Chapter V

Eco-Tourism Potential in Coimbatore

All progress and growth is a matter of change, but, change must be growth within our social and government concepts if it should not destroy them.

Herbert Hoover

In the last thirty years, India has opened its doors to international visitors and is now fostering tourism largely to gain an increase in foreign earnings to help its economy. There has been a significant growth in nature tourism all over the world. The world tourism has attained new records with half a billion – tourist arrival all over the world inspite of the recession in recent years.

Tamil Nadu, has ecologically rich sites where eco-tourism is promoted. The rich wildlife unique forestry sites and varied habitats hold immense eco-tourism potential. Eco-tourism helps to boost local village economy besides providing healthy leisure and recreation facilities to the visiting tourists.

The district of Coimbatore, is one of the Western districts of Tamil Nadu, situated at the foot of the Nilgiri hills. It’s headquarters is Coimbatore itself. It is the second largest city in the state. The city is located on the Western side of Tamil Nadu and is surrounded by Western Ghats on all sides. Coimbatore is one of the most industrialized cities in South India, known as the textile capital of South India or Manchester of South India, because of its strong economy due to textile mills. The city is also known for the manufacture of motor pump sets and varied engineer goods, due to which it has earned the title, ‘The Detroit of the South’.

2. The Hindu, 14th February and 4th June 2011.
3. The Hindu, 12th October 2011.
5. Tamil Nadu Tourism, Enchanting Tamil Nadu, Coimbatore, 2010.
According to ancient manuscripts, Coimbatore’s history can be traced to the Irula tribal chief Kovan and his clan, who were its earliest settlers and the founders of Kovanpatti, a part of Kongunadu. Years later, the surrounding forests were cleared and a new village was formed called Kovanputhur. It is also said that, the name of Coimbatore comes from the local goddess, Koniyamman, Koniyattamuthur or Koniyanmuttar, later metamorphosed to Koyamuthur which is anglicised as Coimbatore.

**Geographical Location:**

Coimbatore with an area of 23.5 sq.km, is located in the shadow of Western Ghats. It enjoys a very pleasant climate throughout the year aided by the fresh breeze that flows in through the 25 km long Palghat gap. It is situated on the banks of Noyyal river. It is surrounded by the mountains in the west and the reserve forests on the Northern side. The entire Western and Eastern part of the district borders the Western Ghats with the Nilgiri Biosphere as well as the Anaimalai and Munnar ranges. A Western pass to Kerala referred as Palghat gap provide its boundary. Due to it proximity to the Western Ghats, the district is rich in fauna. The rich black soil of the region has contributed to Coimbatore's flourishing agriculture and industry. It serves as an entry and exist point to neighbouring Kerala and the ever popular hill station of Ooty. It is a disembarking point for those who want to take the mountain train that runs to Mettupalayam just 35 km from Coimbatore. There are also regular bus services from Coimbatore to Ooty.

**History of Coimbatore :**

Coimbatore existed even prior to the 2nd century AD as a small tribal village, until it was brought under Chola control in the 2nd. or 3rd century AD by Karikalan, the first of the early Cholas. Later, the region fell into the hands of the Rashtrakutas, from them it

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fell into the hands of the Cholas who were in prominence at the time of Raja Raja Chola. Then it was occupied by the Chalukyas, Pandyas, Hoysalas and the Vijayanagar kings, when Kongunad fell to the British along with the rest of the state, its name was changed to Coimbatore.\(^9\)

To begin with, Coimbatore was in two parts for the purpose of revenue administration. In 1804, the areas were merged into one and brought under one District Collector, at that time the collector was Mr. H.S. Greame.\(^10\)

Coimbatore, became the headquarters of the newly formed district in 1865 and it was constituted into a Municipality in 1866. In 1868, the Nilgiris district was bifurcated from the Coimbatore district.\(^11\) In the beginning of the 20\(^{th}\) century, there were ten taluks in the district namely, Bhavani, Coimbatore, Dharapuram, Erode, Karur, Kollegal, Palladam, Pollachi, Satyamangalam and Udumalaiyettai. The name of Satyamangalam taluk was subsequently changed as Gobichettipalayam. Karur taluk was transferred to Tiruchirappalli district. In 1927, some villages of Bhavani taluk together with a few villages from Salem district were constituted into Mettur area, but very soon, in 1929, this area was transferred to Salem district. Again in 1956, considerable area of the district, namely, the whole of Kollegal taluk was transferred to Mysore State as part of the States Re-organisation scheme. In 1975, Satyamangalam sub-taluk was upgraded as a full-fledged taluk. Again in 1979, Perundurai sub-taluk of Erode and Mettuplayam sub-taluk of Avinashi were also upgraded into independent taluks. Thus, the total number of taluks in the district came to twelve. But in the same year, six taluks were bifurcated from the district to constitute a new district, namely Erode. In 2008, four taluks from Coimbatore district (Tiruppur), Udumalpet, Palladam, Avinashi (part) and three taluks from Erode district, Dharapuram, Kangeyam and Perundurai (part) were bifurcated and formed into Tiruppur district. At present, Coimbatore district contains six taluks namely,

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\(^9\) Tamil Nadu Tourism, op.cit.

\(^10\) *Coimbatore District Administration-A History*, Coimbatore.

\(^11\) *The Hindu*, 14\(^{th}\) February 2011.
Coimbatore (North), Coimbatore (South), Mettupalayam, Sulur, Pollachi and Valparai. This bifurcation reduced the size of the present Coimbatore district.\textsuperscript{12}

Coimbatore, is at the heart of a region of great historical importance, an area of contact between the plains of Tamil Nadu to the east, the plateaus of Mysore to the north and the coastal plains of Kerala, reached through the Palakkad gap to the south. The frequency with which the word palayam (encampment) occurs, indicate the extent to which this was a region of conflict between Cholas, Pandyas and the Cheras.\textsuperscript{13}

**Population:**

Coimbatore accounts for a district population of 34,72,578, contributing to 4.81% of the state's population. It has a population density of 748 persons sq.km.\textsuperscript{14}

**Resources:**

Natural, cultural resources are the basis of existence of Coimbatore. The ancient amazing Noyyal river basin irrigation system with its original 27 lakes and water channels starting from the foothills of Vellingiri hills and flowing up to Tiruppur through the city is the lifetime for Coimbatore. Due to its ideal geographical location, Coimbatore boasts its salubrious climate throughout the year which could be described as one requiring 'neither fan nor fire'. The forest in Northern and Western biosphere of this region are rich in fauna, flora and biodiverse natural vegetation.\textsuperscript{15}

Coimbatore district is richly endowed with hills, forests, rivers and wildlife. The Western Ghats of the district are the home of rivers such as Bhavani, Noyyal, Aliyar and Siruvani which provide the drinking water and irrigation water for the people and farmers of Coimbatore.

