CHAPTER-5
EVALUATION OF ECO-TOURISM PROJECTS IN IDUKKI DISTRICT

In the fourth chapter a detailed study has been made about the ecotourism development in Kerala and this chapter evaluates the ecotourism projects in Idukki district.

5.1 Introduction

Idukki is one of the 14 districts of Kerala. A landlocked district, Idukki is one of the most nature rich areas of Kerala. High ranges and wooded valleys are girded by three main rivers-Periyar, Thalayar and Thodupuzhayar and their tributaries. As a tourist destination, Idukki offers diverse attractions like wildlife sanctuaries, hill stations, dams, spices plantation tours, mountain treks, elephant ride etc. Idukki has a large population of tribals. The main tribes are Muthuvan, Malayarayan, Mannan, Paliyan, Urali, Ulladan, Malavedan and Malapandaram. The district headquarters is located at Kuyilimala in Painavu. Idukki is the second largest district of Kerala. The district borders the Kerala districts of Pathanamthitta on to the south, Kottayam on to the southwest, Ernakulam on to the northwest and Thrissur on to the north and Coimbatore, Dindigul and Theni districts in Tamilnadu on to the east. Rugged mountains and forest cover about 97% of the total area of the district.

The districts name ‘Idukki’ is supposed to be derived from the Malayalam word ‘Idukk’ which means a narrow gorge. That could be true that the narrow step-sided valets are not a strange phenomenon in this hilly district flanked by the Western Ghats in the east. This district lies between latitude 9’ 5’ and 10’ 21’ north and longitude 76 ‘37’ and 77 ‘25’ east. For the purpose of developmental activities, this district is divided into eight community development blocks viz. Adimaly, Azhutha, Devikulam, Elamdesom, Idukki, Kattappana, Nedumkandam and Thodupuzha. Idukki accounts for 12.9% of the area of Kerala and only 3.7% of the population of Kerala. The highest arch dam in Asia is in Idukki district.

Idukki is one of the districts in the state where linguistic minorities exist. The linguistic minorities consist mainly of Tamil origin. They are mainly workers
in the tea and cardamom plantations, spread in Peermade, Udumbanchola and Devikulam taluks. The district is highly heterogeneous in the matter of its people in their culture, climate cropping pattern, physiographic features etc. Idukki has an area of 4,479 km² (1,729 sq.ml) and a population of 1,107,453(as per 2011 census) of which male population is 551944 and female, 555509.

5.2 History of Idukki

Idukki district was formed on 26 January 1972 as per Government notification No.5413/C2/71/RD dated 24 January 1972. The district consists of Devikulam, Udumbanchola and Peermade taluks of the erstwhile Kottayam district and Thodupuzha taluk (excluding two villages Manjallore and Kallorkadu) of the erstwhile Ernakulam district. The taluks contain 65 villages between them. At the time of formation the district headquarters started functioning at Kottayam and from there it was shifted to Painavu in Thodupuzha taluk in June 1976, where it is proposed to build a new planned forest township. Periyar which is one of the largest rivers of Kerala, flowing through Idukki gorge formed between the two high massive rocks called “Kuravan” and “Kurathi” is the site of the gigantic Idukki arch dam. We have very little authentic knowledge which throws light into the ancient history of Idukki district. Even though there is no clear evidence whether men of the Palaeolithic age lived here, but there is evidence of Stone-age dolmens were discovered in the valleys of Anchanad in Devikulam taluk.

