Chapter VI

Eco –Tourism Potential in Nilgiris

*It is not the time a man spends in planning; it’s the faith and confidence he puts in his planning that really counts*

Nilgiris, the most forested district of Tamil Nadu, signifies an important stretch of Western Ghats in the state and is the meeting point of the Western and Eastern Ghats. The Nilgiris, is a celebrated summer resort for the tourists from India and abroad. It is a paradise of holiday makers, who can see many profiles of nature each with distinctive grandeur. It’s salubriously bracing climate, the magnificent scenery supported by lush green, vegetation, ornamental trees in the parks surrounded by the gardens and coffee estates on the slopes of purple hills, all strengthen the marvelous beauty which attracts a large number of visitors.

**Origin of the Name of the District:**

The name ‘Nilgiris’ in Sanskrit means blue hills and in Tamil it means Neelamalai, (Neelam- blue and giri- hill or mountain). The Nilgiri Hills, is also known as Nilagiri malai. The first mention of this name has been found in Silappathikaram. During the reign of the Hoysala king Vishnuvardhana (1104-1141 A.D) his general Punisa is said to have frightened the Todas, driven the Kongas underground, slaughtered the Poluvas, put to death the Malayalas, terrified king Kala and entered the Nila mountains. The names Niladhri and Nilachala are also used in other inscriptions of this period. There is a belief that the people living in the plains at the foot of the hills, should have given the name, the Nilgiris in view of the violet blossoms of Kurinji flowers enveloping the hill ranges periodically.¹ The name Nilgiris was also due to, by the blue haze envelops the range with most distant hills of considerable size.²

---

² *The Nilgiris District Administration*, Statistical Handbook.
Geographical Location:

The Nilgiris Bio-Sphere is the point of tri-junction of Kerala, Karnataka and Tamilnadu. It has hill stations of various altitudes and is a very popular travel destination. There are cloud kissing peaks, dense forests, rushing streams, undulating emerald green plains, breath-taking view of sudden drops, valleys and glades.

The district marks the western extremity of Tamil Nadu, situated in the middle of the Western border of the state. The Nilgiris which forms an integral part of the Western Ghats has an area of 2,549 sq.km and located between 11’10” & 11’45”N latitude and 7’14” and 77’2”E longitude. It is bordered on the north by the Karnataka state, north west by the Kerala, on the east by Coimbatore district and north east by Erode district of Tamil Nadu. The entire district is hilly and is divided into two natural zones namely the Nilgiris plateau and the Wynad table land. Based on topography and climate, the district is divided into four well defined regions. They are as follows:

The Nilgiris plateau is located at the junction of the Eastern and western Ghats. The plateau is the central part with an average elevation of 2000 mts above the Mean Sea Level (MSL) with an average annual rainfall of 1500 mm. It is 55 km in length and 35 kms in width approximately occupying an area of 1800 sq. kms.

The Sigur plateau in the northern side, adjoining Karnataka with an average altitude of 1000 mts and rainfall of 800 mm. Gudalur plateau is in the western side adjoining Wynad plateau of Kerala with an average altitude of 900 mts and rainfall of 2000 mm. the southern and eastern slopes, with peaks upto 2500 mts elevation and sloped falling to 300 mts MSL merge with plains. Rainfall here varies from 2000 mm to 800 mm.

---

**Elevation:**

Natural forest wealth is one of the main factors adding to the natural beauty and economic importance of this district. The forest area of the district is 1,42,577 hectares. The highest elevation is the peak of Doddabetta, which lies at a height of 2,595 mts from the MSL remarkable for the flattered curve of the summit. The towns of Kotagiri, Coonoor and Gudalur lie at a height of 1,983, 1,858 and 1,117 mts above the MSL respectively.

**Nature of crops:**

The gross area under cultivation is 77,520 hectares. Tea, coffee, potato and various English vegetables like cabbage, carrot, raddish, cauliflower etc., are planted in this district. Cardamom, pepper and ginger are the major spices grown in Nilgiris. About 60% of the cultivable land falls under the slopes ranging from 16 to 35%. Tea is the main plantation crop. There are more than 200 tea manufacturing industries under both private and government undertakings.6

**Climate:**

Although situated in the tropical zone, this region enjoys a subtropical temperate climate by virtue of its altitude. Due to its altitude, the Nilgiris has much cooler and wetter climate than the surrounding plains. The region experiences an average maximum and minimum temperature of 23.10°C and 5.10°C respectively. The coldest month is December and the hottest month is April during which a dry wind blows from the north-east. Frosty nights are common during January and February. Thunder storms are frequent through April and May and the monsoon brings heavy rainfall. During winter the temperature reaches a maximum of 20°C and a minimum of 10°C. Wind velocity of this region ranges between 13.4 km/hour and 4.4 km/hour, humidity also ranges from 70% (December) to 94% (July).7 The rolling hills of Downs look very similar to the

---

Downs in Southern England and were used for similar activities such as hunting. As such Nilgiris was preferred by the British for its ‘English-like’ climate.

**Rainfall:**

The average rainfall in this region varies from place to place and is somewhere between 1856.5 mm – 3000 mm. the district usually receives rain both during South West Monsoon and North East Monsoon. The incidence of drought is also common in Nilgiris. From soil and water conservation point of view, high incidence of drought during April and December, excess rainfall during July and October.

**Flora and Fauna:**

The natural vegetation of the valley is typically a dense and rather low forest with much undergrowth and many epiphytes, mosses and ferns. Both tropical and temperate flora occurs, vegetation being mostly tropical in character at lower elevations and temperate at higher elevation. Botanically as well as zoologically and ethnologically, the Nilgiris forms a district ecological realm of its own, the typical forests of Nilgiris is called ‘sholas’. Geologically, the Nilgiris are the world’s earliest formations, nearly 3,500 million years old and one of the stablest parts of the world. Nilgiris is India’s first biosphere reserve. It has been described as one of the 14 ‘hotspots’ of the world because of its unique bio-diversity.

