CHAPTER-1
GENERAL INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

Tourism has been identified as one of the world’s largest smokeless industries and it is one of the fastest growing industries today. The significance of tourism has been well recognised in both the developed and developing countries. In recent times it has ushered into a new area of expansion and importance and has emerged as an economic activity of immense global importance.

Tourism has found a niche for itself as an effective instrument for generating employment, earning revenue (for the state) and foreign exchange (for the country), enhancing environmental preservation, rejuvenation of the culture and tradition and thereby facilitating overall development. The relevance of tourism has reached new heights and has steadfast place all around the globe. It has acquired immense social, cultural and economic significance in modern society.

Humans have travelled far and wide since the beginning of time. Food, water, safety and or acquisition of resources were the initial travel motivations. Travel for pleasure or exploration soon emerged. But the area covered under travel has always depended upon the mode of technology. The earliest travellers walked or rode on domesticated animals. The invention of the wheel and the sail provided new modes of transportation. Each improvement in technology increased individual’s opportunity to travel. As roads were improved and governments stabilised, interest in travel increased for education, sightseeing and religious purposes.

Man’s thirst for travelling remained growing from time immemorial. Touring or travelling opened up a person’s horizon and complements his personality. Travelling also helped to differentiate between harmonies and encouraged contacts between various cultures and countries. While travelling, a traveller’s mind must move and react, race and pause and move on again. Travelling helps not only to reflect on the life and times of the world, it also helps to mix East with West, culture with culture, and people with people.
The first 50 years of the 20th century made tourism, a major worldwide industry. The faster rate of expansion of international tourism is the result of increasing leisure, the emergence of the middle class in Europe, innovation of the Motor Car in Europe and USA, higher standards of living, technological advancement in rail transport together with construction of network of Highways and communication, emergence of the new patterns in world tourist flows as a result of psychological, sociological and economic factors related to purchasing power and efforts by various countries put into the marketing of tourism products.

Organised Tourism is a major phenomenon of modern world and is one of the world’s highest priority industries and employment provider. To acquire the present status of an industry, tourism has to wait for a long time. It was only in the early 20th century that tourism became a white-collar, environment-friendly money minting industry. Today, as already mentioned, it has become one of the largest and fastest growing industries employing a sizeable chunk of labour force. With rapid advancement in science and technology, tourism has acquired the status of an industry in all industrialised countries. The high influx of foreign tourist traffic has accelerated the demand for certain eco production and distribution activities. Tourism has emerged as an industry next to Information Technology industry in the service sector. Domestic tourism plays a vital role in achieving the national objectives of promoting social and cultural cohesion and national integration.

The word tourism is related to ‘Tour’, which is taken from a Latin word “tornus” which means a tool for describing a circle or turner’s wheel. Only from this word the notion of ‘round tour’ or ‘package tour’ developed which is the very much essence of tourism. The concept of tourism was first formulated in the period between the two world wars. World tourism is an US $350 billion business. Tourism industry contributes 10.9% to the world’s gross national product.

### 1.2 The Concept of Tourism

The concept of tourism as a phenomenon involves the movement of people within their own country or across the national borders. Tourism involves basically three elements (Wahab1975) namely man (human element as the creator of the act of tourism), space (the physical element to be necessarily covered by the
act itself), and time (the temporal element which is compared by the trip itself and the stay at the destination). Conceptually, tourism is defined as the sum of phenomenon and relationships arising from the travel and stay of nonresidents in so far as they don’t lead to permanent residence and are not connected with an earning activity (Burkart and Medlik, 1984).

1.2.1 Definition of Tourism

Mathieson and Wall created a good working definition of tourism as “the temporary movement of people to destinations outside their normal places of work and residence, the activities undertaken during their stay in these destinations and the facilities created to cater to their need”. According to Macintosh and Goeldner tourism is the “sum of the phenomena and relationships arising from the interaction of tourists, business suppliers, host governments and host communities in the process of attracting and hosting these tourists and other visitors”. Tourism has to be regarded as an industry although, strictly in accordance with the classical definition of the term, which contributes to economic and social development and activities of many productive sectors.

1.2.2 Characteristics of Tourism

- Movement of people and their stay at various destinations.
- Gives rise to activities at the destinations.
- Developing social and physical infrastructure and amenities to facilitate visitors.
- Gives rise to recreational and other cultural events to attract tourists.
- Developing pleasure activities and professional service providers.
- Gives rise to various service demands which are provided by commercial sense of tourist industry.

Tourism is a collection of activities, services and industries that delivers a travel experience, including transportation and accommodations, eating and drinking establishments, entertainment facilities and other hospitality services provided for individuals or groups travelling away from home.
1.3 Facets of Tourism

- **Agri Tourism**
  
  Agri tourism is a style of vacation in which hospitality is offered on farms. This may include the opportunity to assist with farming tasks during the visit.

- **Adventure Tourism**
  
  Adventure tourism is a type of niche tourism involving exploration or travel to remote areas, where the traveller should expect the unexpected.

- **Cultural Tourism**
  
  Cultural tourism is the subset of tourism concerned with a country’s or region’s culture, especially its arts.

- **Medical Tourism**
  
  Medical tourism is the act of travelling to other countries to obtain medical, dental, and surgical care.

- **Space Tourism**
  
  Space tourism is a recent phenomenon of space travel by individuals for the purpose of personal pleasure.

- **Rural Tourism**
  
  Rural tourism includes a range of activities, services and amenities provided by the rural people to attract tourist to their area in order to generate extra income.

- **Sports Tourism**
  
  It is a form of tourism in which sports activities are conducted in association with tourism activities. Kerala Sports Council promotes this.