\textsuperscript{12} Coimbatore District Administration, op.cit.,
\textsuperscript{14} *The Hindu*, 4\textsuperscript{th} June 2011.
\textsuperscript{15} Ibid.,
Forests of Coimbatore District:

The forest of Coimbatore district is spread over an area of 693.48 sq.km against the district area of 7433.72 sq.km. The forest is responsible for cool weather, the green landscape and clean air of the district. The forest tract falls between 10°37' and 11°31' North latitudes and 76°39' and 77°5' East longitudes. The greater part of the Coimbatore Forest Division is situated in southward extending Western Ghats, with the north-western parts forming the lower ranges of the Nilgiris. The Coimbatore forest division is part of the Nilgiris Biosphere Reserve (NBR) and also forms a part of the core zone of the NBR. The Coimbatore Forest Division forms a continuous, longitudinal and compact block, lying in the North Western sector of the Coimbatore district. Nature has bestowed the district and its adjoining areas with a rich forest having the world’s most sought after locales.

The forests of Coimbatore district are administered by two forest divisions. South of Palghat gap lies the Anamalai Wildlife Sanctuary, which has been designated as Tiger Reserve during 2008, North of Palghat lies the Coimbatore Forest Division. This division is bounded on the North and North-West by Satyamangalam, Erode, Nilgiris North and Nilgris South Forest Divisions and on the west and South West by Palghat Forest Division of Kerala state.

The Coimbatore Forest Division consists of 6 administrative sub-divisions known as six territorial ranges namely,

1. Bolampatty
2. Coimbatore
3. Perianaickenpalayam
4. Karamadai

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16. Coimbatore Forest Division, Tamil Nadu, India.
5. Mettupalayam
6. Sirumugai Division

The Coimbatore Forest Division may be broadly divided into following segments based on geographical variation:

1. The Nilgris Slopes Reserved Forests
2. Plain Forests around Mettupalayam
3. The Velliangadu Valley
4. The Naickenpalayam Valley
5. The Thadagam Valley
6. The Bolampally valley
7. The Wallayar Valley

Geology, rock and soil:

Geologically, the entire region belongs to the metamorphic terrain of Archean age comprising varieties of rock types. The three major groups of rock types are seen in the area. Economic minerals like limestone, kankar, gypson and felspars are also present. The soil is generally shallow in depth devoid of humus.

Forest statistics of Coimbatore district:

The geographical area of the district : 7433.72 sq.km.

Forest area of the Coimbatore Forest Division : 693.48 sq.km (9.33%).

Forest area of Anamalai Tiger Reserve : 958.59 sq.km (12.89%).

Total forest area of the district : 1652.07 sq.km\textsuperscript{18}

\textsuperscript{18} Coimbatore Forest Division, Tamil Nadu, India.
Water supply:

The Moyar and Bhavani, Kallar and Connoor, Walayar and Thannitorapallam - thodu rivers, with the tributaries Siruvani, Kodungarapallam, Anaikattipallam, Moongilpallam, Thekkampallipallam are all perennial rivers. Coimbatore is gifted with a unique spread of a dozen natural water bodies that store rain water, recharge groundwater and provide cozy shelters for thousands of birds and fishes. The lakes, are a home to number of migratory birds from Northern Asia during winter season.19

There are 13 lakes in and around Coimbatore, they are Singanallur lake, Ukkadam lake, Sulur lake, Valankulam, Kurichi lake, Krishnampatti lake, Muthanan lake, Seevagasintamani lake, Perur wetlands, Kumarasamy lake, Ammankulam, Selvampatti and Narasampatti. Though, Coimbatore has emerged as the most prosperous city in Tamil Nadu, it’s unique lakes are dying, they have turned into stinking ditches and dump yards.

A proposal is made by the Tamil Nadu Infrastructure Urban Financial Services Limited (TNIUFSL) to convert Narasampatti, Krishnampatti, Selvampatti, Kumarasamy, Selva Chinthamanikulam, Periakulam, Valankulam and Singanallur to convert into tourist spots.20

The Indian Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Coimbatore has suggested that a comprehensive recreation infrastructure proposal focusing an eco-tourism should be mooted for the Coimbatore Local Planning Area. Eco friendly projects and water conservation in Coimbatore is a key thrust area.21
Places of Interest:

Aliyar (Azhiyar) Dam and Park:

Aliyar Reservoir is a big one situated near Pollachi in Coimbatore district, Tamil Nadu. The dam is located on the foothills of Valparai, in the Anamalai range of the Western Ghats. Aliyar Dam was constructed in 1962 across the Aliyar river. It is located about 65 kms from Coimbatore. Here, Aliyar lake receives water from upper Azhiyar reservoir through hydro-electric power station in Navamali and Parambikulam reservoir through a contour canal. The dam is one of the longest in Asia- around 2 km in length. The scenery is absolutely beautiful with mountains surrounding three quarters of the reservoir. Boating to entertain the visitors is also available. Near the dam, a good-looking park, an aquarium and a mini theme park is being maintained by Tamil Nadu Fisheries Corporation.

Vaidehi Waterfalls:

It is located 30 km from Coimbatore (via) Narasipuram village. It is a fine picnic spot for trekkers. A perennial water falls named Vaidehi is an attraction here.

