

# Green Horizons of Tourism: Reimagining Eco-Tourism for Viksit Bharat@2047

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## ABSTRACT

*This bibliometric literature review examines the contribution of eco-tourism to sustainable and inclusive development, placing the discussion within the broader national vision of Viksit Bharat @2047. The review highlights how eco-tourism supports entrepreneurship, strengthens environmental stewardship, and enhances the socio-economic well-being of rural communities. It also synthesizes key trends in author contributions, journal productivity, and country-level research patterns. Analysis of 149 publications from 2000 to 2025 indicates an annual growth rate of 3.61 percent, reflecting steady scholarly engagement with the subject. The findings show that eco-tourism research is closely linked to themes of sustainable development, livelihood diversification, and community participation, with substantial international collaboration. Journals such as Sustainability, Resources Policy, Investment Management and Financial Innovations, Cogent Business and Management, and Economic Theory and Practice emerge as prominent sources. Overall, the review underscores the rising importance of eco-tourism in national development strategies, with India and China standing out as leading contributors to the global discourse.*

## Introduction

Ecotourism has emerged as an important approach to development, contributing simultaneously to environmental conservation, cultural preservation, and more equitable forms of economic growth. Ecotourism plays a significant role in improving rural livelihoods, supporting small tourism enterprises, and expanding opportunities for women's participation in the sector. This review synthesizes major theoretical developments, contemporary research trends, and empirical findings related to ecotourism. It draws on studies published

between 2000 and 2025 to evaluate how ecotourism influences community well-being and the ecological landscape. Concepts such as sustainable development, community-based tourism, and empowerment provide the theoretical basis for understanding the socio-economic and environmental impacts of ecotourism in the region. The ongoing challenge of balancing economic expansion with ecological protection especially in the context of India's Viksit Bharat @2047 vision, requires deeper scholarly inquiry. Future research must adopt more interdisciplinary lenses to advance inclusive and sustainable development outcomes. As India is an

ecologically fragile country, achieving the goals outlined under Viksit Bharat @2047 will depend heavily on environmentally responsible strategies, with ecotourism positioned as a key pillar. Prior studies highlight that tourism models promoting inclusive economic growth, environmental protection, cultural heritage preservation, community involvement, and women’s empowerment are essential to India’s long-term development agenda. This study, therefore, reviews the patterns, theoretical foundations, and empirical evidence on ecotourism from 2000 to 2025 to provide a comprehensive understanding of its evolution and impact.

Ecotourism’s socio-economic and ecological benefits can be explained by community-based tourism, sustainable development, and empowerment programs. This research also stresses the importance of national sustainable growth policy. Economic growth and environmental protection should be balanced (Commission on Growth, 2008). In other words, the study focuses on policy implementation and may contribute considerably to Viksit Bharat@2047 (Gulati et al., 2024). This result comes from multi-domain ecotourism research. This paper evaluates literature using bibliometrics and highlights technology’s capabilities and aids educational research and practice. The literature study has three goals to explore eco-tourism’s environmental, cultural, and livelihood benefits and classify eco-tourism research by authors, subjects, and publications. The study evaluates national and regional eco-tourism, concentrating on their involvement in Viksit Bharat@2047. The bibliometric analysis was performed on scholarly publications, conference papers, and research reports as Kumar et. al. (2024) described research gaps, collaborative networks, publishing trends, and journal as the nation’s output. This analysis identifies literature gaps and guides future research with a comprehensive strategy.

**Literature review**

Ecotourism’s Impact: A Vision for Viksit Bharat@2047 using bibliometrics was conducted on the studies from Scopus database, as this database has the largest peer-reviewed scientific abstract and citation database (Ballew, 2009; Schotten et al., 2017). Scopus included global science, engineering, medical, and humanities research (Ballew, 2009). Conference proceedings, and academic works are included in the study. The modern methods track, evaluate, and visualize this research. For the collection of data, papers in Scopus was identified with titles, abstracts, and keywords like “eco-tourism” in the first stage. The second stage sorted data by subject, popular articles, and duplicates. All selected items included multidisciplinary

business administration studies, and sample data covered time span from 2000–2025. Phase 3 excluded non-English publications as shown in the Table1. Data was examined using “Biblioshiny,” a R package, using the R 4.0.3 “Bibliometric” web-based interface. Open-source software that is versatile, upgradeable quickly, and interfaces with other statistical R packages is becoming increasingly valuable as bibliometrics grows (Nazma et al., 2023). Bibliometric reviews incorporate subject-specific data, except for older literature reviews (Goodell et al., 2021).

