Eco-Tourism in Kerala- A Study on Opportunities and Threats

Abstract

Eco-tourism is one of the fast growing tourism sectors in Kerala, contributing 30 percent of the total revenue from tourism sector. The eco-tourism sites in Kerala offer pleasant and pleasurable diversions that range from going on hiking, biking, trekking and hill climbing tours, wildlife safaris to the numerous wildlife sanctuaries located on the hills. The development of tourism depends upon various factors such as attraction, accommodation, transportation, recreation, restaurants, shopping, hospitality, safety and security, attitude of the host community, tourist destinations and so on. The flagship of tourism industry in Kerala is Department of Tourism, Government of Kerala.

The study is based on both primary and secondary data. Primary data are collected from various tourists who are visiting the eco-tourism projects in Kerala by using an interview schedule. The secondary data are collected and compiled from various sources such as official publication of tourism department, District Tourism Promotion Council, Magazines, Journals, Newspapers and various Websites, Research studies etc. The places selected for intensive study are Neyyar eco-tourism project in Thiruvananthapuram, Thenmala eco-tourism project in Kollam and Wayanad eco-tourism project in Wayanad. A sample of four hundred respondents is selected randomly for the conduct of the study.
The study reveals that the tourism centre which attracts young people, but the female penetration in the destination is low. The purpose of visit is more for entertainment than for education and research. Medias plays a prominent role in providing information to the tourists. The main attraction of the visitors to visit the eco-tourism destination is to learn about nature. Lack of infrastructure is the main reason for the tourists not to visit hills and wildlife sanctuaries. Absence of enforcement of rules and lack of proper tourist’s spot guidance are the main problems faced by the tourists.

The study reaches the conclusion that the present eco-tourism centers are facing several problems. Eco-tourism is a very good exploitation area for Kerala and Government. The tourism department must establish eco-parks all over Kerala so as to protect the greenery of our state and also to increase our status in the world tourism map.