AN OVERVIEW OF ECO-TOURISM DESTINATIONS IN KERALA

Kerala, the green state of India, is a different experience altogether. This is perhaps the only state in India where the urban and the rural have no much disparity in terms of standards. The modern and conventional aspects have their equal and proportionate credence here. However, the roust vegetation; the slumbering lagoons and the overall greenery that take one to the very heart of nature, enchant one that much. There is always the relentless effort in the pursuit of knowledge and standards of living.

40% people of the state know three languages Malayalam, English, Hindi. This Human Development Index is at par with the developed countries.

Geographical features of Kerala

Kerala the southernmost tip of India is situated between Arabian Sea and the Western Ghats. It is located in the North Latitude between 8°12 and 12°48’ and East Longitude between 74°52’ and 77°22’. The coastline is about 580 Km, in lengthen while breadth of the State vary from 11 kilometres to 121 kilometres. The total area of the State is 38864 sq.km, which comes to 1.3% of the total area of the Indian Union. The total geographical area of the state is 38, 85,497 hectares. Twenty-eight percent of the geographical area of the state is forest land.
Kerala Tourist Map

Kerala tourist map Fig 2.1
**Climate**

The rainfall in the state comes to a little over 3000 mm spread over two monsoon seasons and the temperature ranges from 89°F to 90°F. The climate is semitropical, hot and moist. Kerala has over 25% of India’s 15,000 plant species. Most grow in the Western Ghats that include over 150 ferns 4000 flowering plants, 600 fungi, 800 linches and 200 mosses. Of these, 1500(63%) of the nation’s plant species are endemic to this region.

Kerala’s forest types include tropical wet evergreen, semi-evergreen and tropical moist deciduous. Teak, mahogany, rosewood and sandalwood are common in and are smuggled from the Western Ghats. The area is also abundant in orchids, anthurium, balsam and medicinal plants. There are banyan figs and bamboo as well as 40000-year-old grasslands. Along the coasts, there are pockets of mangroves. In the valleys and protected steep slopes of the Ghats, moist evergreen forests known as shoals provide essential shelter and food for animals. Kerala’s abundant and diverse habitat supports wildlife population of 100 species of mammals, 550 species of birds and 169 species of reptiles.

According to Thomas Cook, “Kerala is the home of Ayurveda and this is the unique selling point in Kerala. The destination offers a combination of culture, adventure and beaches.”
History of travel and tourism in Kerala

The present stage Travel and Tourism began nearly five decades ago. A better understanding of the present stage tourism needs knowledge about the history of tourism. The trade relationship between Kerala and other countries of the world established a national ethos concerning tourism and this historic feeling could help to develop tourism in the State. Kerala has almost a cosmopolitan community enriched by a 3000 year old dialogue with the rest of the world.

In India, the history of Tourism is linked with religious travel-Thirathayathra -, which is as old as the Holy Scriptures. Trade, religion and conquest were the major motivating forces for the movement of the people in the ancient world. Tefular trade linked the ancient cities of Iran, Egypt, Mesopotamia, and Indus valley. Travel received a great stimulus during the Renaissance period. The educational travel, which eventually came to be known as Grand Tour, was popular during the 16\textsuperscript{th}, 17\textsuperscript{th} and 18\textsuperscript{th} centuries. The early travellers such as Megasthenes, Fahien, Huien Tsang, Alberuni, Marcopolo etc. developed a habit of recording interesting events and issues that had come across during their voyage. This served as a guide to future explorers.

Kerala is an up market destination and it must remain that way. It became popular because of its connectivity, which is the key point in the success of any destination. According to Mr. Chandana Khan, Tourism secretary of Andhra Pradesh, “Climate is not a limiting factor if the tourism product exists enough, for foreigners to come to a destination and the general weather condition is taken as a package component of a tropical country.”
Eco-tourism avenues in Kerala

The tourism traffic to Kerala shows an increasing trend over the past few years. The total tourism inflow to Kerala is about 50 lakhs during 1977 which is 13% more than the previous year. Foreign tourist arrival is about 1082 lakhs. Kerala Government is working on a strategy to increase the foreign tourist inflow to the tune of five Lakhs by the turn of the century.

Eco-tourism is becoming popular in Kerala. Eco-tourism contributes to the conservation of the natural areas by providing economic incentives and revenue for the government to preserve and manage natural areas. It utilizes the natural resources and provides employment to the local people. The built in environment education programmes raises the awareness of the local people and helps in conservation of the natural resources. Kerala has commissioned an exclusive eco-tourism project at Thenmala in the Western Ghats. Activities such as trekking through rain forests and wildlife sanctuaries, staying in tree top huts etc are also gaining popularity. United Nations has declared the year 2002 as the year of ecotourism. Kerala has already geared up to meet the challenges of converting the entire tourism trade in the state to eco-friendly tourism. Generally, tourism is a large consumer of power. However, the tourism trade in Kerala is motivated to promote power conservation by encouraging natural ventilation instead of artificial air conditioning. It aims to create the absolute minimum impact on forests, wildlife sanctuaries, farms and other environmentally sensitive regions that the Tourism has resulted in.
Places of historical importance

The architecture of Kerala is an amalgam of external influences, both foreign and Indian. The Padmanabhaswamy temple and Napier museum in Thiruvananthapuram, the Bolgatty palace in Kochi, the Arakkal palace at Kannur and the Kolathiri palace at Chirakal are but only a few examples of Kerala’s architecture. The traditional house of a Keralite, the Nalukettu was built in accordance with the principles of Thachusatra, the science of carpentry and the Vasthushastra, which are again emerging as an indispensable pre-requisite in any form of construction works.

Below are given some of the palaces of tourist importance.

a) Kanakakkunnu Palace

The Kanakakkunnu Palace is in Thiruvananthapuram district. The Travancore Rajas built this palace, which reflects the architectural excellence of the kingdom. At night when the palace grounds are lit by garden lamps, it brings to mind the royal majesty of the kings who once inhabited its mighty interiors adorned with large crystal chandeliers and exquisite pieces of royal furniture are seen.

b) Napier Art Museum

Among the museums of India, Thiruvananthapuram Museum named after Lord Napier, former Governor of Madras, is one of the most important and oldest. Napier Museum building is a landmark in the city with its unique ornamental and architectural style in the gothic roof and minarets painted walls and ceiling. It has double walls with ventilators suited to provide an air conditioning effect. Bronze collections, wood
carvings, ivory carvings of the Museum are feast to the lover of Indian Art. Within the museum compound is the Chitralaya Art Gallery displaying a good collection of Indian and Foreign paintings.

c) **Kuthiramalika**

This bungalow is located near the Sri Padmanabha Swami Temple at the East Fort in Thiruvananthapuram city. It reveals the architecture of the 19th century. It is heard that the great poet king of Travancore, Sri Swathi Thirunal composed many of his verses there. It has a display of ornaments and personal belongings and weapons of the king of Travancore.

d) **Vizhinjam Rock Cut Cave**

It is located 17 kilometres away from Trivandrum. Vizhinjam was earlier the capital of the many chieftains who ruled the southern parts of Kerala around the 8th century A.D. The granite cave here encloses a one-celled shrine with a loose sculpture of Vinadhara Dakshinamurthi. The outer wall of the cave depicts the half completed relic of the Hindu God Shiva with his wife and dancing partner Goddess Parvathi.

e) **Koyikkal Palace (Nedumangadu)**

Located 18 kilometres away from Trivandrum, on the way to the Ponmudi hill station and the Kuttalam waterfalls, this ancient palace that dated back to the 15th century, is famous in the history of Kerala as the official residence of Perakom Thavazhi (the material lineage), especially of Umayamma Rani of the Venad royal family. There lies a double storied traditional Nalukettu building with slanting gabled roofs with an inner
courtyard. Two museums of folklore and numismatics set up by the Department of Archaeology can also be seen.

f) Mattancherry Dutch Palace

A beautiful palace dating back to AD 1557, built by the Portuguese for the use of the Raja of Kochi (Cochin). Renovated by Dutch settlers a century later, the double storied building stands tall between the Jewish synagogues in the south and the panoramic backwater network in the east. The architecture of the typical domestic Kerala style is called Nalukettu with a central courtyard connecting 4 separate complexes with wooden slatted walls and gabled roofs. Displayed inside are extensive murals depicting scenes from the Hindu epics Ramayana and Mahabharata and some of the Vedic Hindu legends. Other interesting inclusions are: the royal bed chamber (palliyara) with 17th century murals depicting 45 scenes from the Ramayana-right from Puthrakameshtiyaga (the sacrificial royal ceremony soliciting the birth of a child) to Sita Devi’s return from captivity; the covered porch, the coronation hall with the carved ceiling, a collection of Royal dresses, turbans and three palanquins, six large murals representing the Hindu God Guruvayoorappan and the coronation of King Rama, the staircase room or Kovinithalam leading to the ladies chamber adorned with murals representing the great poet Kalidasa’s Sanskrit verse, Kumarasambhava, a painting of Lord Vishnu at Vaikuntha, the deity of Tripunithura temple. A spacious hall lies, featuring royal paraphernalia like weapons, swings and furniture and the lower storey stands with kitchen, dining hall etc. and the Bhagavathi temple occupies the position in the central courtyard.
g) **Jewish Synagogue (Fort Kochi)**

The Synagogue was built in 1568 but was destroyed in 1662. It was rebuilt in 1664. The great scrolls of the Old Testament, the copper plates on which the grants of privileges made by the rulers, the exquisite Chinese hand painted tiles are the things that catch one’s eye.

