

# VALUING ECOTOURISM IN CHENNAI CROCODILE BANK

PRABHAKARAN T.R

## ABSTRACT

The concept of eco tourism is entirely a new side of tourism industry. Ecotourism has been developed to appreciate the natural beauty, culture and history of the environment without disturbing the eco system. It is one way creating economic opportunities for conservation of natural resources and wildlife on the other hand it is creating awareness among people to protect nature to maintain a balanced ecosystem. In India, ecotourism is still at its nascent stage but due to increasing awareness among people the concept is fast gaining popularity. The diverse geographical features of India are enriched with hundreds of tourist destinations. No matter which region you explore, almost every part of the country is laden with numerous spots giving tourists wide range of Eco tourism places to explore. *Chennai (Madras)*, the capital of the state of Tamil Nadu is a marvelous place to discover. Under this backdrop, the famous wildlife sanctuaries, Chennai Crocodile Bank near Mahabalipuram in Chennai, Tamil Nadu has been chosen as a study area. The aggregate benefit generated by conserving the endangered species in the Chennai Crocodile Bank and the optimal entry fee for the Park is estimated. The economic value placed on the amenity service provided by the Chennai Crocodile Bank by using the travel cost method is quantified. The demand function for the Chennai Crocodile Bank has also been evaluated using the zonal travel cost method.