Archaeological excavation conducted during 1947-48 at Kallarpattom colony in Udumbanchola taluk and at Vandiperiyar in Peermedu taluk brought to light the remains of old stone-age menhir and tombs. Karikode near Thodupuzha was the headquarters of Vadakkumkoor Raja. There is a remnant of a fort at Karikkode. Near this fort there is a Devi temple said to have constructed by the Vadakkumkoor Raja. There is also another temple by name Annamala Temple constructed in Chola style. The church at Muthalakodam, near Thodupuzha is believed to have constructed before 13th century. The Ninnar Mosque near Karikkode is said to have constructed by the Vadakkumkoor Raja for his Muslim soldiers. Thodupuzha was also a nerve business centre. There is historical evidence to prove that from ancient time onwards ivory, teak, rosewood, sandalwood etc. were exported to foreign countries. Historians believe that Kuzhumoor, the capital of Chera kings of the Sangam age, is the Kumily in Peermade taluk. It is assumed
that portions of Meenachil taluk and the whole of the high range were included in the Thanthuzhynad under the Kulasekhara Empire (A.D 800-1102). For some time these regions were under the reign of the Thekkumkoor Kingdom. It was proved that Vennimala, one of the capitals of the Thekkumkoor Rajas, was in Idukki district. Poonjar Kingdom was established by Manavikrama Kulasekhara Perumal. Manavikraman brought Meenachil taluk and the High Range under his rule from the Thekkumkoor Raja. Thus major portions of Idukki district came under the rule of the Poonjar Raja.

5.3 Idukki-The Spice Land of Kerala

Kerala’s history is closely linked with its commerce, which in turn was wholly dependent until recent times on its spice trade. Kerala was known for its spice and travellers around the world journeyed here to trade and to gain control over the rich land. It is believed that the spice trade dates back to three thousand years. Pepper still remains the king of Kerala’s spices but Idukki also has a very rich produce in cardamom, cinnamon, nutmeg, mace, ginger and turmeric. As in the past, Idukki continues to be the spice capital of the world.

Over twelve varieties of spices, including ginger, garlic, cardamom, vanilla, pepper, cinnamon, coffee, tea, clove and nutmeg are cultivated in Idukki and the surrounding areas. Idukki high ranges with several peaks topping 2000mts above sea level are home to the longest river in Kerala, the Periyar and its tributaries. These high ranges are characterised by a series of plateaux like Devikulam, Eravimala etc. and they consist of rich Tea, Coffee and Cardamom estates including legendary Kannan Devan Hills. All such ranges and plateauxs are unique tourism destinations.

5.4 Eco-Tourism in Idukki District

Idukki is counted in the list of most stunning, calm and tranquil destinations in Kerala. At Idukki, one cuddles tenderly in the lap of impeccably magnificent natural beauty. Nature Showers its majestically enchanting grace in every nook and corner of this site. Besides, we also come across numerous astounding mushroom cultivation and dairy farming here, as most of its inhabitants rely on agriculture. There are several areas in the district which are untouched by humans and hence remain endlessly capped in mist and greenery all around the year. If you deeply explore Idukki, you will encounter ceaselessly dark regions
because of dense forests engulfing them. The water in Idukki is translucent and pure. Apart from these miraculous scenic charms, there are array of places in Idukki which make this locale a paradise of Kerala.

Idukki is one of the best tourist destinations in the world. Among the 14 districts of Kerala, Idukki is the front runner of ecotourism potential. There are many factors that make Idukki different from other mainstream destinations. With the Sahya Ranges occupying most of the geographical area, the district has within its boundary the highest mountain peak and the largest area of forest land in the state. Different regions in Idukki have the jungle walks and safaris for tourists. The ideal climate and ambience to embrace thriving vegetation and exotic wildlife is present in Idukki. There are plenty of sanctuaries and national parks and most of them arrange tours, jungle walks and safaris for tourists. The colossal mountain ranges that form a backdrop for most area also provide challenging trekking spots and picturesque picnic locations. Idukki also has many breath-taking beautiful waterfalls and naturally formed sandalwood forest. The hill station Munnar with its spectacular views, well run specialised dairy farm, and lush green carpet of tea plantations are one of the hotspots in Idukki. Plantations of tea, coffee, cardamom and rubber can be seen all around this beautiful district. The cool climate in the district also makes it popular among the tourists, both foreigners and local people.

There are five wildlife sanctuaries in Idukki district. This beautiful high range district of Kerala is geographically known for its mountainous hills and dense forests with high ranges of altitude varying from 2500 feet above sea level. About 1500sq.km of its areas are reserved forests, much of which is home to a variety of flora and fauna. This forest area houses wildlife like tigers, deers, Indian bison and monkeys. Streams, valleys and hills combine to make Idukki an ideal year-round holiday destination.