- **Pilgrim Tourism**
  
  This is a form of tourism, which is associated with temple, church and religious festivals.
- **Beach Tourism**
  It is conducted in association with beach and sea.

- **Backwater Tourism**
  In Kerala, there is ample scope for backwater tourism. Cruising along the backwaters of Kerala is an ideal way to discover the real Kerala.

- **Monsoon Tourism**
  Monsoon the season of rainbows and raindrops is certainly not to be wasted indoors. The very special season of the year, monsoon brings everything fresh. Traditionally this period is considered as off-season. But today there are so many packages associated with promoting tourism in the monsoon period.

- **Disaster Tourism**
  Disaster tourism is the act of travelling to a disaster area, not to help, but to look with interest upon the devastation. Disaster tourism can become a nuisance if it hinders rescue, relief, and recovery operations.

- **Drug Tourism**
  Drug tourism is the travelling for the purpose of obtaining or using drugs for personal use that are unavailable or illegal in one’s home jurisdiction.

- **Garden Tourism**
  Garden tourism is a type of niche tourism involving visits or travel to botanical gardens and places, which are significant in the history of gardening.

- **Literary Tourism**
  Literary tourism is a type of cultural tourism that deals with places and events from fictional texts as well as the lives of the authors.

- **Experiential Tourism**
  This is an ideal derivative of ecotourism for its seemingly endless benefits to all concerned. It is, in its simplest form, any type of tourism that allows
the tourist either individually or in a group as a unique opportunity to experience true life in the host destination in its myriad forms.

### 1.4 Eco-Tourism - A Profile

Worship of nature and conservation of ethics have been an inseparable part of Indian ethos and traditions. The Indian tradition has always taught that human kind is a part of nature and one should look upon all creations with the eyes of love and respect. As the new millennium is unfolded, we are becoming increasingly aware of the finite, interconnected and precious nature of our planet home. Likewise, tourism is becoming an increasingly popular expression of this awareness. With advances in transportation and information technology, more and more remote areas of the earth are coming within the reach of the traveller. Today, tourism is ubiquitous in the sanctuaries and national parks and this is becoming the principal means by which people are able to experience and interact with nature. In response to this increasing appreciation of nature experiences, a new travel ethic has arisen, which is now called ecotourism. This term has become increasingly popular in both conservation and travel circles.

The origin of ecotourism lies in nature and outdoor tourism. Environment aesthetics is the most significant pull factor innate in any ecotourism destination. Ecotourism is a form of tourism that is inspired primarily by the natural history and the environment of an area. Ecotourism projects are less capital intensive. Ecotourism has recently come to be regarded as the panacea that enables us to aggressively seek tourism dollars with no obvious damage to eco systems, since wild resources are not being harvested and there is no apparent associated development. As a concept, ecotourism has gained momentum recently in India, but as a way of life Indians have practiced ecotourism since times immemorial by their traditional approach to nature and rich cultural heritage.

Ecotourism can be distinguished from nature tourism by its emphasis on conservation, education, traveller responsibility and active community participation. Nature tourism, low impact tourism, green tourism, bio-tourism, ecologically responsible tourism and others have been used in literature and marketing, although they are not necessary synonymous with ecotourism. In some
foreign countries ecotourism is also termed as green tourism. Another name of ecotourism is ecological tourism.

Ecotourism is a new concept in tourism industry. Within the ambit of international tourism, ecotourism is a fast growing segment. Ecotourism emerged on the basis of demand which grew as a revolt against ill effects of urbanisation. Ecotourism projects the concept of sustainability in tourism. Ecotourism can become an important factor in expansion of the level of tourism. Although returns from ecotourism are higher than in agriculture in many cases, tourism should not be used as an excuse for further encroaching on protected areas.

1.5 Tourism and Environmental Destruction

Sustainable tourism is led by motives like spirit of enquiry, love of beauty, search for knowledge and respect for nature. It aims at quality tourism, which creates minimal damage to the natural, social and cultural fabric. If a proper sewage disposal system has not been installed for hotels, or other tourist boarding points there may be pollution of ground water from the sewage.

Due to excessive use of internal combustion vehicle such as cars and buses used by and for tourists in a particular area creates air pollution. Noise generated by the concentration of tourists, tourist vehicles and sometimes by certain types of tourist attraction such as an amusement park may reach an uncomfortable and irritating level for residents of the area.

The principle of product life cycle can be applied to tourism industry. Unless specific steps are taken, tourist destination areas and resources will inevitably become over-used, unattractive and eventually experience declining use. Environment aesthetics is the most significant pull factor innate in ecotourism destination.

1.6 Defining Eco-Tourism

While a universally accepted definition of ecotourism remains elusive, it is important to appreciate that ecotourism attempts to address concerns and interests around environmental, economic and social impacts of conventional mass tourism. It was Hector Ceballos Las Curain, a Mexican Environmentalist who coined the term Ecotourism in 1983. The term was initially used to describe
nature-based travel to relatively undistributed areas with an emphasis on education. The concept was, however developed into a scientific approach to the planning, management and development of sustainable tourism products and activities. It has grown considerably in popularity and commercial significance in just past 10 years in response to interest in environment, increase in leisure time and personal incomes. Ecotourism is now at various stages of development in different regions.

Ecotourism is often referred to as ‘green’, ‘conservative’ and ‘sustainable’. Any tourism programme that is

A) Nature based
B) Ecologically sustainable
C) Where education and interpretation are a major component and
D) Where local people are beneficial can be called Ecotourism.

