



BHARATHIDASAN UNIVERSITY

Tiruchirappalli- 620024,
Tamil Nadu, India

Programme: M.Sc., Environmental Science and Sustainable Management

Course Title : **GEOSPATIAL DATA MODELLING AND INFORMATICS**

Course Code : 21PGEC03-2

Module-I

Introduction to Sustainable Ecotourism

Dr. M.Prashanthi Devi

Professor

Department of Environmental Science and Management

The background features abstract, overlapping geometric shapes in various shades of green, ranging from light lime to dark forest green. These shapes are primarily located on the left and right sides of the slide, framing the central text. The overall aesthetic is clean and modern, with a focus on natural, earthy tones.

SUSTAINABLE ECOTOURISM

An Introduction

- ▶ Definitions
- ▶ Keywords
- ▶ Difference between various tourisms
- ▶ Key personalities



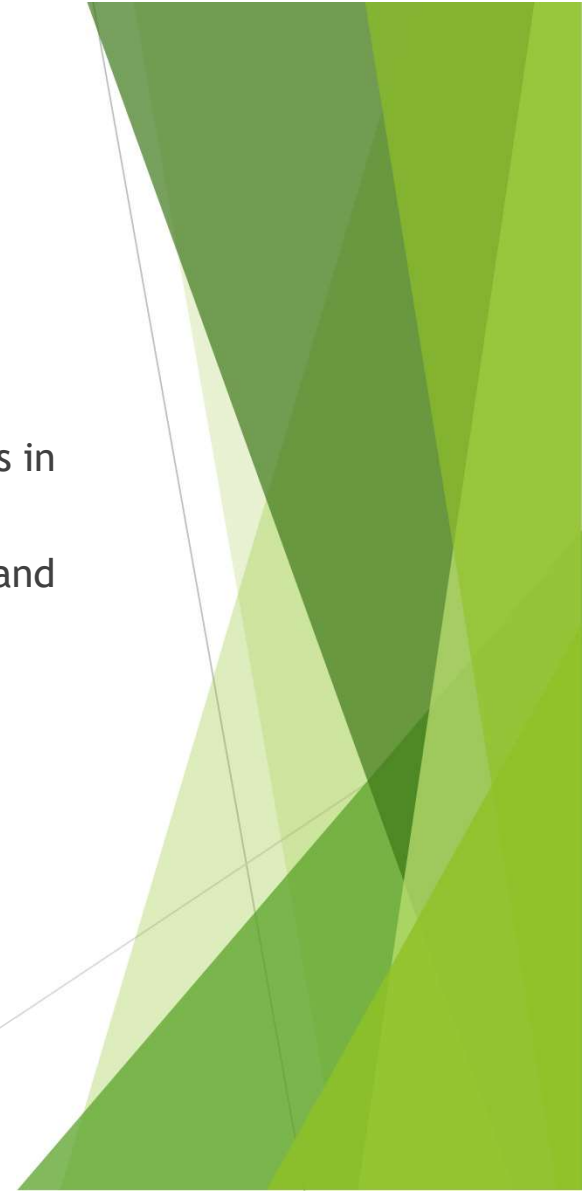
Tourism

- ▶ The practice of traveling for pleasure.
- ▶ Thus, a tourism which contains a visit to an Ecosystem is known as Eco- tourism.
- ▶ But, that is not all.
- ▶ Eco-tourism is not only travelling to such Ecosystems, but also conserving them.



