CHAPTER - IV

ANALYSIS OF THE TOURISM POTENTIAL OF THE FOUR DESTINATIONS

An objective and comprehensive analysis of the tourism potential of the four selected, tourism destinations have been made. The details are as given herein below:

4.1 KUTTAMPUZHA

4.1.1. Profile of Kuttampuzha:

A landlocked destination, Kuttampuzha is one of the most nature’s opulent areas of Kerala. High ranges and wooded valleys along with a forest area is best suited to promote Ecotourism. As a tourist destination, Kuttampuzha offers diverse attractions like Hill stations, Dams, Spice plantation tours, Mountain trekking, Elephant rides, Jeep safari, so on and so forth. The area, situated in Ernakulam district is a “hillock stretch of land” near Thattekkad Bird Sanctuary, Edamalayar Dam and Bhoothathankettu.
The Kuttampuzha Gramma Panchayath is situated in the extreme north west of Ernakulam district, comprising an area of 543.07 sq km\(^1\). It abounds in scenic beauty and river valleys. It has also the unique feature of housing the largest number of tribal population in Ernakulam District and the central Travancore areas of Kerala. The neighbouring state of Tamilnadu shares the northern boundary of the panchayath. The south west of the of the panchayath is boardened by the perennial river, Periyar and shared by the Maakulam panchayath in Idukki district. The river Periyar and Bhoothathankettu Dam which are naturally formed and mystically important scenario, attract a large number of tourists, mainly foreign tourists. This geographically unique place is surrounded by rivers and forests and places like Manikantanchallil, Vadatupara, Edamailayar, Thalipara where the lion’s share of people of the area inhabit are in the priority list of tourist attractions. The people here find their livelihood through collecting raw materials for paper manufacturing like Bamboo and Reed. The tribes make their subsistence through collecting and trading in invaluable articles such as honey, kasthuri mangal\(^2\), bamboo etc., which are abundant in Kuttampuzha. Surrounding areas of Edaimalayar Hydro Electric project and the forest

\(^{1}\) As per the records of the Kuttampuzha Gramma Panchayath
\(^{2}\) Medicinal herb, usually used skin treatments
area of Pooyamkutty along with myriad varieties of flora and fauna which are always noisy, alive and enchanting. The fauna is blessed by the presence of the reptile King Cobra and the national bird of Kerala the Great Hornbill. The world renowned bird sanctuary, named after the famous bird watcher Dr. Salim Ali, is situated at the entrance of Kuttampuzha Panchayath.

The panchayath has some of the finest varieties of teak in Asia, the biggest teak in Asia is in the forest, close to the water reservoir at Edaimalayar in Kuttampuzha Gramma panchayath. The presence of an ancient temple of Kancheri and Poika are proofs that human beings inhabited there in the ancient times. The old Aluva- Munnar highway, passing through Kuttampuzha is an additional proof of the foreign encroachment as well as the feudal set-up. The magnificent visual treat of the confluence of the Pooyamkutty and the Edamalayar rivers which are tributaries the Kuttampuzha river is indeed a boon to any visitor. The adventurist tourists are enamoured of Variakutt and Peedimedu waterfalls, which are additional feathers in the cap of Kuttampuha. The scope of development of tourism here is great owing to the abundance of natural resources and conducive geographical peculiarities.
### 4.1.2 General information

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<tr>
<td>Literacy Rate (Female)</td>
<td>83 Per cent</td>
</tr>
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</table>

Source: Census data 2011
4.1.3 People of Kuttampuzha:

The people of Kuttampuzha are basically dependent on the forest resources and river fishing for their livelihood. The main source of income is the collection of raw materials and unique spices having medicinal value from the forest. There are seventeen scheduled tribe colonies, situated in the various parts of the forest. There are also schedule caste colonies. Majority of people in Kuttampuzha are agriculturists, and also drawing substantial additional income from
forest resources. Accordingly they usually engaged in fishing, collecting honey from the forest, making of bamboo products, cattle rearing and so on and so forth.

4.1.4 Malayan Tribes of Kuttampuzha

Edamalayar in Kuttampuzha panchayath is a place still in Adimali Block panchayat (Idukki) but officially reckoned as in Ernakulam district, is the only place where the aboriginal Malayans are found. Bamboo-cutting, fishing, manual labor and forest wealth collection are their main occupation. They rent out their farmlands and do manual labour in them. They participate only for name sake in educational and cultural programs. They consume alcohol and tobacco lavishly and are addicted to the same.

They are found to be very unhealthy owing to their morally degraded life.

The Malayan tribe belongs to the Scheduled Tribe and this community lives in the Idukki District of Kerala, India. Their name derives from the Tamil word for Mountain. In the district, they are found in places like the Edamalayar in Kuttampuzha panchayath and some of

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the hilly terrains in the Adimali Block Panchayat. Quite a handful of Malayan tribals are also found in Ernakulam district which is considered to be the orginal home of these Malayan tribes. They are also called "Panicker". Following the tradition of most of the tribal communities in the other parts of the Indian subcontinent, these Malayan tribes too have made themselves to experts in jobs like bamboo carving, fishing, honey keeping, etc. The gathering of the products from the dense forest areas is also a lucrative occupation for most of the Malayan tribes of Kerala. It has been noticed that due to their liquor consumption and chain smoking habit, there is a degradation of both the health and morality of these vulnerable tribal segment.

Malayan Tribe festivals and fairs play an important part in the community life of these Malayan tribes, which also demonstrate the cultural exuberance of the community. Amongst the various feted festivals, especially in Idukki district, the Adimali Fest is the most famous one. It is actually the tourism and agricultural festival, which has been celebrated mainly in the mountainous region ever since the beginning of the year 1991. After that once in a year this festival is celebrated by the Malayan tribes during the last week of the month of

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December. However, the study area does not have such festive celebrations at all.

During the Adimali Festival, fairs and exhibitions are organized in the venue. Myriads of the cultivators make a display of various items that they have prepared on their own. Exhibition of the stalls of various government departments, institutions and agencies are of huge appeal along with the exhibition stalls of the trade fair. An agricultural fair at Thodupuzha is also important and is held every year under the auspices of the agricultural society.

The existing tourist attractions in Kuttampuzha are as follows:

4.1.5 Thattekkad Bird Sanctuary

Thattekkad Bird Sanctuary is located at Latitude 76deg. 40'-76 deg.45’N and Longitude 10deg. 7'-11 deg. E. The bird sanctuary is located in Kothamangalam Taluk of Ernakulam district on the northern banks of the Periyar river which is also the entrance to the Kuttampuzha Gramma Panchayath. At the height of 35-523m above the sea level, this marvellous bird sanctuary is situated at Njayqapilli peak. Thattekkad

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5 As per records at the Kuttampuzha Gramma Panchayath
Bird Sanctuary, situated at thirteen kilometres north east of Kothamangalam, is a home to some of the rarest species of birds in India.

The great ornithologist, Dr. Salim Ali conducted a survey and found that this area has attracted the highest number of birds in India. He recommended that it be turned into a sanctuary in the early 1930s. Owing to his suggestion, the sanctuary was established in the year 1983 by the Kerala Government, which maintains the sanctuary.

Thatekkad Bird Sanctuary is located in the dense tropical evergreen and deciduous forests and grassland patches. The picturesque landscapes here makes it a choicest bird sanctuary for those who love being close to nature. Thatekkad also has extensive plantations of teak, rosewood, mahagony, etc. A variety of flowers and trees combine to form the bewitching flora of this wildlife park.

4.1.6 The Fauna of Thattekkad

Thattekkad is famous for its exclusive bird life. Among the animals found here are elephant, Leopard, bear, porcupine, python and King cobra can also be sighted here.

Rare birds and exotic species like the Crimson-Throated Barbet, Bee-eater, Sunbird, Shrike, Blackwinged Kite, Grey Heron and the
Night Heron are also commonly sighted. Indian roller, cuckoo, common snipe, crow pheasant, jungle nightjar, kite, grey drongo, Malabar trogon, woodpecker, large pied wagtail, baya sparrow, grey jungle fowl, Indian hill myna, robin bird, jungle babbler and darter are some of the birds commonly found here.⁶

There are a few rare birds as well which include: sunbird, shrike, fairy blue-bird, grey-headed fishing eagle and blackwinged kite.

Thettekkad is a popular bird watching destination where elephant riding and Jeeps Safaris are also conducted thus promoting ecotourism.

4.1.7 Edamalayar Dam

The Edamalayar Dam is a multipurpose concrete gravity dam, located at Ennakal, near Bhoothathankettu, on the Edamalayar River, a tributary of the Periyar River in Kerala. Completed in 1985, with a length of 373 metres (1,224 ft), the dam created a multipurpose reservoir, covering 28.3 km² (10.9 sq mi) in the scenic hills of the Western Ghats.⁷

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⁶ Kerala Planning Board.Ernakulam
⁷ Kerala State Electricity Board, Kuttampuzha
The reservoir storage is utilized by a hydroelectric power station which has an installed capacity of 75 MW with two units of 37.5 MW capacity, producing an annual energy output of 380GW·h.

This large reservoir created by the Edamalayar Dam is operated by the Kerala State Electricity Board to meet its peak power generation requirements. The dam will benefit the Edamalayar Irrigation Development Project by diverting water, released from the tail race channel of the Edamalayar power station.

4.1.8 Bhoothathankettu

Bhoothathankettu is a dam and tourist hot spot in Kerala. It is situated outside the village of Pindimana, about 10 km away from the town of Kothamangalam and fifty kilometers from the main city of Kochi. The original natural dam has been supplemented by a modern dam impounding the Bhoothathankettu Reservoir (Thattekad Reservoir). During the Malayatoor pilgrim season, travelers use the roads through the forest.

Large blocks of unshaped stones are placed on both sides of the Periyar River to form the dam, making it look like a wonderful dam built by superhumans. The name Bhoothathan Kettu, means "monster
fort"; past generations believed that it was built by a Bhootham (demon).

The myth behind Bhoothathankettu is that some demons planned to submerge the Trikkariyoor temple, whose presiding deity is Lord Shiva by making a dam in the Periyar river and flooding the area. But, Lord Shiva, suspecting trickery, came up with a plan to deter them. He made it appear that dawn was approaching by making a sound like the crowing of the rooster. The demons, fearing the arrival of light, fled, giving up their task. But there remains to this day the visible proof of their effort - the huge stones the demons were supposed to have rolled on to the riverbed, the Old Bhoothathankettu. The Periyar flows on through the narrow space which the demons did not quite manage to dam up.

But the reality is that it has been the result of two great floods - one in the 4th century and the other in 1341, which threw open the port of Kochi. The massive landslides during the flood are believed to have caused gigantic rocks to roll down from the mountain and become entrenched in the Old Bhoothathankettu.

8 The Hindu, Dec29,2001
9 "The magic of Bhoothathankettu". The Hindu. Archived from the original on 23 May 2003.
4.1.9 Upcoming project of Kuttampuzha

A Naval Armament Depot is likely to be set up in Kuttampuzha soon. The project is being brought to Kuttampuzha for two reasons, the first being that the area is sparsely populated and secondly the project would generate roughly over thousand new jobs to the local people. Moreover, many feasible developmental projects can also be undertaken due to conducive environmental condition of the area.

4.1.10 Potential Areas for Tourism Development

The proposed potential and enchanting tourism attractions in this beautiful hilly area include; Vaishali Guha, Peendimedu waterfalls, Inchathotty Hanging Bridge, Schedule Tribe Colony, Knacheri And Poika Temple. Even though these are potential tourism destinations, so far no effort whatsoever has been taken by the state government to develop these tourism attractions as part of its tourism promotion activities in the area.

4.1.10.1 Vaishali Guha

This is one of the largest man made tunnels in the country. It is believed that this tunnel was constructed with the rock that was left after the construction of the Edamailayar dam. This has been the location
chosen for the shooting of many film especially the Malayalam classic movie “Vaishali”, which was directed by the famed director Bharathan. It is from this movie that the tunnel got its name. The entry to this point is restricted by the forest department.