Idukki offers abundant scope for promotion of ecotourism if infrastructure facilities and proper promotional activities are provided. Project Tiger which aims at conservation of the tiger in the wild, has been very effective in the Periyar Wildlife Sanctuary (Thekkady). The endangered Nilgiri Tahr has found a new lease of life at the Eravikulam National Park, which was instituted solely with the aim of preservation of this species. The Chinnar Sanctuary is unique in its flora and fauna.
No trip to Kerala will be complete without a visit to these magnificent and well preserved sanctuaries.

Traveling to Idukki is an experience in itself as the place offers a great combination of traditional and modern comforts. Brightly coloured flowers and tall green trees with their thick foliage create a good experience for nature lovers. Adventure seekers can indulge in paragliding, mountaineering, wildlife safaris, hill trekking, biking and others absorbing hill activities during Idukki visits. The following map of the Idukki district depicts the important ecotourism locations in Idukki district.

**Figure 5.1**
**Major Eco-Tourism Destinations in Idukki District**

NB: Tourist destinations are marked with yellow spot
5.4.1 Geographical Coverage

Geographical and climatical characteristics of Idukki district are unique. Anamudi, the highest peak, south of Himalayas is in the Kannandevan hills village of the Devikulam taluk. It is 2659 meters from mean sea level. Except a bit of midland region in the Western portions of Thodupuzha taluk, all the remaining area of the district lies in the mountainous tract of the Western Ghats. There are 14 peaks in Idukki, which exceeds a height of 2000 meters above sea level.

5.4.2 Climate in Idukki

The western part of the district comprising midland areas experience moderate climate. The eastern part comprising of the high peaks above an elevation of 2400 meters, the temperature at times falls down to freezing point in winter. The climate of the district undergoes a sudden variation as we go from west to east. Occurrence of mist is usual in the highland regions. An ideal climate with temperature not fluctuating too much, contributes to the tranquil setting of the hill resorts of Idukki. The hill station experiences mild climate throughout the year.

5.4.3 Community Participation: A Driving Force in Eco-Tourism Development in Idukki District

Community plays a significant role in ecotourism development in Idukki district. Characteristics of community development are based on local initiatives and it advocates a site-specific approach to find solutions of community problems using community members and community resources. The smaller scale, dispersed nature of ecotourism development, with less sophisticated demand, should enable a much higher degree of local participation than conventional mass tourism. Community-based conservation is used in most of the wildlife sanctuaries in Idukki district. In order to win the support of local communities for long-term biodiversity conservation goals, the effort should continue addressing local development needs and encourage women’s participation. Local communities need to have some measures of control over them and share equitably in the benefits emerging from ecotourism activities. Kerala Tourism Ministry should encourage small-scale local tourism enterprises for the benefits of both the foreign and domestic tourists. The collaborative attempt from local authority and community in the ecotourism developmental activities in the Idukki district is very successful.
5.4.4 Protected Areas

The district has several protected areas including: Periyar Tiger Reserve in the south, Kurinjimala Sanctuary to the east, Chinnar Wildlife Sanctuary to the northeast, Eravikulam National Park and Anamudi Shola National Park to the north, Pampadum Shola National Park to the south and Thattekad Bird Sanctuary in the west. These protected areas are well known for several threatened and endemic species including Tiger, Nilgiri Tahr, Grissled Giant Squirrel, Nilgiri Wood-Pigeon, Elephant, Gaur, Sambar Deer, Purple Frog and Neela Kurinji.

5.4.5 Transport Facility

Air: Nearest airports are Kochi and Madurai.
Rail: No railway track in Idukki.
Road: Idukki is well connected by roads. There are six state highways passing through the district.