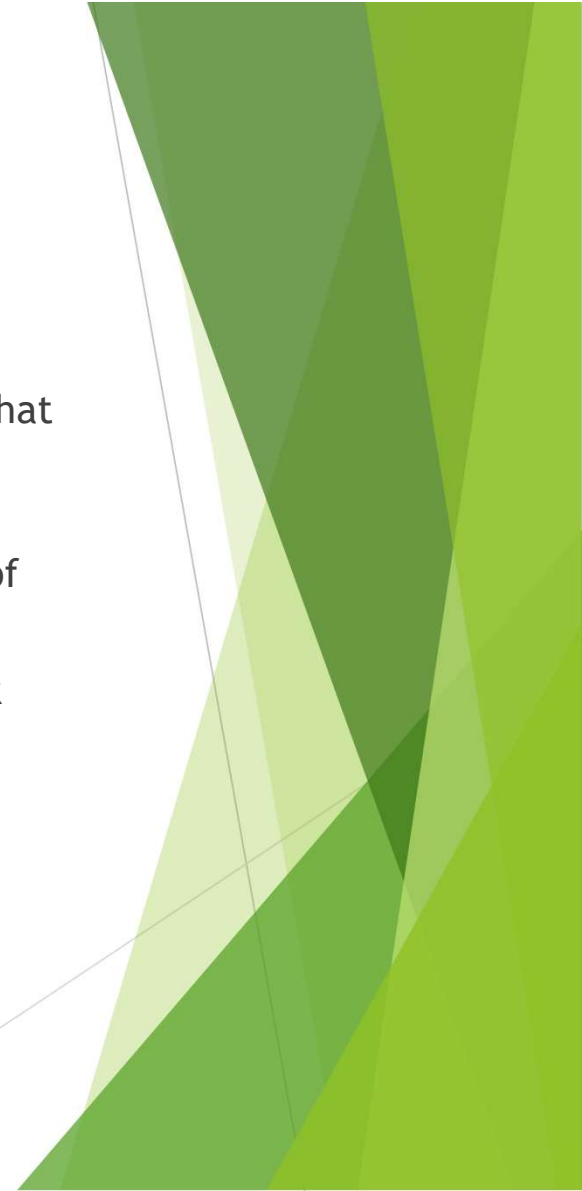
Ecosystem

- ▶ Ecosystem is the system in which we live - the system which include the earth, the water, the sky and of course the living and the non-living objects in all these systems.
- ▶ It is a dynamic complex of plant, animal and micro-organism communities and their non-living environment interacting as a functional unit.



What is Ecotourism?

- ▶ Perhaps the most over-used and misused word in the travel industry. But what does it mean?
- ▶ The International Ecotourism Society defines it as "responsible travel to natural areas which conserves the environment and improves the welfare of the local people".
- ▶ A walk through the rainforest is not eco-tourism unless that particular walk somehow benefits that environment and the people who live there.
- ▶ A rafting trip is only eco- tourism if it raises awareness and funds to help protect the watershed.



Defining The Experience:


- ▶ Eco-tourism
- ▶ Adventure Travel
- ▶ Sustainable Tourism
- ▶ Responsible Tourism
- ▶ Nature-Based Tourism
- ▶ Green Tourism
- ▶ Multi-Sport Adventures
- ▶ Cultural Tourism



Defining The Experience:

Clearly all of these definitions are debatable.

- ▶ What one person or company calls "eco" another calls "sustainable" and so on.
- ▶ The main distinction between these terms is the motives and ethics behind them.
- ▶ Is the environment being cared for?
- ▶ Is there genuine effort to help the local economies?
- ▶ Are resources being left intact for future generations?
- ▶ Is the local culture being honored and valued and not just photographed?

- 
- ▶ The term ecotourism was coined in 1983 by “Hector Ceballos Lascurain” a Mexican environmentalist, and was initially used to describe naturebased travel to relatively undisturbed areas with an emphasis on education.
 - ▶ Ecotourism guarantees the sustainable use of environmental resources, while generating economic opportunities for the local people (Farrell & Runyan 2001; Bhattacharya, Chowdhury and Sarkar, 2011).
 - ▶ Ecotourism itself is meant to be a sustainable form of natural resource-based tourism. Even though ecotourism lacks a concrete definition, there are many wellrecognized definitions that have formed a clear picture of its core principles

Ecotourism

- ▶ For the International Ecotourism Society (TIES), ecotourism is defined as:

"Responsible travel to natural areas that conserves the environment, sustains the well-being of the local people, and involves interpretation and education"

Ecotourism should provide direct financial benefits for conservation and local people and is focused on the conservation of natural resources.

Ecotourism: What is it?