Pareeshith Thampuran Museum at Ernakulum has a great collection of oil paintings, prehistoric monuments, sculptures, temple models etc. One of the prettiest attractions in Kochi is Fort Cochin where Chinese fishing nets dip into the water. The ancient St. Francis Church which was built by the Portuguese in 1510 where Vasco De Gama was originally buried is another place of importance. Bolgatty Palace built by the Dutch in 1744 in a narrow stretch of island is converted into a hotel complex of KTDC. Journey along the backwaters is most enchanting one in Kochi. A private run Kerala History Museum near Edappally in Kochi is also worth visiting.

h) **Pallipuram Fort**

It is a 16th Century fort built by the Portuguese in 1503, captured by the Dutch in 1661 and sold to the State of Travancore in 1789. Situated in the north extreme of Vypeen Island, it is one of the oldest of existing European monuments in India.

i) **Hill Palace Museum (Tripunithura)**

The Kochi Royal family for their official residence built Hill Palace Museum in 1865. It is 10 kilometres away from Kochi. The palace complex consists of 49 buildings built in the traditional architectural style of Kerala and is surrounded by 52 acres of terraced land with a deer park and facilities for horse riding. All sorts of flora of Kerala
including rare medicinal plants are found here. A full-fledged ethno-archaeological Museum and Kerala’s first ever Heritage Museum are the main attractions. Displayed inside the thirteen galleries are oil painting, 19th century painting, murals, sculptures in stone and plaster of Paris, manuscripts, inscriptions, coins, belongings of the Kochi royal family, Paliathachan’s gallery and royal furniture including the simhasana (the throne or the king’s chair). Also exhibited are: 200 antique pieces of pottery and ceramic vases from China and Japan, kudakkal, tomb stone thopiikkallu, hood stone menhirs (granite/Literate memorials) rock cut caves belonging to the early iron-age and wooden temple models and plaster cast models of objects from Mohenjo-Daro and Harappa of the Indus Valley civilization of North India. The upper storey houses a gallery of contemporary art.

j) Edakkal Caves

Edakkal caves situated in the Ambukuthi Hills, 10 kilometres away from Sultan’s Battery, are two natural rock formations formed by a large split in a huge rock. Inside one can marvel at the ancient stone scripts, carvings and pictorial wall inscriptions of human and animal figures with peculiar headdresses and swastika forms and symbols. Archaeologists consider these as one of the earliest centres of human habitation. It is believed that similar straight-line cave drawings (considered 7000 years old) can be seen only in Atiriya in the European Alps and a few rocky places in Africa. The pictures depict the moods of man and woman, stars, bow, knife, palm etc.
k) **Bekal Beach and Fort**

It is the largest and best-preserved fort in the whole of Kerala, surrounded by a splendid beach. Shaped like a giant keyhole, this magnificent historical fort offers a superb view of the Lakshadweep Sea from this tall observation tower, where long ago huge cannons used to be placed. Nearby there is an old mosque said to have been built by the valiant Tipu Sultan of Mysore. Established by the ancient Kadampa dynasty, the fort changed hands over the years to the Kolathiri Rajas, the Vijayanagar Empire, and Tipu Sultan and finally came under British.

**Backwaters**

Kerala has a system of backwater known as the west Coast Canal. Artificial canals interlink the lagoons, backwaters and the mouth of rivers to provide a continuous water way from Thiruvananthapuram to Hosdurg, a distance of nearly 560 kilometres. The backwaters form an attractive and economically important feature of Kerala. The department of tourism has identified certain centres in the backwaters. They are:

a) **Veli**

Veli, a beautiful lagoon with calm and serene atmospheres, is only five minutes’ drive away from the International Airport of Thiruvananthapuram. This tourist complex, meant for domestic tourists, is a variety centre with sculptures, a walk in hall in the shape of a giant sea conch, a children’s wading pool, a youth hostel and facilities for boating. Many kinds of boats are in use in Veli. Even a hovercraft, first of this kind in India, is also provided for the tourists.
b) Akkulam

Akkulam Lake is the northern end of the Veli Lake, covering a distance of two kilometres and is blessed with beautiful and picturesque landscape. A water park, a children’s park and boat ring facilities are the main attractions. While the Veli complex is a departmental venture, Akkulam is managed by the Thiruvananthapuram District Tourism Promotion Council.

c) Thiruvallam

This serene backwater stretch, en route to Kovalam, is famous for its canoe rides.

d) Kumarakom

The village of Kumarakom is a cluster of little islands on the Vembanad Lake, and is part of the Kuttanad region.

The bird sanctuary at Kumarakom spread across 14 acres is a favourite’s haunt of migratory birds and is an ornithologist’s paradise. Egrets, darters, herons, teal, Water Fowl, cuckoo, Wild Duck and migratory birds like the Siberian Stork are seen here. The best way to watch the birds of the Kumarakom Sanctuary is on the whole of a boat trip around the islands.

e) Pathiramanal

Pathiramanal, a small island on the backwaters of Alappuzha, is a haven for hundreds of rare birds migrating from different parts of the world. Surrounded by the Vembanad Lake, stretching from Alappuzha to Kochi, and the Kayamkulam Lake,
Pathiramanal is accessible only by boat. The green island thus forms an ideal place for a break in the journey while on a backwater cruise.

f) Sasthamkotta

This vast freshwater lake surrounded by hills on three sides is the largest of its kind in Kerala. The ancient Sastha Temple which lends its name to the town, is an important pilgrim centre.

g) Kuttanad

Kuttanad, popularly known as the rice bowl of Kerala, is the most beautiful backwater region of Kerala. It is here that most of the snake boat races are conducted and majority of the rice boat and houseboat cruises are scheduled.

h) QST & R Block Kayals

QST & R Block Kayals (backwaters remind the visitor of the famous dikes of Holland). A striking example of the indigenous agricultural engineering know-how, made possible cultivation and habitation here at four to 10 feet below the sea level. A leisurely cruise along the canals here is a memorable experience.

i) Vembanad

The Vembanad Lake, an enchanting picnic spot and a fast developing backwater tourism destination, provides boating, fishing and sightseeing experiences that are truly exhilarating.
j) **Bolgatty**

This lush, lovely island is famous for its palace of the same name. The Bolgatty Palace, built in 1744 by the Dutch and later taken over by the British is the oldest Dutch Palace outside Holland. Today it is a popular hotel run by the Kerala Tourism Development Corporation.

k) **Willington Island**

Named after Lord Willington, a former British Viceroy of India, this man-made island is surrounded by beautiful backwaters. The island is the site of the city’s best hotels and trading centres.

### Beaches of Kerala

Kerala lies along 580 kilometres of sun drenched coastline of the Arabian Sea. The shimmering blue of the ocean stirs up profound feeling in the visitor. Even the beach sand of Kerala offers the visitor a choice of colours. The important beaches of Kerala are:

a) **Kovalam**

Kovalam is 16 km away from Thiruvananthapuram city. It is an internationally renowned beach with three adjacent crescent beaches. It has been a favourite haunt of tourists, especially Europeans, since the 1930’s. A massive rocky promontory on the beach has created a beautiful bay of calm waters ideal for sea bathing. The leisure options at this beach are plenty and diverse- sunbathing, swimming, herbal body toning massages, special cultural programmers, Catamaran cruising etc. The tropical sun acts so
fast that one can see the faint blush of coppery tan on the skin in a matter of minutes. Life on the beach begins late in the day and carries on well into the night.

b) Shankhumugham

Shankhumugham is six kilometre away from Thiruvananthapuram city. The Shankhumugham beach, adjacent to the Thiruvananthapuram Airport and the Veli Tourist Village, is a favourite haunt of sunset watchers. An indoor recreation club, the Matsya Kanyaka (a 35 m long sculpture of a mermaid) and a restaurant shaped like a starfish and the Cha-cha Nehru Traffic Training Park for children are some of the attractions here.

c) Varkala Beach

The Varkala beach is 40 km north of Thiruvananthapuram city and 37 km south of Kollam. A dip in the holy waters at this beach is believed to purge the body from impurities and the soul from sins. This is why Varkala beach is also known as Papanasam (Cleansing of sins) beach. A 2000-yr old shrine, the Janardhanaswamy Temple, stands on the cliffs overlooking the beach, a short distance away. The Sivagiri Mutt, founded by the great social reformer and philosopher Sree Narayana Guru (1856-1928) is also close by. Sree Narayana Guru propagated the ideology of “One caste, One religion and One god” in a society torn by the taboos of caste system. There are also many mineral water sprigs in the region.

d) Thirumullavaram

The Thirumullavaram beach is about 6 km away from Kollam town. Abu Abraham, renowned cartoonist praises Thirumullavaram in the following words: “Here
is a bathing beach, the kind of which I have not seen anywhere else in all my travels round the world”. This secluded beach is a beautiful picnic centre. This beach is safe to dive in most part of the year.

e) **Thangasseri**

The Thangasseri beach is about five km away from Kollam town. The picturesque seaside village of Thangasseri has a three kilometre-long beach on which stands a 144 ft tall lighthouse- a silent sentinel warning seamen of the treacherous reefs of the Thangasseri, since 1902. Thangasseri was once a favourite settlement of the Portuguese, the Dutch and the English in succession, as Kollam was one of the oldest and most important ports for international cashew trade on the Malabar Coast. Today, it has a few ruined forts built by the Portuguese, and the Dutch and some 18th century churches.

f) **Vijaya Beach**

The Vijaya beach is about five kilometres away from Alappuzha town. Alappuzha beach is a popular picnic spot. The pier, which extends into the sea here, is over 137 years old. Entertainment facilities at the Vijaya Beach Park add to the attractions of the beach. There is also a fascinating, old lighthouse nearby.

g) **Cherai Beach**

The Cherai Beach is near to Vypeen Island. The lovely beach bordering the Vypeen Island is ideal for swimming. The sea on the western side and the backwaters on the east give this upcoming tourist destination, a uniqueness, which can be found only in Kerala. Thick coconut groves and Chinese fishing nets on the waterfront are the added attractions.
h) Nattika Beach

Nattika Beach on the Malabar Coast, about 25 km far from Trissur, the cultural capital of Kerala, is one of the best beaches along the West Coast. The beautiful beach, laced by coconut palms, holds several attractions like the fascinating Silver Sand Bay, and the sights of a breathtaking sunset and of a continuous stream of charming traditional boats - the kettu vallams and the kettuvanchis. The nearby lighthouse in the bay of the Arabian Sea offers a captivating aerial view of the beach and the greenery around.