5.4.6 Accommodation Facilities in Idukki

Accommodation facilities here include hotels and home stays. Hotels are run both by KTDC and private persons. Hotels range from budget to business; leisure to low priced. There is no dearth of hotels in Idukki. The region oozes freshness of verdant hill and azure water bodies making Idukki hotels an ideal retreat for all kinds of wildlife enthusiasts and nature lovers. There are around 83 hotels in Idukki district, among this 19 two star hotels, 57 three start hotels and 4 four star hotels.

5.5 Munnar

Munnar is breathtakingly beautiful - a haven of peace and tranquillity - the idyllic tourist destination in God’s Own Country. Set at an altitude of 6000ft in Idukki district, Munnar was the favoured summer resort of the erstwhile British rulers in the colonial days. Unending expanse of tea plantations, pristine valleys and mountains-exotic species of flora and fauna in its wild sanctuaries and forests-aroma of spice scented cool air.

The hill station of Munnar is situated in the Idukki district in the eastern part of Kerala, bordering the state of Tamil Nadu, popularly known as Kashmir of the south. Munnar is well connected to all the cities in Kerala. Munnar is located in a midst mist-covered mountain ranges and evergreen forests of the Western Ghats,
at a varying altitude of 1,600 m (5,249 ft.) to 1,800 m (5,906 ft.) above mean sea level.

The name Munnar is believed to mean ‘three rivers’, referring to the town’s strategic location at the confluence of the Mudhirapuzha, Nallathanni and Kundaly Rivers. Munnar consists of vast sloping areas of tea plantations, of which mostly are owned by Tata tea. Coffee and cardamom plantations give it a simplistic and smooth appearance. Munnar also has the highest peak in South India—Anamudi, which towers over 2695 m. Among the exotic flora found in the forests and grasslands in Munnar is the Neelakurinji. This flower bathes the hills in the blue every twelve years. There are many lovely spots that are ideal for rock climbing and trekking as well. The noisy waterfalls, gurgling streams and rows climbing and trekking gives an added aura to the spot. The noisy waterfalls, gurgling streams and rows of tiny cottages add more life and colour to the vivid picturesque location that Munnar already is.

5.5.1 History of Munnar

The name Munnar was aptly given to this place since it is located at the convergence of three rivers. The recorded history of Munnar dates back to the 10th century, though many pre-historic epics link Munnar to the Stone Age. During the 17th century, a group of people of Tamil origin, known by the name ‘Muthuvans’ migrated to Munnar and they settled at Munnar and nearby areas.

By the 19th century, Munnar had become a part of Anchunadu, a small tribal kingdom believed to be one among the earliest tribal settlements of south India. The fertile soil of Munnar was used for cultivation of cardamom, ginger etc. in those days.

It was the Spanish planters who brought Munnar to the limelight and the first notable personality to visit this place was the Duke of Wellington. John Daniel Munro from the British East India Company visited Munnar around the middle of the 19th century and he gathered permission to acquire 588 sq.km of land from the Maharaja of Poonjar.

With the assistance from Kannan Thevar, the tribal chief of Anchunadu, Mr. Manro and his companions took over some of the mountains and hills of Munnar. In 1895 Messrs Finlay Muir and Company procured Munro’s land and in 1976 Tata-Finlay Ltd. procured it.
5.5.2 Flora and Fauna

Most of the native flora and fauna of Munnar have disappeared due to severe habitat fragmentation resultant from the creation of plantations. However, some species continue to survive and thrive in several protected areas nearby, including the new Kurinjimala Sanctuary to the east, the Chinnar Wildlife Sanctuary, Manjampatti Valley and the Amaravati Reserve Forest of the Indira Gandhi Wildlife Sanctuary to the north east, the Eravikulam National Park and Anamudi Shola National Park to the north, the Pampadum Shola National Park to the south and the proposed Palani Hills National Park to the east. As per the latest report, there are more than 200 variety of birds can be seen in Munnar Wildlife Division.

