SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

“I don’t want to protect environment. I want to create a world where the environment doesn’t need protection.”
4. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

In the present study, two climatic parameters, four vegetation parameters, one habitat parameter with richness and density of animals, and three socio-economic parameters were studied to understand the differences in habitat caused due to ecotourism activities in the two Wildlife Sanctuaries and two Reserve forests of Karnataka.

The four study areas varied significantly in various environmental parameters. These parameters are important for both wildlife and also for the development of ecotourism. For example, thick canopy cover was observed in Brahmagiri WLS and Bisle RF would definitely support the rich biodiversity; however, the thick canopy may restrict them to be exposed to the trekker. However, in Talacauvery WLS and Yaana RF, the tropical evergreen nature of the forest has moderate temperature, low canopy; more tree density (with less basal coverage) could form a good habitat for many species of wild animals and equally good for development of ecotourism entertainment due to high visibility across the vegetation.

High tree density and diversity was observed in Talacauvery WLS and Yaana RF which could help to start the new ventures like “short-term education programmes/trekking to educate on the local tree species” by the ecotourism ventures for the students. Since the basal area coverage of the tree is less in Talacauvery WLS there is a good scope for developing hideouts for animal watching and thereby further attraction could be made.

Impacts due to safari path, domestic animals grazing inside the WLS/RF, monoculture plantations, and construction of roads, construction of resort for tourism purpose and others like soil erosion, firewood collection were observed in Talacauvery WLS and Brahmagiri WLS. In contrast Bisle RF remains as a very good conserved site in terms of less impacts; this is due to the least tourism activities in the RF. But few activities like firewood collection and trekking path was observed in Bisle RF. Involvements of people in ecotourism ventures are low and there is lot of scope for the involvement of local people and revenue sharing.
As per the survey, it is observed that there was decrease in the visitors to all the four study area due to the lack of facilities. The relationship between the management and the community should be strengthened and both should participate in running a sustainable ecotourism activity.

Climatic factors have got a great influence on selecting the place for an Eco tourist’s as a destination. Generally, people prefer the places where the climate is pleasant and where they can spend more number of days with a minimal facility. In our selected study areas, Bisle RF, Talacauvery WLS and Brahmagiri WLS climatic factors like temperature and humidity were quite moderate and favourable which can be developed as a good ecotourism site.

The concept of ecotourism is to generate revenue and to utilize the same revenue in conservation activities and to improve the livelihood of the communities residing in and around the forests. There are four main components in ecotourism; wildlife, local community, management and eco tourist, without focussing on these components it is not possible to do justice for ecotourism. In our study we have focussed on all four components and have come out with an inference on conducting ecotourism ventures in the tourist zone of all the four study areas suitably. Transect has been marked in all four study areas where programs like canopy walk, bird watching and safari can be conducted. Especially Talacauvery WLS is having a very good potential for conducting safari compared to Brahmagiri WLS, Bisle RF and Yaana RF. Bisle RF and Yaana RF are having good potential to start new ventures like bird watching and educating tourists on medicinal plants. Brahmagiri WLS can be developed as a good trekking centre due to which attracts more number of wildlife and conservation enthusiasts.

Due to high tree density and diversity in all the study areas, it shows that there is less destruction in all the study areas but all of them lack in proper management from the concerned departments. If the same continues we may have to lose its nativity. It is the right time to implement the concept of ecotourism from the concerned authorities.
It was evident from the site visit that four to five families of the community named “Lalas” were residing inside Talacauvery WLS, their primary job is cultivation. Since, there is a proper coordination between management and the community they was no dispute or protest from the local community against the management. Even we were able to note some settlements in Yaana RF, settlements were not evident in Bisle RF and Brahmagiri WLS.

Some of the endangered species like Nilgiri Martyn, Malabar squirrel and Lion tailed Macaque was sighted in Bisle RF and Yaana RF respectively during our site visits. There is a proposal to declare Brahmagiri WLS and Talacauvery WLS as a tiger reserve since tigers were sighted inside the WLS limits very frequently. During our visit to Brahmagiri WLS we were able to locate the pug mark and the faecal matter of Tiger in Transect No.3. This shows the sensitiveness of some areas. It is advisable not to allow tourism activities in the sensitive zones of the protected areas and Reserve forests.

The Eco-tourism is established in all the four study areas but there is a lack of coordination between management and communities. The tourism zone should be limited, and tourist activities should not be allowed in core zones to avoid impact on the species diversity. More staffs are required to manage the protected areas and reserve forests. Community based programmes should be encouraged, and the communities should be involved in promoting tourism activities. Importance should be given to their art and culture. Local communities should be trained to act as guides, naturalists, travel agents, in food supplying, constructor etc. Management should promote traditional kiosk like local delicacy restaurants, handicrafts and other local products available in the area, especially in Bisle RF.

It was noticed that locals were not encouraged by management in promoting ecotourism or for any other activities in all four study areas. Livelihood is not up to expectation in Bisle RF and Yaana RF. But, tourism activities are at its peak in Talacauvery WLS and Brahmagiri WLS due to private entrepreneurs. Management should take advantage of this development and should encourage ecotourism activity.
From the survey it was evident that most of the tourists want development and minimum basic facilities in all the study areas. Most of the Eco tourist interviewees demanded for toilet and trash can facility in all the four study areas.

Our study has two dimensions of impacts of ecotourism like positive and negative, positive impacts are more due to increase in jobs, revenue, which in turn increases the livelihood of the locals and also due to ecotourism illegal activities like poaching, smuggling and encroachment will be reduced in the wildlife areas. Negative impacts such as disturbance to endangered and threatened species due to human load and pollution will be increased which can be minimized if proper management strategies are adopted.