One of the first definitions of ecotourism was made in 1983 by the Mexican architect Héctor Ceballos-Lascuráin, who defined it as follows:

"That form of environmentally responsible tourism that involves travel and visitation to relatively undisturbed natural areas with the object of enjoying, admiring, and studying the nature (the scenery, wild plants and animals), as well as any cultural aspect (both past and present) found in these areas, through a process which promotes conservation, has a low impact on the environment and on culture and favours the active and socioeconomically beneficial involvement of local communities".

Ecotourism

Tourism to places having unspoiled natural resources.

Ecotourism

Tourism to exotic or threatened ecosystems to observe wildlife or to help preserve nature.

Ecotourism is the maintenance of very small-scale, low density tourist developments, usually in locations where the environment is particularly fragile or sensitive to human activity, so that degradation does not occur in those areas.

Ecotourism is the term applied to tourism and travel that pays special attention to environmental concerns.

Ecotourism seeks to educate travellers on conservation of the environment and respect for different cultures. It also pursues the creation of an ecological conscience, encouraging more activism among visitors so that they become enthusiastic and effective conservation agents.

The Australian Commission on National Ecotourism Strategy calls it:

“**[Ecotourism is]** nature-based tourism that involves education and interpretation of the natural environment and is managed to be ecologically sustainable” .

The International Ecotourism Society defines Ecotourism as:

“**[Ecotourism is]** responsible travel to natural areas that conserves the environment and improves the welfare of local people”.

ECOTOURISM is a sustainable kind of travel since according to its premises, it contributes to sustainable development.

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT is the one which seeks to optimize the present social and economic benefits, without compromising the potential to obtain similar benefits in the future.

It is also referred to as **ETHICAL TOURISM** because it seeks the wellbeing of local communities without leaving the appreciation and conservation of the environment aside.

The terms **ECOLOGICAL TOURISM** and **NATURE BASED TOURISM** are synonyms for **ECOTOURISM**.

ECOTOURISM seeks to improve local communities' welfare, by boosting their economic and social development, creating economic opportunities which in turn will produce sustainable benefits in time. Therefore, it is an activity which promotes employment as well as economic and social development, acting as an alternative income source for social sectors living in hard economic situations.

- 
- ▶ Martha Honey's definition is becoming the **'standard definition'**.
 - ▶ From her book: **"Ecotourism and Sustainable Development"**.
 - ▶ **She has seven (7) defining point.**
 - Involves travel to natural destinations
 - Minimizes Impact
 - Builds environmental awareness
 - Provides direct financial benefits for conservation
 - Provides financial benefits and empowerment for local people
 - Respects local culture
 - Supports human rights and democratic movements

Ceballos Lascurain (1987) (Joshi, 2011)	Ecotourism is defined as travelling to relatively undisturbed natural areas with specific objective of studying, admiring and enjoying scenery and its wild animals and plants as well as existing.
Conservation International (Ziffer, 1989).	A form of tourism inspired primarily by the natural history of an area, including its indigenous cultures. The ecotourist visits relatively undeveloped areas in the spirit of appreciation, participation and sensitivity. The ecotourist practices a non-consumptive use of wildlife and natural resources and contributes to the visited areas through labor or financial means aimed at directly benefiting the conservation of the site and the economic well-being of the local residents.
The National Ecotourism Strategy (1994) (QuickStart Guide to a Tourism Business, 2006)	Ecotourism is nature based tourism that involves education and interpretation of the natural environment and is managed to be ecologically sustainable. This definition recognises that 'natural environment' included cultural components and that 'ecologically sustainable' involves an appropriate return to the local community and long term conservation of the resource.
McCormick, 1994	Purposeful travel to natural areas to understand the culture and natural history of the environment, taking care not to alter the integrity of the ecosystem, while producing economic opportunities that make the conservation of natural resources beneficial to local people
World Conservation Union (Brandon, 1996)	Environmentally responsible travel and visitation to relatively undisturbed natural areas, in order to enjoy and appreciate nature that promotes conservation, has low negative visitor impact, and provides for beneficially active socio-economic involvement of local populations.
Honey, 1999	Travel to fragile, pristine, and usually protected areas that strive to be low impact and (usually) small scale. It helps educate the traveler; provides funds for conservation; directly benefits the economic development and political empowerment of local communities; and fosters respect for different cultures and for human rights.
Weaver, 1999	Interest in ecotourism, now widespread among tourism planners and marketers, is rationalized by a number of popular assumptions regarding the sector's potential economic, environmental, and socio-cultural benefits
Weaver, 2001	Ecotourism is a form of tourism that fosters learning experiences and appreciation of the natural environment, or some component thereof, within its associated cultural context'