If it does not satisfy any one of the above mentioned components, then it cannot be called a real ecotourism venture. It is nature-based because ecotourism contributes to the conservation of natural areas by providing protection to the forests. Ecotourism activities are made ecologically sustainable through waste management using non-polluting techniques and using locally available materials for construction, introducing environmental impact assessment based on sustainability parameters. Education and interpretation are major components of ecotourism activities. If local youth is given training in these areas it will be of immense beneficial to the local people in providing both direct and indirect employment and preserving the pristine purity of the nature.

Scientists and academics have defined ecotourism in different words. As mentioned earlier, Ceballos-Lascurian who was the first person to define ecotourism as that involves travelling to relatively undisturbed or uncontaminated areas with the specific objective of studying, admiring and enjoying the scenery and its wild plants and animals, as well as any existing cultural manifestations (both past and present) found in these areas. The Green Globe 21 International Ecotourism Standard has adopted definition of ecotourism as: “Ecologically sustainable tourism with a primary focus on experiencing natural areas that fosters
environmental and cultural understanding, appreciation and conservation”. Martha Honey in her book ‘Ecotourism and Sustainable Development’ has defined “Ecotourism as travel to fragile, pristine, and usually protected areas that strive to be low impact and small scale.” It helps to educate the traveller, provides funds for conservation, directly benefits the economic development and political empowerment of local communities, and fosters respect for different cultures and for human rights. Fennell defined ecotourism as a sustainable form of natural resources-based on tourism that focuses primarily on experiencing and learning about nature and which is ethically managed to be low-impact, non-consumptive and locally oriented. It typically occurs in natural areas and should contribute to the conservation or preservation of such areas.

Fennell identified 13 main variables in his definition. The variables are ranked by frequency of response: -

- Interest in nature
- Contributes to conservation
- Reliance on parks and protected area
- Benefits local people/long-term benefits
- Education and study
- Low impact/non-consumptive
- Ethics-responsibility
- Management
- Sustainable
- Enjoyment and appreciation
- Culture
- Adventure
- Small scale

The Nature Conservation has joined the World Conservation Union, i.e. (IUCN) in adopting the following definition of ecotourism “environmentally responsible travel to natural areas in order to enjoy and appreciate nature (and
accompanying cultural features both past and present) that promote conservation, have a low visitor impact and provide for beneficially active socio-economic involvement of local people”. The International Ecotourism Society (TIES) defines ecotourism as, “responsible travel to natural areas that conserves the environment and improves the well being of people”. This means that those who implement and participate in ecotourism activities should follow some principles like minimise impact, build environmental and cultural awareness and respect, provide financial benefit to local people and support international human rights and labour agreements. Laarman and Durst defined ecotourism as “tourism, which combines the elements of education, recreation and adventure with the aim of the protection of nature”. In short ecotourism is nature-based tourism that involves education and interpretation of the natural environment and is managed to be ecologically sustainable.

According to Shackley, ecotourism is a term invented by conservationists in the 1970s, whilst according to Fennell, the term can be traced back as far as 1965 to the work of Hetzer, who used it to explain the interaction between tourists and the environments that they come into contact with. However, like the concept of alternative tourism, there is no consensus about the meaning of ecotourism (Good Win1996).

According to the Worldwide Fund for Nature-India, ecotourism is an alternative tourism and it respects social and cultural traditions. It is decentralised in nature and seeks to integrate rural development. Ecotourism would ideally generate revenue for conservation of natural and cultural wealth and afford cultural exchange among rural and urban population.

1.6.1 Aim of Eco -Tourism

The aim of ecotourism involves anything from: -

- Volunteering
- Personal growth
- Learning new ways to live on ecologically efficient life without wasting natural resources
Usually ecotourism or ecological tourism involves travelling to places where flora, fauna and cultural heritage are the primary attractions. The revenue generated through eco-travel can be channeled into the development of infrastructural services like transport, communication facilities, management of protected area etc. It generates employment to local people directly from tourist sector or from various support sectors. The ecotourism focuses on pollution control, carrying capacity based tourism and tourist environmental policy.

1.6.2 Special Facts about Eco-Tourism

True ecotourism minimises the negative aspects of conventional tourism on the environment and enhances the cultural integrity of local people. That means while you are on an ecological vacation, you want to promote:-

- Recycling
- Energy efficiency
- Water conservation and
- Creation of economic opportunities for the local communities.

There are three specific segments of ecotourism. They are: (i) Nature Tourism-- based on the web of life or life forms, (ii) Adventure Tourism--dealing with sports activities in various natural environs, and (iii) Culture Tourism--dealing with aspects of social and cultural heritage. Ecotourism has provided a viable economic alternative to exploitation of the environment. Ecotourism is entirely a new approach in tourism. Four goals of ecotourism include protection of the environment, economic sustainability, cultural integrity and enhancement and education.

India, with its immense natural wealth and panoramic environs, is recognised as one of the earth’s biologically, wealthiest nations, offering an unparalleled ecological diversity to ecotourism. Some of the prominent ecotourism locations across India are Sunderbans (West Bengal), Sepahijala-Wildlife Sanctuary (Tripura), Tumthang (Sikkim), Plage Paradiso Sea-beach (Pondicherry), Lohtak Lake (Manipur), Kalpeni-a blend of aqua-marine sea, Coconut Groves and Coral Reefs (Lakshadweep), Gir National Park (Gujarat), Kazhiranga National Park (Assam), Thenmala (Kerala) and Chilka Lake (Orissa).
Among states in India, Sikkim and Kerala are the states that achieved a wide success in the ecotourism development. The first planned ecotourism destination in India was the Thenmala Ecotourism in Kerala. The potential ecotourism destinations in Kerala are Thenmala, Kuruva, Tirunelli, Pookot, Kumarakam, Vagamon, Thattakkadu, Bhoothathankettu, Thekkady, Munnar, Athirappally-Vazhachal Falls, Nelliampathy, Silent Valley, Nilambur, Perumvannamuzhy, Pythalmala and so on. Kerala has some of the forest hill stations like Munnar, 14 Wildlife Sanctuaries and two National Parks. Ecotourism can take several forms like to be in a beautiful natural forest or landscape, wild life safaris, to enjoy watching animals, birds and trees or corals and marine life, adventure travel, camping, whale watching and archeological digs that take place in marine, mountain, island and desert eco systems, mountain climbing, to engage in trekking, boating, river rafting, botanical study etc. These are some of the common forms of ecotourism. At the same time ecotourism activities occur not only in and around national parks and wildlife sanctuaries, but also even more significantly in forest areas and other natural areas, which have varied attractions and more relaxed legal restrictions.