**Rivers:**

The district is bounded by Moyar river in the north and Bhavani river in the south. These two rivers are the main river streams that drain Nilgiri hills, Pykara river, Sigur river, Kavithole halla, Kedirayar halla, Kalava halla, Madukadu halla and other streamlets originating from northern parts of the Nilgiri hills flowing northward to join Moyar river. Kundah river, Katteri river, Coonoor river, Neeralipallam and other streams

---

8. *Hill Area Development Programme for Nilgiris*, Forest Department, op.cit., p.3.
flow in the south easterly and easterly directions to join the Bhavani river. Many man-
made reservoirs for Kundah Hydro Electric Project schemes are located in the Nilgiris
plateau important among them being Pykara, Sandy nallah and Parsons valley.\textsuperscript{10}

**Hills:**

The Nilgiris has a number of grassy undulating hills, which are divided by narrow
valleys and swamps. They are as follows: Doddabetta, Snowdon, Devashola,
Kulakombai, Hulikal Drug, Coonoor betta, Rallia hill, Dimhatti hill etc. The noticeable
peaks in the district are Chinna Doddabetta, Konabetta, Kookalbetta, Kundahbetta,
Kundah Mugi, Dolphin’s Nose, Ibex hill, Muttunadabetta, Tamra betta, Velliangiri etc.\textsuperscript{11}

**History of the Nilgiris:**

The Nilgiri hills are part of the larger mountain chain namely the Western Ghats.
These hills have a history going back a good many centuries. It was originally a tribal
land occupied by the Todas around what is now the Ooty area and by the Kotas around
which is now the Kotagiri (Kothar Keri) area. The Badagas are one of the major non-
tribal populations in the district who reside in the mountain.

The Nilgiris was a part of the Vijayanagar kingdom from 1336 to 1565. The
Mysore rulers gained control of it in 1565, later it came under the rule of Hyder Ali and
Tipu Sultan. The Nilgiris was ceded to the East India Company in 1799.\textsuperscript{12}

Although the Nilgiri hills are mentioned in the Ramayana of Valmiki, they
remained all but undiscovered by the Europeans until 1602. The Nilgiris was a place of
special attraction for the Europeans because of its natural charm and pleasant climate.
Though regular settlements were started only in the 19\textsuperscript{th} century, the religious zeal of the
Christian missionaries took them to this area much earlier. Apparently, the first European

\textsuperscript{10} Hill Area Development Programme, The Nilgiris District, op.cit., p.1.
\textsuperscript{11} M. Gopalakrishnan (ed.), op.cit., p.11.
to ascend the hills was a catholic priest, who was sent in 1602 by the Bishop of the Syrian Christians in Malabar on an evangelistic mission. Shortly afterwards, another party under a Jesuit priest named Jacome Ferrieri resolved to explore the hills and succeeded. The first Englishman to reach the top of the plateau was Francis Buchanan, who went up in 1800 from Devanayakkankota in the Bhavani Valley.\textsuperscript{13}

However, the credit for the British discovery of this region goes to Whish and Kindersely who were the assistants to the Collector of Coimbatore. In 1818, they reached Kotagiri near Rengaswamys peak, crossed the hills and descended by the Keloor Pass. They reported to their superiors that they had discovered the ‘existence of a tableland possessing a European climate’. John Sullivan, then collector of Coimbatore was greatly interested in this region. In 1821, he first visited ‘Wotkymund’ with a Badaga guide, he acquired the stone House Hill and started building the first house of Udhagamandalam, the stone house in which the Government Arts College is located.\textsuperscript{14}

A number of old varieties of plants of Europe and South Africa form part of Nilgiris flora today because of Sullivan. The first road to Nilgiris from Sirumugai via Kotagiri was formed in 1820 due to his effort. It was Sullivan who planned and executed the formation of the famous Ooty lake by damming up the streams in the surrounding area. It was mainly owing to his enthusiasm for the place and his faith in the future that Ootacamund rapidly developed until it became the capital of a district and the summer headquarters of the government. The progress made in the Ooty station upto 1827, witnessed the appointment of Stephen Rumbold Lustington as Governor of Madras, who wanted to lay the foundation stone of a church. The first church was opened in 1831, known as St.Stephen church. Later on, as a member of the council, Sullivan made several far reaching impacts on the administration of the Nilgiris hills through his proposals on the question of re-annexation of western portion of the Nilgiri hills into Coimbatore district. Sullivan’s work was followed by his successors. His pioneering contributions to


\textsuperscript{14} M. Gopalakrishnan (ed.), op.cit., p. 224.
Nilgiris were remembered by the Nilgiri district administration in 2001, when the Dimhatti bungalow of Sullivan was renovated and made a standing monument to his yeomen service to the development of the Nilgiris. Later, in 2002, ‘Save Nilgiris Campaign’ was conducted in three days students’ trek programme to coincide with the International years of Mountains from the foothills of Sirumugai to the Nilgiris along the trail followed by Sullivan in 1819.\textsuperscript{15}

The Nilgiris consists of six taluks namely Udhagamandalam, Coonoor, Kotagiri, Gudalur, Kundah and Pandalur. These taluks are divided into four Panchayat union namely Udhagamandalam, Coonoor, Kotagiri and Gudalur. The headquarters of the district is Ooty. It was ranked first in a comprehensive Economic Environment Index ranking of districts in Tamilnadu.\textsuperscript{16}

**Demography:**

According to the 2011 census, the Nilgiris district has a population of 7,35,071. It has a population density of 288 inhabitants per square kilometer. The Nilgiris has a sex ratio of 1041 females for every 1000 males and a literary rate of 85.65%. It is the second least populous district of Tamil Nadu after Perambalur.\textsuperscript{17}

**Nilgiri Biosphere Reserve:**

Forests in the Nilgiris are varied and diverse, represent bio-diversity treasure house on the earth and are home to many rare endangered and threatened species of plants and animals.

As a follow up of UNESCO’s Man and Biosphere (MAB) programme, the Indian National MAB Committee designated Nilgiri Biosphere Reserve(NBR) which includes

---

\textsuperscript{15} Forest History of the Nilgiris, Tamil Nadu Forest Department, Chennai, 2004, pp.20-21.

\textsuperscript{16} The Times of India, 22\textsuperscript{nd} September 2009.