**Table 1: Bibliographic Data Retrieval Process**

| Stage | Filtering Criteria   | Eliminated | Accepted |
|-------|--|------------|----------|
| 1     | Initial search outcome (on search term)  |            | 2570     |
| 2     | Year filter (2000–2025)  | 793        | 1777     |
| 3     | Filter by subject (economics, econometrics, finance, business, management and accounting, and multidisciplinary) | 1033       | 744      |
| 4     | Language filter (English)  | 295        | 449      |
| 5     | Document type (article, review)  | 149        | 300      |
| 6     | Scimago Journal ranking (Q1, Q2, Q3) & citation  | 50         | 250      |
| 7     | On the basis of the title and abstract   | 101        | 149      |

(Source: Author Compilation)

**Discussion of Results**

This study focused on historical and contemporary ecotourism studies, highlighting three notable endeavours. This study examined how ecotourism promotes sustainable development, economic growth, and community empowerment within the Viksit Bharat@2047 initiative. They focused on the importance of tourism trends, community involvement, and ecotourism success. The study also determined how community involvement, global networks, and government laws affect the economy of the country. This project focuses on culture, environment, and sustainable living. The study highlights the important practices, stakeholders, and issues, advancing the field. The report also describes growth trends that could inform government decisions and make visitor activities more environmentally friendly.



Figure 1 Descriptive information

(Source: Biblioshiny)

The 2000–2025 research dataset is included in the bibliometric summary (Figure 1). 148 publications published over 84 sources showed a good yearly growth rate of 3.61, indicating scholarly interest in the subject. Averaging 9.41 co-authors per publication, these 994 papers showed moderate collaboration. Foreign co-authorship was 34.46 percent, indicating that no single person did the investigation. The dataset contains 994 author keywords, 1128 references, and 1356 references, indicating considerable literature research. Recent investigations suggest that the document is 10.5 years old on average. The average number of citations for each text, 52.18, implies that each work has considerable academic impact and exposure in this discipline.

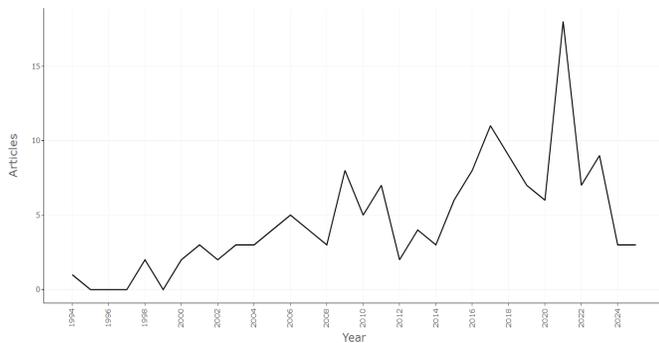


Figure 2: Annual Scientific Production

(Source: Biblioshiny)

Figure 2 shows the 1994–2024 article distribution by year. The first years (1994–2000) saw little research, with some years having no publications and others having one or two. From 2001 to 2005, there was a continuous increase with occasional variations, reaching five articles by 2005. This rising trend persisted into the late 2000s,

peaking at eight pieces in 2008. Between 2009 and 2015, publication numbers fluctuated between two and seven articles. Starting in 2016, the number of articles climbed dramatically, culminating at 11 in 2017–2018. The number of articles peaked at 17 in 2021, showing a huge research boost. After this high, output plummeted sharply to nine pieces by 2022 and three by 2023–2024, back to early 2000s levels. The figure shows a time of low scholarly attention, moderate increase with oscillations, a significant surge in 2021, and a recent fall.