Characteristics of an Ecotourism Business

According to [Patterson \(2002\)](#), characteristics of an ecotourism business are that it:


- ▶ Have a low impact upon a protected area's natural resources and recreation techniques.
- ▶ Involve stakeholders (individuals, communities, ecotourists, tour operators and government institutions) in the planning, development, implementation and monitoring phases
- ▶ Limits visitation to areas, either by limiting group size and/or by the number of groups taken to an area in a season
- ▶ Supports the work of conservation groups preserving the natural area on which the experience is based.
- ▶ Orients customers on the region to be visited.
- ▶ Hires local people and buys supplies locally, where possible.
- ▶ Recognizes that nature is a central element to the tourist experience.
- ▶ Uses guides trained in interpretation of scientific or natural history.
- ▶ Ensures that wildlife is not harassed.
- ▶ Respects the privacy and culture of local people.

Ecotourism has six characteristics.

These are:

- a) ecotourism involves travel to relatively undisturbed natural areas and/or archeological sites,
- b) it focuses on learning and the quality of experience,
- c) it economically benefits the local communities,
- d) ecotourists seek to view rare species, spectacular landscapes and/or the unusual and exotic,
- e) ecotourists do not deplete resources but even sustain the environment or help undo damage to the environment, and
- f) ecotourists appreciate and respect local culture, traditions, etc.



- 
- ▶ It focuses primarily on experiencing and learning about nature, its landscape, flora, fauna and their habitats, as well as cultural artifacts from the locality.
 - ▶ A symbiotic and complex relationship between the environment and tourist activities is possible when this philosophy can be translated into appropriate policy, careful planning and tactful practicum ([Rahman, 2010](#)).

eco-tourism to sustainable ecotourism

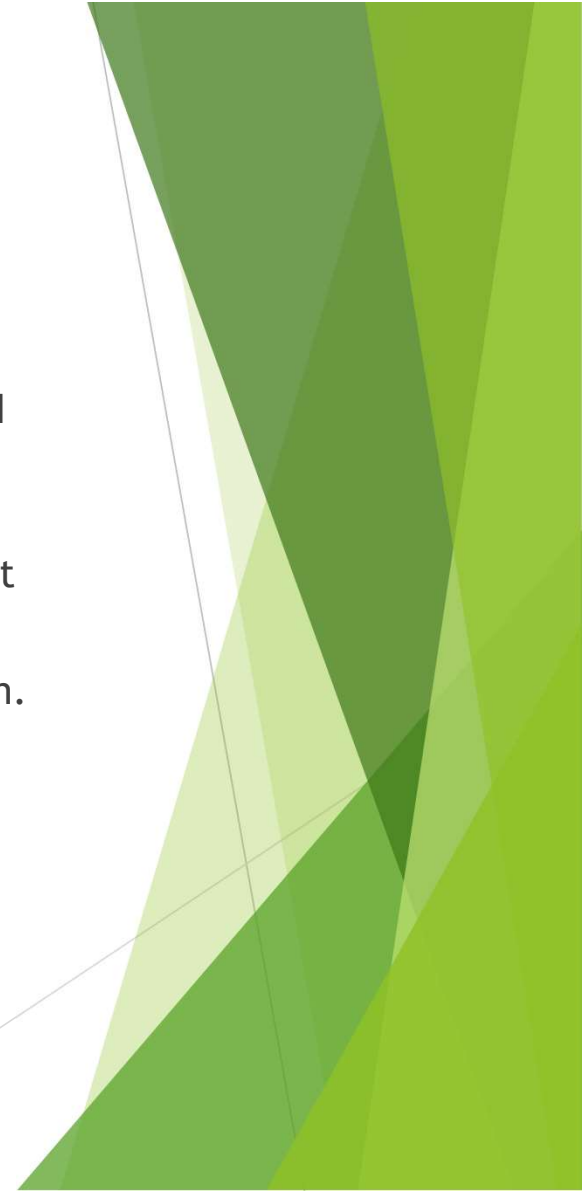
most definitions of eco-tourism boil down to a special form of tourism that meets three criteria:

- ▶ it provides for environmental conservation;
- ▶ it includes meaningful community participation;
- ▶ it is profitable and can be self-sustained



What is Sustainable Tourism?