4.1.10.2 Peendimedu waterfalls:

This is a picturesque waterfall near Pooyamkutty. It is so enchanting and attractive that it can be exploited in tourism promotion. The journey to the falls is through the old Munnar forest road, which was used for transporting tea and spices from the plantations in Munnar in yesteryears. This historical route is existent but is not properly maintained. This is a scenic route through thick foliage with the river running parallel to the in many places. The remarkable feature of Peendimedu waterfall is that enroute one can spot some of the rarest species of birds and fauna, which provide a real treat to the bird watcher’s eye. At Peendimedu waterfalls, one can take a dip in the river’s cool waters

4.1.10.3 Inchathotty Hanging Bridge

A suspension bridge is a type of bridge in which the deck (the load-bearing portion) is hung below suspension cables on vertical suspenders. This type of bridge has cables suspended between towers. It
is the largest suspension bridge in India with a length of 183m and a width of 4feet. This hanging bridge is on the river Periyar, situated at the eastern side of Ernakulam district.

4.1.10.4 Scheduled Tribes Colony:

The Schedule Tribe colonies are seventeen in number, the uniqueness of this Tribal habitat is that it is the only panchayath in Ernakulam district with the maximum number of tribal population. These people are for the most part dependent on the resources of the forest for their daily livelihood. They get form these several: medicinal herbs which are used in the treatment of various diseases. This forest is rich in flora and fauna.

4.1.10.5 Knacheri and Poika Temple

The Forest on the right bank of Periyar was the abode of a great civilization at an unknown time in history. The civilization disappeared for reasons not fully known. Nature has left a few traces of the past glory. The remains of several temples and Muniaras are valuable
indicators for historians and excavators in finding out the real glory of this civilization. In this way they are of great historical value\textsuperscript{10}.

Muniyara or Megalithic Monuments are structures built of large stones by prehistoric people for burial or religious purposes. The word megalith means large stone. The stones may weigh from 25 to 100 short tons (23 to 91 metric tons) each. Megalithic monuments can be found in various parts of the world. The most famous ones in India are seen at Marayoor, Kuttampuzha, Thattekad, Thundathil, Poika and Karipa\textsuperscript{11}. This will be fascinating for the tourists especially the foreigners.

Trekking is the only ways by which one can get see the remains of the Knacheri temple, situated nearly fourteen km inside the forest and is a boon for nature lovers. Both the temples are dedicated to Lord Shiva.

The important attractions in this area besides the above mentioned ones include several small waterfalls and there is tremendous scope for bird watching, trekking and kayaking. All these can be made use of to promote forest tourism and tribal tourism.

\textsuperscript{10} Sreedharan Menon,(1985),“A survey of Indian Culture” first DCB, ed 2007, pp223
\textsuperscript{11} Gopalan AK(1959) , “Kerala Past and Present”, London pp 26-28
While trekking through Kuttampuzha, one can see tribal settlements, herds of elephants, butterflies, wild deer and rare birds. Kuttampuzha is surrounded by forests and river valleys, rich in flora and fauna and so it would prove to be ideal for all sorts of tourism including ecotourism and sustainability tourism. Forest tourism is the next big trumpet card of the state tourism department to attract tourists both domestic and foreign\textsuperscript{12}. Promotion of tribal tourism in Kuttampuzha also has immense scope and this will greatly benefit the tribal population who are groaning under the burden of livelihood. This tribal hamlet could be improved if responsible tourism could be implemented here. The very unique and conservative lifestyle could captivate the tourists.

The demographic features are distinctive which will mesmerize foreigners as well as people hailing from the northern parts of India. The unique feature of Kuttampuzha is that it is the cross border area with Tamilnadu. The probability of attracting tourists visiting the existing tourist hotspots of Bhoothathankettu, Edamalayar, and Thateekad is considerable if proper infrastructure facilities are provided here. Kuttampuzha could be promoted as a spoke point by harnessing the

\textsuperscript{12} The Hindu, July 2012, “Forest Tourism, Kerala’s Next Big Shout”.
potential of the area. Tourism promotion could also involve Bamboo rafting, kayaking, cycling, fishing and such other ecotourism activities.

Tourism development at Kuttampuzha is at a low ebb. Thus most of the potential sites described above have little or no access for the tourists and no systematic studies have been carried out so far in this regard.

The potential for development of tourism at a given destination depends on the availability of a strong tourism resource base, ie, various facilities in terms of accessibility, internal transportation, accommodation, recreation and entertainment provision, travel agencies and tour operation services, shopping opportunities and so on\textsuperscript{13}. However, the basic infrastructure, related to water and power supply, communication and currency exchange facilities, health-hygiene and security –safety services, hygienic restaurants etc, are seemingly more relevant from the resident point of view, and that will prove essentially decisive factors in the ultimate growth and development of tourism industry as a whole. Obviously, the tourist may not feel inclined to visit a destination, which lacks the basic infrastructure.

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\textsuperscript{13} Pearce Douglas(1987),” Tourism Today- Geographical Analysis” London: Longman.pp56
\end{flushright}
Putting it the other way round, even the areas with lesser tourism resource potential but equipped with requisite support infrastructure has greater development potential than those with rich tourist resources treasure but with poor infrastructure. Promoting tourism in infrastructurally strong area is more convenient both from time and money view points. Naturally, potential tourism enterprises too, prefer to invest in such areas, in view of lesser cost of development vis-a-vis possibility of access to a great market segment. The fact remains that the quality of tourist facilities at a destination are necessarily determined by the quality of available basic infrastructure. The condition of the art infrastructure has a decisive impact on the economic development besides effectively activating the latent entrepreneurship. From the residents’ view point, modernization of infrastructure leads to improvement in the living standards, enhancement in awareness and effective interaction with the outside world etc... in addition to expansion of trade and industries.

Coming to tourism, the infrastructural requirements are too diverse and at times too specific, depending on the type of touristic

appeal and the range of tourist activities possible to be developed at a given destination. For example, trekking does not involve much of the infrastructure or tourist facilities, except a definite trek and a guide, as also availability of suitable camping sites enroute. Likewise, river running, Kayakking, Bamboo rafting have their own set of requirement in terms of basic infrastructure tourism facilities. Tourists visiting different destinations or travelling under different motives have different set of demands, depending on their purpose of visit expectations at a regard to the given destination.

The study region has been full of touristic potential in the form of scenic beauty and a unique tribal life. Along with the basic infrastructure, needed for developing tourism in Kuttampuzha, it is also essential to understand and promote the existing potential of tourism through well -planned entrepreneurial ventures.

4.1.11 SWOT Analysis of Kuttampuzha

Strengths

1. Abundant natural scenic beauty, vast potential for bird watching.

2. Amalgamation of tribal and modern culture.
3. Strategic location – Mid way between Edaimalyar, Bhoothathankettu and Thatteekad

4. Places of historical importance.

Weaknesses

1. Poor policy framework.

2. Poor infrastructure.

3. Lack of marketing efforts.

4. Lack of awareness of the potentiality of tourism.

Opportunities

1. Ecotourism.

2. Responsible tourism.

3. Rural tourism.

4. Employment and Entrepreneurship.

Threats

1. Cultural erosion

2. Poaching and timber logging

3. Pollution

4. Erosion of natural resources
Strengths

Kuttampuzha has inherent strengths of its own. First of all its strategic location near to Edaimalyar, Bhoothathankettu and Thatteekad, being equidistant from the three destinations it has a potential to become a super travel or tourism hub. It could also be promoted as a stopover destination to Munnar.

Kuttampuzha has the opulence of a bounteous nature like nowhere else. Thus nature based and responsible tourism can work wonders here like the rest of the state. Moreover, the tribal strength of Kuttampuzha can be positioned as a unique tourism product.

Weaknesses

There is no policy framework, by either the Panchayath or the state governments to develop tourism in the region. This coupled with the poor infrastructure puts Kuttampuzha way behind other regions of the area. What bothers more is the lack of awareness among the local people. They need to develop a receptive attitude towards visitors and welcome them with a smile. Moreover, due to lack of marketing efforts, many potential visitors are not aware of what Kuttampuzha has to offer. A proper marketing strategy coupled with information dissemination centres can bring amazing prosperity to Kuttampuzha.
Opportunities

Opportunities for tourism activities are just galore at Kuttampuzha are enormous. The vast stretch of green provides ample scope for ecotourism. Another potential that can be cashed upon is tribal tourism and ethnic tourism. These activities could bring in the most desired foreign exchange and also provide employment to thousands.

Threats

The main threat to Kuttampuzha is the depletion of the forest covers. As pointed out earlier, the vast green vegetation is one of the major strength of Kuttampuzha. Therefore, large scale timber logging and poaching of wild animals are a major threat. There is considerable fear when the tribal people come into contact with more civilized people, it may lead to cultural erosion. They may start imitating the visitors forgetting their own way of life. Another alarming threat is the depletion of natural resources, especially water, flora and fauna of the region.

4.2. KUMBALANGY

Kumbalangy is surrounded by backwaters. A ring of Chinese fishing nets literally encircle the island –village, bearing witness to the rich aquatic life. An array of mangroves separates the land from water
providing a breeding ground for prawns, crabs, oysters and small fishes. The village which is 16 Sq.Km in area is home to fishermen, farmers, labourers, toddy tappers and coir spinners, all alike. The coastal ambience and ethnic cuisines are some of the highlights of Kumbalanghi.

KUMBALANGY GRAMA PANCHAYAT, ERNAKULAM DISTRICT

4.2.1 General Information
### Profile of Kumbalangy:

Kumbalangy Gramma Panchayath is an island village. The panchayath is surrounded by backwaters on three sides and is located on the outskirts of the city of Cochin in the state of Kerala in South India. Kumbalangy region was part of the Edapally Principality and later merged in the Cochin Kingdom. History says that the Travancore kings fought war against Cochin Kingdom and conquered many parts of
Kumabalangy and annexed them. Kallencherry, a region of the present Kumbalangy, once belonged to the Madras state of British\textsuperscript{16}.

At present the panchayath has a land area of 14.77 sq.km. The panchayath has the utmost length of 5.21km and a maximum width of 1.5km\textsuperscript{17}. There is no conclusive evidence regarding the origin of the place and also regarding the formation of the island. However, the popular belief among the elders of the locality is that the island was formed consequent on the great flood of 1341 AD.

### 4.2.3 Geographical Boundaries

Kumbalangy shares its boundaries with Kannamaly and Perumpadapu backwaters in the north, Ezhupunna lake in the south, Edakkochi and Aroor backwaters in the east and Chellanam Pandikudy road, Kannamaly and Ezhupunna backwaters in the west.

### 4.2.4 Transportation

Access to Kumbalangi tourism village can be made in two ways, by road and water. Public transport is available to Kumbalangi from Ernakulam and Kaloor bus stands. With the completion of the Ezhupunna Bridge, Kumbalangy will get connected to the main land from Allapuzha also.


\textsuperscript{17} As per the records kept in the pancahayth.
Since Kumbalangy is surrounded by water on the three sides, ferries give greater connectivity to the panchayath. By the road the island is just 45km away from the Cochin International Airport, 15 km away from the Ernakulam railway station and 16 km from Ernakulam KSRTC transport bus terminal.

The land near backwaters is full of clay. Most of the land in this area is situated below sea level. This land is primarily used for the cultivation of paddy and for the farming of prawns and crabs. The other parts of the island are slightly above sea level. Coconut and arecanut cultivation is the primary occupation of the people of this region.

4.2.5 People

The density of the population of the region is high. Majority of the inhabitants of the village are farmers. The new generation people of the village find work in the nearby places of Ernakulam as industrial and domestic labourers.

4.2.6 Flora and Fauna

Kumbalangy is an agrarian village. The main fauna, found here are fishes like pearl spot, filophia, prawns, crabs, paral and oyster. The major flora of the place consists of coconut and arecanut. The main cash crops are probably paddy and cashew nut. The presence of a large number of Mangroves in the place protects the land from soil erosion.
and the presence of trees helps the growth of fishes in the surrounding waters.

4.2.7 Existing tourism ventures in Kumbalangy

4.2.7.1 Kumbalangy as a Model Tourism Village

In 2003 the government of Kerala took a policy initiation to encourage village or rural tourism in the state. As part of the policy initiation, Kumbalangy Gramma Pachayath under the leadership of the then President, Mr. Sivadathan and the then Minister of Tourism of the state Prof K V Thomas, who hailed from the same region took up the challenge of developing the Panchayath as a Model Tourism Village. The efforts and experiment were proven successful and at present the Panchayath is one among the 31 endogenous tourism projects identified and funded jointly by the Government and UNDP\textsuperscript{18}. The model tourism village is a visual treat to its visitors with the Chinese fishing nets literally encircling the village.

