CHAPTER – 7

WELFARE SCHEMES AND TOURISM - THE NEW INTERACTIVE SPACES

With the objective of uplifting the tribal communities, the Government has introduced a series of programmes and projects in Periyar Tiger Reserve. Unfortunately the progress or development of the tribals is not upto expectations for a number of reasons. As the programmes are plan-based and more emphasis is often given on the disbursement without considering the local felt needs, they often do not serve the real purpose. For making the development programmes really successful, one must be aware of cultural traditions, eco-system, economy, history, and ethnic composition of the region. A number of studies have also indicated that the development has not taken place at a uniform pace. Thus, some communities are more advanced than the others or some families are enjoying most of the benefits meant for the total community. The utilization and enjoyment is typically unequal at the community as well as at the regional level. There is no doubt that this situation will lead to class formation among the tribals. In fact, it has already emerged190.

We examine critically the development activities initiated by the Government and non-government agencies and the resultant socio-economic transition or changes that have taken place in the tribal communities of PTR.

The following are the schemes for the welfare of the tribal population during the year 2006-2007\textsuperscript{191}. The schemes are divided under two major heads (a) Plan Schemes and (b) Non-plan Schemes. The administrative expenses of the State Tribal Development Department, the allowances and salaries of the employees, the Lump Sum Grant and stipends allocation to the tribal students of the State, the expenses in connection with the expenses of tribal hostels and other tribal institutions come under the non-plan scheme. During 2006-2007, nearly Rs 2307.15 lakhs have kept aside for the above mentioned purpose. Under the plan schemes, there are a good number of projects which come under the state government.

The Central as well as State Governments implemented various schemes with a view to improve the socio-economic and cultural aspects of the tribal communities. Let us analyse the tribal welfare schemes which are categorised under different sector-wise spending: educational

\textsuperscript{191} A “Hand Book on Welfare Programmes” (Mal) Scheduled Caste Development Department, Government of Kerala, 2007,
schemes, health care programmes, agricultural and industrial segments, economic and other benefit schemes and legal aid programmes.

Programmes under the educational scheme such as financial assistance to tribal students, educational loans and special scholarships to students who study abroad, special incentives to parents and students who excel in their studies, sports, arts and other cultural activities, financial assistance for hostel building and infra-structure, model residential schools, pre-metric hostels and youth hostels, funds for training programmes, remedial coaching and vocational training are initiated by the government.

With the intention of improving the health conditions of the tribal communities, many schemes were implemented by the Government. Huge amount of money was included in the budget to provide financial support to the effective functioning of hospitals and mobile clinics in the tribal areas. Various schemes for the supply of fresh drinking water and sanitation facilities were implemented in the tribal areas. Orientation programmes on health and hygiene were also organised in the tribal areas.

The Central and State Governments initiated various schemes to improve the agricultural and industrial segments. Money was being granted for the purchase of land for the landless tribals for agricultural
purposes, financial support to do group-farming, organising National Level Trade Fairs and Exhibitions, and for the formation of food grains bank etc.

Grants for the commencement of new industries and programmes for better working conditions, financial support for the functioning of industrial training centres etc were also initiated by the Government.

Economic and other benefit schemes were initiated as a means of improving the economic conditions of the tribal communities. Various schemes for providing job opportunities to the tribals were created. Training in various trades such as type writing, computer programming, tailoring, printing, painting and handicrafts works were given to them. Formation of co-operative societies to ensure fair prices for their products, self employment units, insurance schemes, micro credit finance schemes, grant for the purchase of pick-up vans and petrol auto rickshaws were also sanctioned. The Government also attempted to improve the socio-economic status of the tribal women by granting loans to start small scale business. It enabled the tribal women to generate their own income and ensure economic security. Another programme which comes under the benefit schemes is the release of grant to parents who are below poverty line who find it difficult to
conduct marriage of their daughters. The loan is sanctioned on the ground to save the tribal parents from the exploitation of money lending institutions. Financial assistance for the construction of houses is also included under the welfare schemes.

The tribals are always being exploited in many ways. To ensure their safety and protection of their rights, Government have initiated different programmes. Free legal aid is one of such programmes meant for settling their legal issues without imposing economic burden on them.

