one). The maximum item-total correlation is of ECET42 which is 0.709 and minimum item-total correlation is of ECET41 which is 0.329. All other items also have positively correlation. One may look for items that, if deleted, will lead to a - substantial increase in the scale a.

**Respondents: tourist only**

The below dataset has been achieved after taking into consideration the responses of the tourists group only. The Rotated Component Matrix, helped in constructing new factors as given below:

Table 21. Ecotourism - New Variables (Respondents: Tourist Only)

<b>Factor-1:</b> Creating Awareness and Local Involvement.	The variable –Creating Awareness and Local InvolvementII is the mean of the items ECET5, ECET6, ECET46 and ECET57
<b>Factor-2:</b> Minimizing Negative Impact on Environment	Factor -2: The variable –Minimizing Negative Impact on EnvironmentII is the mean of the items ECET8, ECET17, ECET21 and ECET22
<b>Factor-3:</b> Mix of Tourism and natural Conservation	Factor -3: The variable – Mix of Tourism and natural ConservationII is the mean of the items ECET10, ECET11, ECET12 and ECET23
<b>Factor-4:</b> Upliftment of Local Communities	Factor – 4: The variable –Upliftment of Local CommunitiesII is the mean of the items ECET7, ECET14 and ECET24
<b>Factor-5:</b> Responsible Travel to Natural Areas	Factor – 5: The variable –Responsible Travel to Natural AreasII is the mean of the items ECET4, ECET16 and ECET18
<b>Major Factor:</b> Ecotourism (Tourist)	The Variable –Ecotourism (Tourist)II is the mean of all the above new variables of Ecotourism. (i.e. Mean of Factor 1, 2, 3, 4 & 5)

Table 22. Natural Conservation - New Variables (Respondents: Tourist Only)

<b>Factor-1:</b> Efficient Planning and Proper Waste Disposal	The variable –Efficient Planning and Proper Waste Disposal is mean of ECET15, ECET20, ECET26, ECET27, ECET28, ECET29, ECET32, ECET33 and ECET39
<b>Factor-2:</b> Green Building Standards and Efficient use of Resources	The variable –Green Building Standards and Efficient Use of Resources is mean of ECET41, ECET51, ECET52 and ECET53
<b>Factor-3:</b> Creating Awareness and Proper Site Inspection	The variable –Creating Awareness and Proper Site Inspection is mean of ECET37, ECET50 and ECET58
<b>Factor-4:</b> Ambient Air Quality Water Quality and Noise Quality	The variable –Ambient Air Quality Water Quality and Noise Quality is mean of ECET30, ECET31 and ECET38
<b>Factor-5:</b> Recycling	The variable –Recycling is mean of ECET34 and ECET35
<b>Major Factor:</b> Natural Conservation (Tourist)	The Variable – Conservation (Tourist) is the mean of all new variables of natural conservation. (i.e. Mean of Factor 1, 2 3, 4 & 5)

**Respondents: Conservation Agency Only**

The below dataset has been achieved after taking into consideration the responses of the Tourists group only. The Rotated Component Matrix, helped in constructing new factors as given below:

Table 23. ECOTOURISM - NEW VARIABLES (Respondents: Conservation Agencies Only)

<b>Factor-1:</b> Creating Awareness and Local Involvement	The variable –Creating Awareness and Local Involvement is the mean of the items ECET5, ECET6, ECET46 and ECET57
<b>Factor-2:</b> Minimizing Negative Impact on Environment	Factor-2: The variable –Minimizing Negative Impact on Environment is the mean of the items ECET8, ECET17, ECET21 and ECET22
<b>Factor-3:</b> Mix of Tourism and natural Conservation	Factor -3: The variable –Mix of Tourism and natural Conservation is the mean of the items ECET10, ECET11, ECET12 and ECET23
<b>Factor-4:</b> Upliftment of Local Communities	Factor – 4: The variable –Upliftment of Local Communities is the mean of the items ECET7, ECET14 and ECET24
<b>Factor-5:</b> Responsible Travel to Natural Areas	Factor – 5: The variable –Responsible Travel to Natural Areas is the mean of the items ECET4, ECET16 and ECET18
<b>Major Factor:</b> Ecotourism (Conservation Agencies)	The Variable –Ecotourism (Conservation Agencies) is the mean of all the above new variables of Ecotourism. (i.e. Mean of Factor 1, 2 3, 4 & 5)

Table 24. Natural Conservation - New Variables (Respondents: Conservative Agencies Only)

<b>Factor-1:</b> Efficient Planning and Proper Waste Disposal	The variable –Efficient Planning and Proper Waste Disposal is mean of ECET15, ECET20, ECET26, ECET27, ECET28, ECET29, ECET32, ECET33 and ECET39
<b>Factor-2:</b> Green Building Standards and Efficient Use of Resources	The variable –Green Building Standards and Efficient Use of Resources is mean of ECET41, ECET51, ECET52 and ECET53
<b>Factor-3:</b> Creating Awareness and Proper Site Inspection	The variable –Creating Awareness and Proper Site Inspection is mean of ECET37, ECET50 and ECET58
<b>Factor-4:</b> Ambient Air Quality Water Quality and Noise Quality	The variable –Ambient Air Quality Water Quality and Noise Quality is mean of ECET30, ECET31 and ECET38
<b>Factor-5:</b> Recycling	The variable –Recycling is mean of ECET34 and ECET35
<b>Major Factor:</b> Natural Conservation (Conservation Agencies)	The Variable –Natural Conservation (C. Agencies) is mean of all new variables of natural conservation. (i.e. Mean of Factor 1, 2 3, 4 & 5)