i) Vallikkunnu

The Vallikkunnu beach is about 20 km away from Malappuram. A beach resort set in the middle of a coconut grove is the main attraction here. The Kadalundi Bird Sanctuary is just a short distance away.

j) Padingarekara Beach

It is very close to Ponnani and at the end point of the Tipu Sultan Road. The beach offers a breathtaking view of the confluence of the Bharathapuzha, the Tirurpuzha and the Arabian Sea. This place is noted for migratory birds, gathering in thousands during the months of February-April.

k) Kappad

This is about 16 km away from Kozhikode town. For the people of Kozhikode, this pleasant stretch of rock-studded beach is Kappakkadavu. To the tourist it is one of the most charming of Kerala’s beaches. Kappad finds mention in history and geography texts as the gateway to the Malabar Coast. Here, 501 years ago, 170 men led by the Portuguese navigator Vasco Da Gama (1460-1524) sailed in and stepped into Kerala to
create a new chapter in history—the story of a long and tumultuous socio-political relationship between India and Europe. The best route to Kappad is along the backwaters. The unspoiled and picturesque backwaters of Kozhikode offer a bewitching experience. A ride down the backwaters through the Korappuzha River brings you to the beach.

l) Kozhikode Beach

About 1 km away from Kozhikode town, Kozhikode Beach is a favourite haunt of sunset viewers. The beach has an old lighthouse and two crumbling piers running into the sea, each more than 100 years old. Children can be entertained at the Lions Park and the Marine Water Aquarium. Kozhikode, the most important region of Malabar in yesterdays, was the capital of the powerful Zamorins and also a prominent trade and commerce centre.

m) Payyoli Beach

Another beach near Kozhikode town is Payyoli. A beautiful stretch of golden sands with shallow waters that border Velliyamkallu are the major attractions of this beach.

n) Muzhapilangad Beach

This is about 15 kilometres from Kannur Town and 8 km from Thalasseri, Kannur district. The Muzhapilangad beach which stretches across four kilometres of sand is a drive-in-beach where one can drive down the entire length. It is a calm and serene place. Huge black rocks scattered here protect this long beach from deep currents, and form a
tranquil pool of shallow waters that is a swimmer’s paradise. The palm groves fringing the beach are a cool hideaway from the tropical sun.

o) Payyambalam Beach

The Payyambalam beach is two kilometres away from Kannur town. Quiet and secluded, this beautiful stretch of sand and surf is the best locale for a relaxed evening. The beach is a popular picnic spot of the local people. The rest of the land Kannur-is equally fascinating to explore. Being the cradle of ageless folk arts like Theyyam and folk music, Kannur has always remained a land of ageless charms. However, if this beach destination is the place you want to spend time at, your stay should be arranged in the town two km away where comfortable accommodation is available.

p) Meenkunnu Beach

The Meenkunnu Beach is 12 km away from Kannur. This beach, with its golden sand and surf, is the tourist’s paradise.

q) Kizhunna Ezhara Beach

Another beach in Kannur districts Kizhunna Ezhara Beach which is 11 kilometres away from Kannur Town. This beautiful stretch of sand is one of the most secluded beaches in Kerala.

r) Kappil Beach

The Kappil Beach is six kilometres away from Bekal Fort. Remote and secluded, this beach is in fact becoming a major tourist attraction.
s) Kanwatheertha Beach

The Kanwatheertha Beach is three kilometres away from Manjeswaram. The major attraction is a large swimming pool-like formation of the sea on the vast beach (Government of Kerala)

Hill Stations of Kerala

The kaleidoscopic splendour of Kerala will be incomplete without hill stations. A visitor to Kerala can discover a new facet of hill stations - the enchanting, subtle shades of an evergreen world. The important hill stations in the state are Ponmudi, Munnar, Peerumedu, Vagaman, Rainpuram and Nelliyanpathy (Government of Kerala).

a) Ponmudi

Ponmudi is 61 kilometres from Thiruvananthapuram city and on the slopes of the Western Ghats. It has misty blue hills, narrow winding pathways, aromatic tea gardens, and array of mountain flowers, exotic butterflies and small rivulets. It is an ideal hill resort in Kerala perches at a height of 915 meters above sea level. Driving along the 18 hairpin curves on the way to Ponmudi is a thrilling experience. Several picnic spots are arranged on the way to the hill on the bank of Kallar River. It is an ideal spot for trekkers. A natural spring, flowering trees and orchids in plenty are found in the Valley. There is also a Deer Park just three km away from the resort. There is a golden Valley for bathing, where a cool, crystal-clear mountain stream splashes down the rocks.
b) Munnar

Munnar, the most beautiful high range in Kerala, is 136 kilometres away from Kochi and situate at an altitude of 1525 meters above sea level in the Western Ghats. The delightful climate, especially during dry months, is the major attraction of Munnar. Kodaikkanal, the Queen Hills, is only 78 kilometres from Munnar. The Munnar hill resorts complex covers the Munnar hills, Mattupetty dam site, Kundala dam site and Top station leading to Kerala State border on the North Eastern sides of Kodai-Kochi road. The famous Indo-Swiss Project is located at Mattupetty, 16 kilometres away from Munnar. Among the exotic flora found in the forests and grasslands here is the Neelakuringi. This flower, which bathes the hills in blue once in every 12 year, will bloom next in 2018 AD. Anamudi, the highest peak in South India, towering over 2685m, is also in Munnar. Around Munnar, there are several exotic locations like Mattupetty, Eravikulam, and Rajamala and so on. Munnar was the summer resort of the erstwhile British Government in South India.

c) Vagama

The Vagaman hill is 25 kilometres away from Peerumedu, the famous plantation town of Kerala. This hill resort is above 915-1100meters above sea level. Grass covered hills; velvet lawns and the cool mountain air make Vagaman a perfect holiday retreat. An exciting blend of religious mysticism and European legacy, Vagaman has a chain of three hills ideal for trekking-the Thangal hill, the Murugan hill and Kurisumala, important for Muslims, Hindus and Christians respectively. There is a little dairy farm run by the Kurisumala monks.
d) **Peerumedu**

The famous plantation town of Peerumedu, named after the Sufi Saint Peer Mohammed, is a lovely hill station, an ideal retreat in the Western Ghats and a choice break for tourists en route to the Periyar Tiger Reserve. Sprawling gardens of tea, coffee, cardamom, rubber and eucalyptus lying side by side with natural grasslands, pine forests and waterfalls make this an unforgettable experience. Peerumedu and its surroundings are suitable for trekking, cycling and horse riding. Another attraction here is the Thrissanku Hills, just four kilometres away. These hills are a choice spot for long walks and offer a breathtaking view of the sunrise and sunset.

e) **Devikulam**

Devikulam is a rare experience of cool mountain air and beautiful flora and fauna. The Sita Devi Lake here with its mineral waters and picturesque surroundings, is a good picnic spot. The lake is also ideal for trout fishing.

f) **Mattupetty**

Mattupetty is known for its highly specialized dairy farm—the Indo-Swiss Livestock Project. Over a 100 varieties of high-yielding cattle are reared here. The Mattupetty Lake and dam, just a short distance from the farm, is a very beautiful picnic spot. Speed launches, slow speedboats and motorboats are available on hire for boating on the reservoir. The sprawling Kundala Tea plantations and Kundala Lake are other attraction in the vicinity.
g) Nelliyampathy

This hill resort is located in Palghat District. The highest peak in the region is Padgiri with an elevation of over 1525 meters. There are more than 32 tea estates. Nelliyampathy is the only place in Kerala where orange gardens greet the tourists. Parambikkulam Wildlife Sanctuary is only 28 kilometres from here. The hairpin curves leading to Nelliyampathy have to be widened and holiday inns constructed for the tourists. Nelliyampathy is a fascination hill country that is a favourite of trekkers. To reach the hill station, at least 10 hairpin bends have to be negotiated on the Ghat road that passes through the evergreen forests of the Sahya Ranges.

h) Rainpuram

Rainpuram is famous for its trekking trails and varied vegetation-evergreen shoal woods, monsoon forests and grasslands. Formerly known as Madathumala-Ranipuram, which in its natural beauty is comparable to Ooty, has extensive forests that merge with the forests of Karnataka. Wild elephants can be seen wandering on top of the mountains.

Wildlife Sanctuaries

Natural forests and their virgin beauty have always been captivated to nature-loving man. There are many wildlife sanctuaries in Kerala to see directly wild animals and birds in their natural habitat (Government of Kerala). The important wildlife sanctuaries in Kerala are;
a) Neyyar Wildlife Sanctuary

The Neyyar Wildlife Sanctuary is 32 kilometres away from Thiruvananthapuram. The total area of the sanctuary is 128sq. kilometres. The famous Agasthyarkoodam peak is the nearby mountain range. Meenmutti water fall of this sanctuary is very beautiful. Sivananda Yoga centre is on the shore of the reservoir of Neyyar dam. The major attractions of Neyyar Wildlife Sanctuary are elephant, Guar, Sambar, Barking Deer, wild Boar, Malabar Squirrel, Lion-tailed Macaque, Nilgri Langur etc.

b) Peppara Wildlife Sanctuary

The Peppara Wildlife Sanctuary is in Thiruvananthapuram district. It has an area of 53 sq. kilometres. The major attractions of this wildlife Sanctuary are: Mammals like Elephant, Gaur, Sambar, Wild Boar, Wild Dog, Malabar Squirrel, Nilgri Langur etc.

c) Shenduruny Wildlife Sanctuary

The Shenduruny wildlife Sanctuary is in Kollam district, having 100.32 sq. kilometres. Shenduruny was the cradle of one of the oldest river valley civilizations in India. Remains of a Stone Age Culture belonging to the Mesolithic period, dating back to the period 5210-4420 BC, have been excavated from a large cave in the north-western part of the Shenduruny River.

d) Chimmini Wildlife Sanctuary

The Chimmini Wildlife Sanctuary is in Trissur District. It has an area of 75 sq. kilometres. Leopard, Elephant, Bear, wild Pig, Wild Bison, Tiger etc are seen here. There are many paths up through the rocks and into the forests of the sanctuary.
e) **Wayanad Wildlife Sanctuary**

It is the second biggest sanctuary in Kerala with 344 sq. kilometres. It is extended to Nagaraholai, Bandipur sanctuaries of Karnataka and Mudumalai sanctuary of Tamil Nadu. It is 112kilmometers from Kozhikode. Thirunelli Pilgrim centre is located in the middle of this sanctuary. It is an ideal place for trekking. Tribal cultures are well preserved there.