- ▶ Any form of tourism that does not reduce the availability of resources and does not inhibit future travelers from enjoying the same experience.
- ▶ If the presence of large numbers of tourists disturbs an animals mating patterns so that there are fewer of that species in the future then that visit was not sustainable.
- ▶ Kayaking school on a free flowing river is an example of sustainable tourism.
- ▶ Big game hunting in Alaska is not.



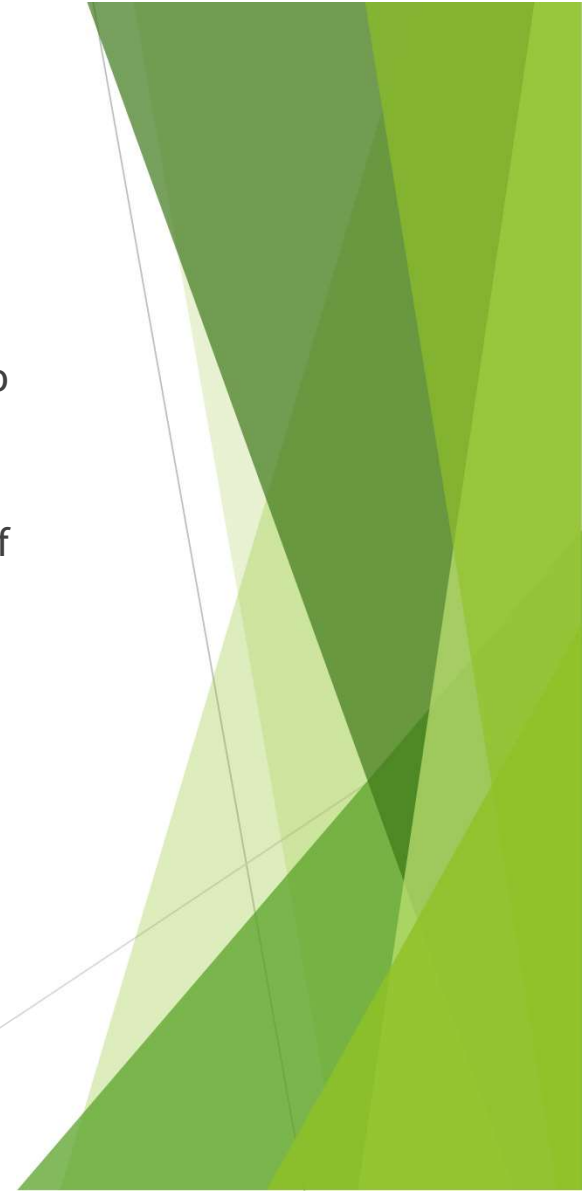
Sustainable tourism

- ▶ According to the UN World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), sustainable tourism is tourism development with a balance between environmental, economic and socio-cultural aspects:

“Sustainability principles refer to the environmental, economic and socio-cultural aspects of tourism development. A suitable balance must be established between these three dimensions to guarantee its long term sustainability” Ecotourism



- ▶ There is just a thin line of differentiation between sustainable tourism and ecotourism, which also shows that there is as such no absolute boundary between sustainable and unsustainable tourism ([Eriksson, 2003](#)).
- ▶ According to [Weaver \(2001\)](#); Ecotourism exists within the broader classification of tourism types which, at an initial level, can be divided into 'mass tourism' and 'alternative tourism' .
- ▶ Mass tourism is seen as the more traditional form of tourism development where short-term, freemarket principles dominate and the maximization of income is paramount.