Dotted with homestays, famous for coastal delicacies, the island gives tourists a peep into the local way of life and living. Kumbalangi was developed as the State’s first model tourism village as part of Kerala government’s rural development efforts. The self sustaining

\textsuperscript{18} Unites Nations Development Programme

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ecotourism destination of Kumbalangi ensures employment opportunities to the locals. It deserves special mention that Kerala scores high as a tourist destination in the country.

The model tourist village of Kumbalangi, which is an ideal eco tourism destination by virtue of its abundance in natural resources, is a veritable treat to its visitors with the famous Chinese fishing nets and many other enchanting sights to savour. This coastal hamlet without doubt, provides a fascinating glimpse of the simple and prosperous livelihood of the villagers, and also unravels the age-old, magnificent cultural heritage of the place. This village has its own natural beauty.

Kumbalangy is a tranquil place and receives tourists with spontaneous warmth of hospitality, unspoiled by the artificial demeanour of modernity. It has virgin landscape, well preserved without being spoiled by too much exploitation.

4.2.8 Potential Areas for Tourism Development

4.2.8.1 Perumpadapu Bridge

The bridge is a site of splendid beauty overlooking the Perumpadapu backwaters. It is at the entrance at the panchayath that the bridge is situated. One can see the Chinese nets on the both sides of the bridge. At both the entrance and the exit of the bridge stand some very tall and shady trees.
If the tourism potential of this place is harnessed properly, then some highly productive entrepreneurial ventures could be developed here.

4.2.8.2 Parks

A beautiful park was developed at the entrance of the village as part of developing the tourism infrastructure in Kumbalangi. The bridge connects the village with Cochin. The park provides entertainment facilities for children and tourists. Every day in the evening the Kumbasree self help group serve food here. A large number of local people visit the park in the evening to relish the local cuisine. Attached to the park is a small ground that is utilised to conduct small exhibitions. A tourism fest is conducted here every year, showcasing Kumbalangy to the public. The basic infrastructural facilities at the park need to be improved on an urgent footing.

4.2.8.3 St George Church, Kumbalangy

This is the oldest church of the island. The foundation stone of the church was laid in 1833. The inscription on the entrance door says that the foundation stone was laid in the 18 Chingam, 1012. This is as per the Malayam era. The Wood Carvings seen on the church are extremely beautiful and ancient.
4.2.8.4 Ilkickal Arthanareeswary Temple

The historic origin of the temple is not very clear. It is believed that the temple came into existence at least 500 years before. At present the temple is under the control of the Ezhava community but it is believed that the temple originally belonged to the Brahmin community of the place. But when they left the island for some unknown reasons, they entrusted the temple to Ezhavas and Christians. Until the beginning of the last century the temple feast was conducted jointly by Hindus and Christians. The temple is one of the rarest temples consecrated to Arthanareeswaran\textsuperscript{19} deity.

4.2.8.5 St Peter’s Church

Built in 1861, the interior is kept in its original style even today. However, when the church was renovated, an extension was added to the facade and this addition did more harm than good spoiling the beautiful view of the church. The wood carvings and the style of construction of the church are typically traditional of the churches of Kerala.

\textsuperscript{19} Arthanareeswarm is a combined form of lord Shiva and Shakti, the right half male and other female.
4.2.8.6 Pokkali Farming

Pokkali rice is a very special variety of organic paddy cultivated here extensively. Kumbalangy Panchayath has to its credit of 140 hectare of paddy fields, most of which lies below sea level. Paddy is produced in this village through group or collective farming. The paddy farm area is divided into nine sections. The numbers of farmers vary from farm to farm. The Manalkur paddy field has the largest number of farmers. There are around 150 farmers here engaged in rice cultivation.

4.2.8.7 Prawns and Crab Farms

There are a number of prawn and crab farms in at Kumbalangy. People are employed here in shifts to protect the crabs and prawns from birds and probable poaching. In many of the paddy fields, alternative\textsuperscript{20} farming is done in alternative years. Thus giving maximum yield to both crops. Thus alternative farming retains the fertility of the soil and avoids the use of the field without using chemical fertilizers and pesticides.

4.2.8.8 Boating

Cruising through the backwaters gives the tourist a panaromic view of the island village and nearby places. The canoes, used for cruising are locally made.

\textsuperscript{20} Alternative Farming signifies cultivation rice and fish on rotation in alternative years is ecofriendly.
4.2.8.9 *Artists' village*

Another attraction of the place is the Kalagramam, the artists’ village. This village, covering an area of four acre, displays handicrafts, made of wood and other raw materials, and fishing equipment. This project is expected to give a lot of employment to the local people, while saving our traditional artisan culture from dying.

The government needs to take immediate action in the completion of the project, as the project is now progressing at a snail’s pace.

4.2.8.10 *Nature Walks*

Tourists can walk through the village and gain firsthand experience of the culture and life of the village. The people are quite hospitable and their behaviour and attitude affable and amiable. During the village walk tourists can watch the fisher folk at work, and a visitor is also free to join then in working fisherman at Chinese nets, can go canoeing or visit the local farms. Kumbalangi being, a mangrove rich destination, a walk through the mangrove will be a captivating experience. The visitors can also observe large number of fishes that live around these mangroves. Tourists are happily assisted by the local people to know the names of fishes, their growth pattern, the specialities in breeding them, etc.
4.2.8.11 Bird Watching

India is home to as many as 1200 species of birds, out of which 141 are endemic to the region. The reason for having large varieties of bird species here is its congenial geographical location. Kumbalangi village has the advantage of attracting different varieties of migratory birds and, in addition, there are several different varieties of native birds. In the tranquillity of the village life the tourists can engage themselves in watching these birds, which will provide them a welcome changes from the daily hassles of life.

4.2.8.12 Chinese Fishing Nets

There are over a hundred Chinese Fishing Nets in the different parts of the lakes in this area. The tourists have the option to watch and experience the operation of the Chinese nets and if interested, any of them can also operate the nets with the help of the fishermen. The Chinese Fishing Nets of Kochi are said to have originated in China. The Chinese traders from Kublai Khan’s court have been attributed the credit of introducing them in Cochin. These nets are installed in land and are used for fishing in a unique way.

4.2.8.13 Kopra Making Units

Kumbalangi is a village with an abundance of coconuts trees. The ripe coconuts are collected and processed for extracting oil from their
kernel. ‘Kopra’ is a vernacular name given to the dried kernel. The sun dries or machine dried kernel is squeezed to extract oil. The tourists can visit the coconut yards and watch the oil extracting process.

Kumbalangi has a unique place in the tourism map of Kerala, especially because of the award that she received “World Tourism Award ” (2006)- she received in the category of “World’s Leading Responsible Tourism Project”. In the 2006, Kumbalangi Tourism Village won the prestigious golden award for Environment protection from PATA (Pacific Asian Travel Association). One of the award committee judges comment “Kumbalangi is a sustainable tourism project that makes a difference; not only does it preserve nature and environment, it also pays homage to a rich culture and heritage”.

The study region is full of touristic potential in the form of scenic beauty and as such it is very enchanting. Along with the basic infrastructure, needed for developing tourism in Kumbalangy it is essential to understand and promote the existing potential of tourism through appropriate entrepreneurial ventures.

4.2.9 SWOT Analysis of Kumbalangy

**Strengths**

1. Abundant natural scenic beauty, Vast potential for bird watching.

2. Amalgamation of rural and modern culture.
3. Strategic location – near Cochin, Fort Kochi

4. Already set a mark as the first model tourist village.

**Weaknesses**

1. Poor policy framework.
2. Poor infrastructure.
3. Lack of awareness of the potentiality of tourism.
4. Lack of marketing efforts.
5. Lack of women entrepreneurial ventures.

**Opportunities**

1. Ecotourism.
2. Responsible tourism.
3. Rural tourism.
4. Employment opportunities through entrepreneurship.

**Threats**

1. Cultural erosion
2. Pollution.
3. The local people do not benefit much from tourism village.
4. Declining natural resources
4.3 CHERAI

Cherai is a region in the island of Vypin, a suburb of the city of Kochi, in the state of Kerala, India, and is a part of the Pallipuram Panchayath. It is at a distance of about 25 km from the High Court Junction, Kochi, Kerala.

4.3.1 General Information

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<tbody>
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<td>Literacy Rate (Male)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Literacy Rate (Female)</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
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Source: Census data 2011
Pallippuram Grama Panchayat, Ernakulam District

4.3.2 Profile

Vypin island was formed in 1341 as a result of a great flood. This island is about twenty five km long and two km wide. The Pallipuram panchayath is situated on the northern side of the island.
One of the unique characteristics of this island is that a large number of historical monuments are situated in the panchayath. Therefore, it is a place of historical importance. A large number of traditional families are still existent here. The island has been for long under foreign rule, under the domination of Portugese, Dutch and the British. In 1503, the Portugese built a hexagonal and three stored fort at Vypin. On the southern part of the fort the Portugese founded a priest training institute, and christened it as ‘Vypin Fort Seminary’. The printing press established in 1577 as part of the seminary was the first printing press in the state. This seminary was managed by the ‘Jesuit Priests’. Later in 1661, the Dutch defeated the Portugese and the Jesuit priests were forced to shift both the press and the seminary to another village, Chendamangalam.

The priest training institute was converted into a leprosy training and inhabitation centre in 1728. Later in 1789, the Dutch sold the village of Pallipuram to the then King of Travancore. However, they retained the leprosy training and inhabitation centre and the infrastructural facilities with the entity and a piece of land measuring nine acre.

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21 Pallipuram Gramma Panchayath Report
As a result of the British conquest in 1795 the leprosy centre and all the infrastructural facilities came under the control of the British. As a result of an agreement between the Dutch and the British, the said leprosy training and inhabitation centre retained its status quo until 1921. Thereafter it was converted into an educational institution and a convent for nuns. All these conquests and changes of rule affected a two way traffic in culture to the benefit of both the natives and the conquerors.

The cultural remains left by the British prevented the evolution of the people into a classless society. The educational institution established by the British in Pallipuram and neighboring areas facilitated the spread of literacy and created a general awareness of the people of the area about the things to come. However, it widened the gap between the haves and the have-nots. The poor were oppressed and had to depend heavily on the rich and the moneyed.

Nevertheless, during the nineteenth century the teaching of Sree Narayana Guru wielded tremendous influence on the people of the island and the attitude of the haves towards the have-nots underwent a sea change. The followers of Sree Narayan Guru and Sahodaran Ayyappan had been endeavouring a lot since 1917, to foster a the
cordial relationship between the rich and the poor. Sahodaran Ayyappan declared a movement of ‘Misrabhojanam’ and this movement gradually percolated to the other part of Kerala to expedite the process of social equality and fraternity, Shahodaran Ayappan established an organization called ‘’Brothers Society’. Akin to this society a women organization also functioned in the area with similar objectives and a mission for reducing the gap between the haves and the have-nots and also to promote harmony among all communities.

In accordance with the trade union act of 1926, the first Vypin Labourers Organisation was set up. It published a newsletter called ‘Vellakaran’. The newsletter was published thrice a week.

“The Lady of Snow Fall Church” was founded more than hundred years ago at Pallipuram, During this period two Mosques and some famous temples such as Azheekkal Sree Varaha Temple, Gowreeshwara Temple, Thirumanamkunnu Temple functioned in this area and they tried to reinforce the communal harmony that existed in the island.

22 Pallipuram Gramma Panchayath Report, twelfth five year plan (2012-2017)
As many as fourteen educational institutions including three high schools are functioning in Pallipuram and they have greatly improved the literacy and educational standards of the island. Besides the two prominent libraries which receive grants from the State Library Cooperative, as many as fifteen libraries are functioning in the area.

Former Archbishop of Varapuzha most Rev Dr Daniel Achari Parambil hailed from Pallipuram.

In 1970, an agitation, initiated by the tenants against the landlords in the Panchayath has paved the way for a substantial social and economic transformation in the Panchayath.

4.3.3 Geography of Pallipuram

Geographically Cherai is a blend of coastal tracts and backwaters. The unique geographical feature of Cherai helps paddy and coconut cultivation.