Monkey Falls:

The Monkey falls is an excellent and ideal outdoor travelogue, which is situated some 65 km away from Coimbatore city and it is some 27 km away from Pollachi on Coimbatore – Pollachi – Valparai main road. The Monkey falls is the most famous and popular tourism spot.22

Siruvani Water Falls:

Siruvani is 34 km away from Coimbatore which is one of the most picturesque spots in Coimbatore. Siruvani is the source of Coimbatore’s drinking water supply.23

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22. Tamil Nadu Tourism, op.cit.,
Valparai:

The pollution free heavenly land namely Valparai is located in Western Ghats above 3500 feet above the sea level in the Anamalai Mountain range, on the Kerala – Tamil Nadu border. Valparai stands majestically with green spread mountains and forest all around. It is a paradise for nature lovers. Prior to the beginning of plantations in 1890’s, it was a solid evergreen tropical forest, Valparai, is rich in flora and fauna. The present day plantations mostly consist of tea, coffee and pepper mostly owned by big corporate houses providing employment opportunities to many. It is 102 km from Coimbatore and 64 km from Pollachi. The Chinnakallar falls, a geographically important place is about 26 km from Valparai, receives the second highest rainfall in India, which makes it to be known as Cherrapunji of Tamil Nadu. The Grass Hills – the World Heritage Site, the Sholayar Dam the second highest masonry dam (345 feet) in Asia and Nirar Dam are some of the tourist spots located in Valparai.24

Kallar Horticultural: Farm:

Kallar Horticultural farm is part of the state Horticultural farm under the Department of Horticulture. A place of natural beauty with Kallar waterfalls, attracts thousands of tourists from in and around Coimbatore, irrespective of the place, being run by the department of Horticulture department for the conservation of vegetation, the place is open to tourists with minimal charges. Facilities are provided to enjoy the serene panoramic view.25

Apart from these places of nature – Coimbatore district has a number of temples, churches, mosques and educational institutions.

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24. Tamil Nadu, Madura Welcome, op.cit., p.29, The Times of India, 14th February 2011.
25. Ibid., p.34.
**Eco-tourism:**

Eco-tourism helps to boost the local economy besides providing healthy leisure and recreational facilities to the visiting tourists. Realising this, the Forest Department of Coimbatore embarked on a project to offer quality and educative tourism. It initiated eco-tourism with the special objective to provide conservation education to the public and socio-economic status to the tribals through revenue generation. The projects are Baralikkadu- Poochimarthur Jungle Eco-Tourism (BJEJ) at Baralikkadu in Karamadai Range and Kovai Courtallam waterfalls Eco-tourism in Bolampatty range.

**Baralikkadu:**

This area is located at an easy destination reachable for people from Coimbatore, Tiruppur, Ooty, Mettupalayam etc. It is located near Pillur.

Karamadai is a panchyat town in Coimbatore district, which is about 29 km from Coimbatore. It is located at 11.24251°N and 76.96009°E. Karamadai Range is one among the six ranges in Coimbatore forest division. Karamadai has an area of 11,233.93 hectares (27733.951 acres). There are 22 tribal villages in this range with 432 households. Out of these 22 tribal villages, 10 villages are situated along the Bhavani and Kundah river. The tribal people used to cross the river with the help of coracles. Hence, they are traditionally well versed in driving the coracles.

**Present status of the villages in Karamadai range :**

Most of the villages in the Karamadai Range have no electricity facilities. Some of the villages received solar street light and solar fences. The villagers are economically very poor. The Forest Department provides job opportunities in the plant nurseries and also as anti-poaching and anti-depredation watchers, fire watchers etc. Villagers also collect Non-Timber Forest Produces (NTFP) from the forest areas for their livelihood.26

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Coimbatore division has man-animal conflict at many places, owing to the extension of human habitation closer to the reserve forest boundary. Coimbatore happens to be the elephant reserve No:8 with the elephant density of 0.524 per sq.km. The conflict pocket exist in Walayar Valley and Thadagam Valley, Bolampatty Range, Narasimapuram Valley, Periyanayakan Palayam Range, Thadagam Valley and Anaikatti Valley, Karamadai Range-Vellangad Valley, Mettupalayam – Bhavani River Bank and Kallar River Bank. Measures are taken for man-animal conflict mitigation on one side through solar powered fencing and elephant proof trenches to prevent straying. Kumkis (trained elephants) are used for sending the elephant back to the habitat after it strays. At present, the Forest Department is focusing on various scientific-aided mechanisms to handle the conflict situation.27 The Forest Department has planned to have kumki elephants to set up camp at eco-tourism base at Chadivayal near Kovai Courtallam. The department will have an added advantage of using Kumki elephants for tourist safaris.28

Eco-tourism project by the Forest Department of Coimbatore Division- Concern for the Welfare of Tribal People:

Eco-tourism is emerging as the fastest growing segment in the tourism industry, attracting millions of people towards nature and wilderness destinations. This sector, besides enhancing visitors appreciation of nature and providing wholesome recreational experience to the travelers, is offering substantial economic benefits to the local communities living in the vicinity of wilderness areas. While an eco-tourism policy for the state is being evolved, unique experiences are happening across the state’s forest locations. The Forest Department of Coimbatore Division has ventured eco-tourism project, as the weary urban population has been looking for some scintillating outdoor experience particularly for the week ends. They are constantly exploring opportunities to set out to some nearby but exotic locales in the company of their kith and friends.

Why Eco-tourism in Karamadai Range?

Eco-tourism initiatives in the Karamadi Range are based on the following strengths:

Local : It is about 29 km from Coimbatore

Water Body : Flow of River Bhavani scenic beauty

Topography : Scenic beauty - the area has good landscape naturally endowed with forests, suitable for trekking

Tribal skill, demand for quality tourism site in Coimbatore, facilitation by forest department.

Keeping these features in view, a novel idea of initiating Eco-tourism in Karamadai Range was evolved by the forest department agencies of Coimbatore.\(^{29}\)

Aims:

Eco-tourism was initiated in this region with special aim to generate income to the tribal families and also to create awareness among the nature lovers and tourists coming from urban area.

Objectives of Eco-tourism:

→ Conservation education to increase appreciation awareness and positive action regarding human interaction with the natural resources.

→ Guided opportunity for common man to experience the wilderness.

→ Improvement of socio-economic benefits to the local people.

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\(^{29}\) Interview with Mr. Andavan, Forester Karamadai Range on 21\(^{st}\) January 2012.
→ A tool to ensure micro-level sustainable participatory forest management.