Information for those who intend to visit Munnar is provided in table 5.1:-

Table 5:1
Fact File

- Altitude: 1600 mts to 1800 mts above sea level
- Clothing: Warm clothes and rain Gears
- Tourist Season: August to May
- Temperature: Min 0°C-Max 25°C

Source: www.munnar.com

The main attractions in Munnar include the following:

- Mattupetty

Mattupetty is situated at a height of 1700m above sea level. Mattupetty Lake and Dam is a beautiful picnic spot with the panoramic view of the tea plantations. Boating facilities are available in the reservoir. Mattupetty is also well known for its highly specialised dairy farm-The Indo Swiss Live Stock Project. The shola forests in and around Mattupetty are ideal for trekking and are habitat to variety of birds. Rivulets and cascades crisscross the terrain here, which again adds more attraction to the place. Mattupetty dam has an agriculture garden on its banks. Speed boat ride through the dam is also available. In the Indo Swiss Live Stock Project, over a 100 varieties of high-yielding cattle are reared here.
• Rajamala

Rajamala is the natural habitat of Nilgiri Tahr. Half the world population of this rare mountain goat is found here, which is fast becoming extinct. Trekking here can perhaps give us a glimpse of Nilgiri Tahr, the rarely seen mountain goat. The Nilgiri Tahrs are today reduced to small herds found in Rajamala region. The total number of Nilgiri Tahrs in Rajamala is estimated at 1317. The stark beauty of the high mountains, the rolling grass lands and the possibility of watching the highly endangered Nilgiri Tahr draws a large number of visitors to Rajamala.

• Echo-Point

Echo-point has a natural echo phenomenon and offers panoramic views. This scenic place gets its name from the natural echo phenomenon here. Echo point on the way to Top stations from Munnar.

• Top Station

From here you can get a spectacular view of the plains of Tamilnadu. Kundalai dam is on the Munnar-Top station road.1700 m above sea level; this is the highest point on the Munnar-Kodaikanal road. The rare Nilakurinji belongs to this region.

• Tata Tea Museum

Located 2 km from Munnar centre on the Nallathany road. Collection of old bits and pieces from the colonial era can be seen here. Demonstration of tea production, information on machineries, tea processing and tea tasting are available here.

• Devikulam

Eco-tourists are attracted to this lake town. This idyllic hill stations with its velvet lawns, exotic flora and fauna and the cool mountain air are a rare experience. The Sita Devi Lake with its mineral waters and picturesque surroundings is a good picnic spot. The lake is also ideal for trout fishing.

• Marayoor

Sandalwood forests, Munyaras (ancient caves) and waterfalls (Thoovanam) are located here. This is the only place in Kerala that has natural growth of sandal wood trees. The sandal wood factory of the forest department and the children’s park spread across a hectare of land under the canopy of a single Banyan tree are
of great interest to tourists. Marayoor is a rain shadow village lying in the eastern side of the Western Ghats and is bordered by the neighbouring state Tamil Nadu.

• Blossom International Park
  Blossom International Park at Munnar has an adventure track, 1000-feet long fountain, roller skates, underground meditation centre and a beautiful garden.

• Anamudi
  The highest peak of South India is close to Munnar and is a great place for adventurous trekking.

• Pothamadu
  Pothamadu offers an excellent view of the tea, coffee and cardamom plantations in Munnar. The rolling hills, the lush mountain and the breath-taking scenery here are ideal for trekking and long mountain walks.

• Pallivasal
  This is the venue of the first hydroelectric project in Kerala and a place of immense scenic beauty.

• Attukal
  A panorama of waterfalls and rolling hills, Attukal, located between Munnar and Pallivasal is a feast for the eyes. The place is also ideal for long treks.

• Nyayamakad
  Located between Munnar and Rajamala, Nyayamakad is a land of breath taking waterfalls. The waters cascade down a hill from a height of about 1600 meters. The enchanting surroundings make an excellent picnic spot and trekking point.

• Chithirapuram
  With its sleepy little cottages, bungalows, old playgrounds and courts, Chithirapuram still exudes an old-world charm. This hill town is also famous for its picturesque tea plantations.