4.3.4 Population

The island is the abode of Hindus, Christians and Muslims who live in harmony. Among the Hindus Dheevaras, Ezhavas are the prominent group. The scheduled castes include the Kuliyas’ and
Vettuvars’. The Christian community consists of Catholics, Syrian Catholics and the Jacobites.

4.3.5 Occupations

Most of the people earn their subsistence through fishing, processing and drying of fish. Fishing is done in the deep sea and the adjoining canals. The major agricultural crops include paddy and coconut. A considerable number of people are earning their livelihood through toddy tapping, handicrafts making, coir spinning; a few earn their living working in the service sector. A substantial number of women are unemployed.

4.3.6 Existing tourism resources of Cherai

4.3.6.1 Cherai Beach

The 10 km long Cherai Beach is the best golden beach of Kerala and is rightly called “The Princess of the Arabian sea”. The warmth of the golden rays of sunset is always felt on the shores. Dolphins are occasionally seen here.

This is one of the few places where one can see lagoons and the ocean being separated by a narrow sand bar.
The beach is shallow, calm and is ideal for swimming & sunbathing. Many are seen to enjoy a game of beach volley ball and take a dip in the sea. All beach amenities such as beach benches, towels, umbrellas, etc. are available on rent.

The newly beautified main beach with the walkway, adds to the charm and the highmast lamp makes the beach, habitable even at night.

Located 35 km away from Cochin, in the Cherai village of the Ernakulam district, the Cherai beach is amongst the most attractive places for anyone touring these parts of South India. Having a coastline of 15 km, the Cherai beach is different from many beaches it is very clean while being shallow and thus, ideal for swimming and sunbathing. Being so near to Kochi city, the commercial capital of Kerala, the Cherai beach is an enticing option for anybody who wants to get away from the din of city life for a short while.

One can find the locals people and the tourists picnicking on the sandy shores of the beach, which stands surrounded by tall coconut trees and green paddy fields. Cherai beach is the golden beach of Kerala. It needs special mention that the beach is also well known for its fresh and delicious seafood.
Occasionally, people also see dolphins in the water. Cherai Beach is rightly considered as one of the most beautiful beaches in Kerala. It is a beautiful combination of sea and backwaters, rimmed by lush green coconut palms and paddy fields. There is also a park for children on the beach. Tourists and visitors can also ride the water-scooter and speedboats, which are available here on rent. There are also a number of lodges and hotels in this area. Usually, there is a lot of rush at the beach during the holidays.

By the seaside Kite flying is another popular activity. Colorful kites are easily available along with all the paraphernalia. For nature lovers, early morning is an ideal time to enjoy the peace and quiet of the beach. Owing to its unique setting, the beach attracts hordes of interesting birds. Bicycles are available near the bus stand, and highly recommended for those looking to explore the area.

Boat ride along the backwaters is another option for those looking to enjoy the languid backwaters. Hire a country boat and wade through the backwaters, taking in the beauty of Kerala village life along the way. But do not head back from Cherai without sampling the fresh seafood. Butter- roasted tiger prawns and a local preparation called ‘Karimeen Pollichathu’ are a must. Crabs and a wide variety of fish are also offered at the sea side venue.
The Cherai beach is also one of the favorite destinations to enjoy the best of sea food delicacies to be watered down with the country liquor called Toddy. The Cherai beach is about 10km long with fascinating white sand, blue water, and green vegetation. The green vegetation here includes the coconut trees and the paddy fields lining the shore.

This is an uncorrupted place in the Gods own country away from city noise and pollution, which each one of us should try to visit and enjoy the multifaceted facilities that lie in wait for the visitors. It is an ideal place to spend a laid back, peaceful holiday amidst enchanting surroundings. Now the tourism department is taking utmost care in the maintenance and development of this beach so as to attract more tourists. Cherai beach is now becoming a favorite spot for beach lovers. The beach frontage and the backwater frontage have given Cherai such magnificent scenic beauty.

4.3.6.2 The Backwaters

The backwaters are a combination of lakes, lagoons, canals and estuaries. One can have the unique experience of catching fish, prawns, lobsters, crabs etc. using the traditional fishing methods.
Another memorable experience is a ride on the country boat along the
gentle river, which has crystal clear cold water, along the palm fringed
backwaters and paddy fields, absorbing the beauty of Kerala villages.
Visiting the fishermen village, fishing boatyard, fishing harbor and
chatting with fishermen are some of the things that are unforgettable.

A ride on country boats will enable one to enjoy the sights
ferrying paddy or fish, fishermen casting the day’s catch, reapers singing
in the fields, agile men climbing on coconut palms, toddy tapper tapping
toddy (fermented coconut water) from the coconut tree, children
splashing water, storks walking and looking for their prey in the paddy
fields, the kingfisher diving in for fish, the twitter of birds etc. The soft
warmth of the rising sun and the wind whispering on sand cannot be
expressed in words. The ride will expose the true soul of Kerala.

4.3.6.3 The Chinese fishing nets

The Chinese fishing nets at Fort Kochi, a part of the Kochi city of
Kerala, make up a very popular tourist attraction. They are fixed land
installations, which are used for a very unique and unusual method of
fishing. Operated from the shore, these nets are set up on bamboo and
tead poles and held horizontally by huge mechanisms, which lower them
into the sea. They look somewhat like hammocks and are counter-
weighed by large stones tied to ropes.

The entire structure of the Chinese fishing nets is about 10 meters
in height. Each fishing net spreads to about 20 meters over the water
body and is operated by a team of about six fishermen. Each net has a
limited operating depth. So, an individual net cannot be repeatedly
operated in tidal waters. There are different fishing nets kept ready for
operation, depending on the state of the tide. The whole paraphernalia is
such that the weight of a man walking along the main beam is sufficient
to cause the net to descend into the sea.

The net is left into the water for a short time; say for four-five
minutes, before it is raised back by tugging the ropes. The catch is
usually modest, but these can be sold to the passersby in a jiffy. The
Chinese Fishing Nets of Cochin are said to have their origin in China.
This is not totally impossible, as China is located at a distance of 5,000
km from Kochi and the city has always been an important center for
trade, attracting traders and seafarers from far and near.
4.3.7 Potential Areas for Tourism Development

4.3.7.1 Cherai Gowreeshwara Temple

Cherai Gowreeshwara Temple is one of the main Hindu temples. This temple is maintained by Vijnana Vardhini Sabha (V. V Sabha). It is reputed as Kerala Pazhani. The festival in the temple is the biggest festival in the Ernakulam district. The festival is celebrated every year during the last 2 weeks of January or the first 2 weeks of February. The main attractions are Elephant march (around 20-30 elephants). It is the second Pooram festival after the original Thrissur Pooram. Gowreeswara Temple is an important pilgrimage centre in Kerala also known as South Pazhani which was built in 1912. Gowreeswara temple is dedicated to Lord Muruka. The idol was installed by Sree Narayana Guru. The trumpeting of more than 30 elephants and the magical sound of "Panchavaadaya" followed by the spectacular view of celebratory fireworks make the festival a highly memorable experience.

4.3.7.2 Azheekkal Sree Varaha Temple

Azheekkal Sree Varaha Venkateswara Temple situated in Cherai, Ernakulam district was constructed in A.D1869 and is the first GSB(Gowd Saraswat Brahmins) (Konkani) Temple in Kerala. The first Guru of Shri Kashi Math consecrated the idol on way back to Kashi
after Sethusnana in Shri Rameshwaram. It is the one and only “Sampoornakshetra” of its kind in South India. Here both the deities of Sree Varaha and Sree Venkateswara stand side by side and is worshiped as a single Moorthy (God).

The famous temple "Ratha" (Chariot) is a rarity in temple architecture. This is the only chariot in the world, which runs on the rail. The festival takes place twice in a year. The chariot is pulled by the devotees around the temple accompanied by giant drum beats.

4.3.7.3 Portuguese Fort

This was built in 1503 by the Portuguese is also known as 'Aya Kotta'. It is the oldest European monument in India. It was an outpost meant to safeguard the famous Mussiris Port. In 1661 the Dutch captured the fort and in 1789 the fort was handed over to the King of Thiruvithankoor.

4.3.7.4 Kottayil kovilakam

Close to the Pallipuram Fort is the Kottayil Kovilakam, which accommodates a Jewish synagogue, a church, a temple and a mosque in the same campus, a living monument of communal harmony.
4.3.7.5 Pallipuram Church

This church was built by the Portuguese in 1577. The exquisite picture of Ave Mary on the top of the "Altar" brought from Portugal. The yearly celebrations of the Lady of Snow take place in August every year. The Water parade of the boats is one of the notable attractions.

The waterways and the boat jetties which are being planned to be developed as part of the Muziris Heritage Project are sure to turn Muziris into an internationally reputed tourism centre; the work in this direction is now nearing completion. The Paravur market, Kottayil Kovilakom, Paliam Krishna temple region, Gothuruthu Valia Church, Gothuruthu Cheria Church, Kottappuram market, Kottappuram fort, Pallipuram fort, Sahodaran Ayyapan Memorial are places where the construction of the boat jetties is in the final phase. The building of a ship with sails (uru) which would bring the sweet memories of old times back to us is also going on at Beypore in Kozhikode. When the renovation of the waterways through the rivers and the canals is over, the visitors will be able to take their boat rides in an eco-friendly environment. At these roofed jetties, people can conveniently take rest and buy tickets for their boat rides.
4.3.7.6 St. Mary's Jacobite Syrian Church

St. Marys Jacobite Syrian Church was established in April 1802, with the permission of Sakthan Thampuran. The founder parishioners of this church were members of the ancient St. Thomas Jacobite Syrian church at North Paravur. Cherai St. Mary's church is one of the prominent parish churches in the Kochi diocese. This church is popularly known as Cherai Valiyapally. The main festival of St. Mary's Valiyapally is celebrated on January 15th the Sunday School and Office buildings are adjacent to the Church.

4.3.7.7 St. George Church

St. George Church at Cherai, popularly known as the Cherai Cheriapally, was founded by a few parishioners of the nearby St. Mary's 'Valiyapally' on 12th October 1871. This 'Cheriapally' at Cherai comes under the diocese of Kochi.

4.3.7.8 St. Rose Church

This old church is located on the river bank of the river Pallippuram River. There are a school and the priests' office close to it.
4.3.7.9 Sahodaran Ayyappan

Sahodaran Ayyappan was one of the famous followers of Narayana Guru. Sahodaran was elected to the Cochin Legislative Council. He continued in this role for the next 21 years. In 1946 he became a minister in Panampilly's cabinet. Ayyappan was also a minister in the Ikkanda Warrior ministry of 1948. Then the integration of Travancore and Cochin took place. Ayyappan was a minister for a brief time in the Paravoor TK ministry, but soon retired from active politics and directed his energy into social and cultural activities. He spent much of his time at Cherai in his effort to affect several social reforms. His birth place has been identified as the Musiziris and a boat jetty is constructed has been there as part of efforts to boost Canal tourism.

4.3.7.10 Pallippuram Fort

The Pallippuram Fort was constructed by the Portuguese in 1507. This Fort was conquered by the Dutch in 1662. As it was situated in a tactical area, the Mysore rulers tried to purchase it from the Dutch, but the English East India Company interfered and that proposal went unheeded. In 1789, the ruler of Travancore made a strategic move and purchased both the Pallippuram Fort and the Kottappuram Fort.
4.3.7.11 Pallippuram Hospital and Police Quarters

This hospital is a very old building and is functioning as a general hospital now. The police quarters and the hospital functioning very old buildings are reminiscent of the colonial past.

4.3.7.12 Kottappuram Fort

This fort was built by the Portuguese in 1523, but was later captured and destroyed by the Dutch, in 1663. After taking it over, the Dutch used a small portion of it as an outpost, to guard their trading ships. The ruins of the original Fort show that the walls were 18 feet thick and made of laterite.

4.3.7.13 Juma Masjid

A gigantic mosque of harmonious proportions and simplicity at a very ancient time and it was late renovated in 1969, but there is no evidence when this was built.