→ To provide public health and hygienic, agriculture and communication.

→ To initiate self-employment opportunities and carry out agricultural activities.

→ To initiate Women’s Self Help Group (WSHG) committee to provide funds for self-employment and to increase the social development of women.

→ To fulfil the demand of tourism, recreation of the nearby areas.

→ Eco-tourism without harming the eco-system of the study area.\(^{30}\)

**The Local Community:**

The villagers involved in the Eco-tourism project are the indigenous Irula tribes. They practice sustenance agriculture, but the crops are posed with the acute threat of damage from the elephants foraying into their fields frequently. In addition, they are engaged seasonally in the collection of different Non Timber Forest produce from the forests, the sale proceeds to which accrue to the tribal forest committees following a government order in 2003. They are also employed in the other forest department operations. Despite such efforts, impact of development activities of the post-independence era has not reached many of these villagers adequately. As a consequence, most of those families live below poverty line.

The innate capacity of the local population in adept handling of the coracles for crossing the river and the willingness of the urban travelers to pay for the outdoor recreation were integrated for evolving a viable nature-based tourism plan. The novel idea of a people–run Eco-tourism package in Karamadai Range took shape in April 2007, utilizing the funds provided under the component of peoples’ participation in Joint Forest Management Committee from the XII Finance Commission grants.\(^{31}\) This project

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\(^{30}\) *Coimbatore Forest Division*, Karamadai Range, Tamil Nadu.

\(^{31}\) *Forest Management in Tamil Nadu*, p.201.
is extended to improve the basic amenities of them like education, sanitation, health, transportation, communication etc.

**Birth of a Community-Based Tourism (CBT):**

Humankind is facing an un paralleled challenge when it comes to reserving the planet’s biodiversity. For successful efforts in Eco-tourism promotion, the community or people’s participation is vital. Community based Eco-tourism implies that a community is taking care of their natural resources in order to gain income through operating a tourism enterprise and using that income to better their lives.  

**Formation of Eco-tourism Committee:**

Ten villages along the river Bhavani have been selected for Eco-Tourism which is known by the name Baralikkadu – Poochimarathur Eco-tourism under Joint Forest Management (JFM) in the Karamadai Range. For formation of the Eco-tourism programme and also for creating basic infrastructure development an amount of Rs. 3 lakhs was allotted by the District Forest Officer from the Western Ghats Development Programme (WGDP) and from the 12th Finance Commission at the rate of Rs.1.50 lakhs to Baralikkadu and Poochimarathur villages.

The Western Ghats Development Programme aims at increasing the free cover of the Western Ghats, besides improving the eco-system of the Western Ghats hill forests and providing life support to the people. It is being implemented in Coimbatore, Dindigul, Madurai, Theni, Erode Virudhunagar, Tirunelveli and Kanyakumari districts.

Two Eco-Tourism Joint Forest Management Committees have been formed involving five tribal villages in each committee.

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33. *Coimbatore Forest Division*, Karamadai Range, op.cit.,
Table 1

1. Baralikkadu Eco-Tourism Joint Forest Management Committee

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S.No</th>
<th>Tribal Village</th>
<th>No. of Families</th>
<th>Total Population</th>
<th>Area in (Ha)</th>
<th>Literate</th>
<th>Agricultural Status</th>
<th>No of Members in the Committee</th>
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<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Veerakkal</td>
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<td>3.</td>
<td>Baralikkadu</td>
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<td>120</td>
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<td>13</td>
<td>Rainfed</td>
<td>3</td>
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<td>4.</td>
<td>Neeradi</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>24.00</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Rainfed</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Gethai Kadu</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>13.35</td>
<td>13.35</td>
<td>Rainfed</td>
<td>3</td>
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2. Poochimarathur Committee

<table>
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<th>S.No</th>
<th>Tribal Village</th>
<th>No. of Families</th>
<th>Total Population</th>
<th>Area in (Ha)</th>
<th>Literate</th>
<th>Agricultural Status</th>
<th>No of Members in the Committee</th>
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<td>Rainfed</td>
<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Nellimarathur</td>
<td>15</td>
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<td>28.81</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Rainfed</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Sethumadai</td>
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<td>60</td>
<td>12.95</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Rainfed</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The first task of the department was to set apart funds for putting in place. The necessary infrastructure for running the planned activities grants have been made for procurement of coracles, chairs, teapoys etc. Coracles were set with cushion upholstery and life jackets were purchased for the safe coracle ride.

**Executive Selection:**

The President of the Committee is elected by the members of the committee the Forest Ranger of Karamadai Range is the Ex-officio Secretary for the committees. Between 2 and 4 members from each village are nominated as the Executive Committee
Members. The District Forest Officer and Conservator of Forest of Coimbatore circle will investigate the progress of the individual joint bank account which have been opened in the name of the Forest Range Officer and the Joint Forest Management President of the concerned committee in the Indian Overseas Bank at Dhayanur for the monetary transactions of the two committees.35

**Duties of Eco-Tourism Committees:**

- To provide necessary assistance to the programme for the development of local tribal people.
- To provide necessary assistance to every individual of the village for their well-being.
- To create awareness among the people about the necessity of the programme.
- To make the people self promoted.
- To give necessary guidance for better management activities of the Women Self-Help Group.

**Formation of Self-Help Groups:**

Ten Women Self Help Groups (WSHG) are formed in all tribal villages of these committees consisting of 13 to 16 members of each committee and Rs.10,000/- is allotted to each WSHG towards the revolving fund under various schemes such as Western Ghats Development Programme, Integrated Forest Protection and Nilgiris Biosphere schemes for their income generation activities. A part of the WSHG members are given training in Avinashilingam Jan Shikshan Sansthan, Coimbatore, in catering and food preparation for preparing and supply of hygienic and quality food to the visitors.36 Assistance to Thamarai WSHG at Baralikkadu Committee is extended to purchase the required vessels for catering services.37

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35. *Coimbatore Forest Division*, Karamadai Range, op.cit.,
36. Ibid.
37. Interview with *Mr. Andavan*, op.cit.,
Tribal Skill and Resource:

The local tribes in the Karamadai range use Bhavani waterways as their transporting mode. They do have very good experience in boat riding in the Bhavani river for a long time. On both sides of the river, there is natural vegetations with undulating hills with scenic beauty that gives fabulous experience when one enters into this range\textsuperscript{38}.