\textsuperscript{17} 2011 Census of India, Indian Government, 16\textsuperscript{th} April 2011, [http://www.censusindia.gov.in/2011](http://www.censusindia.gov.in/2011).
part of two of the ten bio-geographic provinces of India namely the Western and Eastern Ghats as the first Biosphere Reserve of the country in August 1986. Spread between $10^\circ 45'$ to $12^\circ 15'$N and $76^\circ 0'$ to $77^\circ 15'$E over 5520 sq.km of which 1240 sq.km representing the core zone, Nilgiri Biosphere Reserve occurs in the states of Tamil Nadu, Kerala and Karnataka. Tamil Nadu accounts for major portion of Nilgiri Biosphere Reserve with 2537.6 km$^2$ followed by Karnataka (1527.4 km$^2$) and Kerala (1455.4 km$^2$). Comprising of nearly 15 forest and wildlife management units of the three states, the Nilgiri Biosphere Reserve is the tone representative of biodiversity abundance of Western Ghats. The Nilgiri Biosphere Reserve is very rich in flora and fauna. Several objectives have been outlined for the management of Biosphere Reserve. They include:

- Conservation of biodiversity and their ecological foundations.
- Bring representative ecosystems under conservation and sustainable use on long term basis.
- Ensure participation of local inhabitants for effective management and devise means for improving alternate livelihood through sustainable use of natural resources. The Nilgiri Biosphere Reserve has been approved as part of international network of Biosphere Reserve in November 2000 at the 16th session held at UNESCO’s head quarters at Paris.\footnote{Forest History of the Nilghiris, op.cit., p.154.}

The district occupies an enviable position in wildlife conservation, in as much as it bears two significant protected areas namely the Mudumalai Wildlife Sanctuary and National Park and Mukurthi National Park, the former being the oldest of the state’s sanctuaries and later dedicated to the conservation of Nilgiri Tahr, the state animal. Another interesting feature of the hills, particularly the Nilgiri plateau is the vast expanse of rolling downs interspersed with temperate evergreen forest pockets which cumulatively constitute the picturesque shola grassland ecosystem which virtually control the water supply systems both in the hills and in the plains.
The Western Ghats Development Programme is an ambitious programme being implemented from Fifth five-year plan in many forest divisions aimed at watershed management and conservation of the unique diversity and eco-system of this tract. Eco-preservation, Eco-restoration and Eco-development are some of the works undertaken under this scheme which is implemented in Dindugal, Coimbatore, Madurai, Virudhanagar, Erode, Kanyakumari and Tirunelveli districts.19

**Places of Interest:**

The Nilgiris which has been acclaimed to be the Queen of Hills is loved by one and all through its temperate climate, fertile soil and beauty of scenery not surpassed in any region of the globe. Here, a traveler can see many profiles of nature, each with distinctive grandeur. Of about the 80 hill stations created by the British during their rule, Udhagamandalam is the first and considered the best. The tribal inhabitants of the Nilgiris provide a lot of interest not only to the anthropologists but also to the casual visitor. The following are the places, which attract the attention of the visitors and are praised as places of interest.

**Udhagamandalam:**

It is the largest and the most important hill station in South India. This hill station is at an elevation of 2286 metres and situated at the centre of the district in the Western Ghats. The name Ooty is derived from ‘Ottakkalmandu’ means the village of a single stone. Ooty nestles among the hills where the eastern and western ghats meet, giving the visitor a glimpse of both.20 Officially, renamed as Udhagamandalam, is usually known as Ootacamund and more after it is referred as Ooty. It was founded by the British in the early 19th century. Since it is the largest and the most important hill station, it is, called the Queen of Hill stations.21 Ooty, is said to be ‘Scotland of the East and often it is called as the ‘Little Switzerland of India’. As such, nature has been generous with this region

which is by far the most beautiful in the state. The temperature during summer is rarely higher than 25°C with a minimum of 10°C and winter is distinctly cooler with a high of 21°C and a low of 5°C. Curiously, enough, this slice of paradise remained unknown, to the great southern dynasties and it took the British to discover it is the early 1800’s. The credit for modernizing Ooty and making it accessible goes to the British who constructed the first railway line in the area and made it the summer capital of the Madras Presidency. Settlement in Ooty began in 1822 with the construction of the Stone House (Kal Bangla) by John Sullivan.23

**Government Botanical Garden- A Heaven for Botanists:**

The Botanical Garden in Ooty was established by Marques of Tweedle in 1897. It is maintained by the Agri-Horticulture Society of the Government of Tamil Nadu. It is one of the well laid gardens in Asia and the best known tourist attraction of the Nilgiris, acclaimed as a ‘Botanists Paradise’. A visit to Ooty can gain a wholesome experience of one’s trip to the town only during his tour to the gardens. Initially, it was established as a vegetable garden in 1845 with the object of producing ‘English vegetables at reasonable cost’, it was subsequently converted into a Botanical Garden for promoting horticulture in the Nilgiris. Lying in a picturesque ravine sprawling over 22 hectares at 2400-2500 mts adjacent to the Raj Bhavan, the area has been transformed into an informal assemblage of lawns, lily ponds, flower beds, rockeries, green houses, ledges, borders and pathways over many decades of skilled work. Keeping in tune with the landscape and to enhance the aesthetic appeal among visitors, the garden is divided into six sections namely lower garden, new garden, Italian garden, conservatory fountain terrace and nurseries. The undulating lawns have been planted with ‘Kikiyu’ grass from South Africa. The garden also displays a large number of exotic trees brought from various parts of the world. It has a fossilized true trunk that is 20 million years old. The Annual Floral Carnival, the piece de resistance of summer season is held during the third week

---

end of every May since 1896. Adventure sports like trekking also form a part of the festival. The Department of Horticulture and Plantation crops of the Tamil Nadu Government has planned to enhance its beauty at a cost of Rs.5 crores. Being a rare kind of attraction round the year, the garden has emerged over years into a timeless delight.24

Ooty Lake:

The picturesque Ooty lake, artificially formed on the west of the town is another contribution of John Sullivan, created in 1824 with an intention of providing boating and fishing facilities. Water of the lake was also used for drinking till 1877. The Tamil Nadu Tourism Development Corporation maintains the boat house, mini train and children’s park. To maintain the healthy status of the lake, certain measures like Restricted Sewerage Scheme to control sewage pollution and a lake – clearing programme to eradicate the Eichornia water weed are initiated in the recent years.25

Government Rose Garden:

The Rose Garden at Ooty was set up in 1995 to commemorate the 100th Flower show of the Botanical Garden. It has the largest collection of roses in the country over 3800 varieties and 25,000 plants.26 This garden has been recognized as a Garden of Excellence by the World Federation of Rose Societies at Osaka, Japan in May 2006.27

Among the view points around Ooty are Elk hill, Green Valley view and Snowden Peak, the most prominent is Doddabetta peak which is the highest peak in the district at a height of 2623mts about 10 kms from Ooty. Doddabetta is surrounded by dense shoals. From here, the panoramic view of hills and plains, layers and layers of mountains, Ooty town and various villages can been seen.