1.7 Sustainable Development and Eco-Tourism

The concept of sustainable development has been placed on the global agenda since the 1992 Earth Summit at Rio. Any society setting itself the goal of sustainable development should develop economically and socially in such a way that it minimises those activities, the costs of which are borne by future generations. Deteriorating environment and loss of natural resources represent one of the main ways by which present generation is creating uncompensated future costs. Hence the conservation of natural resources and the environment is crucial to achieve sustainable development. The World Commission on Environment and Development defined sustainable development as the development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generation to meet their own needs. The exploitation of resources, direction of investment, the orientation of technological development and institutional changes must work in harmony and enhance both current and future potential to meet human needs and aspirations. The rationale of Brandt Land Commission Report is to raise the
standard of living of the least advantaged in society while at the same time avoiding uncompensated future costs.

Modern tourism heavily depends on outstanding natural features and unique cultural aspects. Sustainable tourism aims at the continuous maintenance of these along with its equitable distribution of socio-economic benefits to the local community. The Globe 90 Conference on Environment and Industry defined sustainable tourism as the management of tourism resources in such a way that it fulfills economic, social and aesthetic needs, while maintaining cultural integrity essential for ecological process, biological diversity and life support system. In this backdrop, ecotourism can be regarded as the best way to achieve sustainable tourism, for it looks into the protection of natural and cultural integrity and contributes to conservation while promoting tourism.

Ecotourism is led by motives like spirit of enquiry, search for knowledge and respect for nature. The three pillars of sustainable development—public welfare, economy and environment—have to be effectively built into ecotourism. It aims at quality tourism, which creates minimum damage to natural, social and cultural environment. Sustainable tourism is an extension of sustainable development. The long-term economic benefit from tourism can continue only if tourism becomes sustainable.

1.8 Criteria for Eco-Tourism

Ideally, ecotourism should satisfy several criteria, such as:

- Conservation of biological diversity and cultural diversity through ecosystem protection.
- Promotion of sustainable use of bio-diversity by providing jobs to local populations.
- Sharing of socio-economic benefits with local communities and indigenous people by having their informal consent and participation in the management of ecotourism enterprises.
- Tourism, which is based upon experiencing natural and cultural resources.
- Respect for land, nature, people and cultures are the philosophy behind the ecotourism.
- Tool for conservation, economic development and cultural revival.
- Marketing device for promoting tourism products with an environmental emphasis.
- Tourism to unspoiled natural resources, with minimal impact on the environment being a primary concern.
- Convenient umbrella name for a number of tourism related concepts such as ‘responsible or ethical travel’, ‘low-impact tourism’, ‘educational travel’, ‘green tourism’ and so on.
- Symbiotic and sustainable relationship between tourism and the environment.
- Minimisation of tourism’s own environmental impact.
- Affordability and lack of waste in the form of luxury.
- Local culture, flora and fauna being the main attractions.

1.9 Characteristics of Eco-Tourism

- It must promote positive environmental ethics-fostering preferred behavior in its participants.
- It does not degrade the resource. There is no consumptive erosion of the natural environment visited.
- It concentrates on intrinsic rather than extrinsic values.
- It is bio centric rather than homocentric in philosophy.
- It must benefit the wildlife and environment.
- It is a first hand experience with the natural environment.
- It has an expectation gratification’. Being able to water wildlife, help local to earn livelihood, could be gratifying.
- It has a high cognitive and effective experimental dimension.
1.10 Soft and Hard Eco-Tourism

Ecotourism activities can be classified as hard and soft. Hard ecotourism: - an ideal type of ecotourism which emphasises on intense, personal and prolonged encounter with nature. Soft ecotourism, on the other hand, is characterised by short term, frequently mediated interaction with nature that is often just one component of multipurpose tourism experience. Soft ecotourism takes place within a less natural setting (e.g.; park, interpretation centre, scenic lookout, signed hiking trail, wildlife park) and is usually accompanied by a high level of service and facility provision.

1.11 Guiding Principles of Eco-Tourism

- Avoids negative impacts that damage or destroy the integrity or character of the natural environment.
- Educate travellers about the importance of conservation.
- Direct revenues for conservation and management of natural and protected areas.
- Brings economic benefits to local communities and directs revenues to local people living adjacent to protected areas.
- Emphasises the need for planning and sustainable growth of the tourism industry and seek to ensure that tourism development does not exceed the social and environmental carrying capacity.
- Retains a major share of revenue in the host country by using locally owned facilities and services.