• Lock Heart Gap
  This is an ideal place for adventure tourism and trekking. The fresh mountain air, the mist clad hills and panoramic view make it worthy of visit.
• **Power House Water Falls**
  
  This waterfall on the way to Thekkady from Munnar cascades down a steep rock, 2000 m above sea level. The spot is enriched with the scenic western mountain ranges, and is an ideal place for a break on the way to the Periyar Wildlife Sanctuary in Thekkady.

• **Kundala**
  
  Kundala is a picturesque town on the way to Top stations. The Golf Course which belongs to Tata Tea Ltd. is located here. The Kundala artificial dam is another attraction. Aruvikkal waterfalls are also near Kundala.

• **Anayirankal**
  
  It is a lush green carpet of tea plants. A trip on the splendid reservoir is an unforgettable experience. The Anayirankal Dam is surrounded by the Tata Tea Plantations and evergreen forests. It is an ideal picnic spot.

• **Cheeyappara**
  
  The Cheeyappara and Valara waterfalls are located between Naramangalam and Adimali. The Cheeyappara waterfalls cascade down in seven steps. It is also a great place for trekking.

### 5.5.3 Eco-Tourism Activities in Munnar

Munnar is an idyllic tourist destination with rolling hills, grasslands, dense forests, brooks and rivulets, diverse flora and fauna, numerous waterfalls, lakes, tea plantations and walking trails.

Kerala Forest Development Corporation (KFDC) is a public sector undertaking registered in 1976 under Companies Act for taking up commercial forestry activities like raising and managing pulpwood and cash crops plantations in forest land. KFDC has ventured into the field of ecotourism since 2001 in Munnar. Presently KFDC offers guided treks and outdoor camps at Munnar.

For trekking in Munnar in Idukki District, KFDC has developed a base camp facility at the foothills of the Karimkulam Plateau. Here presently only some temporary facilities are created. Hence it is decided to upgrade the facilities are materialise two trekking programme i.e. camping at Rhodovalley and camping at land end in Munnar. For the upgradation, the following activities shall be carried out.
- Solar fencing around the area
- Procurement of tents and accessories
- Construction of ponds, landscaping etc.

5.5.3.1 Bird Watching - Let Your Spirits Soar with them

Rare wild birds that have colourful plumage and that sing sonorously abound in the resort premises are found here. Bird watch can spend hours on end watching the winged surprises all around them. The balconies are good vantage points to observe the birds on trees at eye level. Mynas, Thrushes, Parrots, Shrikes, Hornbills etc. are commonly sighted.

5.5.3.2 Butterfly Watching - The Flowers Flying off the Bowers

Unique and endemic species of colourful butterflies in different stages of metamorphosis can be watched from close quarters to your heart’s content. The great variety of plant life sustains a great variety of insects. The largest moth in the world, the Atlas moth, and one of the largest butterflies, the southern bird watching and other large and colourful specimens are easily observed.

5.5.3.3 Nature Photography - The Art of Recording and the Science of Beauty

The rare flora and fauna of the wild variety can be photographed in quiet seclusion. There will be nothing to disturb the peace and tranquillity. Hides formed naturally by the undergrowth and the lofty position of the balconies is ideally suited for taking wildlife photos. Human constructions within the area are well planned and not to protrude into the picture space.

5.5.3.4 Adventure - The Fatigue that does away with all your Fatigue

Trekking short and long distances to scenic spots where you can spend hours enjoying the panorama all around, cycling at your leisure and pleasure, rock climbing and mock river crossing and campfire. Experienced guides and instructors will be there to help you.

5.5.3.5 Aquatic - Placid Expanses of Inviting Waters

Aquatic activities will be arranged on request at the enchanting environments of the Mattupetty Lake, Kundala Dam and Old Munnar Lake premises. Rowing, boating and other aquatic adventure activities can be enjoyed at affordable rates.
5.6 Thekkady

Thekkady, India’s largest wildlife sanctuary is a dream destination for any tourist visiting India. The country’s sole Tiger Reserve in Thekkady, with its bountiful treasures of tropical flora and fauna is the ultimate reservoir of many an endangered species and a rich tribal culture. Thekkady is a pleasant heaven on earth for those who love nature in its wild manifestations.