If we look at the above mentioned welfare schemes initiated by the Government, we understand that these welfare schemes do not address the specific issues of the tribal communities and is a product of general welfare programmes, but not necessarily by taking into account the micro situations. The Government could not achieve the proclaimed objectives because it is all kind of a policy, decided from the top.

We could find in the tribal area of our study, a number of drop outs from schools. This is collaborated by the fact that the percentage of illiterates is very high among the tribal communities in Kerala compared to the non-tribal population. The huge amount of money spent on adult literacy programmes could not yield the desired objectives. For example,
the field data regarding the educational standards of the Mannan community in our study area points out the number of illiterates which shows that these policies do not cater to the requirements of the tribal community. This raises question regarding the planning and implementation of such development programmes in the educational sector.

Though new primary health centres and mobile clinics function in the tribal areas, they could not achieve the desired objectives of World Health Organisation, ‘health for all’ by 2010. The policy makers were trying to transfer their knowledge of health care to the tribals rather than recognizing their notion of knowledge of ethno-medicine. Therefore, no financial support was granted in retaining the practice of ethno-medicine, which is needed to heal some of the specific diseases widely seen in the tribal areas, and is considered as an important drawback of the health care schemes.

Interventions in the agricultural sphere led to increased tribal participation and many tribal communities became peasantised and this gave rise to the question of land rights. The policies were initiated with the objective of resolving the questions of land rights, but most of them remained unchanged. The reason is that the policy makers pursue the
same policy prevailing across other social groups without addressing the specific needs of the tribal communities.

Interventions also led to increased tribal participation especially who owned cultivable land. When eco-development programmes were introduced, the tribal cultivators could control the harvesting, processing and marketing of their crops without the intermediaries, who used to control this in the past. This led to their release from debts and increasing trend of saving investments and asset creation. Such improvements are brought about by the new policies introduced in the wake of eco-development which give a participatory notion aimed at developing the tribal communities, unlike most of the highly administrative and bureaucratically oriented programmes of the Central and State Governments.

In the following section, we shall discuss eco-development project in a detailed manner.

ECO-DEVELOPMENT PROJECT

The eco-development project is a world level scheme based on the concept of people centred strategies of nature conservation. Nowadays Peoples movements are being organized through the process of decentralization and capacity building for the good governance at
local level. The current approach is to involve the local communities in the protection and management of forests. This movement gained considerable momentum in the 1990s and is popularly known as participatory forest management. The Eco-development programmes are the back-bone to the participatory forest management\textsuperscript{192}. Officially, Eco-development is described as a Site Specific Package of measures derived through People’s Participation, which addresses all aspects of land use and other resources in order to promote sustainable land use practices as well as income generating activities which are not deleterious to protected area values. The National Forest Policy is largely based on the perspectives of eco-development\textsuperscript{193} and it lays emphasis on the participation of local communities in conservation.

The strategy for eco-development for Indian Protected Areas was first mooted around 1990 by International non-Governmental organizations such as the World Wild Life Federation which had been experimenting in Africa. The idea gained institutional support at the 1992 United Nations Commission for Environment and Development (UNCED) conference in Rio de Janeiro, and the World Bank created a

\textsuperscript{192} School of Social Sciences, ‘An independent evaluation of participatory forest management’, March 2003, p .2.

\textsuperscript{193} Rajan Gurukkal, “The eco – development project and socio economic dynamics of fringe area of PTR – A concurrent study”, Centre for Development studies, 2004, p .17.
special fund called Global Environment Facility (GEF) in consultation with the World Bank and International non-Governmental Organizations. The Government of India identified possible Protected Areas, where the Eco-development Projects, funded through an International development assistance loan, can be implemented. In the second phase 7 other parts and sanctuaries including Ranathambhore in Rajasthan, Rajaji in Uttarpradesh, Gir in Gujarat and Melghat in Maharashtra was targeted for GEF funding\textsuperscript{194}. PTR is one of the 8 sites selected to implement Eco-Development Project during 1996, but Nagarhole in Karnataka was later omitted from the list and only 7 sites were included. The project had 4 components in which the Village Eco-Development was the people oriented part.