1.12 History of Eco-Tourism

The history of Ecotourism started in the 1950s. Before that, the concept is not widely recognised or misunderstood. In the history of ecotourism, ecotourism existed in a few different forms that primarily try to achieve the same thing that the current ecotourism does. Ecotourism was first introduced in Africa in the 1950s with the legalisation of hunting. This need for recreational hunting zones led to the
creation of protected areas, national parks and game reserves. Some experts suggest that there are two major components that contributed to the emergence of ecotourism. First, ecotourism is linked to the environmental movement of the 1970s and 1980s. Second, there was a great dissatisfaction with mass tourism due to over development, environmental pollution and the invasion of culturally incentive and economical disruptive foreigners. This combination of an increase in environmental awareness and the emerging dissatisfaction with mass tourism led to an increased demand for ecotourism. In the 1980s, the concept of ecotourism became much widely known and studied. Modern ecotourism began in the 1980s.

The term ecotourism first appeared in 1970s but became a buzzword in the early 90s in western countries. In practice it is used as an ‘eco-sell’ marketing tool. A more scientific explanation for ecotourism is ‘environmentally responsible travel to natural areas, in order to enjoy and appreciate nature, promote conservation, have a low visitor impact and provide for beneficially active socio-economic involvement of local people’. It can be distinguished from other forms of tourism by its emphasis on conservation, education, traveller responsibility and active community participation.

Development of green consumerism in the 1980s coincided with the development of a range of holiday types that inferred a greater level of awareness of the environment and is associated with mass tourism. Many terms have subsequently been used, often interchangeably to describe these new forms of tourism including ‘Alternative’, ‘Green’, ’Natures’, 'Sustainable’, ‘Responsible’ and ‘Ecotourism’. Green tourism is an early term essentially synonymous with ecotourism, but never very well defined.

Many in the general public, who have always taken a traditional recreation tourism vacation, will not be very familiar with the concept of ecotourism. Some would say that the concept is very older, beginning with the first traveller who forsook a pleasure trip for one that involved education and gathering of information. But in the past few years, the idea has gained significant momentum, until the term ‘ecotourism’ became more widely recognised and accepted. The complete story of ecotourism from its roots as an idea to its current status as a
viable industry, would take a volume. The interesting tale of environmentally and culturally sensitive travel covers several years and a great deal of trial and error along the way.

Many would not have projected the growth of this concept into a profitable industry. At first, the ‘movement’ involved a few entrepreneurs who saw a chance to make some money by organising events and trips for those who could pay. But these adventurous businessmen soon realised that travellers wanted something more. The tourists wanted to experience nature in its unspoiled state and they wanted to visit remote destinations that had not been on tour itineraries before. Some enterprising individuals bought land or leased property, then provided facilities they called eco-lodges, in which the accommodations were quite simple and kept the visitors close to nature. These were the humble beginnings of ecotourism. In the decade of the 1990s, the idea of profiting from ecotourism moved beyond individual entrepreneurs to community leaders and government officials on the regional and state level.

Ecotourism is often looked as a modern phenomenon, something that happened when environmentally aware people started getting enough money to travel to those places they had only read about. This is just not true. Ecotourism is as old as tourism itself. In fact, ecotourism history is embedded in the literature of western civilisation.

Another view about the history of ecotourism is that in some places, following the 1973 rise in oil prices and subsequent international debt crisis, the World Bank adopted a similar strategy of tourism development as a potential means of encouraging foreign investment and earning foreign exchange. In response to the economic and environmental difficulties; various institutions prompting tourism development has shifted to include sustainable measures, environmental protection as well as the need to include local communities in the planning and implementation process. Many environmentalists began to support conservation and tourism was viewed as a potential mechanism to ensure sustainability. It is here that we first witness the emergence of ecotourism as a distinct category that is, the combinations of economic and environmental
practices in order to promote conservation and development through small-scale locally owned tourism projects.

As we have already discussed tourism is currently the world’s largest industry and ecotourism represents the fastest growing sector of this market. Throughout the developing tropics, protected area managers and local communities are struggling to balance the need for economic growth with the preservation of natural resources. Ecotourism may offer one way of striking this critical balance. Over the years ecotourism has become more and more popular because people have begun to realise the importance of preserving the environment.

1.13 Eco-Tourism and United Nations

Ecotourism activities have expanded rapidly and further growth is expected in the years to come. Because of its global importance, the UN designated the year 2002 as the International Year of Ecotourism and its Commission on Sustainable Development requested international agencies, Governments and the private sector to undertake supportive activities. The World Ecotourism Summit was held in Quebec City, Canada from 19 to 22 May 2002. The World Tourism organisation and UN (United Nations) Environment Programme organised a pioneering forum in 2000, which was conducted solely online. The prime objective was to provide easy access for a wide range of stakeholders involved in ecotourism to exchange experiences and voice comments. It was focused on main themes like ecotourism policy and planning: the sustainability challenge, regulation of ecotourism: institutional responsibilities and frame work, product development, marketing and promotion of ecotourism and monitoring costs and benefits of ecotourism.

1.14 Eco-Tourism and Globalisation

The emerging worldwide competition due to liberalisation policies of the government, we are forced to improve the quality of our tourism industry equivalent to the international standard. Globalisation has become a driving force to many industries in today’s world. Globalisation has shown tremendous scope for tourism development. This has therefore allowed for many developing
countries to embrace the integration of culture, technology, politics and economics as a part of their strategy in attracting tourists to these countries. It is essential to understand that both tourism and globalisation feed off each other. Through globalisation, communication has become much more easily accessible between people. As a result of this, travelling from one country to another is increasing day by day; which in turn drives tourism as an industry. As a result of this, the negative impact of mass tourism also increases. The main challenge that the tourism industry faces is to sustain economic growth while ensuring the long-term protection as the social and natural environment. Ecotourism is a solution to this challenge. The important thing is that the globalisation channels significant information to every potential traveller on today’s environmental threats such as global warming and oil spills making more and more people look for alternative and sustainable travel solutions. Environment has become more pronounced with globalisation of the world economy. The important stages in the ecotourism development were taken place in the post-liberalisation period.