27. Tamil Nadu Splendour of India, op.cit., p.118.
The nature lovers can view the sprawling 20,000 acres of Wenlock Downs. The Gymkana club, the factory of the Hindustan Photo Films Company, the Government Sheep Farm and the Golf Course are all in the Wenlock Downs. Apart from all these places, there are a number of small, but enchanting spots around Ooty, that offers picnicking possibilities and these include the Kalhatti falls (13km), Glenmorgen (25kms), Mukurthi Peak (26 kms), Pykara Dam (19kms) and Avalanche (25kms).28

There are several small hill stations around Ooty, each having its own brand of charm that goes to prove why Nilgiris-the district of Blue Mountains is the most beautiful in the state.

**Coonoor:**

Situated at an altitude of 2000ft and 19kms from Ooty is the first of these hill stations. It is a small town with an equable climate that has made it popular as a hill resort in its own right. The main attraction is the Sims Park, a small well maintained Botanical Garden established in 1874 by J.D.Sim, then Secretary of Government. It has several varieties of plants, not to be found in any other hill stations. This is probably, the only garden in the south which supports a tree park with well over 50 exotic tree species, some of which were planted around 1885. View points and spots around Coonoor include Lamb’s Rock, Lady Canning’s Seat, Dolphin’s Nose, St.Catherine Falls, Laws Falls, Ralliah Dam and Doorg. The last one has the remains of a fort built by Tipu Sultan. Coonoor is the second largest hill station in the Nilgiris. 29

**Wellington:**

Named after Arthur Wellesley, Wellington Cantonment is 15 kms from Ooty, has India’s only Defense Service Staff College and it is the headquarters of the Madras

---

28. Ibid., p.119.
29. Ibid., pp.119-121.
Regimental Centre, the oldest regiment of the Indian army. The Pomological Station at Wellington is an experimental fruit garden under the care of the Tamil Nadu Horticulture Department. The station carries out research activity in the area of scientific fruit cultivation.

The Pasteur Institute at Coonoor, established in 1907, is the country’s foremost manufacture of polio vaccine for the purpose of finding cure to the dreaded rabies.

**Kotagiri:**

Kotagiri is between the high peaks of Western Ghats which lies just 29 kms from Ooty. It is considered to have been the first home of Kotas. Among the places of interest are Elk Falls, Kodanad View Point, Kanneri Mukku and the Rangaswami Pillar and Peak.30

**Ketty:**

Ketty is famous for having the highest railway station in the country, situated at a height of 7000 ft in the Nilgiris. The weather of Ketty valley is salubrious. It has a wealth of national beauty.31 The valley is one of the largest valley in the world and extends from the plains of Coimbatore to the Mysore plateau.

**Garden of Kateri:**

A new garden sprawling across 5.8 acres near Kateri, 4 km from Coonoor has been developed with grass cover of flowering plants. It is located adjacent to the Runnymede train track. A view track has also been erected in the garden to enable the tourists to have a panoramic view of the Kateri falls and river.32

---

Hill Area Development Programme (HADP) – Arboretum:

Arboretum is defined as a living collection of trees and other woody plants. Various tree species of native and exotics are grown in Arboretum. It is situated near the Central Bus Stand on the way to Fern Hill Palace adjoining the Ooty lake and it is maintained by the Department of Horticulture under HADP funds. It was started in the year 1992 with the aid of introducing exotic tree species.33

Eco-tourism in Nilgiris:

Nilgiris – A Tourist Paradise:

In view of the fascinating landscape comprising of vast expanse of rolling downs, dotted with pocket shola forests combined with the salubrious climatic conditions, the Nilgiri hills is one of the most favoured destinations for all categories of tourists, particularly the low end and medium budget ones. Forest locales in the Blue Mountains has much to offer in the form of scintillating landscapes, fascinating peaks, cascading waterfalls, breath-taking view points, wonderful wildlife and for more with a panorama of rolling grasslands, dense sholas, waterfalls, silver streams, crystal clear lakes, vast expanse of tea plantations interspersed with vegetable gardens, spectacular array of view points, an amazing variety of flora and fauna, fabulous trekking trails, innumerable heritage sites, magic mist, pollution free atmosphere, most refreshing air, fog, cloud, star-studded skies and serenity. Nilgiris presents truly a breath-taking Kaleidoscope of visual treats and soul stirring experiences.

Few of the most popular eco-tourism spots located within forests, sanctuary or national park areas are enumerated in this chapter. Some of these spots are in the forest areas leased to either Tamil Nadu Electricity Board or Tamil Nadu Tourism Development Corporation and therefore, conditions as imposed by the above agencies apply in addition to the forest regulations in permitting a visit to such spots. In view of the salubrious daytime, weather and the very exotic looking locations, many of these tourist spots are

33. Forest History of the Nilgiris, op.cit., p.179.
the favoured destinations for the movie makers from the celluloid water. However, as the filming and the associated sporting activities brought in enormous stress on the pristine forest eco-system and was threatening the tranquility of various wildlife forms, several sensitive and core areas came to be banned for filming over years, besides placing stringent guidelines for observance. Some of them include prohibition of film shooting in core and sensitive areas, banning of sporting activities in Reserved Forests, Sanctuaries and National Parks, no damage or disturbance to flora and fauna or the eco-system.

**Fascinating Peaks of Nilgiris:**

Western ghats of Nilgiris represent a wholesome ecological system comprising of various types of forests including the unique montane – sholas – grasslands. Besides enclosing two of the most popular wildlife protection units namely Mudumalai Wildlife Sanctuary and Mukurthi National Park, this region is endowed with many of the high mountain peaks, the highest among them being the Doddabetta peak.