The village eco development component has the core strategy envisaged under the project and 55\% of the project costs have been allocated to it. The objective of the eco-development component is to reduce the negative interactions of the local people on the bio diversity and to increase collaborations of local people in conservation by -

\textsuperscript{194} Vasanth Saberwal & Mahesh Rangarajan, ‘\textit{Battles Over Nature – Science and Politics of conservation\textquoteright}’, Permanent Black, 2003, p276.
1. Conducting participatory micro planning and providing implementation support.

2. Implementing reciprocal commitments that foster alternative livelihoods and resource uses to be financed by the VE programmes and that specify measurable actions by the local people to improve conservation.

3. Conducting special programmes for additional joint forest management including voluntary relocation and supplementary investments for special needs\(^{195}\).

Building social capital is fast becoming an important tool in the poverty reduction strategy of biodiversity rich areas throughout the world. The world development report 2000-2001 identifies three pillars to this strategy-

1. Promoting opportunity

2. Facilitating empowerment

3. Enhancing social capital

Building social capital is at the core of the empowerment agenda together with promoting pro-poor institutional reforms and removing

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social barriers. However, social capital is also a critical asset for creating opportunities that enhance well-being, achieving greater security and reduce the vulnerability. Social capital can be defined as the institutions, relationships, attitudes and values that govern interaction among people and contribute to economic and social development\textsuperscript{196}. The Eco-development Project aims at conserving biodiversity through a strategy of eco-development, which eventually converges into building social capital among fringe area communities by increasing better livelihood opportunities outside the protected area by way of collective action and seeking better networking with development agencies\textsuperscript{197}.

The first systematic contemporary analysis of social capital was produced by Pierre Bourdieu, who defined the concept as the aggregate of the actual or potential resources which are linked to possession of a durable network of more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance or recognition\textsuperscript{198}. His treatment of the concept is instrumental in focusing on the benefits accruing to individuals by way of participation in groups and on the deliberate construction of sociability for the purpose of creating this resource. In the original


\textsuperscript{197} Kerala Forest Department, ‘\textit{India Ecodevelopment Project – Building Social Capital For Conservation}’ Periyar Tiger Reserve project, April 2003pp.02-04.

\textsuperscript{198} Ibid
version he went as far as asserting that the profits, which accrue from membership in a group, are the basis of the solidarity which makes them possible. Bourdieu’s\(^{199}\) definition makes it clear that social capital is decomposable into two elements, first, the social relationships itself that allows individuals to claim access to resources possessed by their associate and second, the amount and quality of those resources. Through social capital, actors can gain direct access to economic resources (subsidized loans, investment tips, protected markets), they can increase their cultural capital through contacts with experts or individuals of refinement. Both Bourdieu and Coleman emphasise the intangible character of social capital relative to other forms. Whereas economic capital is inside bank accounts and human capital is inside their heads, social capital is related to others and it is that other, not himself who are the actual source of his or her advantage\(^{200}\).

Coleman\(^{201}\) distinguished the term from physical and human capital; physical capital identifies investment in tools or other tangible productive equipment, human capital refers to less tangible investments

\(^{199}\) For details see Pierre Bourdieu, “The Forms of Capital”, op. Cit


in skill and knowledge by individuals (manifested specially by educational attainment). Social capital is even less tangible and refers to the relations among persons that facilitate action, embodied in the collective norms of communities that extent beyond immediate family members and trust worthiness of the social environment on which obligations and expectations depend\textsuperscript{202}.

Most ensuing discussions of social capital emphasise levels of trust and patterns of social networks within communities. Scholars take social capital to reflect features of social organization, such as trust, norms and networks, which can improve the efficiency of society by facilitating coordinated actions. \textsuperscript{203}

Since building social capital is considered as an important tool in the poverty reduction strategy of biodiversity rich areas, the responsibility for the operation of the eco-development project is vested with the people’s bodies called Eco-Development Committees (EDC). There are 72 EDCs of four categories constituted during the Plan period. They are Village EDCs, Professional Group EDCs, User Group EDCs and Service Group EDCs. The people in the hamlets along the fringe

\textsuperscript{202} Ibid p.168
area of the PTR are the members of the village EDCs. The temporary or permanent employers of the forest department and the tribal guides etc. constitute the members of professional group EDCs. Those persons who subsist on the biomass of PTR are members of the user group EDCs. The merchants who do business during Sabarimala season are the members of the SAPP EDCs or Swami Ayyappa Poonkavana Punarudharana EDC. Therefore the EDCs are another important stakeholders of PTR.