1.15 Eco-Tourism and Third World Countries

Ecotourism, which is one of the world’s biggest industries, is a global focal point. The result is that ecotourism that is increasingly introduced in third world countries in the form of a development package involving capital expertise technology and management systems is thus becoming something like a new green revolution. However, these recent trends in tourism development schemes-projected as sustainable, nature based, soft, green and ecotourism ventures has generated considerable public debate, potential serious implications on nature and society, particularly in southern countries. There are a lot of initiatives and thrust in the third world countries for the development of ecotourism as a possible potential/opportunity for poverty alleviation and income generation as component in environmental and bio diversity projects. It is sometimes deliberately directed towards the removal of all barriers to travel including physical, economic, social and legal barriers. Ecotourism has been a major source of revenue in the third world. Third world countries view tourism as a shortcut to rapid development. Ecotourism in third world countries and developing countries has been increasing annually by 5% as compared to 2.5% in developed countries. After all, it is in
these areas that relatively undisturbed and preserved natural environments and exotic areas are located.

1.16 Sustainable Eco-Tourism

Listed below are viewpoints that make ecotourism more sustainable.

- Be informative as possible
- Support integrity of place
- Ensure that the benefits flow to local residents
- Conserves resources
- Respect local culture and tradition
- Avoiding the abuse of the product
- Make quality, not quantity
- To give unforgettable experience
- Offer a romantic experience

1.17 The Dimensions of Eco-Tourism

- Environmental Dimension

  By definition, the descriptive component of ecotourism involves the natural environment as an attraction. Conversely, the prescriptive component involves the impact of visitation on the natural environment. Ecotourism can generate positive and negative environmental dimension.

- Experiential Dimension

  Most of the attention within ecotourism and within sustainable tourism generally has been on environmental sustainability. However, tourism should be sustainable in other dimensions, including the experiential dimension. If the visitor experience is sufficiently degraded there will be a reduction in visitation that jeopardizes sustainability. Despite the relative inattention paid to experiential impacts within the ecotourism literature, they have been a focus within the ecotourism; they have
been a focus within the recreation. For sometimes experiential impacts may be a greater limiting factor than environmental impacts.

**Socio-Cultural Dimension**

As with the natural environment, the socio-cultural environment serves as both an ecotourism attraction and a recipient of ecotourism impact. Many ecotourism activities involve relatively intense interaction between greatly different cultures, and these differences may exacerbate the negative socio-cultural impacts of ecotourism.

**Economic Dimension**

The final dimension is economic. There are various stakeholders in ecotourism, from operators to natural area managers to local communities. Like general tourism, the economic impact of ecotourism can be grouped into three categories-direct, indirect and induced economic impacts.

1.18 Importance of Eco-Tourism

The importance of ecotourism is increasing day by day. All the ecotourism projects form a major part of the whole sector. In the context of high unemployment, weakened agricultural and industrial sector, tourism is considered to be the best alternative for priority in the economic and social development. Among different types of tourism, ecotourism is the most relevant. Ecotourism development not only improves the state’s income, brings valuable foreign exchange and increases employment but also results in distribution of benefits across the state as opposed to most of the other states which tend to localise the economic and social benefits to a particular region. Ecotourism as a sustainable tourism should be beneficial to the future generations also.

The concept of ecotourism has got wide ranging acceptability cutting across the countries whether the state of environment and ecology are partly or wholly affected. In the era of globalisation, competition among the countries for the energy production by exploiting natural resources like water, coal, uranium etc has become a great concern as the raw materials are getting exhausted and at the same time the ecological surroundings are also unbalanced noticeably. This loss of
ecology and environment is irreparable. Thus, ecotourism has become extremely topical in government, industry, academic and even community circles in recent years. The declaration of the year of ecotourism in 2002 by World Tourism Organisation has provided impetus to the government and private entrepreneurs to initiate plan of action for ecotourism development both in the protected areas and other nature based areas with direct support and participation of local community.

The four fundamental pillars of ecotourism are:

- Minimum environmental impact
- Minimum impact on and maximum respect for host culture
- Maximum economic benefit to host country and
- Maximum recreational satisfaction to the participation tourist.

There is now a need to encourage tourism that contribute to the conservation of the ecology and environment, contributes to the local community and provides the tourist an opportunity to relax experience and participate in nature. Development of tourism and protection of environment are interrelated. Tourism is attracted by pleasing environment and environment will get a face-lift because of the tourist attraction. Tourism is bigger than steel, electronics and such type of industries. In India tourism is the third largest foreign exchange earner after garments, gems and jewellery. The foreign exchange earning from tourism especially from ecotourism is very high. The World Resources Institute estimated that nature tourism was growing between 10-30% a year. Today, it is likely that growth is even higher. The International Ecotourism society estimated that of all tourists in the recent years, between 60-80% were nature based.

Ecotourism is rapidly being developed in various parts of the world. In the developed world, ecotourism flourished specially in Australia, Canada and USA, but most of the developing countries like Cambodia, Laos and Vietnam witnessed considerable development in this regard, where as in countries like Nepal, Bhutan and India, ecotourism is viewed as an opportunity to add value to their traditional forms of tourism. Ecotourism is already the largest source of foreign exchange in countries like Costa Rica and Belize. Ecotourism is rapidly being developed in various parts of the world. Africa features extensive protected
areas hosting a variety of ecosystems and traditional cultures that are major attractions for nature-oriented tourism. The United States are probably one of the regions in the world where ecotourism is developing fastest. Although the term ‘ecotourism’ is less frequently used in Europe than in other continents, there is increasing recognition within Europe about the important and mutually supporting relationship between tourism, agriculture, viable rural communities and the conservation of nature.