**Doddabetta Peak – Crown of Nilgiris:**

Nilgiris boasts of the highest peak of the state, Doddabetta is about 2636 mts. In the entire Western Ghats, this is the second of the highest peaks, south of the Himalayas, next only to Anaimudi of Kerala which stands at 2695 mts. At Doddabetta, the Tamil Nadu Tourism Department maintains a telescope house which represents one of the most favoured destinations of the tourists who throng the peak in thousands. Forest department in the recent years, have initiated several eco-friendly measures in the area to prevent littering and disposal of non-degradable waste by making the tourism department to adopt effective solid waste disposal measures.\(^3^4\)

**Nilgiris – Trekkers Paradise:**

There are excellent opportunities for trekking in the Nilgiris with the country rising from 300 mts in the North and South to 2600 mts in the west. The trekking areas

---

\(^{34}\) Ibid., p.180.
are divided into two distinct geographical regions with very different climatic conditions namely- a) The western area with a temperate climate and b) northern and eastern region with a tropical climate. Trekking in the former region takes one through long winding walks over rough, course; tussocky grass leading to some of the fascinating peaks like the Mukurthi, Koleribetta from where the trekker gets the most spectacular and grand views from the edge of the escarpment of the western boundary of Mukurthi National Park of the low country of Kerala as the land falls away in sheer cliffs of 1000 mts or more to heavy and evergreen forests. There are camping facilities of many different designs and facilities in both the regions in the form of forest rest houses and trekking sheds. Treks are organized for interested school, college, groups and other interested individuals along the marked routes, most of the time by providing the services of an experienced guide who has sound knowledge of the country.35

Promotion of Eco-tourism at Avalanche and Cairn Hill:

Eco-tourism is defined as ‘responsible travel to natural areas that conserves the environment and improves the well being of the local people’. In view of this, the Government of India-Ministry of Environment and Forests have encouraged the promotion of eco-tourism in and around the Protected Areas. Such tourism is low impact, educational and conserves the environment while directly benefiting the economic development of local communities.

From being a vacation destination in the 1960’s, 1970’s and even in 1980’s, which mainly attracted tourists, from various parts of India and abroad, who likes to spend a few days savouring its natural beauty, salubrious weather, unpolluted air and noise-free environment, Ooty, the Queen of Hill stations transformed in the following decades into a sightseeing spot teaming with people, suitable for the promotion of tourism. In the second decade of the millennium, yet another transformation is being noticed by discerning observers. In view of this, the forest department of the southern

35. Tamil Nadu Tourism, Enchanting Nilgiris, HADP, op.cit.
division of the district has taken initiative to promote scenic spots under its jurisdiction which would be of interest to the tourists.

Avalanche and Cairn Hill are the two scenic spots chosen by the Forest Department of the Southern Division of Nilgiris to promote eco-tourism.

Eco-Tourism in Avalanche:

Avalanche, is an important tourism destination in the Nilgiris district situated at 25 km away from Ooty town. It is surrounded by a rolling landscape with blooming flowers like magnolias, orchids and rhododendrons. Avalanche got its name from a tremendous landslip which took place in 1824. Today, it holds nothing fearful for a visitor and its virgin green forests and placid blue waters provide a welcome break from the routine tourist attraction of overcrowded Ooty. Avalanche, is located in the protected Nilgiri Biosphere reserve, entering into Avalanche hill and the surroundings adjoining Emerald lake requires prior permission from the forest office in Ooty. The only place to stay, is the forest guest house on top of Avalanche hill.

Avalanche lies in Kundah Reserve Forest comprising of two Forest Ranges namely Udhagar South range and Korakundah range of Forest office, the Southern Division of Nilgiris. Upper Bhavani is a drive through the verdant greenwoods and serves as one of the gateways to the Mukurthi National Park which is about 25km from Avalanche and its surroundings areas get around 5000 mm of rainfall annually.

Formation of Eco-Development Committee (EDC), Avalanche:

In view of the enormous response and attractions towards Avalanche and its surrounding areas, the District Forest Office of the Southern Division, under the approval and guidance of the Conservator of Forests, Coimbatore Circle, formed an Eco-Development Committee during April 2012. This Committee comprises of the Toda tribals of Mullimund and Thepakadmund hamlets near Avalanche.

Features of the Committee:

- The Eco-Development Committee comprises of 44 members from the Toda tribal community belonging to Mullimund and Thepakadumund.
- An Executive Committee with 18 members including 8 women has been formed among which a president has been elected.
- The Forest Range Officer, South Division of the Forest office is functioning as the Member Secretary.
- A Forester has been posted exclusively to monitor and execute the Eco-tourism activities at Avalanche.
- A Joint Savings Account with the president and Member Secretary is opened and operated at Canara Bank, Ithalar.\(^{38}\)

Eco-tourism activities at Avalanche:

The Eco-Development Committee is fully involved in the Eco-tourism activities at Avalanche. The introduction of Community Based Eco-tourism from 5\(^{th}\) May 2012 was a boon to the visitors who were allowed to visit and enjoy the scenic beauty of Avalanche, by the vehicles run by the Eco-Development Committee. (A 26 seater van is operated for visitors.). The tourists are permitted to visit Avalanche and its surroundings areas only by these vehicles.

Places of interest at Avalanche:

Cauliflower Shola:

This is a beautiful valley with a heavy bunch of Shola forest seen on the other side. It resembles like arranged Cauliflowers and hence named as such.

Bhavani temple:

It lies by the side of a beautiful waterfalls and is believed to be the main source and origin of Bhavani river.

\(^{38}\) Interview with Mr. Badrisamy, District Forest Officer, Nilgiris Southern Division, Udhagamandalam on 7-5-2013.
Lakkidi:

This is a view point of Upper Bhavani Dam completely surrounded by grassland and pocket shoals.

**Benefits enjoyed by the Eco- Development Committee members:**

- 10 members are engaged as Eco- tour guides with a payment of Rs. 150/- per trip.
- 1 member with Heavy Vehicle Batched License is employed as driver for the van which is used for eco-tour earning an amount of Rs. 7325/- per month.
- 1 member is engaged as a guide cum cleaner for the van with a monthly payment of Rs. 5000/-
- 1 member is engaged as billing Machine operator and is paid Rs 5000/- per month.
- The women Self Help Group in this village is benefited by running a shop fulfilling the snacks and food needs of the visitors.
- 4 members of the committee own jeeps which are used for eco-tours, earning a rent of Rs. 800/- per trip. Some of its members are engaged as drivers in these jeeps.

**Issue of loans to the members:**

Based on the resolutions, passed in the eco- Development meeting prior approval proceedings from the District Forest Officer, Nilgiris South Division, the following loans are issued to the Committee members:

- Rs.10000/- given as individual loan for 16 members.
- Rs.1,00,000/- loan for Samandhi Poo Women SHG is given for a running a shop at Avalanche.

**Achievements: (Success story of Avalanche Eco-Tourism)**

- An average of 2000 people are visiting Avalanche every month.
- An average of above Rs. 3.50 lakhs is collected as revenue every month.
- An average of Rs. 1.50 lakhs is paid as guide fees, drivers, machine operator payments, vehicle rent etc., to the tribal members.
- The current Bank Balance as on 11.03.2013 is Rs.11, 50,948.00.
The approximate net profit for the EDC is earning a considerable amount by running shops for visitors.