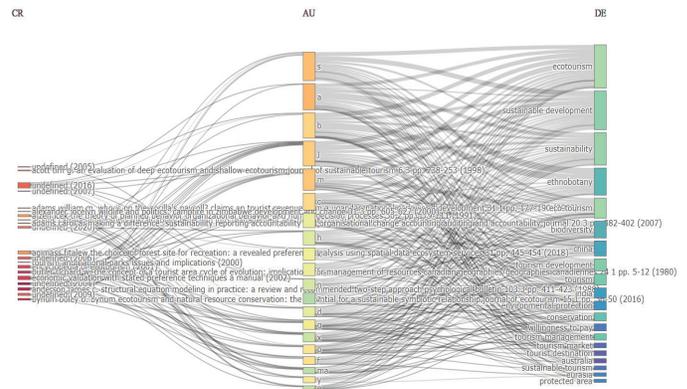


Figure 3: Three-Field Plot Production

(Source: Biblioshiny)

The Figure 3 illustrates the intellectual connections within ecotourism and sustainability research by mapping cited references (CR), authors (AU), and descriptors or keywords (DE). On the left, CR highlights essential scholarly works that form the foundation of the field, including critical areas like ecotourism evaluation and sustainable development frameworks. The middle section features authors as integrators who transform earlier insights into new contributions. The right side categorizes scholarship using keywords, with central terms like “ecotourism” and “sustainability” alongside specialized foci such as “biodiversity” and “tourism management.” The diagram visually represents knowledge flow, showing both consolidation through dominant themes and diversity via niche topics. It underscores the alignment with global priorities, including the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and highlights the interdisciplinary nature of the field. Overall, the figure captures the structure, thematic priorities, and evolving directions of ecotourism and sustainability research, reflecting a balance between foundational theories and context-specific insights.

Table 2: Most Global Cited Documents

| Paper                            | DOI                              | Total Citations | TC per Year |      |
|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|-----------------|-------------|------|
| D, 2017, J. CLEAN. PROD.         | 10.1016/j.jclepro.2017.09.053    | 775             | 86.11       | 6.16 |
| M, 2017, SUSTAIN. CITIES SOC.    | 10.1016/j.scs.2016.10.008        | 289             | 32.11       | 2.30 |
| CJ, 2007, TOUR. MANAG.           | 10.1016/j.tourman.2005.07.016    | 244             | 12.84       | 2.61 |
| S, 2018, HABITAT INT.            | 10.1016/j.habitatint.2017.12.001 | 232             | 29.00       | 3.40 |
| S, 2023, J. SUSTAIN. TOUR.       | 10.1080/09669582.2022.2029870    | 183             | 61.00       | 3.68 |
| T, 2019, CURR. ISSUES TOUR.      | 10.1080/13683500.2017.1405383    | 134             | 19.14       | 2.59 |
| E, 2021, J. HOSP. TOUR. MANAG.   | 10.1016/j.jhtm.2021.07.016       | 110             | 22.00       | 2.36 |
| M, 2006, ASIA PAC. J. TOUR. RES. | 10.1080/10941660600931143        | 108             | 5.40        | 2.49 |
| EEB, 2005, MARK. INTELL. PLAN.   | 10.1108/02634500510589921        | 105             | 5.00        | 1.55 |
| C, 2021, J. HOSP. TOUR. MANAG.   | 10.1016/j.jhtm.2021.04.010       | 102             | 20.40       | 2.19 |

(Source: Author’s compilation)

The comparison of academic papers in sustainability, tourism, and hospitality highlights significant citations and their impact. D (2017) leads with 775 citations and a high annual rate of 86.11, indicating strong relevance. M (2017) follows with 289 citations (32.11 annually), while CJ (2007) has 244 citations (12.84 annually), showing lasting influence. Recent works like S (2023) are rapidly gaining traction, with 183 citations (61.00 annually), alongside E (2021) and C (2021) with 110 and 102 citations, respectively table 2. The analysis reveals that older studies continue to contribute significantly over time, while newer research is being quickly recognized, thereby reflecting the evolving landscape of sustainability and tourism research.

Figure 4 illustrates the distribution of research documents across various academic journals in sustainability and tourism. The bar chart displays journal names on the vertical axis and the number of published documents on the horizontal axis. The leading journal is Sustainability (Switzerland) with 16 documents, followed by the Journal of Sustainable Tourism (8), Tourism Management (6), and the Journal of Cleaner Production (5). Mid-tier journals include the Journal of Ecotourism and Ecological Economics (4 each), and Ecosystem Services, the Journal of Ethnobiology and Ethnomedicine, and the Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Management (3 each). The analysis indicates that interdisciplinary journals dominate, and the field encompasses sustainability science, tourism management, ecological economics, and ethnobiology, reflecting diverse research approaches to ecotourism and sustainability.