Ecotourism recognises the full integration of tourist industry in order to ensure that travel and tourism provide a source of income for the people of the area, and that in return they contribute to the conservation, protection and restoration of the earth’s ecosystem. Ecotourism is also significant to throw some light on environmental and ecological aspects related to adventures like mountaineering and trekking. Generally speaking, ecotourism focuses on volunteering, personal growth and learning new ways to live on the planet, typically involving travel to destinations where flora, fauna and cultural heritage are the primary attractions.

The importance of ecotourism is evident from a recent study conducted by the World Tourism Organisation of global spending on ecotourism was increasing by 20% a year about six times the average rate of growth for the tourism industry. Research findings indicate that an increase in the demand for and participation in outdoor activities in general, specifically ecotourism.

Many conservation and resource management professionals increasingly have viewed natural area visitation as an avenue for enhancing natural area finance and providing conservation related benefits, particularly to residents living near natural areas. Many observers believe that the growth rate for ecotourism will be higher than for tourism generally. Thus assuming an increase in the proportion of tourism represented by ecotourism from 7% to 10% and the WTO forecast of 229 million international arrivals by 2015.

The development and increasing popularity of ecotourism is a clear outgrowth of escalating concern for conservation of the world’s natural resources and biodiversity. Global importance of environmental problems also increases the relevance of ecotourism. Ecotourism helps local people because they benefit
economically as much for more by preserving habitats and wild life for continuing use by eco travelers than they could by “harvesting” the habitats for short term gain.

Ecotourism can reduce pollution considerably. Ecotourism provides for the impetus of awareness that educates the public on the importance of environmental issues. Supporting the ecotourism movement is not just a leisure activity; it is a vital part of the safety of our society and the natural world.

India has potential for ecotourism development. India has bio-diversity, various plants, flora and fauna, mountains, wild animals and rich forests. The government of India supports ecotourism programmes and projects. In Kerala, ecotourism sector attracts huge investment. There is wide scope for ecotourism in Kerala. The Western Ghats regions of Kerala can be projected as an ecotourism zone. The recorded forest area is 11,125.59 sq.km. Kerala has 12 wildlife sanctuaries and two national parks.

1.19 Advantages of Eco-Tourism

The main goal of ecotourism is to attract the immense tourism market to the natural areas of the country. Profits that may originate from this programme are used for sustainable economic development and to found local conservation projects for the preservation of the environment. During the period between 1990 and 2002, international tourist arrivals globally grow by 54% and now stand at around 700 million. By 2020 it is expected that this figure will have more than double. Global receipts from international tourism amounted to $475 billion in 2024. Compared to other forms of tourism; ecotourism reduces the extent of conflict between expansion in tourism and loss of other economic values assigned to nature conservation.

The main advantages of ecotourism are below: -

➢ Economic Advantages

The main economic advantages of ecotourism are: -

• Provide direct and indirect employment opportunities.
• Development of related economic sector.
• Increased local land values.

• It provides an excellent source of foreign exchange.

• Provide employment opportunities to both skilled and semi-skilled people.

• Ecotourism activities improve the income level of weaker sections.

• The tenth plan outlay for development of new ecotourism destinations wildlife sanctuaries and to promote plantations and farm based activities.

• Increase in income and standard of living.

• Autonomous and regional development.

• It contributes to an important portion of national income.

• It can also promote business partnership between the private sectors.

• It is an industry without chimneys that is; it can promote economic growth without damaging the environment.

• Ecotourism supports the international labour agreements.

• Ecotourism promotes the overall economic development.

➤ Environmental Advantages

The major advantages of ecotourism in terms of environment are: -

• It safeguards natural environment, the very basis of tourist attraction.

• Ecotourism provides solution for tourism related environmental problems.

• It maintains biological diversity.

• Ecotourism provides protection to natural resources.

• Ecotourism ensures environmental sustainability.

• It preserves the wildlife and species.

• It promotes nature travel.

• Ecotourism and its associated activities is a better form of land use than most agricultural pursuits.

• Ecotourism enhances ecological balance.
• It improves resource management practices.
• Increased multi-stake hold to conserve at landscape level.

➢ **Social Advantages**

The important social advantages of ecotourism are:

• Improved local infrastructure-communication/transport.
• Increased social capital building, local organisational and managerial capacity.
• During the past ten years, there were drastic changes in the provision of accommodation facilities as a result of ecotourism development.
• It provides positive attitude and experience among the travellers.
• Ecotourism is a peace industry because it promotes respects for other culture.
• It promotes the welfare of the people.
• It satisfies the visitors in all aspects.
• Increased media exposure to natural areas around the world.
• Ecotourism helps in the manpower development.
• Improvement in the quality of living.
• Ecotourism provides and maintains the quality of tourist experience and satisfaction.
• Local people get more benefits from ecotourism.
• Ecotourism improves the income level of weaker sections.
• Ecotourism respects our social and cultural traditions.
• It plays an important role in the rural development.
• Ecotourism provides environmental education to the students.
• It helps in the regional development.
• It has positive influence on arts and crafts.
Ecotourism at the regional and global level has grown faster than tourism generally, and this probably will continue over the next several years. Many observers believe that the growth rate for ecotourism will be higher than for tourism generally. By mid 1990s, ecotourism as a concept began to enter a period of maturity. The explosion of interest in ecotourism led to the emergence of a lively debate among academic and industry leaders about the merits of the ecotourism. This led to the formation of National Ecotourism Association.