The entire eco-tourism area is maintained plastic free.

**Future plans in Avalanche Eco-Tourism:**

- Conducting a package tour from Ooty to Upper Bhavani via Avalanche and covering Cairn Hill Eco-Tourism site also includes provision for food, snacks, tea, etc.,
- Developing Kolaribetta Peak route for package stay and trekking through Eco-Tourism.
- Creating Eco-friendly lodges, eco-shops and interpretation centre at Avalanche, proposals have been sent for allotment under Tourism sector.
- Training the Women Self Help Groups members in catering, craft works, etc.,
- Conducting regular awareness programmes for school and college students at Avalanche with resource persons.39

**Cairn Hill An Eco-Awareness Centre:**

Cairn Hill, on the Ooty- Avalanche road is another scenic spot controlled by the Southern Division. It is located 5 km away from Ooty along the road leading towards Nanjanad, Avalanche, Manjoor etc. This site lies undisturbed from sound pollution, about 300 mts away from the main road.

Cairn Hill, derived its name from a Cairn (or piled stone circle- a pre-historic burial site to the tribals), found at the highest peak point of the reserve. It is one of the first Reserved Forests on the upper plateau formed in late 1860’s.40 The Reserved Forests with an extent of 167.775 hectares has one of the oldest Cyprus plantation planted in 1868 by the British. The trees are more than a century old; some of them are more than

---

39 Interview with *Mr. Srikanth, Forest Range Officer*, Nilgiris Southern Division, Udhagamandalam on 7-5-2013.

40 *Cairn Hill Eco-Awareness Centre*, Tamil Nadu Forest Department, Nilgiris Southern Division, Udhagamandalam.
40 mts tall, mighty with majestic look. Cairn Hill has been a very old renowned place of beauty to visit and enjoy the nature. The natural landscape of this place with a trek trail around a small hillock in the centre has attracted many people to have a peaceful and calm spending time.

Wildlife, seen and heard here are Languor, Barking Deer, Porcupine, etc,. This site is also good for bird watching, with interesting birds. Apart from exotics such as wattle, eucalyptus, there are four pockets of nature shoals. Many of them being regenerated into seedlings of suitable species of shola trees. Along the tracks and trails, one could see ‘eco-awareness and quotes’ etched on stone slabs, thought provoking and making one to imbibe their meaning in nature and its conservation for the benefit of mankind. Recently, an interpretation centre has been established where various exhibits depict the history of the Nilgiris. This Eco-Awareness centre, (as it is called) serves to heighten the relationship between man and nature and enhances the dissemination of knowledge on the forest ecosystem of Nilgiris. It also helps to create a new positive attitude and behavior towards environment. It also houses one of the rare collections of photographs of old Ooty. It has got a model of Nilgiris landscape with sound and light show, telling about the ecological setting of the Nilgiris. There is a canopy walk which gives a different view of the forests. Orchidarium has been established where various species of orchids from Naduvattam and Avalanche area can be seen.41

Moreover, the government sanctioned an amount of Rs. 1.5 lakhs during 1985-86 under HADP (Hill Area Development Programme) for the creation of this eco-awareness centre and holds back on nature forest and wildlife. A footpath laid with soling stones meandering through a multitude of plantations to a distance of 2 km leads the visitor to the Bagada temple at 2312 mts, the highest point of this reserve forest. Along the track, polished cuddapah stones carrying information on salient features of the Cairn hill forests have been erected. Benches are provided to facilitate the visitors to rest amidst greenery.

The area has been protected with chain like fence to exclude biotic interference in form of grazing, fire and illicit firewood collection and to promote the natural regeneration of shola species.\(^{42}\)

The Southern Division of the Nilgiris has started bird watching facility which is a popular activity at Cairn Hill. Treks for exclusively bird watching are conducted on Saturdays and Sundays for a group of 10 members.\(^{43}\) Cairn Hill remains open between 9 a.m and 5 p.m. The facilities are managed by the Self Help Group of the Todas. Since it is in an eco-sensitive place, eatables and plastic items are not allowed inside the Cairn Hill. A sum of Rs. 81.20 lakhs has been granted under the Government of India Tourism Development scheme for developing Cairn Hill as a tourist spot with view to promote sustainable tourism and expose lesser known tourism destination to the visitors.\(^{44}\) This Cairn Hill indeed is a prized possession of the Nilgiris, which has become the most popular eco-tourism spot.

**Trekking tours:**

The Eco-tourism wing of the TTDC has introduced 25 trekking tours to various places including Nilgiris in 2010, to offer trekkers a different kind of experience and to create awareness among communities and tourists particularly youngsters to prevent the use of non-biodegradable products.\(^{45}\)

**Eco-Tour of the Forest Department:**

The forest department of the North Division of Nilgiris has set to introduce eco-package tour. Though, there are conducted tours arranged to major tourist destinations in the Nilgiris, an eco-package tour is the first of its kind in the state. The tour project includes three main locations, Longwood Shola, Kodanad View Point and St. Catherine Falls near Kotagiri. The two-day programme includes trekking and bird watching inside

\(^{42}\) Ibid.
\(^{43}\) *The Hindu*, 23\textsuperscript{rd} April 2012.
\(^{44}\) *The Hindu*, 17\textsuperscript{th} May 2011.
\(^{45}\) *The Hindu*, 1\textsuperscript{st} June 2012.
the Longwood Shola and a breath taking visual treat of the Nilgiri hills from the Kodanadu View Point. During the tour, the visitors are made to stay at a trekking shed at the Longwood Shola overnight. The package tour concludes with a visit to St. Catherine Falls and a visit to nearby Toda habitat at Koditheni mund. A visit to the adjoining tea estates and tea factories is a part of the tour. In addition to the most picturesque, panoramic view of some of the tea estates and river Moyar, the tourist can also see the actual point where the Eastern and Western meet at the Kodanadu View Point. The eco-tour is a two day programme which includes trekking inside the forest and bird watching. Only 20 persons are accommodated in a single trip. The tour is strictly an environmental friendly one. Plastics and littering is prohibited during the journey. A village committee comprising residents of surrounding villages and a few local self help groups has been formed for this purpose.46