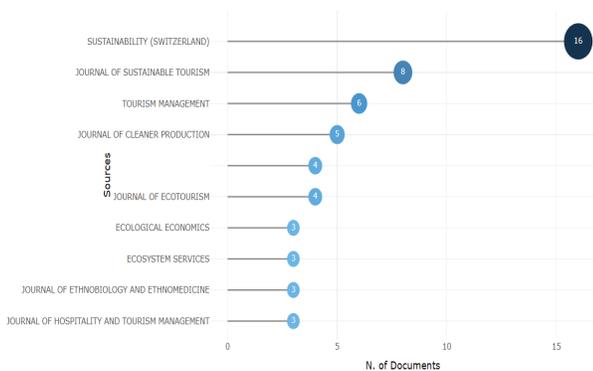


Figure 4: Most Relevant Sources

(Source: Biblioshiny)

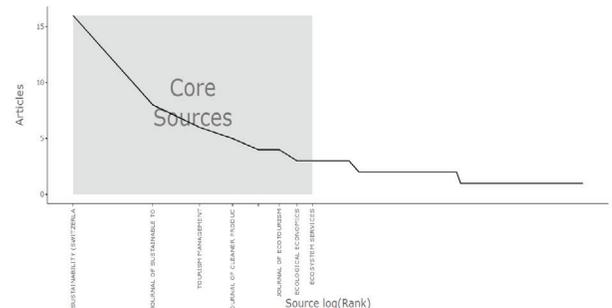


Figure 5: Core Sources by Bradford’s Law

( Source: Biblioshiny)

Figure 5 illustrates a source ranking analysis, frequently derived from Bradford’s Law, which delineates the principal journals that contribute the highest volume of publications in the domains of sustainability, tourism, and ecotourism research. The x-axis represents the rated sources on a logarithmic scale, whilst the y-axis denotes the quantity of published articles. The darkened area designated as “Core Sources” emphasizes the limited number of journals responsible for the majority of articles, illustrating that research output is focused in a select few channels. Sustainability (Switzerland) unequivocally leads with the greatest quantity of publications, succeeded by the Journal of Sustainable Tourism, Tourism Management, Journal of Cleaner Production, Journal of Ecotourism, Ecological Economics, and Ecosystem Services. Subsequent to this core zone, the curve declines precipitously, signifying that numerous other journals contribute only marginally. This visualization substantiates the notion that a select few journals generate the majority of significant contributions in a specific field, whereas numerous peripheral journals provide minimal input, rendering the identified core sources vital for scholars seeking to publish or track prominent research in this area.

Figure 6 shows the significantly skewed distribution of authorship productivity in terms of documents written. X-axis displays number of papers written by particular writers; y-axis shows percentage of authors in each category. The rapid fall in the curve shows that nearly 100% of authors have produced only one paper at the first data point. From one to two papers, the fraction of contributing authors declines substantially to less than half, demonstrating that only a small subset of scholars consistently publishes more than one. From here, the curve quickly declines, with just a tiny percentage of authors publishing three or more times and even fewer four or more. Lotka’s Law of Scientific Productivity predicts that the number of authors publishing  $n$  publications is inversely related to  $n^2$ , as seen by the dashed line. The solid line shows research data. Close alignment between the two curves, especially early on, supports Lotka’s Law, a fundamental bibliometric principle. As the quantity of documents increases, fewer writers than predicted produce several publications, contrary to theory. This statistic shows that a tiny minority of extremely active experts produce most academic research, while most authors publish only once. This distribution shows both the breadth of engagement in the area, as many people contribute at least one study, and the depth of expertise concentrated in a few prolific authors who drive much of the ongoing knowledge development. This trend highlights the importance of a few core researchers whose repeated contributions shape the discourse in sustainability, ecotourism, or financial inclusion, as well as the field’s openness to diverse, one-time contributions from a wide range of scholars. This data shows productivity patterns and research collaboration, where most authors contribute occasionally and a minority become dominant voices through continuous output.

