Chapter 7

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

Well established tourism is good indicator of development. Even though, ecotourism is improved version to generate more jobs in local area for unskilled people, it gives income with minimum negative impacts on local environment, economy and socio-cultural factors.

This study has made for outcomes of concept, principles and initiatives of ecotourism. Identify main ecotourism sites and their activities in Kodagu district, knowledge, attitudes of tourists and other stakeholders on ecotourism have been examined. Potentiality of ecotourism has also been studied. Finally, it has included elaborate study of impacts of ecotourism on local environment, economy and culture in study area.

7.1 Major Findings:

➢ Despite the volume of secondary sources that has emerged on the first objective of this research, ecotourism is clearly at an early stage of development, as is our understanding of how ecotourism differ from other types of tourism. More research is needed to help formulate definitions acceptable to those working in this field, to help overcome this critical absence of focus.

➢ The literature points to the fact that ecotourism is a nature friendly tourism. This includes other type of tourism such as nature-based tourism, herbal tourism, rural tourism and sustainable tourism. Many scholars and researchers have discussed on principles of ecotourism. However, this study has observed lack of research on principles of ecotourism.
Initiatives of ecotourism in early stage, a few countries of equatorial regions like Kenya, Costa Rica, Ecuador and Brazil have initiated ecotourism in their national tourism policy and it is diffused to countries of tropical and temperate regions.

In India, Kerala state has pioneering role to initiates ecotourism, because ‘Thenmala’ is the first planned ecotourism destination. Assam, Madya Pradesh, Jammu and Kashmir, Himachala Pradesh, Panjab, Gujarath, Uttarakhand, Uttara Pradesh and North-Eastern States are recently looking for the growth and development of ecotourism destination. The Western Ghats region of Karnataka has good potential for ecotourism development and growth of it, in initial stage.

This study has identified ten different types of ecotourism sites in the district namely bird watching centers, cultural heritage sites, fishing camps, health promotion and spa centers, home stays, national park and elephant camp, recreation centers, river rafting places, trekking places and waterfalls.

Some places have dual character, for example Rajiv Ghandi (Nagarahole) national park and Dubare both have famous for bird watching centers and also for river rafting and elephant camp. Some home stays and resorts have served as recreation centers and health promotion and spa centers (Orange County Resort and Club Mahindra). Each ecotourism sites have single or multiple activities. They are located in different places of Kodagu district.

The maximum percentage of Local people-communities (27.5%) has defined “Ecotourism is a responsible tourist’s activity in the natural areas which
support the conservation of natural resources and welfare of the local people” and (25%) have said that “Ecotourism is the travel to natural areas”.

- The more percentage of International tourists (35%) have defined “Ecotourism is a responsible tourist’s activity in natural areas or even in nature-based artificial areas which support the nature conservation efforts and the local people’s welfare” and (27.5%) have said that “Ecotourism is an alternative tourism which is shifting from small-scale nature tourism to a set of principles applicable to any nature-based tourism”

- The good percentage of domestic tourists (26.66%) have comment on “Ecotourism is a travelling to moderately undisturbed areas with purpose of studying, appreciative and enjoying the natural sceneries and diversification of culture and (21.66%) have opined “Ecotourism is an alternative tourism which is shifting from small scale nature tourism to a set of principles applicable to any nature-based tourism”.

- 39.16% of tour operators/travel agents have simply defined “Ecotourism is the travel to natural areas” and other 19.16 % have accepted “Ecotourism is activities of tourists to use of natural gift and characteristics of an area through good practice with the aim and objectives of resulting new experience”

- Local people/communities are more aware on revenue for host people from providing facilities and services, free from environment pollution and over exploitation of natural resources to accept ecotourism principles. International tourists have similar opinion as local people/communities. Though, they add one more aspects strongly agreed of ecotourism principles is revenues of
ecotourism to purpose of conservation and maximum benefits are shared in local hosting people.

- High percent of revenues shared in local host communities to providing facilities and service to tourist are widely debate and agreed principles of ecotourism by domestic tourists. This category of stakeholders also accepts ecotourism will educate traveler who visit the place on importance of conservation. Tour operators/travel agents are less knowledge on principles of ecotourism. However, they comment that educate the tourists on conservation of local natural and cultural resources and local people can get more income through tourism activities in tourism (ecotourism) places.