4.3.7.14 Chavittunatakam

In the 17th century, the Portuguese missionaries brought an art form to this coastal area and blended it with local art forms to create the dance drama known as Chavittunatakam, which basically portrays
Christian history. In olden days, Kathakali and Koodiyattom were performed regularly in the temples. In Chavittunatakam or 'stamping drama' the performers stamp their feet hard on the wooden stage, to make a loud noise, which lent the form its name. The language of this drama is Sanskrit. Originally, there would be 150-200 people on stage for a regular show. Now, the performers are down to 75 and the duration of a show is reduced to 2-3 hours. Most of the Chavittunatakam artists live on Gothuruthu Island, where the Kerala Chavittunatakam Academy has been founded. This rich dance drama can be witnessed in Cherai provided prior arrangements have been made.

4.3.7.15 Gothuruthu Church

This is an old church located at the centre of the village. A school which is about 100 years old is found close to the Church and the priests' office is nearby. Chavittunatakam art is performed annually in the month of January, at the church in Cheria, Pallamthuruthu, in connection with the festival of St.Stephen.
4.3.7.16 Traditional Boat Trips

Tourists can enjoy the traditional boat trips to this island. Arrangements will be made for them to try their hand at cooking traditional sea food dishes.

4.3.7.17 Traditional Fishing Nets

The fishing community here has traditionally used various types of fishing nets. Tourists will find it interesting to learn about the traditional nets and the way they are used. The fisher folk are happy to allow tourists to try to make a catch using these unique nets and definitely it give the experience of an adventure to tourists.

4.3.7.18 Toddy Tourism

Toddy tourism is one area that Cherai can score. Toddy is the indigenous Kerala beverage, extracted from the inflorescence of the coconut tree. Tourists could, on request, be taken to see toddy tappers, extracting the sap by incising the inflorescent stalk using a special type of knife that they carry on a hand-made, natural waist belt.

The toddy is collected in a clay pot. Freshly extracted toddy is sweet in taste and is called madhura kallu - sweet toddy. On
fermentation, the sap will taste sour and will then give a kick. The sweet
toddy is used as an ingredient in kallappams or hoppers, a dish made in
Kerala houses with rice flour.

The toddy shops in Cherai are often furnished with wooden
benches and tables and the liquor is served in clay pots. One cannot
remember a toddy shop without recalling the lip-smacking food there.
The well-flavoured curries are known for their tanginess and spiciness,
probably to appeal to the customers in various states of inebriation. The
menu include rice, sliced tapioca and fish curry, crab curry, mussels fry,
Pearl Spot baked in banana leaf, frog leg curry, duck roast, spicy pickles
and various delicious meat. These preparations are available in most of
the toddy shops. A hot, spicy dish in combination with the sweet or sour
brew is an alluring combination.

Toddy is available in huge quantities due owing to the large scale
cultivation of coconut trees in this area.

The study region abounds in touristic potential in the form of
coastal tourism and backwater tourism. Along with the basic
infrastructure needed for developing tourism in Cherai, it is essential to
understand and promote the existing potential of tourism through
entrepreneurial ventures.
4.3.7 SWOT Analysis of Cherai

1. Abundant natural scenic beauty, Vast potential for water sports.

2. Vast potential for Canal tourism, the biggest coastline beach in Cochin.

3. Strategic location – near to Cochin.

4. Places of historical importance.

Weaknesses

1. Poor policy framework.

2. Lack of awareness of Canal tourism.

3. Lack of marketing efforts.

4. Lack of awareness of the potentiality of tourism.

Opportunities

1. Handicrafts and Souvenir tourism.

2. Responsible tourism.

3. Coir tourism.

4. Employment and Entrepreneurship.
**Threats**

1. Cultural erosion
2. Water pollution
3. Pollution
4. Declining natural resources.

**Strengths**

Cherai has inherent strengths of its own. First of all, with its strategic location adjacent to the city of Cochin it has a potential to become a super travel or tourism hub. Nature has gifted Cherai with its bounties like nowhere else. Thus nature-based and responsible tourism can work wonders here. Moreover, the canal tourism can be positioned as a unique tourism product.

**Weaknesses**

There are no policy frame work, by either the Panchayath or the state government to develop tourism in the region. There is an evident clash between the DTPC and the Panchayath. Moreover, due to lack of marketing efforts, many potential visitors are unaware of what Cherai
was really to offer. A proper marketing strategy coupled with information dissemination centres can bring great prosperity to Cherai.

Opportunities

Opportunities for tourism activities are just enormous at Cherai. With the vast stretch of green provides ample scope for ecotourism. Another advantage that can be cashed upon is the water shopping potential especially to the benefit of the women folk. These activities could bring in the most desired foreign exchange and also provide employment to thousands.

Threats

The main threat to Cherai is the depletion of the water. As mentioned earlier, it is possible under the guise of developing tourism in Cherai, large scale timber logging and poaching of wild animals can take place. It is a serious threat that when the tribal’s come in to contact with modernity, there are considerable fear, it may lead to cultural erosion. They may start imitating the visitors and neglect their own tradition. Another alarming possibility is the depletion of natural resources especially the water, flora and fauna of the region.
4.4. KUTTANADU

Kuttanadu known as the rice bowl of Kerala is rich in history, vast in expanses, spectacular in sight and composite in nature with the uniqueness of fertile agricultural lands and numerous water bodies’ quiet suitable for tourism promotion and women entrepreneurs to flourish.

Kuttanadu, the rice bowl of Kerala houses an agrarian community, striking a chord of harmony with its physical setting. Noted for its farming below sea level (about 4 to 10 feet) the land of Kuttanadu possesses a socio-cultural fabric of its own. Four major rivers in Kerala viz. Pampa, Meenachil, Achankovil and Manimala flow into this region.

Kuttanadu can be accessed from places on the National Highway- 47 from Harippad to Alappuzha town in the District of Alappuzha, and from places like Thiruvalla and Changanassery on the Main Central (MC) Road going through the District of Kottayam.

The most popular route taken by tourist and explores to get close to and explore Kuttanadu is the Alappuzha- Changanassery road. This road goes through the heart of Kuttanadu and gives visitors plenty of options to watch the day-to-day life at Kuttanadu. Kuttanadu in Kerala, India is the lowest region of India, with 500 square kilometres of the
region below sea level. Its elevation ranges from 0.6 m above to 2.2 metres below sea level\textsuperscript{23}. Most of the area is covered with water throughout the year. Kuttanaduu is one of the few places in the world where farming is carried out below sea level.

Kuttanadu, a stretch of 75 km stands sandwiched between the vast serene sea and the magnificent hills. The bewildering labyrinth of shimmering waterways composed of lakes, canals, rivers and rivulets, is lined with dense tropical greenery and preserves rural Kerala life styles as it is far removed from the buzz of city life. The scenic view change from narrow canals and dense vegetation to open vistas and dazzling green paddy fields.

The sweeping network of canals honey-combing the town of Alappuzha has earned the sobriquet, "THE VENICE OF THE EAST". The Coir workers too present an interesting sight. Alapuzha becomes the cynosure of all eyes in August-September, every year when the water regatta unfolds itself.

Kuttanadu meaning ‘low lying lands’ is one of the most fertile regions of the world, spread over the district of Alappuzha, Kottayam and Pathanamthitta, which is crisscrossed by rivers, canals and

\textsuperscript{23} Kavalam, Bhoomishasthram
waterways. Four major rivers namely Achenkoil, Pampa, Manimala and Meenachil, originating from the High Ranges discharge their water into the Arabian sea through the Kuttanadu backwaters.

The Kuttanadu Wetland System (KWS) inclusive of the Vembanad lake is now receiving global attention because nature is at the peak of its beauty in this Ramsar site. The KWS comprising of 32 Panchayats of Alappuzha district, 27 Panchayats of Kottayam district and 5 Panchayats of Pathanamthitta district is a predominantly the agriculture belt of Kerala, where people are dependent on farming and allied sectors like fishing, animal husbandry etc for their livelihood.

This is the only part of the world where rice is cultivated below sea level and this will be of great importance in view of the projected sea level rise, caused by global warming. It is a unique wetland which permits one good crop of rice and one harvest of fish and an area of thriving water tourism. Kuttanadu is a biodiversity paradise. The area is also popular for its coconut cultivation, duck rearing and coir industry. The soil is salty clay which is highly impervious, facilitating paddy cultivation but is extremely acidic in reaction due to microbial oxidation of organic matter resulting in iron and aluminium toxicity. Cultivation is taken up along contiguous blocks or padasekharams or polders, bounded by rivers and canals. Extent of padasekharams range from a few hectares
to 1000 hs, each padasekharam is jointly owned by several cultivators and group farming is practiced.

The main season is the Punja crop (Rabi season) when sowing takes place in November / December immediately after the North East Monsoon and harvesting is done in March / April. A second crop is taken in selected areas as Virippu crop (Kharif season) when sowing takes place in June / July immediately after the South West Monsoon and harvesting is done in September / October. Paddy fields are flooded with water to reduce the soil acidity and to control weeds and pests. This period of flooding is used for duck rearing also. Before sowing, the flooded water is pumped out through centrifugal force using engine pumps after the bunds are repaired.

After monsoon, cultivation is taken up on lands bounded by waterways by erecting bunds along the flow of water. When the flow of water increases, the bunds are breached causing floods in the paddy fields. Paddy cultivation is taken up in about 40,000 ha out of which double cropping takes place in 10,000 ha.

The Kuttanadu region has been under intense and increasing anthropogenic pressure over the years, which has adversely affected its ecology as well as the livelihood of the people. This has resulted in loss of flora and aquatic fauna, particularly the fish species and population,
eutrophication of water bodies promoted by nitrate and phosphate leaching from farm fields, high level of pollution with organic, inorganic and toxic material locally generated and brought in by the rivers, aggressive spread of water hyacinth, poor drainage due to choked water ways, increasing intensity of flooding, shortage of potable water and proliferation of water borne parasites and predators affecting human health.

Lying between latitude of 9.4250° N, longitude 76.4639° E, the Kuttanadu covers an area of 1157 sq.km spread into upper Kuttand and lower Kuttanadu over the taluks of Cherathala, Ambalapuzha, Kuttanadu, Kartkikapally, Mavellikara, Chegannur, Tiruvalla, Changanseery, Kottayam, Vaikom. Kuttand thus lies in the revenue districts of Allapuzha, Pathanamthitta and Kottayam. Climatically, Kuttanadu is warm and humid in temperature. The Kuttanadu comprises of 14 panchayaths which come under two block panchayaths namely the Kuttanadu Block Panchayath and the Veeliyanad Block Panchayath. The Kuttanadu Block panchayath comprises of Thalavadi, Thakazhi, Champakulam, Nedumudi, Edathua, Kainakkary North, Kainakkary

\[24\] As per the records kept with the Allapuzha Muncipality.
South and the Veeliyand block panchayath consists of Ramankary, Muttar, Veliyanadu, Pulicunnu, Kavalam, Nelamperoor and Kinnumel.

4.4.1 Geographical Characteristics

Kuttanadu is a unique geographical configuration. An aerial view of Kuttand presents a picture of patches of land mass, floating over a conglomeration of rivers and rivulets, canals and waterways. The deltaic formation of the confluence of four rivers Achenkoil, Pampa, Manimala and Meenachil which enter Kuttanadu at different points contribute to this unique geography in no small measure. An intricacy of canals, rivulets and waterways interconnect these rivers and consequently it is almost impossible to trace separately any of these rivers in the region. The deltaic formation of the rivers slopes down the Vembanad lakes and merge with it. The estimated length of these waterways is 240 km.

The Vembanad lake extends from Allapuzha in the south to the Cochin Harbour in the north, where it opens into the Arabian sea. Water in this lake is a mixture of saline water from the Arabian Sea and the fresh water of the river system.

4.4.2 People of Kuttanadu

Kuttanadu which has a unique heritage of humanity with natural beauty and enterprising people is now in decline. This region has a high
density of population. Kuttanadu is a biodiversity paradise. The people of the area are dependent on farming and allied occupation like fishing, animal husbandry for their livelihood. The area is also popular for its coconut cultivation, duck rearing and coir industry. Kuttanadu with its peculiar geographical and topographical features has always been dependent on agriculture. Consequently, the proportion of people dependent upon agriculture is naturally high. The literacy level of Kuttanadu is above 93 per cent, slightly above the state average. In the absence of alternative employment opportunities people irrespective of the literacy level, depend upon paddy cultivation.