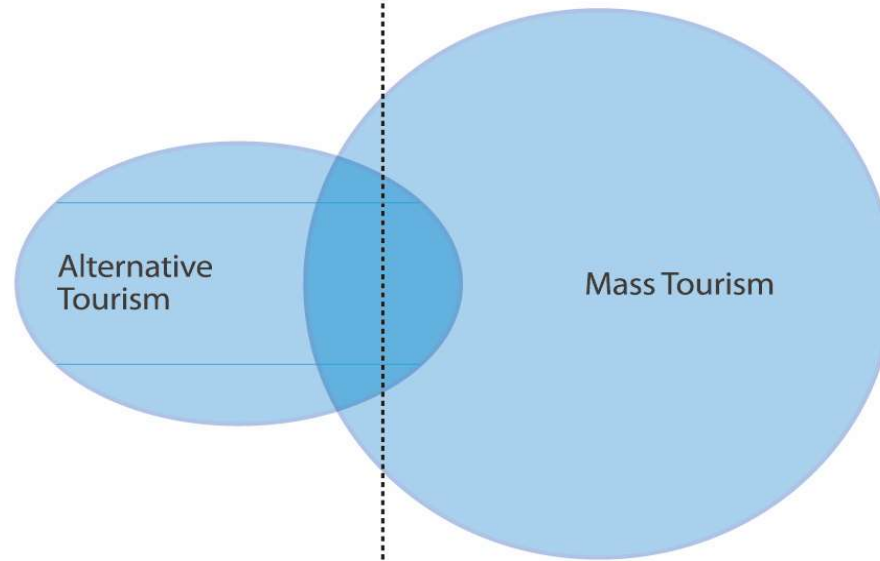
Sustainable Ecotourism

Unsustainable Ecotourism

Socio-Cultural
Tourism

Adventure
Tourism

Ecotourism



Alternative
Tourism

Mass Tourism



- ▶ There has been much deliberation about the term 'ecotourism' but it is important to realize that it is the principals of ecotourism that are important - any form of tourism could become more sustainable but not all forms of tourism can be ecotourism.
- ▶ In addition, there is often controversy about whether ecotourism exists only in '*relatively undisturbed natural areas*'.
- ▶ While undisturbed natural areas may be a focal point for most research and writing of ecotourism, the majority of ecotourism occurs in area that have been 'disturbed' and are often very close to activity or urban areas.

Principals of ecotourism often include:

- ▶ Natural areas
 - ▶ Contains educational and interpretive features
 - ▶ Generally for small groups
 - ▶ Minimizes negative impacts
 - ▶ Supports the protection of natural areas by generating economic benefits for host communities, organizations and authorities managing natural areas with conservation purposes
- (Source: World Tourism Organization)



- ▶ **What is ecotourism?** Ecotourism is "responsible travel to natural areas that conserves the environment and sustains the well-being of local people." Sometimes it is defined as a sub-category of sustainable tourism or a segment of the larger nature tourism market.
- ▶ It includes an interpretation/learning experience, is delivered to small groups by small-scale businesses, and stresses local ownership, particularly for rural people.
- ▶ **What is the difference between ecotourism and nature-based travel?**
- ▶ While nature-based tourism is just travel to natural places, ecotourism provides local benefits - environmentally, culturally and economically. A nature-based tourist may just go bird watching; an ecotourist goes bird watching with a local guide, stays in a locally operated ecolodge and contributes to the local economy.
- ▶ **Where does Sustainable Tourism fit in?**
- ▶ Sustainable Tourism embraces all segments of the industry with guidelines and criteria that seek to reduce environmental impacts, particularly the use of non-renewable resources, using measurable benchmarks, and to improve tourism's contribution to sustainable development and environmental conservation

Sustainable Ecotourism -

- ▶ Minimizes environmental impacts using benchmarks
- ▶ Improves contribution to local sustainable development
- ▶ Requires lowest possible consumption of non-renewable resources
- ▶ Sustains the well-being of local people
- ▶ Stresses local ownership
- ▶ Supports efforts to conserve the environment
- ▶ Contributes to biodiversity