Considering the large number of houses in the Mannan settlement at Mannakkudy, three EDCs are formed, as the manageable number of families of one EDC, as per the guideline issued by the Project, is 80-120. They are Mannakkudy I EDC, Mannakkudy II EDC and Mannakkudy III EDC, formed in 1996. The activities that the EDCs visualized are technical and financial support, agricultural improvement, honey bee keeping and mushroom cultivation, establishment of a centralised store house and institution of fair price marketing facility for perennial cash crops such as Cardamom, pepper, tea, coffee, coconut and Areca nut and training professionals like those of eco-tourist guides and health workers, institution of crop insurance against crop failure and granting fishing rights and the collection of NTFP inside
the protected Area. The following table shows the composition of the Mannan EDCs at PTR

Table- 19- Composition of Mannan EDCs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sl No</th>
<th>Name of EDC</th>
<th>Social Group</th>
<th>No of families</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Mannakudy 1</td>
<td>ST</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Mannakudy 2</td>
<td>ST</td>
<td>89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Mannakudy 3</td>
<td>ST</td>
<td>101</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Participatory appraisals conducted by the Sociologist, Eco-Development project, PTR in Annexure 3.

The main objectives of the activities are to ensure peoples involvement in protecting the identified forest areas within the Protected Area, bringing down their extractive dependency on forest and reduction of dependency for fuel wood, dammar etc. Improvement of agriculture, awareness of income generation, and improvement of health status thus came within the purview of village eco-development initiatives. Measures to regulate the fishing activity and reduction of forest dependency on items such as fuel-wood, honey, dammar, wooden poles and other biomass, became another important items of the agenda.

The India Eco-development project implemented in the areas bordering PTR focuses on the reduction of human pressure on the
reserve by providing alternate sources of income to the dependents especially the tribals. The Government has invested heavily on tribes and non-tribes for improved agriculture, other sources of income generating, capacity building and nature education. During 1990s the focus of management shifted to biodiversity conservation with people’s participation through the strategy of Eco-development.

The implementation of Eco-development programmes in PTR has considerably influenced the tribal life. First of all the eco-development programmes have remarkably decreased the tribal dependency on forests. Nowadays, most of the Mannans depend on the forest only for collecting firewood for self-use and they are aware of the conservation of forests for them and for future generations.

The activities of the EDCs have brought about some striking results. The most striking result is in the cash crop economy as visible in the case of the Mannan tribe. Prior to the formation of EDCs, their crops, particularly pepper is sold to the merchant-money lenders from whom they had borrowed small amounts. The activities of the EDCs enabled a formal avoidance of this kind of exploitative intermediaries which in turn increased their income by about four times. When their income increased, it is reflected in their material life also. The EDC
activities also promoted a sense of corporate existence, collaboration, collective responsibility, and trust that are some of the vital forms of social capital\textsuperscript{204}.

The Government agencies functioning in PTR are the officials of Travancore Devaswom Board, Tourism Department, Kerala State Electricity Board, Irrigation and Public Works Departments, District Administration, District, Block and Village Panchayats, and the NGO groups such as Peermedu Development Society, Malanadu Development society etc, function as participators in Eco-development programmes.

In PTR the EDCs were able to link up with NGOs such as the Peermedu Development Society and the Malanadu Development Societies and other development agencies. They took up initiative in group activities especially in cultivation of mushroom, goat and rabbit rearing and the production of handicraft items which enabled them to ensure economic benefits. The attitude of the tribals of PTR to save money has increased. The eco-development programmes have created awareness about their cultural identity that enabled them to preserve the traditional art form like \textit{Koothu}. The youth club of the Mannan tribal

community was revived. They started performing the traditional art form that was almost on the verge of extinct legacy. The interaction of the tribal communities with the dominant society has brought about some changes in their traditional art form, which was evident in their modern cinematic dance performances.