Mammals such as elephant, tiger, panther, jungle cat, civet cat, monkey, wild dog, bison, deer, bear etc. are protected here. The elephant occupies prime position. Interstate seasonal migration of elephants is common. The tiger population in the sanctuary is fairly good. Besides them, reptiles such as monitor lizard and a variety of snakes are also protected.

f) **Parambikkulam Wildlife sanctuary:**

This Sanctuary is included in the Annamalai Wildlife Sanctuary. The total area is 285 sq. kilometres. The only approach to this region in through Pollachi in Tamil Nadu. Because of its seclusion from other part, the natural beauty of Parambikkulam is not yet spoiled. The famous Kannimaram Teak Tree (46 meters in height and 625 centimetres width) is a curious thing to be seen. There are top huts and watchtowers. There is also boating facility in the Parambikkulam reservoir.

g) **Peechi Vazhani Wildlife Sanctuary**

The Peechi-Vazhani Wildlife Sanctuary is in Trissur district. It has an area of 125 sq. kilometres. Carnivores like the leopard, Tiger, Fox etc. and herbivores like elk, deer,
barking deer, bison, elephant and spotted deer are protected here in the leaf-shedding forests and meadows. Beside, more than 60 types of species are also protected here.

h) Periyar Tiger Reserve

The Periyar Wildlife Sanctuary is one of the world-renowned wildlife sanctuaries in India. It is also declared as Tiger Reserve Sanctuary. It is 260 kilometres from Thiruvananthapuram, 225 kilometres from Kochi, and 140 kilometres from Madurai in Tamil Nadu by road. The sanctuary is situated in the Western Ghats in Peerumedu Taluk of Idukki district. The total area is 777 sq kilometres. The temperature varies between 15.5°C in December-January and 31°C in April-May. The average rainfall is 2030mm. The forest type comprises evergreen, semi evergreen, deciduous forests, interspersed with grass-lands and Eucalyptus plantations. Elephant, Gaur, Sambar, barking deer, mouse deer, Nilgri langur, Bonnet macaque, and lion tailed macaque are the herbivores in the forest reserve. Tiger, Panther, Jungle cat, wild dog etc. are the major carnivores seen in the area. This is the only sanctuary in India where the Wild elephant can be observed and photographed at close quarters. Nearly 181 species of birds have been identified in this area (Government of Kerala).

i) Idukki Wildlife Sanctuary

This has a 77 sq kilometres area. The Idukki arch dam, the first major hydroelectric project in Kerala, is situated here. Around the sanctuary is a 33 sq. km scenic lake-the Idukki reservoir-formed by three dams, Cheruthoni, Idukki and Kulumavu. Mammals like Elephant, deer, bear, leopard, tiger, wild pig etc. are the wildlife of this sanctuary.
j) **Chinnar Wildlife Sanctuary**

The Chinnar Wildlife Sanctuary is in Idukki district. This is the second habitat of the endangered Giant Grizzled Squirrel of India. The location of the Sanctuary offers the unique advantage of watching its fascinating wildlife at close quarters from the road without venturing deep into the jungle. The Marayoor sandal forest and the beautiful Thoovanam waterfalls are located here.

Besides the above-mentioned sanctuaries, there are other sanctuaries in Kerala such as the Eravikulam National Park, and the Tattekkad Bird Sanctuary. This bird sanctuary came into existence in October 1983 on the basis of the report of Dr. Salim Ali, the noted ornithologist. It is 20 kilometres away from Kothamangalam. Indigenous birds are seen here. Due to the human settlement much of the bird life is destroyed. The situation that existed during Salim Ali’s visit to this place has completely been changed now. Hence the rationale of declaring this area now as sanctuary is not so clear.

**Festivals of Kerala**

No month in the calendar is turned without a festival in Kerala. In most of the festivals, caparisoned elephants mounted by men holding white plumes swaying in the air are unavoidable. The important festivals of Kerala are;

i) **Arattupuzha Pooram:**

This elephant Pageantry takes place in the month of March-April every year at Arattupuzha temple, about 14 km from Trissur. This is the oldest and most spectacular
Pooram festival of Kerala. Sixty caparisoned elephants bearing brightly colored muthuukkuda (silken parasols) and white tufts present an exotic pageant.

Pooram is the festival of festivals in Kerala. This festival is conducted during March –April every year at Nellikkulangara Bhagavathi Temple, Nenmara, and 40 km away from Palakkad. The festival is a joint invocation to the Nellikkulangara Bhagavathi by the people of the Nenmara and Vallangi villages. Performances of various folk arts like Kummatti, Karivela, Andivela and so on are on show during the festival. On the concluding day or the Vela, 30 caparisoned tuskers stand together in ceremonial splendour under a heavily decorated canopy.

ii) Trissur Pooram:

This elephant pageantry is held during April-May every year at Thekkinkadu midanam of Trissur city. Pageant of 30 caparisoned elephants, Kudamattom, fireworks and a variety of musical performances including chendamelam and Panchavadyam are the major attractions of this festival.

iii) Uthralikkavu Pooram:

This festival is held during February-March every year at Sree Ruthira Mahakalikavu Temple in Trissur district. This is an eight day celebration which is highlighted by the elephant procession of day and night. Traditional musical ensembles like the Panchavadyam and the Pandimelam add rhythm to this magical spectacle. The cultural fare during the festival includes temple and folk art performances.
iv) Chinakkathoor Pooram:

The highlight of the day-long Pooram at Sree Chinakkathoor Bhagavathi Temple is a grand procession of 33 gaily caparisoned elephants in the evening during January-February every year. The pageant is accompanied by the traditional temple percussion ensemble. About 16 well-decorated kuthiras (horse motifs) and eight kaalas (bull motifs) are also brought in a procession to the temple by devotees. Art forms like Vellatu, Poothanumthirayum, Aandi vedam, Karivela, Kumbhamkali (dancing with pots) etc are presented. Tholopavakoothu (shadow puppetry) is conducted on 17 evenings preceding the Pooram.

v) Pooram at Pariyanampetta Bhagavathi Temple:

This is a seven day annual festival held at Pariyanampetta temple in Palakkad district. This festival is dedicated to goddess Bhagavathi. Pooram, the concluding day of the festival, is marked by a ceremonial procession of 21 elephants. Kalamezhuthu Pattu (the ritual drawing of the goddess’s image on the floor, accompanied by a ritual song) is performed on all the festival days. Religious and folk arts like Kaalavela (bull motif spectacle) and Kuthiravela (horse motif spectacle), Poothanum thirayum, etc accompany the procession on the concluding day.

vi) Gajamela at Adoor Parthasarathy Temple:

In this festival, nine majestically caparisoned elephants take part in this spectacular procession which culminates at Chennapatti temple, three km away. Ottanthullal and a few other art forms are staged on the tenth day.
vii) Onam Festival:

The most important festival of Kerala is Onam. This festival falls during August-September every year.

viii) Tripunithura Athachmayam:

This is a ten-day harvest festival on Onam days held at Tripunithura, Kochi. Theyyam, Panchavadyam, Chendamelam, Pambamelam, Karakattam, Mayilatom, Ammankudam, Aattakavadi, Pulikkali, etc form part of the festival. Floral carpets that are a trademark of Onam are also seen.

ix) Pulikkali (Tiger dance):

This festival is held at Swaraj Round, Trissur during August-September every year as part of Onam. This boisterous dance is performed by groups of men who paint their bodies to look like tigers. On the fourth day of Onam, ‘tigers’ from all over Trissur come to the Swaraj Round in processions to perform a grandly riotous dance.

x) Tourism Week Celebrations:

To mark the Onam festivals, the Tourism week is celebrated in the state especially in Thiruvananthapuram during which the streets in the city are illuminated and a unique package of traditional and cultural programmers are staged at the Kanakakkunnu Palace and other landmark points. It culminates in a colourful carnival which the vast majority of the populace turns out to watch.
xi) Thirunakkara Arattu:

This is a ten-day festival held at the Thirunakkara Temple in Kottayam district during March-April every year. Usually nine caparisoned elephants take part in the Arattu procession which begins in the afternoon; folk arts like Mayilatom (peacock dance), Velakali, etc are presented in the temple compound in the evening. A major attraction is the all-night Kathakali presentation on the third and fourth days of the festival.

xii) Vaikathashtami Festival:

This festival is held during the month of November-December every year at the Mahadeva Temple, Kottayam. On the Ashtami night Thidampu, a symbolic idol of Lord Siva (known here as Vaikom Mahadeva is taken out in procession joined by man deities from nearby temples. The cultural fare includes classical music and dance including night-long Kathakali performances on the eighth and ninth days.

xiii) Kodungalloor Bharani:

This is held at the Kodungalloor Bhagavathi temple, Trissur. The Bharani festival which falls in the Malayalam month of Meenam (March/April) will be celebrated this year on March 21. This festival attracts the largest congregation of Velichappadu (“Revealers of Light”) or Oracles.
xiv) Chettikulangara Bharani:

This annual festival is one of the most well-known festivals of Kerala. The festival and the temple is dedicated to Goddess Bhagavathi. Almost all the folk arts of south Kerala are presented at the temple. Kathakali buffs are in for a real treat because there will be all-night Kathakali performances. Some other spectacular features include a kettukazhcha procession, Kuthiyottam, the Patayani, the Kolkali and the Ammankudam.

xv) Thaipooya Maholsavam:

This festival is held at Koorkancherry Sree Maheswara Temple, in Trissur district. Though the presiding deity of the temple is Lord Maheswara (Siva), the temple celebrates the seven-day Thaipooya Maholsavam dedicated to Subramanian, in which 10 groups, each comprising 30 ambalakkavadi and 60 pilikkavadi, participate. An ambalakkavadi is a decorated model of a temple six to 10 feet tall which is carried on the shoulders of a devotee. Pookkavadi is bow-shaped and decorated with followers. The Kavadiyattam goes on till noon, followed by an elephant procession, and then it is resumed again at night and goes on till dawn. A spectacular fireworks display marks the conclusion of the festival.

xvi) Machattu Mamankam:

This festival is held at the temple of Machattu goddess Bhagavathi, celebrating the famous Machattuvela festival on the concluding day. Richly decorated Kuthirakkolams (motifs of horses) are ceremoniously brought to the temple by the devotees as offerings. Elephant pageants accompanied by Chendamelam (Traditional
percussion music) converge in the temple courtyard in the evening, unfolding an extravagant spectacle. Various cultural programmers are held on the festival days.