Coracle ride and risk operation training:

Twenty trained tribal men are enrolled to drive the coracles. The coracle ride is being conducted only on Saturdays and Sundays. Each coracle can be accommodated with 4 tourists and hence 40 tourists in 10 coracles at a cost of Rs. 350/- for adults and Rs.250/- for children below 15 years are collected as charges for the coracle ride which includes lunch, trekking inside the jungle and river-bathing as part of the programme. Children below 5 years are allowed free. In addition to this, two pilot / rescue coracles consisting of two well trained tribal boatmen accompany these coracles while riding in the water catchment areas as protection measures or for the welfare of visitors\textsuperscript{39}.

Programme schedule for coracle ride:

Generally, the coracle ride starts by 10 am and gets over with 2 hours enjoyment in the Bhavani river back water of Pillur dam. Tourists enjoy the beauty of the forests and they interact with tribal villagers situated along the bank of the river. The coracle driver or a boat man for each trip is given Rs.225/- . This joyful coracle ride was started on 7\textsuperscript{th} April 2007.\textsuperscript{40}

\textsuperscript{38} Baralikkadu – Poochimarathur Eco-Tourism, Karamadai Range, Coimbatore Forest Division.
\textsuperscript{39} Ibid.,
\textsuperscript{40} Interview with a Coracle Rider at Baralikkadu on 21\textsuperscript{st} January 2012.
Tribal Delicacy:

After the ride, delicious lunch with traditional tribal food like ragi balls with fish curry or chicken gravy, vegetable salad, chappathi-kurma, variety rice, curd rice, fruits, mineral water are served with utmost hygienic manner. This food is prepared and served by the Tamarai Women’s Self Help Group member of Baralikkadu village with love and affection. For the preparation and supply of food each tribal woman of this group is given Rs.125/- per lunch. At present, due to rise in prices of all commodities, the women want an increase of this amount to Rs.150/- as their payment.41

Tourists very much appreciate the quality and taste of the food. The tourists are taken for trekking inside the jungle followed by lunch in the gentle terrain, so that women and children also can enjoy the jungle ride followed by cheerful bathing in the clean Bhavani River.

Generally these operations are conducted both morning and evening on the week ends and on government holidays in order to offer this opportunity to 80 persons on each day. This restriction is made with the view to protect the environment. The limited package of visitors makes the trip enjoyable because there is no over crowdness, bus frequency is also limited. Moreover there are no shops, hotels, restaurants or lodges in this region. All these facilities are avoided to preserve nature and to make the area free from pollution.

Community Development and Economical Changes:

Before starting this programme, the tribal people enrolled in this programme were economically very poor and job opportunities to them were very low, because they were utilised by the Forest department for planting operations and for the collection of Non-Timber Forest Produces (NTFP) from the forest areas. But after the introduction of this programme, they are frequently getting job opportunities through driving coracles and women tribals are benefited through the WSHG by way of preparing and supply of food to the visitors.

41 Interview with the Chief Cook, Tamarai Self Help Group, Baralikkadu on 21st January 2012.
Benefits of the villagers through Eco-Tourism Funds:

An aero generator windmill has been erected during 2008-09 with the support of Eco-tourism fund and a fund of Rs.1.50 lakhs was allotted under Nilgris Biosphere Reserve scheme in Veerakal tribal village for the provision of drinking water facilities to the villagers from the existing bore-well and also for lighting system to the Adult and Children literacy programme, which was started with the support of the Avinashilingam Jan Shikshan Sansthan, Coimbatore in Veerakal, Gethaikadu, Ansur and Sirukinaru villages to benefit the aged tribal men and women to read and write.

A 10 HP Diesel Motor with accessories and HDPE Hospipe has been laid for providing irrigation facility for the agricultural needs of the villagers of Veerakal tribal settlement. Water facility is arranged for agricultural purpose of the villagers of Poochamarathur village through the erection of one kerosene motor.

Fibre coracles are supplied to the villages of Poochamarathur, Nellimarathur and Thondai village for their use. The members of the Eco-Tourism Committee are given loan for their income generation activities from the Eco-Tourism fund. Awareness programme is conducted through the ‘OSAI’, (Non-Governmental Organisation) to the villages from the Eco-Tourism fund.42

Medical camps are conducted at Athikadavu for the entire villagers of Karamadai range, with the support of Avinashilingam Jan Shikshan Sansthan, Coimbatore. The villages are provided with a primary health centre and a van, medicines are also supplied during emergency.43 Some of the tribal children receive higher education.44

42. Coimbatore Forest Division, Karamadai Range, op.cit.,
43. Interview with Mr.M.Andavan, Forester, op.cit.,
44. Interview with a villager at Baralikkadu on 21st January 2012
Eco-Tent at Poochamarathur Village:

With the help of Baralikkadu – Poochamarathur Eco-Tourism fund two well equipped eco tents were formed at Poochamarathur village at a cost of Rs.2,25,000/-. It has been decided to collect Rs.2000/- per tent for 2 persons from the visitors for 24 hours including the cost of rent, coracle ride, food etc.

Baralikkadu and Poochimarathur tribal areas are visited by a number of tourists.45

The money thus collected, is deposited as savings in the bank for future usage of the people. Money generated from this Eco-tourism project is used for the beneficiaries only. The eco-tourism revenue is used for the following expenses of the community development: educational fees for tribal people (students), wages paid to the coracle drivers, payment for food etc., through Baralikkadu WSHG, assistance to SHG, socio and economic development of the tribals of BJET.46

Outcome of Eco-Tourism:

Eco-tourism in the Karamadai range is widely appreciated by the tourists and nature lovers.

The dependence of forests for minor forest produce is totally stopped. The ultimate aim of the programme is to reduce the forest dependency by the local tribal people by giving alternative employment opportunities. The villagers in the Karamadai range have new alternative job opportunities. The socio-economic status is gradually increased. The demand of quality tourism in the nearby areas is fulfilled by the present Eco-tourism programme. The success of the programme will lead the department to carry out same kind of programmes in other areas of the division for the sustainable forest management

45. Coimbatore Forest Range, Karamadai, op.cit.,
46. Interview with Mr. Desappan, Forest Ranger, Karamadai on 13th December 2011.
Future benefits planned for the Community Development activities to the villagers:

→ Construction of Community Hall at Baralikkadu village.