4.4.3 Champakulam

Champakulam is a village in Kerala. It is in Alappuzha District. Champakulam is part of Kuttanadu, the rice bowl of Kerala, and is resplendent in green paddy fields, coconut groves and water fall. Champakulam is an important tourist spot and is famous for the Moolam boat race. The river Pampa flows through the village, splitting it into two. It is connected, by road to Alappuzha, Changanassery and Edathua. By water, it is connected to numerous places too.

Champakulam Kalloorkadu St. Mary's Forane Church (Valia Palli) Champakulam Kalloorkadu St. Mary's Forane Church (also called Champakulam Valia Palli) is one of the oldest Christian churches in
India\textsuperscript{25} and the mother church of almost all Catholic Syrian churches in Alleppey District. Believed to be established in AD 427. Rebuilt many times and the many rock inscriptions found around the church tell us about the history of the church. The open air Rock Cross at Champakulam church is one of the most ancient ones with a clear documentation of its antiquity down to AD 1151. There are many archaeological artifacts, found around the church about its history. Champakulam church was once under Niranam Church. Champakulam Church had very friendly relations with the Jacobite Syrian group and played a pivotal role in many ecumenical efforts in the Eighteenth century. It belongs to the Syro-Malabar Catholic Church of India. The annual feast at this church is on the 3rd Sunday of October. The feast of St. Joseph is celebrated on March 19.

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{25} Abraham K, 2010, "Champakulam Kalloorkkadu St Mary’s Church- The Hidden Pearl in Nasrani History".
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### General Information

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<thead>
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<td>Literacy Rate (Female)</td>
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Source: Census data 2011
4.4.3.2 Champakulam Moolam Boat Race

Champakulam Moolam Boat Race is the oldest and one of the most popular vallam kali (snake boat races) in the Kerala state of south India. The race is held on the river Pampa on the moolam day.
(according to the Malayalam Era M.E) of the Malayalam month Midhunam, the day of the installation of the deity at the Ambalappuzha Sree Krishna Temple.

Chundans (Snake Boats) are supposed to be Navy boats of Chempakasserry rulers. Now they are only used for the races. Traditionally each boat belongs to a village, and the villagers worship that boat like a deity. Only men are allowed to touch the boat, and to show respect they should be barefooted. To make the boat slippery while in the water, it is oiled with a mixture of fish oil, coconut shell carbon and eggs. Repair work is done annually by the village carpenter. Constructed according to specifications taken from the Sthapathya Veda, an ancient treatise for the building of wooden boats, Champakkulam chundan has 130 ft length and breadth of 69 inches. It has a depth of 22 inches with the rear portion towering to a height of about 11 ft, and a long tapering front portion, and resembles a snake with its hood raised. Its hull is built of planks precisely 83 feet in length and six inches wide. It can accommodate 105 oarsmen. This chundan can cover a distance of 1.4 km in about 5 minutes. In the centre of the chundan vallom, which was earlier the place of the canon, stand two people who beat the odithatta (fire platforms) with poles and sing the vanchippattu (songs of the boatmen) to maintain the rowing rhythm.
While the strongest oarsmen sit at the front to set the pace, the back is managed by six hefty amarackars (helmsmen) who stand and help steer the boat. The person at the highest point of the boat is the Chief Oarsman. Champakkulam Chundan is the winner of several boat races including hatric victory at the famous Nehru Trophy boat race during the years of 1989, 1990, 1991.

Champakulam angadi has some art-emporiums where tourists might find numerous items of interest.

4.4.3.3 Places in and around Champakulam

Though Champakulam is a village itself, there are many other small places in and around Champakulam. Some of them are part of Champakulam: Amichakari, Champakulam, Kandankari, Kondakkal, Manapra, Mancombu, Nedumudi, Padaharam, Pulincunnu, Pullangadi, Thekkekkara, Vaisyambhagom, Nadubhagam.

4.4.4 Nedumudi

Nedumudi is a village in Alappuzha district in the Indian state of Kerala. It is the birthplace of the renowned malayalam actor Nedumudi Venu. Nedumudi stands in the banks of the river Pampa. It is the First village in Kerala to attain 100 per cent literacy.

Nedumudi is part of the lower Kuttanaduu and it has a moderate climate, though in Autumn the Pampa river overflows and creates
trouble, by flooding which as a blessing in disguise makes the soil rich and ideal for Agriculture, the main Economical source in Nedumudi. But in 2010 due to the unexpected climate change the chance for another agricultural season is unprofitable. The main celebration in the village is the annual festival at the Sree Bhagavathy temple, Kottaram. It is situated in the Attuvathala. The festival is conducted by the four karas (sub divisions) of Nedumudi and the temple dehaswom. Some time ago, the Thottuvathala karayagom had a snake boat Parthasarathy. This snake boat won the NehruTrophy. Now it is owned by some others.

4.4.4.1 Demographics

As of 2011 India census, Nedumudi had a population of 15428 with 7525 males and 7903 females. The Nedumudi village is again divided into 4 sectors according to their differences namely: Attuvathala, Thottuvathala, Thekemurri, Ponga

4.4.4.2 Thalavady

Thalavady is an upper Kuttanadu village and Panchayat located in Kuttanadu Taluk, Alappuzha district, Kerala, India. The geography of Thalavady is dominated by the vast lush green paddy field, unique among the Kuttanadu villages, bordered by a network of canals that run between the fields and the Pampa River that flows through the village. Thalavady panchayat office is located in Trikkayil.
Thalavady also houses several famous temples and churches. Chakkulathukavu temple on the banks of the Pampa river in Thalavady is one the most popular pilgrim centres in Kerala. The 25-year-old Pamba Boat race is held at Neeraettupuram on the day of Thiruvonam.

4.4.5 Veliyanad

Veliyanad  Block Panchayat, Alappuzha District

General Information

<table>
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<td>Literacy Rate (Male)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Literacy Rate (Female)</td>
<td>97</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Source : Census data 2011
Ramankary is a town in the Kuttanadu region of India. It is 9 km away from Changanacherry City and 17 km from Alappuzha city. It is
one of the villages in Alapuzha on the bank of the Pamba River with a picturesque extensive paddy fields

The villages bordering Ramankary include Veliyanau in the north, Mampuzhakkary in the east, Manalady in the west and Vezhapra in the south. Ramankary has a famous Dharmashasta (Ayyappa) temple, too.

4.4.5.1 Padayani at Nilamperoor

The annual Padayani Utsavam of the Bhagavathikkavu at Nilamperoor, a village in the Kuttanadu taluk on the precincts of Changanassery Municipal town, is a festival which symbolises and reflects the tradition and culture of a typical Kerala village. The Pdayani Utsavam is celebrated on a grand scale with Kolamkettu (making of effigies) and Kolamthullal (a kind of ritual dance, performed by carrying the effigies). The chief kolams displayed are of Siva, Bhima, Ravana, Elephants so on and so forth. The Utsavam spread over sixteen days, beginning on the Thiruvonam day in Chingom (August-Setember) and coming to a close on the Pooram asterism. The celebration climaxes, is on the pooram day, the sixteenth day, following the commencement of the Utsavam. The next ritualistic act of the Utsavam is the Ezhunnellippuu (carrying the idol procession) of the kolams (deities). While small kolams are carried by people on shoulders, the big ones are
ceremoniously taken on wheels. Firstly, small swans are taken to the festival ground and then the big ones. In the bright flames of the burning fire, these swans would appear as though they are artistic pieces, studded with precious gems. These effigies will be taken in procession amidst vociferous clamor and outcries from the multitude assembled and with the beating of drums and other rejoicings. Grand Scale Pyrotechnics will also take place simultaneously, heightening the tempo of the occasion. The kolams are brought before the kavu and after the performance of some rites they are kept in a corner of the kavu. This is what is known as Padayani. Subsequent to this, kolams of Bhima, Ravana and caparisoned elephants are brought in procession.

All the artisans of the locality co-operate in the making of these effigies for which they are allowed certain prerequisites

4.4.5.2 Pulinkunnu

Pulinkunnu is an island village in Alappuzha district in the Indian state of Kerala. Pulinkunnu is located in the Kuttanadu taluk a part of Alappuzha District.

A ride along the scenic beauty of the wide Pampa river is enchanting and that is the reason why this route is one of the most favoured by houseboats tourism operators in Kerala. It is a part of the Kerala backwaters, which is a network of lakes, wetlands, and canals.
The famous Rajiv Gandhi Trophy boat race is held here during the months of October – November every year.

Considered an educational village, Pulinkunnoo has schools and colleges that are hundreds of years old. St. Joseph's Higher Secondary School is one of the most important and the oldest institution in Pulincunnnoo, with more than 118 years of its history. Many prominent personalities including Sri. M V Pylee (former Vice Chancellor of Cochin University)' Fr. Mathew Chathamparambil (the present Vice Chancellor of Christ University, Bangalore) etc. are the former students of this school. Cochin University College of Engineering, Kuttanadu under CUSAT, is a famous engineering college situated here at this place. Notable educational institutions in the village include: Little Flower Girls High School Pulincunnoo, Amalolbava Lower Primary School, St. Mary's ITC,K E Carmel ICSE School etc. Students from far and wide, in and around Kuttanaduu have been enlightened in these small village premises.

Veliyanad is a small village in the Ernakulam District of the state of Kerala in southern India. It belongs to the Edakkattuvayal Panchayat in Kanayannoor Taluk. The village is around 30 km from the city of Kochi. The nearest airport is the Cochin International Airport. Piravom
Road, Ernakulam Town and Ernakulam Junction Railway Stations are the closest major railway stations.

4.4.5.3 Places of interest

- Chinmaya International Foundation: an organization dedicated to the spread of Advaita Vedanta across the world, founded by Swami Chinmayananda.
- Melpazhur Mana: renamed as Adi Sankara Nilayam, this is a sprawling nalukettu located in Veliyanad at Edakkattuvayal Village in Ernakulam. This mana was sold to Chinmaya International Foundation. It is refurbished and currently it is known as the Chinmaya International Foundation.

Pazhoor Perum Thrikkovil is 3 km from Veliyanad. Thirumarayoor Rama's Temple situated 2 km from Veliyanad is one of the few ancient Rama temples in Kerala. Other places of interest are:

- Vezhathumyal Bhagavathy Temple
- St. Mary's Simhasana Church, Veliyanad
- Mar Behnan Church
- Bala's Homes
- St. Paul’s Catholic Church
4.4.5.4 Educational institutions

- St. Paul's High School, Veliyanad: The school is affiliated with the 'Kerala State Secondary Education Board' that offers classes from V to X.
- Govt: Upper Primary School:
- St: Paul's Bethany Nur. School:
- TocH Engineering college (2 km from Veliyanad)

4.4.5.5 Recreational Clubs

Young Waves Arts and Sports Club: A group of young and energetic people, founded it in the year 2005. Since then, the Club has played a major role in conducting the cultural celebrations in the area mainly Onam.

4.4.5.6 Adi Shankara Nilayam

Located in Veliyanad, Adi Shankara Nilayam is the ancestral maternal house of Shri Shankara. It is a sprawling nalukettu, located in Veliyanad in Edakkattuvayal Village in Ernakulam. Traditionally known as the 'Melpazhur Mana', the place was renamed as Adi Shankara Nilayam by Pujya Gurudev Swami Chinmayananda. Now the property has been acquired by the Chinmaya International Foundation. The nalukettu is decorated with exquisite wooden paneling and engravings. A meditation hall in memory of Swami Chinmayananda is there nearby.
Situated in 8.3 acres (34,000 m$^2$) of land, the property houses a water pond, a temple complex, an excellent library, a computer unit and residential accommodation for visiting scholars. There is a large temple dedicated to the deity of the family - swayambhu Shasta (Lord Ayyappa). A Naga Yakshi temple and a temple for Vettakkorumakan are also seen in the complex.

Muttar is a village in upper Kuttanadu, with Alappuzha district of Kerala, India. It is located 10 km west of Changanacherry, on the Kidangara Neerattupuram (Muttar Central) road, surrounded by Thalavady, Neerettupuram, Kunnamkary, Chathamkary & Mithrakary. The River Manimala flows along the eastern border of the village. The village has several coconut plantations and paddy fields. Paddy is cultivated about 5 ft below sea level.

The oldest place of worship in Muttar is the Kochukodungalloor Temple, located on the Northwest side of the village. There are 3 Parish Churches in this small village, affiliated to the Syro-Malabar Catholic Church. The annual parish feast of St George Church is celebrated from 29 Jan to 2nd Feb.