The eco-development programmes have influenced the tribal communities of PTR to change their attitude towards education. At present children of the tribal communities of PTR are sent to nearby schools. Children from Uralikudy are sent to tribal hostels for higher studies. A good number of incentives were given to the tribal parents for sending their children to schools.

To ensure the active participation of the tribal communities in the eco-development programmes, the Government have declared awards for the best EDCs. The tribals actively took part in the cultural meet and bagged a number of prizes during the Wildlife Week celebrations in 2006-07. The cultural meet has created awareness about wildlife protection and in the conservation of nature. A strong sense of belonging or coming togetherness and community harmony were some impacts of the EDCs functioning in PTR.
Capacity development in the innovative diversification of means of subsistence into economically viable enterprises, through collective thinking at the local level is another important result of the project. Traditionally the tribal communities enjoyed certain rights in the forests especially on the forest produces. With the conversion of forests into ‘Reserve forests’ and sanctuaries, their claims became illegal. In the past people used to depend on forest biomass as a major source of earning. Reduction in biomass removal pre-supposed a drastic change in the subsistence pattern and attitude of the people, wanted a shift from the traditional means of living based on the illegal use of forest biomass. The tables showing the nature of forest dependency of the tribal communities of PTR has been referred to in the sixth chapter (table 11 and 12).

As per field data the number of dependants on PTR biomass has considerably decreased and its sale has reached at a level of negative dependency on fuel wood, black dammar etc.

The most significant social benefits associated with EDC are the realisation of the worth of their land and the potential for their agricultural growth. Redemption from indebtedness is another social benefit. EDC- sponsored marketing facility and the institution of Fair
Price Marketing facility of pepper is also note-worthy among social benefits. To meet the challenges due to crop raids by wild animals, introduced sustainable ways of defence like electric fencing and giving compensation for damages to the households concerned are also introduced.

The EDCs gave the local people incentives to strive to become a body of common goals and to learn how to participate in planning and implementing local development programmes. The availability of opportunities to hold responsible positions of status and rank led to the accumulation of social capital of the poor and the marginalised. Acquisition of social capital enhanced their capabilities to enter the public sphere, which in turn improved their capabilities. The capacity to fight aginst oppression depends on the level of their social capital accumulation. It is assumed that if social capital is high, groups perform better to achieve common economic and political goals.

Acquisition of social status and recognition is an important change effected by the eco-development project. The people of the Fringe Area had been accused largely of illegal dependence on forest. The project extricated them from this blame by providing a new status and rank to its members known as eco-development committee
members, and the ecological awareness entailed positive shift in the attitude towards forest, are remarkable effects of the Eco-development project.

The eco-development project is also not free from negative impacts. Lack of institutional learning of the process of the project, ill equipped in keeping the accounts, lack of interest in implementing the project by the officials of the forest department, and the heterogeneous society which is not receptive of the new ideas and perspectives of the project etc had left only a little hope for sustainability, caused by negative impacts.

Tourism has also played an important role in the life of tribal communities of PTR. In the following section we shall discuss the impact of tourism in the tribal life of the Mannan and Urali communities of PTR.

TOURISM

Tourism is often projected as an economic necessity for Kerala in the path of development. It is an industry whose employment potential is always exaggerated. It is true that tourism opens up job avenues in
several areas like Hotel Industry, Transportation, Catering and other services\textsuperscript{205}.

The ecological balance of PTR is disrupted and destroyed by a variety of tourism related activities and the impact associated with possible removal of vegetation and related wildlife, have subtle effects on animal behaviour.

In recent years there has been a rapid growth in the field of tourism, catering special interest in nature and culture, ie, the concept of alternative tourism, which is associated with the concept of sustainable development. The alternative forms of tourism include greater awareness of the environmental impacts of tourism, economic development policies and nature conservation. The term alternative tourism includes eco-tourism, nature-tourism, responsible-tourism\textsuperscript{206}, soft-tourism and even sustainable tourism\textsuperscript{207}.