→ Provision of toilet, transport, road facilities, electricity connection to the villagers.

→ Drinking water facilities to the settlement.

→ Irrigation facilities etc.

→ Imparting various training to the villagers.

→ Education and self-employment loans.

Livelihood Benefits from Eco-Tourism:

Eco-tourism is an effective alternative source of income generation. Efforts should be made to improve their understanding and open ways to generate income. With development in an area, they will be improving their living standards. Eco-tourism activity will improve the literacy level of the villagers, as basic and primary education would help youngsters to fetch jobs as guides. Villagers will be able to make better use of their natural resources.

Kovai – Courtallam Eco-Tourism:

Kovai-Courtallam, at the foothills of Siruvani is proving to be a picnic spot for entertainment starved Coimbatoreans. They have no other better place to unwind and de-stress or for spending leisure hours with family and friends. A waterfall at the venue has been attracting visitors for a long time.47

Kovai Courtallam better known as Chadivayal is a waterfall located within Bolampatty Range with rich moist deciduous forests endowed with rich flora and fauna at a distance of 37 km from Coimbatore city. The Bolampatty Forest Range is endowed with beautiful landscape with varied vegetation structure and waterfalls. The green

47. The Hindu, 15th February 2011.
undulating terrain with mist covering hills attracts the tourists from the country. To fulfill the tourism requirements of the people the Kovai Courtallam programme was initiated in this Range by the Forest Division of Coimbatore with the help of Tourism Department of Tamil Nadu in the year 2008.

Eco-tourism promoted at Chadivayal saw the transformation in terms of tourist amenities and infrastructure development at the cost or compromise of protecting nature or ecology. Recently, the department has created two tree-top eco-huts and two cottages exclusively designed to blend with the natural atmosphere at the foothills of Siruvani hills. To run this eco-tourism facility, two eco-development committees had been constituted on 10th Feb 2009, which include the tribals from Chadivayal, Vellapathy, Porathi and Poochimarathur tribal hamlets.

An information centre has been created for enlightening the visitors about the rich flora and fauna of the Siruvani hills and a children’s play ground is created. The authorities have planned to erect solar fencing to keep wild elephants at bay. Eco-tourism is closely monitored and as many as 20 tribals are appointed as eco-protection watchers who work as guides and maintain vigil en route. An elevated rope walkway has become an added attraction at the spot.48

The main attraction near the Chadivayal check post is the four tree-top houses or Tamara resorts that are rented from the forest department for the weekend. The tree tops are provided with air-condition facility. They are rented at a charge of Rs.2000 for 24 hours. Canteen facilities are provided by tribals near the tree-top houses for the convenience of the tourists.

The Forest Department has launched these houses to attract the tourists. This has received immense response from the tourists even from far off places as they are exposed to nature’s beauty in the forest surroundings. This innovative project is aimed at making the people experience the forest environment thereby helping the department in its conservation exercise. The project is being implemented with the active participation

48. Ibid.,
of tribal population living in the vicinity. The idea behind this eco-tourism project is to reduce tribal dependency on forest wealth. The rent collected from the tree-top houses goes to the kitty of tribal welfare fund.\textsuperscript{49}

Though trekking sheds are available, nature trail in the form of trekking has been discouraged in the stretch of the Western Ghats due to the movement of wild elephants. Kovai Courtallam is closed for tourists on Mondays for maintenance works. The forest department has a proposal to make Kovai Courtallam plastic-free.\textsuperscript{50}

**Tribal Settlements:**
The Irula tribes are living in the following forest settlements:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S.No</th>
<th>Name of the Settlement</th>
<th>Population</th>
<th>Families</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Cadivayal</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Seengapathy</td>
<td>157</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Vellapathy</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Bollapathy</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Sarkarborathy</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Jagirborathy</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The department has imposed a ban on carrying eatables into the forest area. There are two eco-tourism vehicles provided by the department to enter the forest area. Visitors have to keep their belongings in their vehicles at the new parking area and board the eco-tourism vehicles with a intention to prevent tourist from littering the forest area and venturing into the forests to have their food since the chances of encountering wild animals are high. This would also prevent the tourists from consumption of alcohol. The department has provided drinking water to the tourists. Visitors are also curious to see the two new Kumki (trained/tamed) elephants brought from Anamalai Tiger Reserve and

\textsuperscript{49} *The Times of India*, 12\textsuperscript{th} March 2011.
\textsuperscript{50} Interview with *Mr. Sureshkumar, Forest Guard*, Bolampatty Forest Range, Chadivayal on 5\textsuperscript{th} May 2012.
and very shortly they would be used for elephant safari. Keeping in view the expenses like diesel for eco-tourism vehicles, drinking water cans, the rate of admission has been fixed as Rs.50/- for adults and Rs.20/- for children.\textsuperscript{51}

The tribals in this area are the beneficiaries, appointed as protection watchers, maintenance watchers etc.

The Forest Department has provided guidance to four tribal settlements (Chadivayal, Seengapathy, Bottapathi, Vellapathi) in Coimbatore Forest Division and has shown the way for the tribal population to successfully take to agriculture. The department has joined hands with Avinshilingam Jan Shikchan Sansthan to guide the tribal people into a new activity for earning their livelihood. According to the Divisional Forest Officer Mr.V.Thirunavakkarasu, the department apart from providing the logistics such as pumpsets and generators, it also extends loans from the Eco-Development Committee funds, earned by the tribal people through eco-tourism initiatives.