The Govt. UP school and St. George Higher Secondary School, both of which are more than 75 years old, are the main educational institutes in the village.
Muttar was one of the first villages in Alapuzha District to achieve 100 per cent literacy. Muttar is ideal village where the religions work hand-in-hand to bring about and sustain communal harmony. Agriculture is the main source of income here. Paddy fields, coconut, banana, mango etc

4.4.6 SWOT Analysis of Kuttanadu

**Strengths**

1. Diverse attractions in a small land area.
2. Stable law & order, personal safety.
3. Good brand image for targeting high spending tourists.
4. Vast potential for Canal tourism.

**Weakness**

1. Weak institutional mechanism for ensuring sustainable development.
2. Inadequate civic amenities and infrastructure in tourist destinations.
3. Lack of awareness of the potentiality of tourism.
4. Poor policy framework.
Opportunities

2. Scope for Canal Tourism.
4. Immense potentiality to develop Responsible tourism.

Threats

1. Unbridled growth of tourism may result in environmental & cultural degradation.
2. High water pollution.
3. Lack of drinking water.
4. The local population do not benefit much from tourism village.

4.5 POTENTIAL AND FEASIBLE INCOME GENERATING PROJECTS IDENTIFIED AT THE FOUR STUDY AREAS/DESTINATIONS

I- Kuttanadu

1. Hotels and traditional restaurants: Kuttanadu is not only famous for houseboats and snake boats but also for traditional food. Women groups can run small and medium type hotels and restaurants, where the local cuisine can be made available. Kuttanadu has easy access to fresh water fish (Pearl spot
fish) and a culinary preparation of fish is mouth watering, Duck is yet another extravaganza, and so are Jumbo prawns, crabs, tortoise meat could be served with the local coconut toddy. The cuisine of Kerala has always been a fascination to the outside world because of the unique blend of coconut and coconut oil.

2. Homestay: has been the latest trend in Kerala but very few homestays were seen in the study areas. A few families especially women can take to homestay ventures where neat and clean accommodation can be provided for the visitors from abroad as well as from within. Foreign tourists are fascinated by Kuttanadu and if given a chance they would definitely prefer to stay in local houses or homestays to get a pastoral feel of the village.

3. Houseboats: There do exist a number of house boats in Kuttanadu, but apparently none of them women-owned. The houseboat business is doing very well in Kuttanadu and so the possibilities for good business in it are very high. Women should make their presence felt in this field, too.

4. Packaged foods: Tourists have found attracted to snacks, some of them take with them home on return. Banana chips, jackfruit chips, alluva (local sweet), Cheemen chutney (dried prawn), pickles. These products can be preserved for a long time, up to a
year. Well-made foods, in hygienic package can be marketed locally and also exported.

5. Souvenir shops- There are no souvenir shops at all in Kuttand, they are found concentrated in the heart of Allapuzha. There are a number of curios and handicraft items that could be sold through these outlets, the prominent ones among them being crafted mats, purses, bags, bangles, wall hanging and dresses. Usually white or flaxen, these fibres are obtained from plants like the banana (stem), Pineapple (leaves) etc. The soft, silky texture of the fibre gives a glazed finish to the products. These fibres are twisted, tanned and then dyed with pigments, before they are woven intricately into these numerous articles.

Yet another product could be the the neryathu worn by men around the shoulders. It could be taken back home and gifted to the elderly as a token of respect. Typical to Kuttanadu are the chundan miniatures well-ornamented with sandalwood or ivory fittings, brass buttons, etc. and are often modified as candle stands, pen stands, and key holders.

The Kathakali Masks: these curios are made in plaster of Paris, clay or papier mache. Hay based huge wall hangings, sometimes made
two dimensionally are also available. The elegant and innovative straw pictures are equally captivating.

6. Car Rentals: There are a number of female tourists travelling to Kuttanadu alone. Therefore the possibilities of cabs driven by women would definitely be a boon to such travellers.

7. Coffee shops: Tourists are always on the lookout for ethnic products. Even when they stay at posh and expensive apartments, they have an intrinsic urge to taste the typical foods of Kerala, cooked and served hygienically. These coffee shops could have tie ups with the local restaurants and hotels to boost the business.

8. Ayurvedic residential centres: the craze for health tourism is ever on the increase. A good many international and domestic tourists come to Kerala for Ayurvedic treatment. Therefore women Ayurvedic doctors could jointly start an Ayurvedic residential centre and market their product through the web. The potential of medical tourism is growing at an alarming pace.

9. Folklore and theatre groups: Kuttanadu is famous for the snake boat race and an indivisible part of the boat race is the Vallam paattu. Students from abroad come here to learn and master this traditional music. Therefore a theatre and folklore centre could be opened with the help of local indigenous population; it would
definitely attract the students who come to study the art and culture of Kerala.

10. Boat services: Kuttanadu being a water locked destination, most of the women know how to row a boat since the local hotels find it difficult to find boat drivers, women could definitely enter into this lucrative occupation.

11. Hatcheries: A hatchery is a facility where eggs are hatched under artificial conditions, especially those of fish and poultry. These products could be directly sold to the hotels and restaurants of Alapuzha, Kottayam and Cochin.

12. Ornamental fish farming: Kuttanadu has abundant of waters, ideal for fish breeding, but this potential has not been utilised. Bunds could be built and cross-breed fish like Gappi, Gold Fish, Karp and Oscar could easily be bred in extensive fish forms..

13. Mushroom cultivation: In recent times the medicinal property of the mushroom has been identified and the demand for mushroom has considerably increased. Kerala enjoying a typical tropical climate is found to be a most suitable place for mushroom cultivation. Species of Pleurotus and Volvariella species can be successfully cultivated in the State all round the year, fed on a variety of agro-wastes like saw dust, vegetable and paper wastes,
oil palm pericarp waste and straw. The best substrate is found to be paddy straw. The production of mushroom is comparatively easy and there are lots of governmental agencies that train people, especially women, in mushroom cultivation and subsidy is provided to promote it.

14. Bee keeping: Honey is yet another product that has marked an increase in demand. In the recent time, there has been tremendous increase in the price of the commodity (Rs.1000 per liter). Bee Keeping, does not require large space and can be done on the premises of an average hutment.

15. Organic Animal Rearing: The people of Kuttanadu especially the women folk have joined together to start and run cattle farming. This business has good scope in Kuttanadu as it is a highly pastoral area and so green fodder and straw are easily available here. Animal husbandry could be done on a large scale, targeting the numerous local hotels and restaurants. Milk, milk products and meat could be packed and also sold locally as well as in the nearby areas.

16. Candle making: A handful women are found involved in this entrepreneurial venture. More women could be brought into this field by imparting them good training in this trade.
17. Coir Products: Kuttanadu is famous from oldent times for its coir and coir products. Majority of the population are dependent on coir industry for livelihood. Handloom mats, tufted mats, power loom mats, coir fibre, coir pith, rubberized coir and coir geo textiles, handloom matting and coir yarn are the major items of export. The number of countries importing coir and coir products from India has increased to 97 from 91 last year. U.S.A, U.K, Germany, Netherlands, Italy and Belgium are the major markets for coir products. Among these, United States continues to be the single largest market, accounting for 37 percent of the total export and European countries together import more than 41 percent. U.S.A stands first with regard to the import of handloom mats, tufted mats, coir geo textiles and power loom mat. The biggest market for coir yarn and coir pith is Netherlands and in the import of coir handloom products UK stands first.

18. Organic agriculture is a holistic production management system which promotes and enhances agro-ecosystem health, including biodiversity, biological cycles and soil biological activity. It emphasises the use of management practices in preference to the use of off-farm inputs. This is accomplished by using, where possible, agronomic, biological, and mechanical methods, as
opposed to using synthetic materials, to fulfill any specific function within the system." - definition proposed for adoption by FAO/WHO Codex Alimentarius Commission

Many techniques used in organic farming - such as inter-cropping, mulching, and integration of crops and livestock - are practiced under various agricultural systems. What makes organic agriculture unique is that, under various laws and certification programs, almost all synthetic inputs are prohibited, and "soil building" crop rotations are mandatory. Properly managed, organic farming reduces or eliminates soil and water pollution and helps conserve water and soil on agricultural lands. Organic farming is one of several approaches to sustainable agriculture. Organic agriculture is gaining importance in the agriculture sector of many countries, irrespective of their stage of development.

The study reveals that the majority of the women folk are adamant on relying on the traditional methods of paddy cultivation and animal husbandry. Even when proper training and subsidiaries are given they are reluctant to take to this business even form home in spite of the massive potential through tourism.
19. Milk Pasteurizing Unit: The majority of the hotel and restaurant owners voice the need for a localized pasteurizing unit, ensuring the quality of organic milk.

II. Kumbalangi

1. Coir products: Kumbalangi is a village with an abundance of coconut trees and a good number of coconut oil making units. Therefore the availability of coir fibre is large. Coir products like Mats could be made and marked easily.

2. Fish Farming: Ornamental fish farming could be started with the export business in view as it will be facilitated owing to its nearness to the Cochin International Airport.

3. Prawn and Crab farm: Kumbalangi is particularly famous for its organic fish farming. Prawns and Crabs already have been established there. This is an area where women could play a significant role and yet surprisingly enough this ideal place has given birth to few or no women entrepreneurs.

4. Mushroom: Mushroom farming could be yet another area that women could venture into.
5. Boating: Sunset cruise could be arranged with music and local foods as accompaniments. This would, indeed, be a star attraction and tourists will flock in large number to that pastoral countryside.

6. Guiding service: Bird watching at Kumbalangi is fast becoming a strong face of tourism and women could take up guiding services locally. Most of the foreign tourists would like to have the assistance from some local guides so that they would be able to enjoy everything that the place has to offer.

7. Tender coconut: The abundance of coconut trees in Kumbalangi makes it an ideal place for tender coconut trade. Tender coconut could also be marketed to the local hotels in and around Ernakulam.

8. Organic farming: Organic farming is being promoted by the panchayath and the panchayath is ready to provide assistance; therefore the option of transforming Kumbalangi into an Organic destination is immense and its potentialities are abundant.

9. Home stay: There do exists a number of homestays in Kumbalangi, but very few are run by women. In new generation of tourists; there are many women travellers in singles. So if
women run accommodation providing business, it would definitely flourish to the prosperity of the place.

10. Restaurants: The need of the day is hygienic eating units- that could provide ethnic food. Kumbalangi, being famous for Prawns and Crabs, could have some specialised restaurants for the same.

11. Pickle making units: Kumbalangi could start its own indigenous pickle making centres. Women entrepreneurs could start their own prawn pickle units and market it both in the local and international market.

12. Recruitment firms: There are a number of college students and working professionals who are looking for jobs or better opportunities. Women can get connected with reputed agencies or corporates to source good candidates through recruitments. Especially the travel industry is on the constant look out for new and fresh hands.

III Kuttampuzha

1. Oleoresins and Spice Extracts: Oleoresin is a semi solid mixture of reisin and oil extracts some herbs that have medicinal property and used for quick relief from pain, cough and cold.
2. This product is in high demand in the international market. Kerala, which is the Spice Garden of India, is home to some major items of export such as Pepper, Cardamom, Ginger, Turmeric, Curry powder, Spice oils and Oleoresins, Vanilla, Nutmeg and mace.

3. Pepper: Pepper, popularly known as black gold holds a prime position in the world of spices. Black pepper originated in Kerala. From here it spread to the rest of South and Southeast Asia. Until well after the Middle Ages, virtually all of the black pepper found in Europe, the Middle East, and North Africa travelled there from Kerala in India.

4. Black pepper (Piper nigrum) is a flowering vine in the family Piperaceae, cultivated for its fruit, which is usually dried and used as a spice and seasoning material. The fruit, known as a peppercorn and the powdered pepper derived from grinding them, may be described simply as pepper, or more precisely as black pepper (cooked and dried unripe fruit), green pepper (dried unripe fruit) and white pepper (dried ripe seeds). All these pepper products have made Kerala, renowned along the ages. Once the peppercorns are dried, pepper spirit & oil can be extracted from
the berries by crushing them. Pepper is usually used in food, beverages, medicinal and beauty products and as a massage oil.