A boat cruise through the lake is the best way to see wildlife in Periyar. The grasses that grow on the lakeside when the water recedes attract most of the herbivores in large numbers. Large herds of Sambar

\textsuperscript{205} For details see, Girish Menon, “Economic Impact of Tourism Development”, Kerala Calling – Tourism Special, Department of Public relations, Government of Kerala, Volume XIII, August 1993.


can be seen grazing by the lakeside. Sounders of wild boar roam about digging up roots and tubers. Asiatic elephants are always seen by the lakeside or grazing in the tall grass savannahs that rise up from the lake to the hilltops. Abundance of herbivores attracts the predators. The dhole is often sighted. The tiger is not uncommon. Besides the boat trip, trekking is other way of observing wildlife. Elephant rides are also offered. Besides the Forest Department, Kerala Tourism Development Corporation and the Peermedu Wildlife Preservation Society also run boats. Private boats are not allowed to operate. Vehicles are allowed only up to the parking place before boat landing. The tourism zone lacks a network of roads. The only way further into the Protected Area is by a boat or on foot. Visitors are allowed to stay in the watch tower at Edappalayam and the inspection bungalows at Edappalayam and Manakkavala.

Periyar Tiger Reserve received more than 4 lakhs of visitors during 2005. About 8% of them are foreigners. Among the Indian tourists, majority come from North India and Tamil Nadu. During Sabarimala pilgrim season, foreign tourists as well as Indian tourists visit PTR. The following table shows the number of visitors to Thekkady
Table 20  Numbers of Visitors to PTR

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>No of visitors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Foreigners</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>32672</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>40607</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>51105</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>53857</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 21 Number of visitors through Vallakkadavu

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>No of visitors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Foreigners</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>1662</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>2745</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>3472</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>5517</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Periyar Range Office. Records

Tourist arrival at Periyar Tiger Reserve shows an increasing trend over the past few years. The field data during 2000 shows that 340811 domestic and 25945 foreign tourists had visited Periyar Tiger Reserve. There was an increase in the number of domestic as well as foreign tourists by 9% each.
Tourist arrival is maximum in the month of May, December and January. The average number of tourists visited Periyar Tiger Reserve in the month of May 2005 were 32672 foreign tourists and 383904 domestic tourists. In the month of December and January the arrival of tourists show an average of 30304 and 30211 respectively. Maximum foreigners arrive during the month of January and February when the plains get heated.

The total revenue generated from the activities include boating charges, entrance fees, elephant ride charges, accommodation charges in the inspection bungalows, watch tower rent, and bus fare to boat landing. The revenue generated from the above activities show a steady increase in the income for the last 5 years. (At present elephant riding and bus service to boat landing are non-operative)

IMPACT OF TOURISM IN PERIYAR TIGER RESERVE

One of the impacts of tourism is that it opens up job avenues in several areas like hotel industry, transportation, catering and other services. Another impact is possible removal of vegetation and related wildlife, noise pollution, harassment of animals, chemical pollution, and water pollution. The effect on the socio-cultural side of local population is

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Girish Menon, ‘Economic Impact ...
another impact of tourism. The tourist who carry along with them, a strong and visible life-style are adopted by the locals without further thought, cause a negative impact on them. Large areas of land are cleared off leaving the organisms inhabiting there, homeless. For attracting tourists, old buildings are demolished and new ones are set up in these places. Over crowdedness is another impact of tourism in our study area.

ECO-TOURISM

The present day eco-tourism may be called as ‘eco-terrorism’ but the International Eco-tourism Society, established in 1990, defines Eco-tourism as “responsible travel to natural areas, which conserves the environment and improves the welfare of local people”. 209 The notion of Eco-tourism was initially developed in 1987 by Ceballos-lascurain 210 who defined Eco-tourism as an experience of travelling to relatively undisturbed areas with specific objectives of studying, admiring, and enjoying the scenery and its wild plants and animals as well as any existing cultural manifestations found in these areas. The implementation of eco-tourism programmes have brought about some changes in the social as well as economic scenario of the tribal communities of PTR.

Tourism plays a major role in the development of Kumily, which provides accommodation, food and shopping facilities to the tourists. This township and the relatively large population it supports have developed an intimate relationship with the tourism activities and are greatly dependent on these activities.