**xvii) Malanada Kettukazhcha:**

This festival is held at Poruvazhi Malanada temple, about 12 km from Adoor, Kollam district. The temple, where this festival is held, is unique in that it is dedicated to Duryodhana, the enemy of the virtuous Pandavas, heroes of the epic, Mahabharata. This is perhaps the only one of its kind in the whole of India. The festival highlights include various folk art performances, Kettukazhcha procession and the Kaala vela. The decorated temple chariot is also a beautiful sight.

**xviii) Kalpathy Chariot Festival or Ratholsavam:**

This festival is held at ‘Sree Viswanatha Sway temple, Kalpathy, 3 km away from Palakkad. The annual Ratholsavam or chariot festival at the Sree Viswanatha Swamy temple, dedicated to Lord Viswanatha or Siva, is one of the most spectacular of the festivals of Kerala. During the first four days Vedic recitals and cultural programmes are held in the temple, which is believed to be over 700 years old. On the last three days, thousands of devotees gather together to draw decorated temple chariots through the streets. This ceremonial procession taken out by a sea of chanting people is a sight to behold.
xix) Aranmula Boat Race:

The Aranmula Vallamkali, held during the Onam season, has a religious origin, though it is celebrated as a grand social event to day. In the olden days, vegetables, cereals and other food materials required for the Thiruvonasadya (the Onam feast), prepared as a ritual offering at the Aranmula Sree Parthasarathy commemorate this ritualistic journey that the famous Aranmula Vallamkali is conducted. Before the grand procession, the snake boats assemble neat the Sree Parthasarathy Temple. Each boat is 100 feet long and accommodates four helmsmen, 100 oarsmen and 25 singers. The boats move in pairs to the rhythm of full-throated singing and shouting, watched out by a crowd of hundreds.

xx) Nehru Trophy Boat Race:

This boat race is held at Punnamada backwaters, Alappuzha. The Nehru Trophy Boat Race is the greatest event of the backwaters of Kerala and is held on the second Saturday of August every year. Magnificent snake boats compete for the prized trophy instituted by Jawaharlal Nehru, the first prime minister of India. Apart from the races of chundanvalloms or snake boats and of smaller country crafts, this spectacular water regatta offers fascinating sights such as ceremonial water processions, spectacular floats and decorated boats.

xxi) Champakulam Boat Race:

The venue of this boat race is Champakulam about 26 km from Alappuzha. The boat race season of Kerala begins with the Champakulam Vallamkali or boat race, one of
the most popular boat races of the State. The highlights of this magnificent event include a ceremonial procession on the water—spectacular water floats, decorated boats and of course, the regal chundanvalloms or snake boats (so called because the prow resembles the raised hood of a snake), each 100 feet long.

**xxii) Payippad Boat Race:**

Another boat race in Alappuzha district is Payippad Boat Race. Apart from the snake boat races, other highlights of the Payippad boat race include extravagant water pageants with floats, decorated boats, classical and folk art performances and so on.

**xxiii) Manarcad Perunnal (Kottayam):**

September starts off with the annual eight-day Manarcad Perunnal at St. Mary’s Church, Manarcad, near Kottayam. The festival, dedicated to Virgin Mary, is a time of fasting and prayer. The ritual fast for eight days is locally called Ettu Noyambu. On the last three days, there is a colourful ceremonial procession of devotees carrying a golden cross and rows of brightly coloured parasols.

**xxiv) Parumala Perunnal (Pathanamthitta):**

The annual Perunnal or festival at the Parumala Church in Thiruvalla is to commemorate the death anniversary of Bishop Mar Gregarious Metropolitan, the declared saint of the Malankara Orthodox Church of Kerala. The bishop was buried at the church. During the day of the commemorative feast (Orma Perunnal), special prayers are
said and rituals performed. There is also a ceremonial procession through the town, attended by devotees from all over the State.

xxv) Malayattoor Perunnal:

This famous Catholic Church, built in the 2000 ft high at Malayattoor hill in Ernakulam District, is dedicated to St. Thomas. It is believed that the apostle, who came to India in the first century AD, visited Malayattoor twice. The Perunnal or annual feast at the Church is celebrated on the Sunday after Easter. Pilgrims of all faiths from far and near, climb the hill chanting the maker of the apostle. Devotional rites and cultural programs are the highlights of the event.

xxvi) Vettukadu Perunnal

Feast of Christ, the King the ‘Madre de Deus’ Church popularly known as Vettukadu Church attracts thousands of devotees from all religions. The annual celebration here is called the ‘Feast of Christ, the King’. The feast is celebrated across 10 days culminating in the last Sunday of the liturgical year. Various religious rites are carried out during the festival days. On the last Saturday of the feast, the image of Christ is taken out in a large colourful procession. A solemn high mass, sermons, Eucharistic processions and benediction mark the final day.

xxvii) Arthunkal Perunnal (Alappuzha):

Arthunkal Perunnal, the feast of St. Sebastian is a ten-day festival, which falls in the beginning of January. The highlights of the concluding day of the festival include a
ritual offering- devotee’s crawl on their knees all the way from the nearby beach to the church- and a ceremonial procession from the church to the beach.

**Features of eco-tourism potential of Kerala**

Kerala is blessed with the tropical forest ecosystem in the Western Ghats, which provides a natural advantage for the development of ecotourism. The government is planning to diversify the tourism products to facilitate the fast growth of tourism. The Western Ghats region is going to be declared as an Ecotourism zone. The different ecotourism projects promote the sustainability of tourism in Kerala. “The needs of today’s visitor should not be met at the expenses of future generations. Such as ecotourism project, based on internationally accepted principles. Will help infuse the sustainability concept of other tourism ventures outside the realm of ecotourism”

The Directorate of Ecotourism of Kerala has identified the following as the ecotourism destinations in Kerala. They are given in Table 3.1

**Table 3.1**

**Eco-tourism destinations in Kerala**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sl. No</th>
<th>Eco-tourism destinations</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Thenmala Ecotourism Project</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Neyyar Wildlife Sanctuary</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Destination</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Peppara Wildlife Sanctuary</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>Shenduruny Wildlife Sanctuary</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>Periyar Tiger Reserve</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>Idukki Wildlife Sanctuary</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>Eravikulam National Park</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>Chinnar Wildlife Sanctuary</td>
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<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Tattekkad Bird Sanctuary</td>
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<td>10</td>
<td>Chimmini Wildlife Sanctuary</td>
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<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Peechi-Vazhani Wildlife Sanctuary</td>
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<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Silent Valley National Park</td>
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<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Parambikkulam Wildlife Sanctuary</td>
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<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Wayanad Wildlife Sanctuary</td>
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<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Aralam Wildlife Sanctuary</td>
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</table>

Besides the above-mentioned destinations, some destinations are also seriously considered for ecotourism development. They are given in Table 3.2
Table 3.2

Planned eco-tourism destination in Kerala

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S l No.</th>
<th>Destinations</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Kumarakom</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>Bhoothathankettu</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>Munnar</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>Athirapalli-Vazhchal</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>Nelliyampathy</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>Nilambur</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>Thirunelli</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>Pythalmala</td>
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<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Ravipuram</td>
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<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Peruvannamuzhi</td>
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<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Peruva Islands</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: “Ecotourism” Public Relations Dept. Govt. Of Kerala

66
The features of ecotourism potentials of Kerala also include:

1. Kerala has ecotourism projects because Kerala has 12 wildlife sanctuaries and two national Parks.
2. Kerala has a rich biological diversity, which can provide an impetus to ecotourism.
3. There is scope for recreational facilities because of the availability of water bodies.
4. The Kerala Government takes marketing campaign.
5. There is scope for such activities as mountaineering, trekking, bird watching etc.
6. Location advantages such as short distance from seashore well developed road network up to forest areas etc.
7. Availability of trained personnel
8. Well informed public and NGOs.

Eco-tourism spots identified in the forests of Kerala on district wise

The potential eco-tourism spots identified in the forests of Kerala on district is as follows:

1. Thiruvananthapuram District
   1. Agastyarvanam Biological Park
   2. Neyyar
   3. Peppara
   4. Ponmudi
   5. Arippa
2. Kollam District
6. Thenmala
7. Kulathupuzha
8. Achancoil
9. Palaruvi

3. Pathanamthitta District
10. Konni
11. Pamba
12. Kochupamba

4. Alapuzha District
13. Gandhi Smrithivanam, Purakkad

5. Kottayam District
14. Kumarakom

6. Idukki District
15. Kolahala Medu / Peerumedu
16. Kuttikkanam
17. Thekkady
18. Munnar
19. Rajamala / Eravikulam
20. Idukki
21. Thommankuthu
22. Chinnar
7. Ernakulam District
   23. Bhoothankettu
   24. Thattekkad Bird Sanctuary
   25. Mangalavanam
   26. Kodanad

8. Thrissur District
   27. Athirapally
   28. Vazhachal
   29. Chimmony
   30. Peechi
   31. Vazhani
   32. Sholayar

9. Palakkad District
   33. Chullannoor
   34. Nelliyampathy
   35. Silent Valley
   36. Parambikulam
   37. Malampuzha
   38. Walayar

10. Malappuram District
    39. Nilambur
    40. Nedumkayam, Nilambur

11. Kozhikode District
41. Kakkayam
42. Peruvannamuzhy
43. Chaliyam

12. Wayanad District
44. Tholpetti
45. Muthanga
46. Kuruva Islands
47. Thirunelli
48. Banasurakotta
49. Vellarimala
50. Mananthavadi

13. Kannur District
51. Pythalmala
52. Aralam
53. Kottiyoor
54. Mangrove based Ecotourism, Kannur

14. Kasargode District
55. Ranipuram
56. Parappa
The above 56 places can be developed as eco-tourism destinations giving emphasis to conservation and environmental education. The products such as trekking, bird watching trails etc can be developed with the help of forest management committee, development committee’s etc. This will help in channelizing the benefits of eco-tourism to local people, which will ultimately elicit support of local community for forest protection.