- International and domestic tourists were satisfied with accommodation, food and beverage, leisure programs, shopping, hospitality, package tour arrangement and information about the site. They were not very much satisfied with the transportation / accessibility, sanitation, guide service and interpretation, security, price of the ticket to the site, travel cost, facilities and management and interaction with local people.

- Both international and domestic tourists have willing on control over resources, local empowerment development in the area, stimulation of local economy, improvement of people’s living standard, preservation of natural and built landscape and conservation of natural resources. Accessibility, accommodation, food and local products / souvenirs, environment and safety or security are very important factors of international and domestic tourists to their visit.
- National Park and Elephant Camp (12.41%) have more strength and Trekking Places (11.74%) in second place. The least strength has found in Homestays (7.04). Trekking Places (15.22%) have more weakness and Health Promotion and Spa Centers (5.19%) are in less weakness position.

- The Cultural Heritage Spots (12.19%), Health Promotion and Spa Centers (12.19%) and Recreation Centers (12.19%) have more opportunities. A few opportunities found in Fishing Camps (7.14%). More threats have found in Cultural Heritage Sites (16.40%) and less in National Park and Elephant Camp (3.90%).

- Health Promotion and Spa Centers have high potentiality do to having high strength and more opportunities compare to weakness and threats whereas low potentiality of ecotourism has found in Fishing Camps by more weakness and threats.

- The impact of ecotourism on environment shows that positive impacts have found in Rajiv Ghandhi (Nagarahole) National Park and Dubare Elephant Camp. These areas environmentally protected and more awareness has seems in tourists and local people on conservation of natural resources.

- Economic impact of ecotourism is more positive on local people livelihood and local economy. This study has observed that more employment generation in study area and even unskilled people have satisfied with tourism development in terms of income.

- Ecotourism impact on socio-cultural factors of study area has positively response. Though, local adults have more engaged in earning the money and this would have effect on their education system and life style.
7.3 Suggestions:

The suggestions are given to further implementation and development of tourist sites in order to sustainable prospective for better representation of ecotourism in the district. These are as follows:

- Establishedment of more information centers at tourism destinations with key information on available of ecotourism activities.
- Eco-friendly transportation and accessibility to all the tourist destinations and place of interest. Frequency of the transport to be improved.
- Security measures at trekking routes and improve local trained guide.
- Facility for smooth banking and acceptance of credit cards for easy transaction of money.
- Improvement of the hotels services which have to become more eco-friendly.
- Better informed guides and travel/tour operators from district head quarter.
- More publicity through media about the ecotourism destinations.
- Attention to the needs of children in the places of trekking, river raft and water falls
- Cleanliness at tourist spots for pollution free environment.
- Proper maintenance of the tourist attractions with followed ecotourism principles.
- Employment of more and more ecotourism professionals in the support services like transport, Hotels, guides ect.
- Focus on adventure activities and wild life segments.
- Identifying and developing unexplored ecotourism destinations and places worth visiting.
7.3 Conclusion:

The ecotourism development at any region of the world is considered as a major livelihood source of locals and conservation of natural and cultural resources. The district has performed as major ecotourism destination in the state. The tourist places of the Kodagu district have good strength and better opportunities, even a few weakness and threats for improving ecotourism. Kodagu district has good potentiality in all dimensions to develop ecotourism. The impact of ecotourism on local environment, economy and culture is positive. The conservation of local environment and culture, educate the people on environment awareness and protect the reserve forest are the positive environment impacts of ecotourism. Generating more employment for local people, income from ecotourism related activities and regional developments are the positive economic impacts of ecotourism. The improvement of local product, labor force to support the ecotourism. In addition to that improvement of infrastructure and health services and other social services are the positive socio-cultural impacts of ecotourism.

Though it has got the above mentioned merits in the development of ecotourism it is not free from shortfalls. It lacks institutional support and the whole ecotourism activity is not institutionalized in the process of development. Each ecotourism activity is carried out separately with very narrow approach where it lacks the comprehensive approach for all the ecotourism activities performed in different spaces. Hence there is an urgency of organizing and streamlining all the ecotourism activities under institutional supervision and monitoring with the local community participation. The institutional monitoring can yield better results in managing the resources, infrastructures and people involved in the ecotourism activities. This can reduce threats and convert weakness as opportunities through proper management of
the ecotourism activities. There is urgent need of specific policy on ecotourism at centre and state level to implement the core principles in its real spirit. Further the role of community and all other stakeholders of ecotourism are very important and they should work together in order to achieve the sustainable development of ecotourism, no doubt it is an alternative income source for local community.