### **Normality Distribution**

Assessing Normality of the data is paramount for the reason that it would determine the application of various statistical measures. In order to assess normality of variables the Shapiro-Wilk and Kolmogorov-Smirnov tests are applied. Both these tests are suitable for numerical continuous or quasi-continuous variables.

Significance level is set at  $\alpha=5\%$ . H0: Data is normally distributed; H1: Data is not normally distributed.

Table 25. Tests of Normality (For Tourists)

	<b>Kolmogorov – Smirnova<sup>a</sup></b>			<b>Shapiro-Wilk</b>		
	Statistic	Df	Sig.	Statistic	Df	Sig.
Ecotourism	0.061	378	0.002	0.985	378	0.001
Natural Conservation	0.08	378	0	0.932	378	0
a. Lilliefors Significance Correction						

As the test statistics of both variables assessed by both tests drive p-value below the significance level, it can be concluded that data are not normally distributed. H0 is rejected for both variables.

Table 26. Perception of Conservation agencies. Tests of Normality (For Tourists)

	<b>Kolmogorov – Smirnova<sup>a</sup></b>			<b>Shapiro-Wilk</b>		
	Statistic	Df	Sig.	Statistic	Df	Sig.
Ecotourism	0.15	30	0.083	0.958	30	0.274
Natural Conservation	0.142	30	0.127	0.936	30	0.072
a. Lilliefors Significance Correction						

As the test statistics of both variables assessed by both tests drive p-value above the significance level, it can be concluded that data is normally distributed. H0 is retained for both variables.

Thus, it may conclude that there is a positive relationship between ecotourism and natural conservation with regard to the perception of tourists arriving in Kashmir. There is also a positive relationship between ecotourism and natural conservation with regard to the perception of conservation agencies operating in Kashmir.

The ecotourism in Kashmir, where nature and culture is plentiful and to gain a greater understanding of the relationship between conservation and ecotourism, while at the same time adding to existing research and helping develop ecotourism in Kashmir. The study is conducted to determine the relationship of ecotourism and natural conservation with regards to the perceptions of tourists and conservation agencies. A total of 408 respondents were selected for the study, out of which 30 were local conservation agencies composed of government officials, NGOs and travel firms and 370 were tourists. A questionnaire is distributed measuring eco-tourism and natural conservation and the level of perception of the respondents to each, then; responses were tabulated, tested for normality and analyzed for significant results. The correlation between ecotourism and natural conservation is examined with regards to the perceptions of tourists and conservation agencies alike.

Data shows that there is a significant and positive relationship between ecotourism and natural conservation as perceived both by tourists and conservation agencies. Also, it was found that there is no significant difference between the perception of tourists and conservation agencies with regard to the relationship between ecotourism and natural conservation. This indicates a high level of awareness of the link between these two concepts as inextricable and necessary in any touristic activity. Implications for on the conduction of tourism in Kashmir highlights a stronger local tourism policy and framework that is responsive to environmental concerns as

well as strengthening awareness of both locals and tourists. Lastly, doing so has allowed us to suggest ways to strengthen the development of ecotourism in Kashmir.

## 6. Conclusion

Various tendencies also occur in the understanding of ecotourism upon changing living conditions. Unless, attention is paid now for developing tourism in ecologically sustainable manner and maintaining environmental integrity, it may cause irreparable damage. To encourage community support for conservation and the consequent protection of natural resources, a direct connection needs to be ascertained between conservation, ecotourism and the benefits that accrue to the community from it, whether collective or individual. The study work starts with the Evolution of Ecotourism that provides the background information and definition of ecotourism. The main body of the study is an attempt to identify the unexplored tourist spots. It describes in detail the important unexplored ecotourism spots.

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## **Aims and Objectives**

Published online by Institute of Certified Specialists twice a year, **Journal of Digital Art & Humanities (JDAH)** is an international peer-reviewed journal which **aims** at the latest ideas, innovations, trends, experiences and concerns in the field of the digital arts & humanities. JDAH bridges humanitarian, artistic, and scientific disciplines, allowing author(s) to express the views on the subjects studied using modern digital/information technology. It is a nexus for information exchange among academia and industry addressing theory, criticism, and practice. The effective dissemination of original ideas/results generated by the human brain and presented/reflected in articles created using modern information/digital technology **is the main objective of JDAH.**

Topics to be discussed in this journal include the following: Digital Journey; Ethical Climate in the digital age; Human Factor in Healthcare in the digital age; Health Psychology in the digital age; Role of Human-Computer Interaction in Psychology; The Critical Thinking Initiative; Ecotourism in the digital age.

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