**Intensive study on Neyyar Eco-tourism project-Thiruvananthapuram**

Covered with 12,000 hectares of rich vegetation, the Neyyar Wildlife Sanctuary set up in 1958 is a colorful canvas of exotic flora and thriving fauna. Tropical ever greens, mixed deciduous and southern hill forests to sub-tropical savannahs and reed breaks make this sanctuary an ideal gene pool preserve. Spread over 128 sq.km of forest area in the Western Ghats, it forms the drainage basin for the Neyyar River and its tributaries-Mullayar and kallar. The Agasthyamalai, 1890 metres high, lies within the premises of the sanctuary and is home to a wide variety of plant species including rare medical plants and brilliantly colored orchids. Animals like elephants, gaur, sloth bear, Nilgiri tahr, Nilgiri langur etc and a variety of reptiles including the python, viper and the flying snake inhabit this forestland.
Crocodile watching, boating and trekking are some of the main activities possible here. A medical garden near the Crocodile Protection Centre has 178 variety of plants. The boat club organizes boat rides that take visitors around at least two of the six islands, in the easily navigable Neyyar Reservoir extending 9.06 sq.km. The more adventurous can go on a safari at the Lion Park. Trekking to the Agasthya Peak is possible in summer with prior permission from the Forest Department.

The Neyyar dam site with milky water thundering down the sluices of the Dam and the adjacent park with unusual life like statues are interesting places to see. The famous Sivananda Yoga Vedanta Dhanwantari Ashram in Neyyar, renowned for its yoga and ayurvedic treatment, is a 10 minute walk from the dam site.
Neyyar Dam

The Youth Hostel, Neyyar rest House, Forest Department Inspection Bungalow, Dormitory of the irrigation department, KTDC’s Agasthya House and the Rest House at Meenmutty are all excellent places to stay.

Neyyar Park
Neyyar is situated 30 km east of Thiruvanathapuram via kattakkada, the sanctuary stretches from Neyyantinkara Taluk to Mundanthurai Tiger reserve in Tamil Nadu.

**Intensive study on Thenmala eco-tourism project – Kollam**

Thenmala or the hills that flow with honey is situated about 72 km away from Thiruvananthapuram, on the Shencottai Road and 66 km away from Kollam. Once much sought-after for its honey believed to have medicinal properties, Thenmala is today home to India’s first planned eco-tourism project. The nerve-centre of a chain of 10 satellite eco-tourism destinations scattered across the hill ranges of Thiruvananthapuram, Kollam and Pathanamthitta districts, Thenmala is spread over acres of evergreen forests.

Thenmala is a natural habitat of diverse flora and fauna, this unique eco-tourism habitat lies 500 meter above sea level. Nature trails dotted with delightful waterfalls and enchanting picnic spots attract naturalists, conservationists and adventure seekers. With its forests, rubber estates and tea plantations, Thenmala provides the perfect background for leisure activities.

Thenmala eco-tourism centre has enough activities to entertain both adults and children. The important activities are divided into Cultural zone, Adventure zone, Leisure zone and other activities.
Cultural zone:

- Amphitheatre- for local art forms and other cultural performances.
- Shop Court- Managed by local women self-help groups for selling local forest products, souvenirs, local handicrafts etc.
- Musical Dancing Foundation- A rhythmic ballet of water, sound and light in natural ambience.

![Musical dancing foundation]

Adventure Zone:

- Nature Trail- Winding trail through various elevations in the zone.
- Canopy Walkway- Elevated path through a canopy of trees that helps explore the ecosystem and the level changes of the area.
Leisure Zone:

- Sculpture Garden- Interesting circulation pathways around the sculptures and the integration of the natural features in zone gives the sculpture garden its own exclusivity.

Other attractions:

- Boating in the Shenduruney Wildlife sanctuary.
- Deer Rehabilitation Centre
- Palaruvi falls
- Trekking
Deer rehabilitation centre

Butterfly safari

Boating
Objectives of Thenmala eco-tourism project

The major objectives of the project are:

1. To develop Thenmala dam and its surroundings as a major tourist destination.

2. To promote Ecotourism on the basis of sound principles of ecological sustainability in the surrounding areas of Thenmala.

3. To have a well-planned tourism destination with emphasis on sustainable tourism development so as to become a model for other destination development programmes.

Intensive Study on Wayanad eco-tourism project- Wayanad

Wayanad is known as one of the most beautiful retreats of Kerala. It always had a great share of the visitors arriving South India. Wayanad with its natural scenic beauty, rich natural resources, the hills, rocks and valley, unique terrain, climate etc provide a lot for catering to the demands of increasing tourists. Wayanad provides scope for eco-tourism, Wildlife tourism, Recreational tourism, Adventure tourism, Heritage tourism, Historic tourism, Pilgrim tourism, Monsoon tourism etc.
Muthanga and Tholpetty forests in the Wayanad Wildlife sanctuary are the foremost and targeted tourism destinations in Wayanad District. Recreational tourism centres like Kuruva Dweep, Banasura Sagar Dam, Karupuzha Dam, Pookot lake, Karalad Lake, Neeliala View point, Sunrise valley, Sentinal Rock Waterfalls, Kanthan Para Waterfalls, Pazhassi Tourist Resort, Lakkidi Ghat Pass etc attracts a lot of tourists. Chembra Peak, Pakshipathalam, Meenmutty Waterfalls etc are known for adventure tourism. Heritage trails include Wayanad Heritage Museum, Muniyara Chain Tree, Pazhassi Raja’s Tomb, and Uravu etc. Historic tourism sites include Edakkal Caves, Pazhassi Memorial, Jain Temples at Panamaram, Sultan Battery Jain temple etc.
Eco-tourism in Muthanga and Tholpetty is very helpful in creating deep conservation awareness in the minds of visitors. It is much educative and recreational too. It is a main source of livelihood income for local tribes including tourist’s guides. Eco-tourism in these centres is managed by Muthanga and Tholpetty Eco-Development Committees under the supervision of Kerala Forest Department.

*Kuruva dweep*
Banasura – Adventure zone

Muniyara chain tree
DETAILS OF THE PROJECTS UNDERTAKEN BY THE DIRECTOR OF ECO-TOURISM

1. Thenmala eco-tourism.

Thenmala eco-tourism India’s first planned Ecotourism destination in the foothills of Western Ghats in Kollam District was inaugurated in January 2001. Thenmala is 72kms from Trivandrum and 66 Kms from Kollam.

Thenmala offers products for both general tourists as well as for eco-tourists. The facilities as part of the eco-friendly general tourism are culture zone with musical dancing fountain, information center, amphitheater shop courts etc. the adventure zone accommodates elevated walkway, nature trail, adventure activities like river crossing rock climbing mountain biking etc. the leisure zone has a sculpture garden with the theme of man and nature a board walk and a suspension foot bridge, apart from this Thenmala ecotourism offers one hour boating in the Shenduruney wildlife sanctuary reservoir and tourists can spend time at the deer rehabilitation center with an children’s eco-park.

This destination attracts a large number of visitors and in 2004-05 around one Lakhs domestic tourists visited the destination. Funds were provided for the beautification of the leisure zone at Thenmala

2. Konni Eco-Tourism Project

Konni is situated in Pathanamthitta district and forms part of forest tracts of Western Ghat This region is at an altitude of 500-1000 m above sea level. The place has been prominent since time immemorial as the abode of the majestic wild elephants and as a training centre of elephants. Historically Konni is closely identified with elephants and
elephant stories. No other place in the southern Kerala has its history linked to elephants. For this reason the project with an “elephant focus “will be one of the most innovative initiatives in ecotourism.

Most prominent feature of the area is its verdant greenery and the unique topographic and ecological features. An agricultural region, Konni is rich in cash crops like rubber, pepper, ginger etc. The developments here are envisaged to get well with these aspects to make it sustainable so that the uniqueness and tranquility of the place is left undisturbed.

Ecotourism activities such as trekking, rock climbing, elephant safari, wilderness camping, river cruise by rafting, wildlife watching, bird watching etc. have ample scope in Konni. The ecotourism programmes in Konni is conceived in such a way that there will be familiarization and soft ecotourism zones / activities in and around Konni and real ecotourism products are envisaged in interior forest areas. These ecotourism products will be managed by VSS (Vana Samrakshna Samithi),which will be a committee of local people. This will ensure local benefits from ecotourism activities. There will be specific programmes for not so serious eco-tourists / normal tourists, who may include elephant rides, soft treks, visit to nearby waterfalls or rock tops, a bath in the Achankovil River etc. In order to ensure the long-term sustainability of ecotourism programmes in Konni a rapid Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) has been carried out.
3. Aralam Wildlife Sanctuary

Aralam wildlife sanctuary is the only protected area in Kannur District and is the northern most sanctuary in Kerala. This sanctuary is supporting a variety of animal and plant communities exhibiting incredible diversity. Due to the altitudinal variations the Sanctuary represent the only compact sub type viz: the Dipterocarpus –Mesua-Palaquin sub type in Kerala. Wayanad – Brahmagiri and the protected areas in the Karnataka state namely the Bharamagiri Wildlife Sanctuary and also contiguous to the forests of Coorg (Kodagu) and assumes much importance in Meta population management. The magnificent Meenmutty waterfalls which is comparable to the Athirapally waterfalls of Kerala is an added attraction to the sanctuary.