1.20 Organisation of the Thesis

1.20.1 Statement of the Problem

The Government of Kerala views ecotourism as one of the alternatives to develop the economy, especially in the context of limited prospects of the manufacturing sector, problems in the agricultural and traditional sectors and uncertainties facing expatriate employment in the Gulf. According to 10th five year plan document, ecotourism has emerged as the vital sector for generating employment and income. It is no longer possible to ignore the vital role that ecotourism is destined to play in the economy of Kerala. We need a careful management to get maximum benefits and minimum negative impacts. In this developmental stage of ecotourism, a study on this field is pertinent.

In Kerala, local people are not given enough roles in the planning process and implementation of ecotourism projects. The global economic slowdown has affected Kerala and India. It is surely having a slowing effect on tourism industry especially ecotourism. Other Problems are lack of cooperation between various departments, problems relating to measure the ecological and environmental impact, deforestation, water pollution, air pollution, unhygienic conditions, loss of native cultural elements, low infrastructure growth in some areas, poor travel facilities, lack of proper planning, some climatic problems, inadequate private investment, problems in the government actions and so on. All the ecotourism projects are not sustainable. Some of these ecotourism projects are in developing stage. The Government policies with regard to ecotourism are inadequate.

Idukki is one of the main districts in Kerala. The district has abundance of wild attractions. There is wide scope for ecotourism in Idukki. Forest Department
has listed 56 destinations as ecotourism centres. Among these, 15 come in Idukki. Munnar, Thekkady, Vagamon, Peerumade, Kuttikanam, Periyar Tiger Reserve, Idukki Wildlife Sanctuary, Eravikkulam National Park, Chinnar Wildlife Sanctuary etc. are the main tourist centers in Idukki. All of these are based on sound ecotourism principles. At the same time the importance, performance and problems of ecotourism development in Kerala can be explained and understood through the overall study of the ecotourism projects in Idukki district. This study intends to focus on a destination-wise analysis. Specific micro level strategies at the grass root level could be considered for policy recommendations at the national level. A complete study of ecotourism destinations in the Idukki district provides a picture about the trend of ecotourism in Kerala.

1.20.2 Objectives of the Study

Baring on the above problems, the study bases itself on the following objectives.

1.20.2.1 Main Objective:

The major objective of the study is to make an evaluation of ecotourism destinations in Kerala with special reference to Idukki district.

1.20.2.2 Specific Objectives:

- To assess the role of ecotourism in the development of tourism in Idukki district.
- To examine various ecotourism sites in Idukki district.
- To understand the problems, performance, growth and economic significance of ecotourism sector based on the study of various ecotourism projects in Idukki district.
- To analyse trends in the field of ecotourism in Idukki district.

1.20.3 Period of Study

This study covers a period of 10 years from 2000 to 2010.
1.20.4 Hypotheses

- There is a positive co-relation between ecotourism development and the overall economic development of local people in Idukki district.

- The age, occupation, income and education wise status of the tourists are co related with the level of satisfaction they derive from ecotourism.

- The tourists coming from urban areas have a higher preference for ecotourism project than the rural counterparts.

1.20.5 Sources of Data and Methodology

Both primary and secondary data are used for the study. Primary data were collected from the beneficiaries of ecotourism projects, local people and the officials of the various departments connected with ecotourism projects in Idukki using a structured questionnaire. The data were supplemented by interviews, discussions and observation. The interviews helped to gather deeper and more detailed information than impersonal survey method. Information was collected from the following categories namely: -

- Tourists (domestic and international)

- Local people

- Officials (ITDC, KTDC, DTPC, other related departments and local bodies)

- Hoteliers and tour operators

- Home stay operators

- Tourist guides
Total sample size is 400 based on simple random sampling method. Since the total number of tourists visiting Idukki district is very large, a sample of 250 tourists were taken for analysis. Tourists visiting Munnar, Thekkady, Vagamon, Eravikulam National Park and Periyar Tiger Reserve were only taken for the study. 50 local people were interviewed as part of data collection. The remaining 100 consisted of tourist officials, tourist guides, hoteliers and tour operators and homestay operators.

Data published in other secondary sources are also extensively used. Data were collected from secondary sources like books and journals related to tourism and other published reports. Data were also being collected from websites of the Tourism Department and other related sites. Secondary data were also analysed by using various statistical tools.

Mixed method (both qualitative and quantitative method) is used in the study. The criteria for selection were based on the number of tourist arrivals in the location. The data collected were analysed using the SPSS (Software Package for Social Science). Percentages and Frequencies were applied throughout the study. To study the association between selected variables the chi-square test, t test and wilcoxon test were applied. The Linear trend line and index were used to analyse the statistical description of tourist visits. Conclusions were arrived based on the analysis.

1.20.6 Limitations of Study

- The scope of the study is limited to one district only.
- Only certain destinations are selected for detailed study.
- Non-availability of sufficient and reliable secondary data.
- The conclusions reached are based on information provided by the different parties covered in the survey and as such may not have general application.
- The statistics relating to some aspects of ecotourism are scattered and inadequate. However, every possible attempt is made to make the study successful.
1.20.7 Scheme of Study

For convenience of analysis and presentation, the thesis is organised under seven chapters.

Chapter 1 gives a general introduction to the study.

Chapter 2 makes a review of literature on the subject.

Chapter 3 is on importance of Eco-Tourism in India.

Chapter 4 provides an overview of Eco-Tourism in Kerala.

Chapter 5 evaluates Eco-Tourism projects in Idukki district.

Chapter 6 provides an analysis of Eco-Tourism development in Idukki district.

Chapter 7 presents the findings, recommendations and conclusions of the study.
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