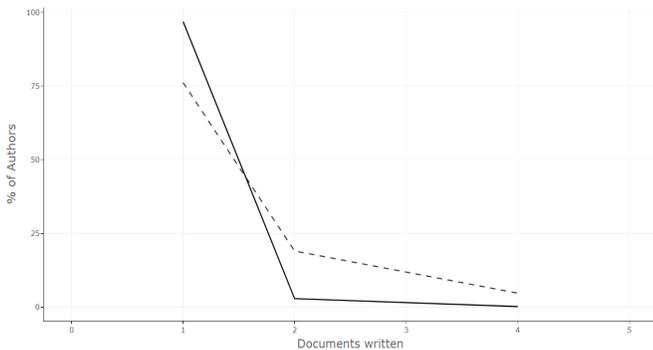


Figure 6: Author Productivity through Lotka’s Law

(Source: Biblioshiny)

Table 3: Authors’ Production over Time

| Author          | Year | TI  | SO  | DOI                           |    | Tcpy |
|-----------------|------|---|---|-------------------------------|----|------|
| Pieroni, andrea | 2024 | The nexus between traditional foraging and its sustainability: a qualitative assessment among a few selected eurasian case studies                            | Environment, development and sustainability | 10.1007/s10668-022-02568-0    | 19 | 9.5  |
| Pieroni, andrea | 2018 | “if you want to get married, you have to collect virdura”: the vanishing custom of gathering and cooking wild food plants on vulcano, aeolian islands, sicily | Food, culture and society                   | 10.1080/15528014.2018.1481263 | 28 | 3.5  |

|                   |      |   |   |                            |     |       |
|-------------------|------|---|---|----------------------------|-----|-------|
| Pieroni, andrea   | 2015 | A cross-cultural comparison of folk plant uses among albanians, bosniaks, gorani and turks living in south kosovo                           | Journal of ethnobiology and ethnomedicine     | 10.1186/s13002-015-0023-5  | 71  | 6.455 |
| Pieroni, andrea   | 2013 | One century later: the folk botanical knowledge of the last remaining albanians of the upper reka valley, mount korab, western Macedonia    | Journal of ethnobiology and ethnomedicine     | 10.1186/1746-4269-9-22     | 83  | 6.385 |
| Evans, louisa s.  | 2023 | Putting coastal communities at the center of a sustainable blue economy: a review of risks, opportunities, and strategies                   | Frontiers in political science                | 10.3389/fpos.2022.1032204  | 30  | 10    |
| Fortnam, matt p.  | 2023 | Putting coastal communities at the center of a sustainable blue economy: a review of risks, opportunities, and strategies                   | Frontiers in political science                | 10.3389/fpos.2022.1032204  | 30  | 10    |
| Lee, choong-ki    | 2021 | Sustainable intelligence, destination social responsibility, and pro-environmental behaviour of visitors: evidence from an eco-tourism site | Journal of hospitality and tourism management | 10.1016/j.jhtm.2021.04.010 | 102 | 20.4  |
| Fortnam, matt p.  | 2021 | Tourism-based alternative livelihoods for small island communities transitioning towards a blue economy                                     | Sustainability (Switzerland)                  | 10.3390/su13126655         | 47  | 9.4   |
| Evans, louisa s.  | 2021 | Tourism-based alternative livelihoods for small island communities transitioning towards a blue economy                                     | Sustainability (Switzerland)                  | 10.3390/su13126655         | 47  | 9.4   |
| Nijkamp, peter j. | 2020 | A new livelihood sustainability index for rural revitalization assessment-a modelling study on smart tourism specialization in China        | Sustainability (Switzerland)                  | 10.3390/su12083148         | 72  | 12    |

(Source: Author's compilation)

Table 3 demonstrates selected authors' publishing, impact, and citation performance over time, highlighting their sustainability, tourism, ethnobotany, and community-based development contributions. Each row provides the author, year of publication, article title (TI), journal or source (SO), DOI, total citations (TC), and TCpY, indicating productivity and collaboration. Andrea Pieroni contributed to ethnobotany and cultural sustainability from 2013 to 2024, according to statistics. His 2013 and 2015 Journal of Ethnobiology and Ethnomedicine studies on folk botanical knowledge and cross-cultural plant applications got 83 and 71 citations and 6.38 and 6.45 TCpY, showing long-term influence. Academic interest in his 2018 and 2024 papers on cultural culinary traditions and sustainability assessments shows his research is relevant across decades. Louisa S. Evans and Matt P. Fortnam explore coastal community sustainability and the blue economy. Their Frontiers in Political Science