The department of tourism had sanctioned the following programmes for the implementation of ecotourism programmes in the sanctuary.

The developments proposed in a border way

1. Developing nature Trails,
2. Providing outreach and factual information materials at interpretation center,
   Formation of trek path,
3. Imparting training to tribal youth in Ecotourism,
4. Display of publicity boards and hoardings in important places.

4. Kallar Eco-Tourism Project

Kallar near Ponmudi is in Thiruvananthapuram district. This is a valley of the Vamanapuram River. Lots of tourists on the way to Ponmudi choose Kallar as a recreation spot. A waterfall named Meenmutty 3 kilometers inside the forest from the Kallar bus stop attracts a lot of trekkers.
Identifying the spot and the waterfall as an ideal spot for the development of ecotourism the Director Eco-tourism submitted a proposal to WGDP in May 1999. The proposal was developing eco-tourism Programmes along the river. The facilities envisaged were bathing ghats, tree huts as watch tower, toilets change rooms, trek path to the falls, signage’s, cafeteria etc. as this area was under the Thiruvananthapuram forest division the Divisional forest officer was the implementing agency for the project. The forest department had formulated a Vana Samrakshana Samithi (VSS) involving the local residents and the VSS was engaged in the development of the primary infrastructure. The VSS after the development of the primary infrastructure opened the spot to tourists in 2004. Now lots of domestic tourists are attracted to the destination. The local VSS members guide them and provide all required facilities.

5. Thommankoothu Eco-Tourism

Thommankoothu waterfalls is situated 20 kms from Thodupuzha in Idukki District. This is not one single fall but comprises series of 12 falls over a distance of 5km. The height difference between first and the last one is about 500m. All the 12 falls or Kutthu (locally Known) passes through lush evergreen forests. This adds to the beauty of the whole system.

Large number of people visits this place every year especially from Cochin City. Currently there is not much infrastructure to cater to the needs of the people. DTPC Idukki has created some basic facilities, such as toilets and information desk, but a lot more need to be done to enrich the experience of the visitors.
Since the water fall is within the forest area only forest department will be able to make ecotourism intervention in a meaningful way in view of the legal and policy issues involved.

The department of tourism has accorded sanctioned the following works

- Maintenance of roads, Beautification, cleaning, creation of parking facilities, installation of Boards.
- Steps to the boat landing with handrails
- Construction and maintenance of trek path
- Providing seaters in resting places
- Tree top machines
- Construction of protection fence at bathing ghats
- Purchase of boating basket (Kotta) and rafters at the Ezhunilakunnu. Boards
- Waste bins
- Drinking water distribution system
- Facilities for dress changing at bathing ghats
- Creation of toilet facilities

6. Palaruvi Eco-Tourism

Palaruvi is a waterfall 75 kms from Kollam in the Kollam District. Palaruvi which means stream of milk makes its way down the rocks, from the height of 300 feet. The Palaruvi wood is a beautiful picnic spot.

Large number of people visits this place every year especially from the southern districts of Kerala and Tamilnadu. There was no infrastructure to cater to the needs of the visitors. Since the water fall is within the forest area only forest department will be able
to make ecotourism intervention in a meaningful way in view of the legal and policy issues involved.

Ecotourism Promotion Society has created some basic facilities, such as toilets and information desk, but a lot more had to be done to enrich the experience of the visitors.

The department of tourism has accorded sanctions for the proposal for the development of Palaruvi Ecotourism like

- Collection and disposal of waste due to tourist traffic
- Construction of check dam at Kadavapara
- The enhancement of the present parking facility
- The restoration of the remains of the historical structures

7. Periyar Wildlife Sanctuary

Periyar Tiger Reserve, popularly known as Thekkady is one of the well-known tourist destinations in India. The unique rainforest habitat interspread with rolling grasslands and Periyar lake gives an exquisite ambience to thekkady attracting thousands of tourists from all over the globe. It is the best place to observe wild animals at close quarters while cursing in the safety of a boat in Periyar Lake. Around five lakhs visit thekkady every year contributing substantially to the economy of Kerala. Over the last five years, Kerala forest Department has been striving hard to upgrade the visitor facilities of the park and several community based ecotourism programmes were initiated during this period. These ecotourism programmes with strong focus on community welfare and forest protection has become immensely popular and added to the ecotourism
capital of Periyar Tiger reserve. In order to sustain the community based ecotourism and similar other initiatives in the Tiger Reserve.

Government has given sanction for the implementation of the following programmes

1. Jungle camping
2. Bullock Cart discoveries
3. Up grading existing Ecotourism programmes such as bamboo groves, tribal heritage etc.

8. Eravikulam National Park

Eravikulam national park is famous for Nilgiri Thar, Elephants, Sambar, Gaur, Lion tailed Macaque etc. It is just 16 km away from Munnar. The highest peak in South India – The Anamudi (2694 meter) – is situated here. This is an ideal area for trekking purpose.

The govt has sanctioned for a trekking programme named Gouldsbury trail. The trekking programme is in memory of Mr.J.C.Gouldsbury who was the general manager of Kannandevan tea company and a keen wildlife entusiast. He was a member of the Indian board of wildlife and was responsible for the creation of Eravikulam National park. The company had a regular system of annual boundary check and the trail will more or less follow this path.

9. Chinnar Wildlife Sanctuary

This is an important wild life sanctuary, which is very much near to the Munnar Hill Station. This sanctuary is famous for Giant Grizzled Squirrel. Other important fauna are Elephant, Gaur, Panther, and Deer etc. The forest types comprise Scrub forest, Dry deciduous forest, high shoals and wet grasslands.
The government has sanctioned for a trekking programme named the chinnar valley safari. This is a trekking programme in the dry forests of chinnar. The trek stays in the dry forests and moves up the gradient to halt at Vasyapara and then further up at Thengamala. The view from both the camps is breathtaking. Camping would be in the camp sheds of the forest department in tents. Being on the rain shadow region, the only area where trekking is possible during the monsoons.

10. Parambikulam Wildlife Sanctuary

Parambikulam Wildlife Sanctuary in Palakkad district is endowed with luxuriant vegetation and all kinds of magnificent wildlife of the state of Kerala. It is one of the best sanctuaries in the country for viewing the savage beauty of Gaur and the awesome majesty of Elephant. Tiger are also sighted here. With three artificial lakes within the sanctuary facilitates boating and animals can be viewed closely from the boat and minibus.

As part of the eco-tourism promotion, camping tourism using high class tents is proposed to be started in the parambikulam area. It is also decided to have a few more eco-tourism intervention for the sanctuary.

11. Eco-Tourism Programmes At Nelliampathy

Nelliampathy hills are situated in Palakkad district the place is about 1000m above mean sea level and is a beautiful hill station. The area has large extent of cardamom plantation in this hill station one can experience the panoramic scenes of spice gardens. Nelliampathy hills are commonly known as poor man’s Ooty is situated towards the northern side of the Western Ghats just after the 49 kms palaghat gaps. The area is in
Palakkad district of Chittur taluk and in Muthalamada and Neliyamoathy ranges of the Nenmara Forest division.

The govt has decide to provide the following facilities at Neliampathy

1. Construction of a viewpoint at mampara
2. A teak path from Thadikkadu to Sitarkundu
3. Construction of a viewpoint at Sitarkundu
4. Minampara – karimala
5. Interpretation center at Kaikatty

12. Pythalmala Eco-Tourism Project

This place is 65 km from Kannur town. This enchanting hill station, situated 4,500 ft. above sea level near the Kerala – Karnataka border, is rich in flora and fauna. It is a six-km trek to the top of the hills. This is the Highest Peak in the Kannur District. A large number of tourists are attracted to this place.

Meadows at the top of the hills with small patches of Shola Forests present a panoramic view. Trekking in this hillock will be one of the major attractions.

13. Nilambur Eco-Tourism Project

Nilambur in Malapuram District is famous for teak plantations. The oldest teak plantation in the world - “Conolley’s Plot” is situated here. The old DFO Bungalow situated at the hilltop near forest rest house can be an ideal location for conducting nature camps.

The proposed developments in Nilambur envisages

• Amenity center at Nedumkayam
• Amenity center at Adyan para (upper level)
• Amenity center at Adyan para
• Amenity center at Keralakundu
• Amenity center at Canolly plot
• Amenity center at Chokad
• Amenity center at T.K. Colony
• Renovation of Existing Quarters Converted into Information Centre
• Improvement of Guest house (DFO's Bangalow)
• Re-construction of Existing Antipathy
• Kadathu Toni
• Walkway Access to Canolly plot
• Walkway Access to Manavedan School
• Improvement of Canolly plot –Picnic Area
• Tree Top House at Nedumkayam and Trekking accessories at Nedumkayam, Keralakund Adyanpara
• Parking Area Development at Nedumkayam
• Signage-Dustbin etc.
• Solar Lights at different area

14. Chimmony Wildlife Sanctuary

Chimmony Wildlife Sanctuary is in Mukundapuram taluk in Thrissur district in Kerala. The Wildlife Sanctuary was formed in 1984 with an area of 85.067 square kilometers. The Sanctuary is 36 kms from the Thrissur town. It is 60 kms from the Cochin international airport and 25 km from the national highway NH 47. The
Chimmony Lake of 10.10 sq kms is also part of the Sanctuary. This lake irrigates the large coll farms in Thrissur district. The Sanctuary houses innumerable numbers of endemic and endangered species. This Sanctuary is a mega biodiversity zone. Presently lots of tourists visit the sanctuary. It is proposed to include three ecotourism programmes in the sanctuary namely

1. Ecoretreat Anaporu

2. Mulapara Ecocamp

3. Virakuthodu Camp

**15. Aralam Wildlife Sanctuary**

With the assistance of the Department of Tourism the ecotourism Programmes pertaining to the Aralam Wildlife Sanctuary, Kannur District was inaugurated by the Honorable minister for Tourism in February 21005. The number of visitors has increased and the total visitors have doubled during the year compared to last year. There are lots of enquiries from domestic and international tourist on the ecotourism Programmes at Aralam. To provide the minimum facilities to the visitors and to have a better appearance of the tourism zone certain necessary infrastructure developments has been planned to be undertaken like

- Paving road at Valayamchal up to interpretation Center by CC blocks
- Providing bamboo GI pipes handrail from Valayamchal to interpretation center
- Creation of Birders trail at Valayamchal including preparation of information boards of locally found birds.
- Landscaping of Valayamchal near the IB Dormitory and Interpretation Center
- Construction of a comfort station
• Website designing and launching

The Programme will be implemented by the Forest Development Agency Aralam

16. Neyyar And Peppara Wildlife Sanctuaries

Neyyar and Peppara are the two wildlife sanctuaries in Thiruvananthapuram District. Ecotourism activities at present in these sanctuaries is limited to conducting nature camps, visiting crocodile rehabilitation center, lion safari park, deer rehabilitation center and boating in the reservoirs in both the sanctuaries. Very few groups mainly foreign tourists only are at present availing the trekking programmes. To make more and more people to interact and understand the forests, their importance and their sustainable management for present and future generations, a few trekking programmes have been envisaged.