In tribal settlements, cultivable areas have been earmarked and provided with solar electric fencing. Three tribal settlements near Pilloor dam in Karamadai Range have been successful for the last two years in harvesting bananas, pumpkins and cow beans. At Seengapathy tribal settlement near Chadivayal, the tribal people have taken to cultivation of bush beans in 3.5 acres, at present they have taken up the cultivation of carrots also. The tribal people are guided in selection of crops, since paddy cultivation is not viable economically, they switched to vegetable cultivation and their earning has also increased. Adjoining areas are also brought under cultivation.\textsuperscript{52}

Thus the Forest Department of Coimbatore division has embarked these two projects to offer quality and educative tourism, with the object to provide conservation education to the public and socio-economic status to the tribals through revenue generation. But rampart urbanization and unchecked utilization of resources along the

\textsuperscript{51} \textit{The Hindu, 9\textsuperscript{th} July 2012.}

\textsuperscript{52} \textit{The Hindu, 24\textsuperscript{th} February 2011.}
reserve forest boundary have resulted in frequent man-animal conflicts. Encroachment along the Reserve Forest in the past had resulted in the fragmentation of elephant corridors. Disturbance in the corridor resulted in pachyderms straying into human habitations. Cropping pattern especially along the forest boundary has aggravated the problem. To solve these problems the department is speeding up the work of installing solar fencing along the reserve forest boundary besides creating Elephant Proof Trencher (EPT) in conflict prone pockets. On the reactive mode, the department has equipped itself with adequate number of anti-depredation squad and anti-poaching watchers, powerful search lights, fire crackers to scare and chase the elephants back into the jungle. The department also embarked on utilizing science to monitor and take pre-emptive steps to prevent the straying of the herd.

**Anamalai Tiger Reserve: (ATR)**

The Indira Gandhi Wildlife Sanctuary and National Park, the largest and well preserved sanctuary in Tamil Nadu lies in the Western Ghats, South of the Palghat gap, is better known as Anamalais, literally meaning ‘Elephant Mountains’.

The Anamalais was declared as Wildlife Sanctuary in 1976 and renamed as Indira Gandhi Wildlife Sanctuary in 1987, after the name of Mrs.Indira Gandhi, who visited the sanctuary in 1961. It was notified and upgraded as National Park in 1989.53

In 2007, it was converted into an integrated Anamalai Tiger Reserve, as it plays an important role in the ecological security, environmental security and economic well being of the region.

The Anamalai Tiger Reserve is situated at an altitude of 340-2400 metres in the Western Ghats near Pollachi in Coimbatore district. The Anamalais consists of a forest-clad and grassy tableland with summits arising about 8000 ft. The area of the reserve is 958 sq.km. The Anamalai hills are a continuation of the vast range of Western Ghats.

53 Forest History of Anamalais, Tamil Nadu Forest Department, March 2003, p.1.
mountains that runs southwards through Travancore-Cochin. On the west, they are cut-off from the Nelliampatty hills by the valley of Thekkady river and on the east from the Palani hills by the valley of Pachiar. The range is separated from the Aiyamalai and Bolampatty hills of Coimbatore division, which connect on to the Nilgiri hills by the break in the Western Ghats known as Palghat gap which is about 50 km wide.

Anamalais, known for its bio-diversity is also rich in anthropological diversity. The indigenous groups living in Anamalais are the Kadar, Malasar, Malaimalasar, Pulaiyar, Muduvar and Eravalar. It is thus described as the ‘anthropological reserve of the state’.

Though the best wildlife and forest spots like Topslip, Attakatti, Aliyar, Thirumoorthy hills, Chinnar, Manjampatti, Valparai, Manambolly, Grass Hills, Varagaliar are part of the setting, it is only Topslip that is identified and recognized as a tourist centre.

**Topslip:**

A part of Western Ghats is located above 300 metres from the sea level on the Anamalais Mountain Range. It is a village in the north-east corner of the hills and it appears to be the beginning and end of Anamalai hills. Prior to 1850, timber from the Mount Strart forests was dragged to Topslip, slipped down the ghat. This name is derived from the practice of sliding teak timber logs down the hills. The ‘slip’ was just a drag path with poles laid across. With the construction of 10.46 km long road from Sichali to Topslip in 1850 by Michael, timber was carted along this road to Topslip and then skidded down the Ghat by dry slide, carted to Palghat, floated down to Barathapuzha to Ponnani and skipped to the ravel yard at Bombay. Timber from Madras arsenal was carted to Vangal near Karur on the Cauvery, floated down that river to the sea and skipped then.

Though Topslip appears to be the main tourist centre, it is not fully equipped to meet the tourist demand. It has become a great wildlife and tourist attraction, over a decade in the Anamalai hills, while the bulk of visitors is constituted by day time visitors thronging places like Monkey Falls near Aliyar, Topslip, Thirumoorthy, the protected
area management consciously has been class emphatic about package tourism extending to few night halts.  

Anamalais has 6 territorial Ranges namely:

**Table: 3**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S.No.</th>
<th>Ranges</th>
<th>Settlements</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Ulandy</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Pollachi</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Valparai</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Manampalli</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Udumalpet</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Amaravathi</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Topslip is situated in Ulandy range which consists of 3 tribal settlements which are:

**Table: 4**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S.No</th>
<th>Settlements</th>
<th>Community</th>
<th>Families</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Eramaparai</td>
<td>Kadars</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Kolikamudhi</td>
<td>Malasars</td>
<td>115</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Kurumbars</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Pulayars</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Kookaty</td>
<td>Malamalaisars</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A settlement or ‘Pathy’, as it is referred to, consists of a group of ten or more huts, huddled together on the banks of a stream or an open glade within the forest.

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54. Ibid., p.111-112.
55. Interview with *Mr. Arokiaraj Xavier, Forest Range Officer*, Ulandy Range, Topslip on 18.06.2013.
Employment Status:

From the status of nomadic hunter – gatherer, the ethnic communities in Anamalais have moved further to a settled way life due to allotment of certain forest areas for cultivation. Prior to the declaration of a sanctuary tribals were employed in various foresting operations like timber harvesting, bamboo harvesting, minor forest produce collection and grazing the cattle of plains, forest regeneration activates which provided them gainful employment through the year.\(^5^6\)

The tribals at Anamalais are employed as tourist and trekking guides, anti-poachers, elephant tamers, labourers etc.\(^5^7\)

At present, the tribals are provided with various job opportunities like anti-poachers, trekking and tourist guides.