As we have already mentioned the major fascination for the tourists is the boat cruise in Periyar Lake, which offers wildlife sightings on the lakeshore grasslands.\textsuperscript{211}

The following graph shows the preference of tourists visiting Thekkady.

**Graph -I .Tourist’s preference to visit Thekkady**

![Graph showing tourist preferences](image)

In a study on the preferences of the tourists, conducted by the sociologist of PTR, 32-35\% of visitors preferred viewing the wildlife

\textsuperscript{211} S. Guruvayurappan, ‘Study on Mullaperiyar and Tourism’, Forest & Wild Life Dept, 2001, p.29
and the beauty of nature, 27% preferred boating and 18% preferred trekking and only 3% have other preferences.

Efforts are also made to evolve sustainable tourism practice by linking tourism options, means of livelihood for local people and protection. The tribal communities such as the Mannans, Uralies, Paliyans and Mala Arayans now constitute a fairly strong group in PTR and have attained a status of close partners in the management of PTR. The involvement of the tribals in the tourism field enhanced a number of changes in their social and economic set up. The tribals got ample opportunities to mingle with the tourists and they began to imbibe the qualities of these tourists. Thus a rapport is made with the tourists and the result is that they began to intermingle with various cultures and it facilitated their overall development. In Kumily town, a number of private hotels, guest houses, and other business enterprises have come up, over the past one decade. This actually helped the tribals to get jobs in the above said enterprises, and the tribals could engage as protection watchers and trackers evolving a mechanism for benefit sharing with the tourism industry.

These are the different ways to improve the infrastructure. Three Hotels run by KTDC provide accommodation facilities at
Thekkady. The Holiday Home run by the Labour Welfare Fund Board, Panchayat and PWD rest houses are the Government run facilities for the tourists. Kerala Forest Department has 2 rest houses inside Mannakkavala and Edapalayam and one inspection Bungalow at Kumily and a dormitory at Thekkady which can accommodate only a few numbers of visitors.

There are three high class hotels within the tourist zone of PTR. The KTDC hotels, Lake Palace Aranya Nivas and Periyar House are inside the PTR. There are a number of other private hotels in close proximity to the PTR.

TOURISM PRODUCTS

The needs of tourism industry are varied and specialised. The Government has to revive and sustain forgotten traditions and dying skills. It should preserve the individuality of the handicraft traditions and art forms and specialised training and stipends has to be made available to craftsmen. Better design and packaging also help tourism products to achieve good markets. The Tourism Registration Act has to be strictly enforced so that the tourists may feel a sense of responsibility and security when they purchase these products.
**NON-GOVERNMENTAL SCHEMES**

Along with the Government initiated programmes, which are gradually penetrating into the tribal settlements causing changes in all aspects life, the policies and functions of non-governmental agencies are also needed to mention. The unauthorised immigrants infiltrated during the turn of the sixties and their settlements include land of ex-servicemen, staff colonies, graziers’ settlements and households of encroachers. Since the settlers are part of the dominant society, whose outlook and aspirations has influenced the life of the tribals.

The non-governmental agencies functioning in the Reserve have some set agenda. The major functions of the agencies such as Peermedu Development Society, Anakkara Vikasana Samithi, SAI Mission, World Vision etc operating in the fringes of PTR are as follows:

Training Programmes for women and young girls, geeva vardhini project for unmarried girls, organizing medical camps in the tribal areas, immunization for children and women, supply of nutritious food for pregnant women, children and mothers, health and hygiene awareness classes for the tribals, project on agricultural training to plant ginger, banana, chillies, mushroom cultivation etc, youth training, disposal of loans for digging wells, training in vermin-compost, cattle rearing,
kitchen gardens, provision for petty shops etc were granted to the tribals. The implementation of above mentioned programmes have brought about certain changes in the agricultural, economic and health fields.

All these activities of the nongovernmental schemes had created new spaces of interaction which had resulted in social changes. The governmental welfare measures had taken the tribals close to the nontribal society bringing a new perspective on life. Along with this, the space created by tourism opened up new avenues for generating income and enabled them to enter into a social world of new life styles.