17. Eco-Tourism Facilities At Peruvannamuzhy And Kakkayam

Peruvannamuzhi is the water spread area of Peruvannamuzhi reservoir in Kozhikode District. This is an excellent area for understanding the conservation benefits provided by forests. Rich in wildlife, bird life and butterfly population, the area is an ideal location for the natural enthusiasts. The irrigation dam and the garden nearby will also be another attraction. As part of the ecotourism initiatives the following facilities shall be created.

• Animal Rehabilitation Centre
• Bathing facility in river
• Trekking programmes
• Bamboo rafting
Kakkayam is the catchments of Kittiady reservoir. Located at about the elevation of the Wayanad plateau, the area is excellent for understanding the conservation benefits provided by forest. The area is also excellent to study the evergreen forest ecosystem. Rich in wildlife and bird life and butterfly population, the Kakayam area is teaming with life and ideal for the wildlife enthusiast. Kakayam Dam (Hydal Project) is also another major attraction. As part of the ecotourism initiatives the following facilities shall be created

- Bathing facility at Orakuzhy
- Viewpoints near the waterfall
- Facilities for bamboo rafting and coracle ride
- Trekking to Ambalappara
- Tree top machans

18. Eco-Tourism Programmes At Rajamalai.

Rajamalai, 15 kms from Munnar in Idukki district is the natural habitat of the Nilgiri Thar. This place, as part of the Eravikulam National Park and attracts a large number of nature lovers. As a part of the eco-tourism initiatives, the following facilities are created.

- Providing drinking water facilities in the park
- Cost of providing facilities for cafeteria, kitchen block, toilet block and kitchen utensils
- Cost of purchase of furniture for cafeteria
- Cost of providing for retaining wall and drainage system etc.
- Providing parking bays

As part of the ecotourism initiatives in the sanctuary it is decided to modernise the interpretation centre at the Periyar Tiger reserve with addition of more internal and external exhibits.

20. ECO-TOURISM PROGRAMMES AT MUNNAR

Kerala Forest Development Corporation is a public sector undertaking registered in 1976 under companies Act for taking up commercial forestry activities like raising and managing pulpwood and cash crop plantations in forest land. KFDC has ventured into the field of ecotourism since 2001. Presently KFDC offers guided treks and outdoor camps at Munnar.

For trekking in Munnar in Idukki District, KFDC has developed a base camp facility at the foothills of the Karimkulam Plateau. Here presently some temporary facilities are only created. Hence it is decided to upgrade the facilities to materialize two trekking programme i.e. camping at Rhodovalley and camping at Lands’ end shall materialize in Munnar. For the upgradation the following activities shall be carried out.

• Solar fencing around the area
• Construction of toilets
• Procurement of tents and accessories
• Construction of pond, landscaping etc.

The eco-tourism programmes in Shenduruney Wildlife Sanctuary the only Wildlife Sanctuary in Kollam District is limited to conducting nature camps by the department and boating in Sanctuary Reservoir by TEPS.

To make more and more people to interact and understand the forests, their importance and their sustainable management for the present and future generations it is decided to conduct certain trekking programmes to be implemented through the Eco Development Committee.

22. Eco-Tourism Programmes at Cheyyapara Waterfalls Near Munnar

Cheeyapara is a waterfall in the Neriamangalan range of the Munnar division. At present lots of tourists visit the falls. An ecotourism programme is proposed for the visitors to the falls. The creation of basic facilities to view the falls is proposed. The same is implemented by the forest development agency Munnar.

23. Eco-Tourism Programmes at Panialy Porr in Kodanad

Panialy Porr is a small waterfall in the Kodanad range. The place attracts a lots of tourists. The basic facility at the fall is limited. In order to promote tourism and to facilitate the tourists to the fall it is decided to initiate certain programme of enhancing the facilities at the fall like

- Creation of an interpretation center
- Construction of a toilet block
- Developing a riverine trail
- Creation of observation deck
- Training for guides
• Bamboo raft
• Signage’s etc.

24. Eco-Tourism Programmes at Muthanga Wildlife Sanctuary

Muthanga is one of the ranges contiguous to the Bandipur National Park and the Mudumalai Sanctuary. It has an extent of 75 km Muthanga range has high potential for ecotourism mainly because of its attractive Wildlife sightings there is an elephant camp with four tuskers, a watch tower and an interpretation center at Muthanga, which need further improvements to cater the needs of the eco-tourists.

OBJECTIVES

The primary objectives of the project are –

a. To improve the economic state of tribals and other locals so as to minimize their negative impact on Forests and Wildlife due to their day to day activities for their sustenance.

b. To develop symbolic relationship among tribal’s, locals and Forest Department so as to enlist their supports for conservation of biodiversity.

c. Optimal harnessing of the ecotourism potential of Muthanga area of Wayanad.

d. To popularize the message of nature conservation among the general public.

25. Eco-Tourism Programmes in Kuruva Island

Kuruva Island is an island inside river Kabini in Wayanad District. This island has a unique ecosystem, which consist of all the forest types, which are found in Wayanad District. The island is a reserve forest and visitors are allowed to without causing any damage to the vegetation. This island can become an excellent ecotourism spot by introducing some additional basic infrastructures. The Conservator of Forests, Northern
Circle, and Kannur has submitted a proposal for creating the island as an ecotourism spot.

The infrastructure requested to be created as part of ecotourism programmes shall be:

- Tree Top huts
- Check dam and bathing Ghats
- Peddle boats
- Country rafts
- Small bamboo over bridges
- Counter and bamboo benches
- Destination boards for attraction
- Name boards for trees and medicinal plants
- Toilets
- Camping facility
- Development of Bird Watching Trail
- Landscaping and developing garden near information center

**26. Eco-Tourism Programmes in Thusharagiri**

Thusharagiri is the water shed area of the Chalipuzha located at about the elevation of the Wayanad Plateau in the Kozhikode District. The area is excellent for understanding the conservation benefits provided by forests. The area is also excellent to
Study the evergreen forest ecosystem. Rich in wildlife, bird life and butterfly population, the area is teaming with life and ideal for the wildlife enthusiast.

At present a lot of tourist visit the Thusharagiri waterfalls. As part of the ecotourism programmes some basic facilities so as to ensure a rich experience to tourist, Basic facility for viewing and bathing in the falls, small trekking and safety arrangements etc. are planned.

27. Eco-Tourism Programmes in Marayoor

Marayoor is situated in the north-eastern corner of Idukki district in Kerala. Munnar-udumalpet State high way passes through the area. Though Marayoor is located amidst forest areas and far away from other parts of the state, sufficiently good facilities are available in the area for urgent needs of the visitors.

Marayoor is a highly suitable area for promoting eco-tourism as Marayoor has a Cool and pleasant climate, Profuse water availability despite less rainfall, Easy approach from Kerala and Tamil Nadu, Proximity to Munnar and Eravikulam, Beautiful landscapes and shoal forests, Unique sandal forests, Existence of ancient cultural sites, etc

28. Eco-Tourism Programmes in Kulamavu

A landlocked district, Idukki is one of the most nature rich areas of Kerala. High ranges and wooded valleys are girded by three main rivers - Periyar, Thalayar and Thodupuzhayar - and their tributaries. The River Pamba also has its origin here.

This beautiful High range district of Kerala is geographically known for its Mountainous Hills and Dense Forests. For the people of Kerala, Idukki is always associated with Power Generation. About 66% of the State's Power needs come from the Hydroelectric Power Projects in Idukki. Idukki accounts for 12.9 percent of the area of
Kerala and only 3.7 percent of the population of Kerala. About 50% of its area is Reserved Forests.

As a tourist destination, Idukki offers diverse attractions like Wildlife sanctuaries, Hill stations, Dams, Spice plantation tours, Mountain treks, Elephant rides etc which attracts a large number of nature lovers. An ecotourism programme is envisaged in the water shed area of Periyar.

29. Eco-Tourism Programmes in Jankikad

Janakikad in the Kuttiyady range of Kozhikode forest division falls under Vadakara Taluk of Kozhikode revenue district. The project area is a bit of vested forest in deciduous nature and having an extent of 131 Ha.

The project area Janakikadu is 5Km away from Kuttiedy town. The project area is approached by road. It is a beautiful natural forest area having good biodiversity of plants and animals. The river Kuttiedy is flowing southern side of the project area. Janakikadu Vana Samrakhshana Samithy will be the implementing agency of the project.

Objective of the project.

• To instill love of nature through pleasant experience.
• To provide facilities for the general public to visit and use the recreation value of forest area in an environmentally compatible manner.
• To unwind stress through nature.
• To encourage firsthand knowledge about our nature.
• To give scientific knowledge to the students and academicians
• To increase employment opportunities to locals
• To provide atmosphere of lonely nature to the modern life.
• To lead to better understanding of the forests and better participation in conservation of forests and biodiversity.