Anti-Poaching Measures:

Tamil Nadu Forest Department gives special consideration in the recruitment of tribal people as forest watchers. Young and able local tribals have been employed as anti-poaching watchers. These tribals have a fairly good knowledge of the tourism and the movement of animals and their behavior, especially elephants. In the anti-poaching camps, uniformed forest staff take turn duty in staying in the camps and lead them. Anti-poaching camp register is being maintained in all camps. This concept of anti poaching is in vogue since 1999, and has been working well and movement of poachers has been greatly contained. It has resulted in detection and prevention of other major offences like timber smuggling, forest fire and ganga cultivation. The Anamalai model of anti-poaching camps is not only forerunner to the efforts of Tamil Nadu Forest Department towards achieving ‘poaching free status’ but also being emulated as a model programme in the other wildlife protected areas across the country.\(^5^8\)

\(^{5^6}\) *Forest History of Anamalais*, Tamil Nadu, p.103.

\(^{5^7}\) *The Hindu*, 28\(^{th}\) November 2012.

\(^{5^8}\) Ibid., p.109-110.
Elephant Camp:

The largest population of elephants in Tamil Nadu is found in Anamalais, followed by Mudumalai. Identity of man taming elephants for various uses in India is not recent. In ancient kingdoms too, wars were fought by deploying elephants among the other units. In the Madras Presidency, elephant capturing was practiced all along the Western Ghats forests, the notable areas being Anamalais and Nilgiris. The camps for training the captured ones began at Sungam (presently Anaipady of Parambikulam in Kerala) in Anamalais and Theppakadu in Nilgiris.59

At Topslip, the Kolikamudhi elephant camp is constructed exclusively for elephants. They are trained and housed by 40 to 50 Malasar, Kurumbar and Pulayar tribes working as Mahouts and Cavadies, who are permanent employees receiving salary ranging from Rs.13,000/- to Rs.21,000/ per month.60

Permission to visit the camp is given by the forest department. On the first day, the tourists are taken on a vehicle safari to Kozhikamudhi elephant camp. On the second day, they are taken on a trek and elephant safari with the help of tribals.

The package includes lunch on day one, tea in the evening, dinner, morning coffee and breakfast. The package charges are Rs.4300 for a minimum of two persons and for additional persons it is charged as Rs.2150.61

At Topslip there are 26 suites – four in Ambuli Illam, two in Mount Stuart Rest House, two in Cheeta, two in Wood House, two in Forest Rest House (FRH) five in Bison, two in Horn Bill, one in Bamboo House, three in Tree Top, two in Pillar Top and one in Karian Shola and nearly 40 beds in the dormitory. Food is served in the canteen at the reception for all tourists. These facilities are managed by the Eco-tourism

59. Ibid., p.39.
60. Interview with Mr. Arockiaraj Xavier, op.cit.,
Development Committees and the revenue is shared by them. This has in fact generated job opportunities for the tribals.  

The nature lovers of Topslip can enjoy a 17 km vehicle safari conducted by the Forest Department Pandaravara, Menampally and Aliyar are the 5 trekking routes. About 40 tribal youths have been giving training in hospitality management and dealing with visitors. The tourists are offered an eco-tourism packages to Topslip. They are taken to medicinal plants / herbs conservation area, museum Krishnamoorthy and interpretation centre.  

**Eco-Development Committee: (EDC)**

The Forest Department of Pollachi circle has established two Eco-Development Committees in the year 2012. Erumaiparai and Kolikamuthy. It is headed by a tribal President and the Secretary who is the Forest Range Officer. The funds of these committees are deposited in the Syndicate Bank at Pollachi with the purpose to utilize it for the betterment of the tribals and their holistic development.

**The Thunakadavu Tribal Co-operative Society:**

This society was formed in 1952, to provide the tribes with basic required provisions. It is headed by Forest Range Officer who is the Secretary of the Society.

**Education:**

The Forest Department started a Primary School upto 8th standard at Topslip in 1959. Here the tribal children are provided with free food and hostel facilities.

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64. Interview with Mr. Arockiaraj Xavier. *op.cit.*
65. Interview with the *Saleswoman of the Society*, Topslip on 18th June 2013.
**Health:**

Due to the remoteness of the area, the tribals do not have basic medical facility in the area. A Primary Health Centre is run by the Forest Department at Topslip for the benefit of the tribes from the settlement around. The tribes are given free medical checkup and medicines are distributed free of cost. 66

**Eco-Awareness:**

Protected area management must have an effective conservation education programme to create eco awareness among people. In Anamalai Tiger Reserve focused attention is being given on programmes such as guided trek along nature trails, audio-visual shows, eco-campaigns, nature camps, audio player in vehicle safari, interpretative materials etc., in the last few years. Some of the initiatives in this regard include: intensive year long campaign against the use of plastics including provision of cloth bags as an alternative in the sanctuary during 2001-2002; Trekking cum Experimental Learning (TEL) programme for students and youths, guided treks to some of the fascinating peaks of the Anamalais like Perumkundru, Pandaravarai, Akkamalai in 2002 which was the International Year of Mountains. 67

To regulate tourism, the Supreme Court imposed a ban on 25th July 2012, which resulted in the closure of the three tiger reserves of Tamil Nadu namely, Anamalai Tiger Reserve, Mudumalai Tiger Reserve and Kalakkad Mundanthurai Tiger Reserve. After four months of indecisiveness, these reserves were reopened for ‘regulated and low impact tourism’, following a court directive and abiding by the guidelines of National Conservative Authority. This facilitated the entry for nature lovers to key attractions like Topslip, Monkeyfalls, Chinnakallarfalls, Nallamudi View Point and Meenparai. Lifting

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66. Interview with Mr. Arockiaraj Xavier, op.cit.,
67. Forest History of Anamalais, op.cit., p.117.
of the ban on tourism in ATR also facilitates entry of visitors to Kerala’s famous Parambikulam Tiger Reserve which is 4km from Topslip.\textsuperscript{68}

Regulated and low impact tourism has the potential to be a vital conservation tool as it helps to win public support for wildlife conservation. Low impact nature tourism contributes to the maintenance of species and habitat either directly through a contribution to conservation or indirectly by providing revenue to the local community sufficient for people to value and therefore protect their wildlife heritage area as a source of income.

\textsuperscript{68} The Hindu, 28\textsuperscript{th} November 2012.