The Southern Division has proposed to organize package tour starting from Ooty to Palada, Avalanche, Cauliflower Shola, Lakkidi and the Cairn Hill. The cost of the package trip is fixed as Rs.750/- which includes lunch, snacks and a momento. The Department has tie up with various hotels to popularize the tour.47

The forest department has renovated the glass tower located at the Kodanadu View Point at a cost of Rs. 2 lakhs. Deavashola Home stay- is an eco friendly accommodation at Kolakombay, which is about 25 kms from Coonoor. It is spread across 650 acres of tea garden and one of the simplest but most ecofriendly home stay. This inventory includes 3 colonial style independent bungalows with 7 rooms and 6 deluxe rooms for comfort. The food served here is mostly South Indian.48

Longwood Shola:

Longwood Shola is the only major pocket of natural Shola forest left in the immediate vicinity of Kotagiri in the Nilgris. Shola mountains, peculiar to the higher

46. The Hindu, 24th June 2012
47. The Hindu, 14th May 2013.
ranges of the Western Ghats, are evergreen tropical rain forests which have evolved for perhaps millions of years, their irreplaceable contribution to the environment is now recognized and hence there is a need to preserve them. Longwood Shola is a relatively small forest which covers only an area of 116 hectares, (including several hills to the east of the main portion) is of great importance to the Kotagiri region. Apart from its major water resource to nearby villages and hamlets, it plays a vital role in Kotagiri’s microclimate, attracting and regulating rainfall.49

The most visible contribution of the Longwood Shola to the area is water. The main villages directly benefited are Kerbetta, Kerbetta Hosatti, Aravenu and Jackanarai and several surrounding hamlets. Water is, however, not the only benefit derived from Longwood Shola. Sholes are known to attract the rain by sending a considerable amount of transpiration back into the air through their dense foliage, this transpiration acts as a catalyst for the rain clouds. Shoals hold a store of medical plants also. Longwood Sholas influence on Kotagiri’s famous microclimate is therefore, undeniable.

**Preservation of Longwood Shola:**

Despite its importance, Longwood Shola has suffered much over the last thirty years. A number of villages and settlements, both big and small, are located all around it and have expanded considerably, subjecting it to intense population pressure, despite the chainlink fence erected in 1987. To help in its preservation, in May 1998, the Tamil Nadu Forest Department constituted an eight-member Longwood Shola Watchdog Committee consisting of concerned citizens of Kotagiri. In collaboration with the Forest Department, this Committee is keeping watch on the Shola’s ground situation, conducts awareness camps and meetings in nearby villages to convey the importance of this forest, and brings schoolchildren into the forest. It will also study, and suggest ways to provide the poorer among the villagers with alternative fuel. On 15 November 1998, an Eco-Awareness Centre was opened in the community hall built by the Forest Department (Longwood

Shola’s Kerbetta entrance) with a permanent photography exhibition on Longwood Shola, audiovisual equipment, and educational material on Shola forests. The Longwood Shola Watchdog Committee is making use of this centre to conduct awareness camps, as well as training workshops for both teachers and schoolchildren. (On January 8, 1999, one such workshop gathered forty headmasters and headmistresses from all over the Nilgiris.) If awareness continues to spread in this promising manner, and if villagers’ fuel needs can be taken care of, we may hope that the trend will be reserved and this beautiful Shola will yet recover its full glory.  

Mukurthi National Park (MNP):

Mukurthi National Park is a 78.46km² protected area located in the south-eastern corner of the Nilgiris Plateau west of Ootacamund hill station. It has an elongated crescent shape facing to the west between 11°10’ to 11°22’N and 76°26’ to 76°34’E. It is bordered on the west by Nilambur South Forest Division in Kerala to the northwest by Gundalur Forest Division, to the northeast, east and southeast by South Forest Division and to the south by Mannar Ghat Forest Division, Kerala. At its southwest tip, the peaks of this park straddle the northeast corner of Silent Valley National Park of Kerala. On the Nilgiri Plateau, the Kundah range of the Nilgiri hills is a ridge on the south-western side of Mukurthi National Park bordering Kerala.

This park was created to protect its keystore species, the Nilgiri Tahr. It is a part of Nilgiri Biosphere Reserve. The park is characterized by Montane grasslands and shrub lands interspersed with sholas in a high altitude area of high rainfall, sub-freezing temperature and high winds. It is a home to an array of endangered wildlife, including Royal Bengal tiger and Asian elephant. The park was previously known as Nilgiri Tahr National Park.  

50. Ibid., p.8.
Mudumalai Tiger Reserve (MTR):

Mudumalai Wildlife Sanctuary and National Park, also declared as Mudumalai Tiger Reserve (MTR) is situated at the tri-junction of Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Kerala States. It is contiguous with Wynaad Wildlife Sanctuary on the west, Bandipur Tiger Reserve on the north. The MTR also forms a part of the Nilgiri Biosphere Reserve. The three sanctuaries together form one of the largest forest areas affording protection to wildlife in the country.

MTR lies between 11°32' and 11°42'N latitude and 76°22' and 76°45'E longitude in Tamil Nadu. It is located on 1000m high plateau at the base of the Nilgiris hills in an extensive belt of forest. Mudumalai is on the North Eastern slopes of the Nilgiri Range of Western Ghats descending to the Mysore plateau. The name Mudumalai means ‘the ancient hill range’, it is as old as 65 million years when Western Ghats was formed. It is the place for rich ecological diversity of various flora and fauna. It is very famous for its high density of tiger population. In recognition of this phenomenal bio-diversity, as early as 1940, it was declared as “Sanctuary” and it is one of the first to be declared in the then Madras Presidency. Initially, the area set apart for the sanctuary was 62sq.km. This was gradually extended to cover an area of 321sq.km and it became a national park in 1990.52 In 2007, it was declared as Tiger Reserve under section 38V of the Wildlife Protection Act of 1972, in an effort to conserve the country’s dwindling Tiger population. It was reorganized in 2012.53

The MTR is a combination of valleys, nallahs, undulating parkland, open grassland, swamps and occasionally barren and some fully clothed hills. The overall picture is one of a smooth, rolling hill forest.