5. Pepper was historically both a seasoning and a medicine. Long pepper, being stronger, was often the preferred medication, but both were used. Black Pepper (or perhaps long pepper) was believed to cure illness such as constipation, diarrhea, earache, gangrene, heart disease, hernia, hoarseness, indigestion, insect bites, insomnia, joint pain, liver problems, lung disease, oral abscesses, sunburn, tooth decay, and toothaches.

6. Kochi, is the primary markets for black pepper in India.

7. Clove Oil: Cloves are the aromatic dried flower buds of a tree in the family of Myrtaceae, Syzygium aromaticum and used as a spice in cuisines all over the world.

8. Clove oil is used to give flavour to food and as a anti-repellant, herbal medicine, pain killer, in making laxative pills, tooth pastes.

9. Mala inchi: Botanical name : Zingiber zerumbet is found in huge in the forests of Kuttampuzha. The medicated oil extracted from it can be used to cure for skin problems and rashes. Its botanical name is Curcuma longa.

10. Kasthuri Manjal : Turmeric is used as a readily available antiseptic for cuts and quantities burns. Dried and powdered
manjal is used for various purposes, usually against skin diseases and stomach disorders. Turmeric is also used in the formulation of some cosmetics.

11. Oleoresins, are in high demand in the international market. Various spices are cultivated in extensive forms to meet the rising market demand. If collected, processed and marketed in the right manner they can attract a huge number of consumers, as they are organic products. Small outlets can be opened at Kuttampuzha itself for direct sale to the tourist.

12. The export of spices from Kerala is mainly through Cochin and Trivandrum Ports. The major destination of spice export is the USA, followed by the European Union, Malaysia, China, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Japan and the Middle East.

13. Since tourism is in its infancy in Kuttampuzha and the tourists are comparatively lesser than in other nearby destinations, here, the building of tourist resorts will be a flourishing venture. Even more, the river and the forest cover create a vibe for tourist to visit the place. At present the accommodation facilities provided at Kuttampuzha are sadly inadequate with just one three star facility and a few homestays.
14. It is true that requirement of the day is small and modestly priced resorts that can achieve profitability by leveraging a rustic theme.

15. Organic Animal Husbandry is the rearing of livestock by using just of organic and biodegradable inputs from the ecosystem in terms of nutrition, health, housing and breeding of animals. In organic animal husbandry system, the use of synthetic inputs such as drugs, feed additives. The adoption of genetically engineered breeding inputs are strictly prohibited. Animal husbandry is an important financial pillar of organically functioning farms.

16. Kuttampuzha is blessed with greenery and fodder is available abundantly and so the potential of promoting animal husbandry is enormous. Cattle breeding such as Cow, Buffalo, Goat, Poultry can be grown and fed organically. Organic farming not only increases the yield but also improves the quality of life. The products of organic farming are charged twice or thrice higher in the open market, thus generating good profit margin.

17. Souvenir shops- There are few or no curio and craft shops at Kuttampuzha. Bamboo products in the form of curtains, lamp shades, bags, purses, ethnic bamboo jewellery can easily be marketed. Cane and bamboo are indispensible to the life of the
inhabitants of that place. They are grown in abundance here and hence most of the household articles in the homes of Kuttampuzha are made of cane and bamboo. Bamboo happens to be the most commonly-used raw material in handicrafts, ranging from household implements to the construction of dwelling houses to furniture, to weaving accessories to musical instruments. Various products made from Cane can also be used for making articles such as curtains and dividers. Honey, collected from the forest can be easily sold. Bamboo is extensively available and therefore small and big products including houseboats can be made with it, which will attract both native and foreign visitors as they would like to take souvenirs. Netturpetti, the ethnic jewel box of the Kerala woman is made here. It is a testimony to the patience and skill of the artisans who make it. The box, usually made of rosewood, is fully handcrafted. Every joint, every screw and lock is shaped and chiselled by the hand. The wooden box is first varnished and then fixed to brass frames. Today, this richly embellished box with its conical lid is a typical item of the souvenir included visitors. The traditional Pulpaya or grass mats of Kerala is one of the oldest handwoven products of the State. Woven out of the Korappullu, (Cyperus
corymbosus) a 91.5 to 152 cm tall species of grass belonging to the family of the Papyrus, is abundantly available in the forest areas of Kuttampuzha, the core raw material for weaving these mats which are designed in various colours. Even the unique spices can be sold through these shops.

18. The production of handicrafts takes place in rural areas, but its marketing requires a showroom or sales outlet at some urban centre.

19. Hotel Business: Women in groups can run small and medium type hotel and restaurants, where the local cuisine can be made available. The typical Kerala cuisine can be served here. Often the visitors like to eat at local outlets that are hygienic, so if outlets could be opened, maintaining atleast minimum international standards, they would definitely attract foreign as well as domestic crowd.

20. Attires: Women could take up dressmaking units. Weaving units also could be started. The Kerala attire set mundu and vaisthi are very much prized in both the domestic and the international markets.

21. Pickle manufacturing: This is also another feasible entrepreneurial venture, befitting the women folk of the area.
Pickles made of mango, tender mango, lime, meat, mixed vegetable and fish can capture the market if they are prepared made hygienically and well marketed. These products can be easily promoted through the local eating outlets and hotels and export channels.

22. Rubber Products: Kerala is known for its rubber produce and Kuttampuzha aboundous rubber cultivation exception. Various rubber products could be made and furniture making could be a good option.

23. Bottled Water: The fresh spring water is abundant in Kuttampuzha from the scores of springs in its hilly terrains. This water could be processed and bottled locally and marketed to nearby areas. Its feasibility is certainly great tapping water from the perennial springs will not adversely affect the ground water potential of the area.

24. Dairy milk units because of the vast expanse of the undulating forest engulfing Kuttampuzha, cattle breeding and dairy development can be profitably undertaken there on a large scale. There is a shortage of milk production in the state, which compels the existing entrepreneurs in the field to import milk from the neighbouring states of Tamilnadu, Karnataka and
Andhra Pradesh. The raw milk, produced in this area can be collected, chilled and pasteurised and marketed in the neighbouring areas of Kuttampuzha. Milk processing is found to be an economically feasible project throughout the state on account of the sacristy of milk in the state. Along with marketing packeted milk on a day to day basis, milk products such as butter milk, butter, ghee, curd etc can also be sold in large quantities.

25. Such a project would enable large number of tribal and other marginalised families to take to animal husbandry.

26. Organic Farming: Owing to its forest cover, the pollution of the nearby urban cities has not yet reached the frontiers of Kuttampuzha. Organic farming has a huge potential especially organic vegetable farming and cattle breeding. The end products could be easily sold to the nearby urban restaurants hotels. There is always an urge to buy organic products even at higher prices because of the growing health consciousness of the people today. In the long run Kuttampuzha will be reputed for fresh, organic products. The marketability of organic produces is vast.

27. Trekkers: A few among the local population of women could take up assisting in trekking. The forest trails of Kuttampuzha offer enormous trekking opportunity. The requirement is
knowledge of the local routes and the local destination inside the forest cover. The potential is immense in the forest segment of Kuttampuzha.

28. Canoeing: A canoe is a lightweight narrow boat, typically pointed at both ends and open on top, propelled by one or more seated or kneeling paddlers facing the direction of travel, using a single-bladed paddle. It is a small boat and journey in it can give a glimpse of the rural, rustic lifestyle of the local population. Since a river passes through Kuttampuzha there is good scope for canoeing here.

29. Guiding services: this is one area where not many women are seen to venture into.

30. At present no trained tour guides are available in the area so a certain number of tourist guides can be professionally trained and appointed in each centre, and such a guide is an essential requirement for the promotion of tourism in the area.

31. Homestay: has been the latest trend in Kerala tourism but a very few homestays were seen in the study areas. A few families, especially women can initiate homestay ventures here and neat and clean accommodation can be given to the visitors from
abroad as well as from within. The advantage of homestay is that one can operate it from home.

32. Packaged foods: Tourist are seen to take fancy for local snacks some of which they take home with them when they return. Banana chips, jackfruit chips, alluva( local sweet), prawns chutney( dried prawn), and pickles are a few of them. These products can be preserved for some time.

33. Car rentals: These services are a must for tourists especially in a place like Kuttampuzha. Women operated car rental has been found to be a success in the urban areas and it could be successfully extended to this area too.

34. Real estate: The growing demand for the real estate makes the job of a real estate consultant lucrative. A person with good understanding of the market demands and the kind of properties sold can easily work as a real estate consultant. The land price at Kuttampuzha is comparatively low.

35. Bee-keeping: The high demand for pure honey has made beekeeping a very profitable trade. Fresh honey is usually collected from the forest but if beekeeping could be practised Kuttampuzha could highly benefit by it.
36. The biggest asset of Kuttampuzha is the forest cover and majority of the women folk are involved in tapping forest resources. Therefore, entrepreneurial ventures suggested for Kuttampuzha are in one way or the other associated with the forest.

IV Cherai

1. Ornamental Fish Farming: Cherai is a fish destination where fishing is the main occupation of the local population. The main advantage of Cherai is its abundance of back waters which is essential ingredient for fish farming. The marketing potentiality of ornamental fish extends beyond Kerala to neighbouring states and foreign countries. The government has now planned to make Kerala a major hub of aquaculture and will soon set up aquaculture farms for cultivating ornamental breeds at various locations in the state.

India is said to contribute 0.08 per cent to the Rs 70,000-crore global ornamental fish market. Guppies and Angels, two popular aquarium fish varieties, are scripting new trends in ornamental fish trade.

Ornamental fish culture is fast emerging as a major branch of aquaculture globally. Aquarium keeping is the second largest hobby in
the world next to photography and the ornamental fish and aquatic plant industry is fast gaining importance due to its tremendous economic opportunities and prospects. Kerala with its highly conducive climatic condition provides ample scope for the development of ornamental fisheries. This sector assumes special significance due to its huge potential in providing employment to the people, hailing especially from the rural sector and as a foreign exchange earner. The low production cost and higher returns within a very short time, growing demand for fishes both from domestic and international market are the major attractions of this sector. In order to make ornamental fisheries an export-oriented industry, Matsyafed, FIRMS and MPEDA are providing assistance for ornamental fish breeding and export. The ornamental fish trade is promoted by the State Government by organizing international Aqua shows and seminars on biannual basis, ensuring the participation of scientists, administrators, breeders, traders and entrepreneurs, even from foreign countries.

With the rising demand from the US, Gulf and the European Union countries for ornamental fish the scope of ornamental fish culture is multidimensional:
2. Organic farming: the scope for organic vegetable produces is enormous. The availability of plentiful supply of water in Cherai is highly conducive to start ventures in this trade. The organic vegetables produced can be packed and supplied to the growing needs of Ernakulam with its increasing export business, helped by its close proximity to the Cochin International Airport.

3. Beekeeping: Honey is in demand owing to its medicinal property. Beekeeping is a profitable business but with lean season lasting for three months only.

4. Artificial Jewellery making: In Cherai, women have started business in jewellery making and if proper training could be provided, more and more women would venture into this business

5. Duck Breeding: The availability of water in large measure is the biggest advantage of Cherai. The demand for duck meat is fast increasing and if organic duck production could be done easily and profitably. The local hotels will buy the lion’s share of the products. The people the world over have a fancy for duck cuisine.
6. Rabbit and Kada: These products have of late been of great demand, owing to their medicinal property as well as their low cholesterol content. If hygienically produced and packed, these could also be exported in large quantities.

7. Souvenir shops: In spite of, having been acclaimed globally as an international destination Cherai lacks full- fledged souvenir shops. The biggest disadvantage of Indian tourism is that even though foreign tourists are prepared to spend any amount in buying novelties, India has very little to offer in contrast with other acclaimed destination like Singapore, Malaysia, Dubai.

8. Floriculture: Kerala has been for long depending on the neighbouring states for flowers. Availability of fresh water makes Cherai highly suited for floriculture. The product could easily find market in the local hotels and nearby Cochin.

9. Dried Fish: Most of the men of Cherai are fishermen and the women folk are engaged in drying the catch so that the excess fish could be preserved and sold in due course. There are various products that could be made from dried fish and its potentials are abundant. Pickles and coconut blended chutneys could be made
and supplied to the local restaurants and hotels in and to those functioning around Cherai.

The location of Cherai is blessed big its proximity to the city of Cochin and the international airport at Nedumbassery. This has made Cherai a tourism hubs through which much of its products could be sold or exported.