Thekkady is near to the Kerala-Tamil Nadu boundary city - Kumily. It is house to herds of Monsters, Sambar, Lions, Gaur, Lion-Tailed Macaques and Nilgiri Langurs. Thekkady is regarded a paradise for organic spices or herbs such as spice up, cardamom, nutmeg and clove. Around five lakhs visit Thekkady every year and they contribute substantially to the economy of Kerala.

5.6.1 Facilities at Thekkady

- Elephant Ride – Children and adults can go for a short elephant ride near the Turble Nature Park after contacting the wildlife information centre near boat landing.
- Boating- Boats of different capacity are maintained by KTDC and Kerala Forest Department. Boats can be hired for a 2 hours cruise-the easy option for sighting wildlife.
- Watch Towers and Rest House – A watch tower and a forest rest house, one each at Edappalayam and Manakkavala for overnight stay inside forests are available with advance booking.
- Visitor Centre – Visitors arriving at Periyar Tiger Reserve can drop by at the Gandhi Park near Kumily town. Besides screening wildlife films, essential information on the reserve is provided here.
- Information Centre at Boat Landing - Visitors are advised to contact the wildlife information centre at boat landing for basic information including guidelines to be observed in the park and the facilities available.
- Interpretation Centre - At the Rajiv Gandhi Centre for Nature Education and Research, there is an interpretation centre that houses various specimens of flora and fauna and up to date information on the park. A reference library also functions in the same building.
5.6.2 Significance of Eco-Tourism in Thekkady

Environmental degradation and ecological imbalance have become a universal phenomenon today and ecotourism is an appropriate tool to educate people and address the related issues. Unlike other states in India, Kerala is rich in bio-diversity. Ecotourism is gaining more significance nowadays due to the consistent efforts of dedicated nature lovers towards the sustainable development. Mass tourism is destructive as far as bio-diversity is concerned; therefore sanctuaries, national parks and reserve forest areas are implementing schemes concerning responsible tourism and ecotourism for sustainable development. The prime attraction of tourists visiting Thekkady is a boat cruise in the Periyar Lake.

Located in the heart of Kumily, Thekkady town, a small hillock, ensconced by the canopy of tall trees lies greenwoods. The 120 years old ‘surki’ dam built across Periyar, Poorna in Vedic Parlance, is a major tourist attraction. The Periyar Wildlife Sanctuary is one of the best places for viewing wild animals. The best time to visit Idukki is during the months of March, April and May. Thekkady offers facilities for trekking, elephant riding and boating. Boating through the placid lake provides a rare opportunity to watch wild animals at close quarters.

5.6.3 Local Participation in Eco-Tourism Activities in Thekkady

Periyar Tiger Reserve and its surrounding areas, as well as other protected areas are rich in bio-diversity. For its implementation, we can see the participation of local communities. The programmes are conducted by local people responsible for the surveillance of the vulnerable parts of the reserve at the ecotourism destination of Thekkady. People who once made a living by illegal operations in the forests have since become forests protectors and earn their livelihood through these programmes. Hence, as a visitor, when you join them in any of these ecotourism programmes at Thekkady, one is directly contributing towards forest conservation and community welfare.

5.6.4 Eco-Sensitisation

The visitors are expected to be supporting a noble cause of forest conservation and community welfare by participating in ecotourism programmes. In due time Periyar and Thekkady would be made into a heritage trove with the efforts of the Forest Department and Kerala Tourism.
The Periyar Tiger Reserve at Thekkady is an example of nature’s bounty, with great scenic charm, rich bio diversity and providing veritable visitor satisfaction. Sprawled over an area of 777sq.km, Periyar is one of the 27 Tiger Reserves in India.

Zealously guarded and efficiently managed, the reserve is a repository of rare, endemic and endangered flora and fauna, and forms the major watershed of two important rivers of Kerala, the Periyar and the Pamba.

