

PROBLEMS AND PROSPECTS OF ECO-TOURISM IN INDIA, WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO 'BHITARKANIKA', ODISHA

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ABSTRACT

Ecotourism is a dynamic and effective instrument that integrates 'ecology' with 'economy' for benefit of both. Well-planned eco-tourism can benefit both protected areas and residents of surrounding communities by linking long-term biodiversity conservation with local, social and economic development.

Bhitarkanika is a unique habitat with a lush green mangrove forest on the sides of meandering creeks and the tilde mud flats located in the Kendrapara district of Odisha, India. It is the second largest mangrove eco-system in India after Sunderbans and is home of diverse flora and fauna so intricately linked with each other. It forms the deltaic region of the rivers Baitarani and Bramhani. This area was not approachable from outside due to hostile conditions and lack of any communication whatsoever. After 1951 large scale encroachment on forest land took place due to expansion of agriculture.

KEYWORDS: Amphibian, Ayurvedic, Ecotourism, Estuarine Crocodile, Flora, Macro Fauna, Mangroves, Olive Ridley Sea Turtle, Reptiles, Wild Life Sanctuary.