(2023) and Sustainability (Switzerland) (2021) papers on tiny island communities' risks, opportunities, and alternatives have 30 and 47 citations and strong yearly averages (10 and 9.4 TCpY). Collaboration can increase exposure and influence, especially in global blue economy discussions. Lee (2021) explores sustainable intelligence and pro-environmental visitor behavior in the Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Management. The collection's highest citation count (102) and TCpY (20.4) show the growing importance of eco-tourism, destination responsibility, and visitor behavior research in sustainability studies. Finally, Peter J. Nijkamp (2020) analyzes rural rejuvenation and smart tourism in China in Sustainability (Switzerland). His 72 citations and 12 TCpY show sustainability indices' methodological breakthroughs, emphasizing tourism-related sustainability research. The table shows two key trends: Sustainability (Switzerland), Journal of Ethnobiology

and Ethnomedicine, and Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Management demonstrate interdisciplinarity, while Pieroni and Evans and Fortnam demonstrate long-term scholarly productivity, gradually expanding from ethnobotany into sustainability issues. In the “Authors’ Production over Time” method, academics’ interests fluctuate and collaboration, interdisciplinarity, and theme shifts influence sustainability and tourism academic discourse.

**Table 4: Countries’ Collaboration**

| From      | To              | Frequency |
|-----------|-----------------|-----------|
| AUSTRALIA | IRAN            | 1         |
| AUSTRALIA | KOREA           | 1         |
| AUSTRALIA | SOUTH AFRICA    | 1         |
| BELGIUM   | POLAND          | 1         |
| BULGARIA  | MACEDONIA       | 1         |
| BULGARIA  | NORTH MACEDONIA | 1         |
| CANADA    | FRANCE          | 1         |
| CHINA     | BOLIVIA         | 1         |
| CHINA     | HONG KONG       | 2         |
| CHINA     | INDONESIA       | 1         |

(Source: Author’s compilation)

Table 4 shows the “From” and “To” columns show the country from which the exchange originated, received, and occurred, while the “Frequency” column shows the frequency. Australia has only one exchange with Iran, Korea, and South Africa, unlike China, which has two with Hong Kong. This suggests China interacts more with Hong Kong. A “1” may represent one-time events, while a greater frequency may indicate ongoing business, diplomatic, airline, or cultural exchanges. Countries with more linkages or active collaboration may have higher exchanges due to geographical and political factors including proximity and historical ties.

**Limitations and Future research direction**

Eco-tourism continues to hold significant promise for fostering sustainable and inclusive development; however, several gaps remain that offer meaningful avenues for future investigation. There is a particular need to examine the long-term effects of eco-tourism on ecological conservation, rural livelihood security, and community resilience especially in light of climate change and the national vision outlined under Viksit Bharat @2047. Future studies may also explore how

digital technologies, smart tourism platforms, and innovative governance mechanisms can enhance the planning, monitoring, and management of eco-tourism initiatives. Comparative analyses across Himalayan states, assessments of ecological carrying capacity, and evaluations of policy implementation at the state and national levels could further enrich the understanding of eco-tourism dynamics. Despite its contributions, the present study has several limitations. The reliance on specific academic databases and English-language publications restricts the scope of available evidence and may overlook in-depth qualitative work, local reports, or case studies. The focus on ecotourism, while useful for regional insights, limits broader generalisation. Additionally, the absence of primary field data constrains the ability to validate findings in real-world settings. Conceptual overlap between eco-tourism and related tourism forms may also influence the categorisation of studies. Even with these limitations, the review offers a substantive foundation for advancing future research and guiding sustainable eco-tourism practices in the decades ahead.

**Conclusion**

Research on ecotourism and sustainability draws upon multiple disciplines, including ecological economics, tourism management, ethnobotany, and sustainability studies, reflecting the complexity of the field. Leading journals such as Sustainability (Switzerland) and the Journal of Cleaner Production illustrate Bradford’s Law, where a small set of core sources contributes disproportionately to the academic discussion. Similarly, author productivity follows Lotka’s Law, with a limited group of scholars—such as Andrea Pieroni and Louisa S. Evans—producing a notable share of influential work. Their sustained contributions help strengthen theoretical foundations, while increasing collaborative research enhances the field’s global relevance by addressing themes such as cultural continuity, biodiversity protection, and rural revitalisation. Taken together, the combination of strong core contributions and widening participation supports the field’s intellectual growth and equips it to address emerging sustainability challenges effectively.

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