The most striking physical feature in the region is the Moyar Canyon (which was called the ‘Mysore Ditch’ before malaria was eradicated from the area). It is deep 20km

---

52 Mudumalai Wildlife Sanctuary and National Park-The Nilgiris, Tamil Nadu Forest Department, 2003.

120
long gorge dug out by the Moyar river which plunges into the gorge below Theppakadu in a roaring waterfall. Mudumalai is a remarkably well-watered sanctuary. Besides the Moyar and Segur rivers, their tributaries which generally go by the name nallahs, probe deep into the remotest parts of the reserve and keep most parts of it watered and drained. Mudumalai enjoys a moderate climate without extreme heat and cold. The attractions in Mudumalai include the Chief Minister’s Watch Tower, View point at Kargudi, Ombetta Swamp, tribal temples in Manradiator Avenue, Moyar river, Kallatty falls, Pykara Lake, Museum near the elephant feeding camp, elephant safari and van safari conducted by the Tamil Nadu Forest Department from Theppakadu.

One of the main attractions of the Mudumalai is the elephant camp which is located on a bend in the Moyar river amongst, picturesque surroundings at Theppakadu. This camp serves as a base camp for the rest of the camps scattered in the jungle around. Besides, it includes working elephants, calves, expectant nursing mothers and old elephants.

The Theppakadu Elephant camp was established in 1972 in Mudumalai range. The Forest Department took up elephant capturing by the conventional pit method from 1889 mainly to build up the work force of elephants needed for timber extraction. Elephant capturing continued till 1953. The captive elephants are no longer used for timber extraction work since these areas are managed, exclusively as protected areas. At present all the captive elephants are stationed at Theppakadu. Further, the elephants are engaged mainly for eco-tourism, patrolling for anti-poaching operations and to control man-elephant conflict outside the reserve or other areas (Kumki work).

The elephant camp at Theppakadu serves, an important educational purpose where over a lakh visitors every year, see the management and feeding of pachyderms and thereby increasing public awareness about the species. This also serves as an important centre for Research and Training for capture elephant management. Theppakadu elephant camp is located nearer to Theppakadu Reception centre. Visitors are allowed to this camp in the evening during elephant feeding to witness the feeding process. The elephants are used for joy riding of tourists early morning and evening on charges.
The local tribal people are used as elephant handlers because of their expertise in the jungles and long traditional association with capture and training of elephants. They are the backbone of capturing, training and handling of elephants in the Forest Department. The Kurumbas in Mudumalai, the Malasars, the Pullayars and Kadar of Anamalai are some of the tribals who have traditional knowledge in the art of capturing, training and handling elephants.\(^{54}\)

One of the unique protection mechanisms in the MTR is Anti-poaching operations by involving local tribals. 18 anti-poaching camps have been established in the sensitive locations of the MTR and manned by 4-8 anti-poaching watchers and uniformed subordinates. Considering the importance and involvement of local tribes in Anti-poaching operations, they are encouraged by providing special, training on Capacity Building Camp.\(^{55}\)

**Nilgiris Mountain Railway (NMR):**

It is a World Heritage Site. It is one of the most picturesque train rides of India, which goes through several tunnels, over waterfalls, edge of cliffs, tea estates etc.\(^{56}\)

Referring to the most refreshing nature of the journey on Nilgiri Mountain Railway, J.S.C Eagan concludes ‘Curiously enough, on the return down the line, the scenery awakens fresh interest, as if it had never before been encountered. But up or down. The panorama unfolded by nature is one of that will ever remain a lasting impression of beauty to those who have seen it…’

To many it symbolizes many things—to the people of Blue Mountains, it is a lifeline symbol of prestige to the lakhs of tourists from India and abroad who come around the year, it inspires awe, amusement and is a source of immense satisfaction. It has played a key role in transporting practically the entire government machinery, when

\(^{54}\) *Mudumalai Wildlife Sanctuary and National Park*, op.cit.,

\(^{55}\) *News Letter*, op.cit.,p.2.

\(^{56}\) Tamil Nadu Tourism, *Enchanting Tamil Nadu*, Chennai.
Ooty was the summer capital of the then Madras Government during the pre-independence days.

The NMR must be accorded high priority to its maintenance for the tourists to enjoy the sceneries. The frequent technical problems must be solved. The Railway ministry should explore the possibility of forming a corporation to exclusively maintain railway as it is the sole reason for a large number of tourists both India and abroad for visiting the Nilgiris. As it is the only rail line to crown this hill district, one cannot imagine the Nilgiris sans NMR and no visitor to this hill station can consider his trip complete without a ride in the mountain train. 57

Realizing that tourism sector is vital for the growth and development of Nilgiris district, Rs. 10,757/- crores is released by the government for the development of tourist places like Government Botanical Garden, Government Rose Garden, Udhagai Boat House, Pykara Boat House, Doddabetta View Tower, Sims Park etc. 58 The tourism minister of Tamil Nadu M. Buddhi Chandran has promised to give top priority to the Nilgiris as far as tourism is concerned and to focus on the preservation of ecology. Starting that the Nilgiris is an ecologically sensitive area with unmatched bio-diversity, the government would surely emphasize on promotion of tourism in Tamil Nadu, possible scenic spots in the hill district to be identified and developed as tourist spots. He also said about the proposal to chart out cable car service in Ooty without disturbing the forest area and wildlife. 59

Ooty attracts between 22-25 lakhs tourists every year. To promote responsible tourism, tourist watch and ward force is set up to prevent exploitation and fleeing of tourists. 60 Flowers, roses, fruits, vegetables and even spices are on show in the Nilgiris district during the month of May for the Annual Summer Festival. 61 Tea and tourism festival is being organized every year jointly by the Department of Tourism, Government

57. Forest History of the Nilgiris, op.cit., p.186.
59. The Times of India, 19th May 2011.
60. The Hindu, 4th January 2011.
61. The Times of India, 2nd May 2011.
of Tamil Nadu, District Administration and the Tea Estates Factories of Nilgiris District in order to boost tourism arrival in the future.\textsuperscript{62} The Nilgiris has launched anti-plastic campaign for which it has been popular in various parts of the country and abroad. This campaign has been intensified with the help of various agencies in the government, local bodies, non-governmental organizations and volunteers.\textsuperscript{63}

This ecologically fragile district which is unique in many ways because it is the chief watershed of South India. Many perennial rivers originated here. Unplanned promotion of tourism would lead to environmental degradation in Udhagamandalam, Coonoor and Kotagiri, if continued; it would not augur well for the future of tourism. There should be balanced promotion of tourism. The natural resources and the beauty of the district should be preserved at any cost and awareness programmes are the need of the hour.

\textsuperscript{62} News Letter, Tamil Nadu Tourism Development Corporation, Chennai, November 2010, p.2.
\textsuperscript{63} The Hindu, 25\textsuperscript{th} February 2011.