The two islets of elevated ground studded with bamboo thickets in Thekkady ecotourism centre is the eco-lodge for experiential learning. Here a miniature habitat has been recreated for man and nature to co-exist in the already available milieu of grassy downs, hedges and bamboos and stream fringed with screw pine. Dwelling units made exclusively with natural materials like bamboo and grass and tents are slotted in the available spaces together with tree top huts to give the place an eco-friendly ambience.

Experiential learning and nature sensitisation camps are conducted for discerning aspirants and the ecotourism programme addresses different target groups like students, travellers, children etc. Lectures, discussions, audio visual presentations, field visits etc. go with the programme at Thekkady.

5.6.5 In and Around Thekkady

- Peiyar National Park - The Periyar National Park comprises a thick evergreen forest with exotic wildlife. The sanctuary was declared a tiger reserve in 1978. Noted for its geo-morphological diversity of wildlife and scenic beauty, the reserve attracts visitors from all over the world.
- The Sanctuary Watch Towers - There are three watch towers for observing wildlife - at Edappalayam and Manakkavala and Thannikudi.
- Murikkady - Washed in fresh spice scented air, Murikkady is a panorama of cardamom, coffee and pepper plantations. It is about 5 km from Thekkady.
- Pandikuzhi - This picturesque place is cradled between Chellarkovil and the Tamilnadu state border. This is a popular picnic spot. Pandikuzhy offers great opportunities for trekking and is a photographer’s delight.
- Chellarkovil - This sleepy little village with its spectacular view of the plains (and cascading waterfalls during the monsoons) is a feast for your
eyes. The village slopes down to the famous coconut groves of Kambam in neighbouring Tamilnadu. It is very beautiful and extremely serene.

- **Vandiperiyar** - The river Periyar flowing through the centre of this town nourishes its vast tea, coffee and pepper plantations. A major trade centre, Vandiperiyar is also home to a number of tea factories. The Government Agriculture Farm and Flower Gardens have a delightful array of rose plants, orchids and anthurium.

- **Vandanmedu** - This is one of the world’s largest auction centres for cardamom. A walk through the sprawling cardamom plantations of Vandanmedu is a pleasant experience.

- **Pullumed** - It is a restricted forest zone. The winding journey to this hill town, along the Periyar River offers a stunning view of the rolling hills draped in lush greenery. Volvet lawns, rare flora and fauna add to the beauty of Pullumedu which can be accessed from a jeep. The famous Sree Ayyappa Temple at Sabarimala and the Makara Jyothi illuminations at the shrine are visible from here.

- **Anakkara** - Anakkara is an upcoming spice tourism destination in the state.

5.7 **Vagamon**

Vagamon is a hill station located in Kottayam-Idukki border of Idukki district. It has a cool climate with the temperature between 10^0C and 23^0C during summer midday. It is situated 1,100 meters above sea level. National Geographic Traveller has listed Vagamon on their directory of the 50 most attractive places to visit in India. Still untouched by commercialisation, the sleepy town with its scenic valleys, beautiful green meadows, enchanting pine forests, mists, fogs, tea estates, waterfalls with the overall greenery is really striking.

The landscape is mostly hilly bold with green meadows. Vagamon is also home to a large variety of flowers and orchids. This place is cuddled up within three striking hills Thangal, Murugan and Kurisumala which are the representation of the chief religions of Kerala i.e. Hindu, Christian and Muslim. Vagamon is at the fringe of the Western Ghat. Vagamon presents very spectacular views with an ethereal touch. Vagamon’s charm is worth experiencing and is indeed one of the must see places for tourists. Reaching Vagamon itself is an extraordinary
experience. The meandering road to Vagamon is cut in solid rock lined with pine forests.

5.7.1 History of Vagamon

Vagamon is also known as the ‘Scotland of Asia’, was discovered by the Britishers who found the place ideal for tea plantations. Later on Christian missionaries came and made Kurisumala ‘mountain of the holy cross’ in Vagamon, their spiritual abode.

5.7.2 Eco-Tourism in Vagamon

Vagamon is a very ideal tourist spot surrounded by the greenery of tea gardens, beautiful meadows, deep puzzling valleys and dales. The enchanting hill station dotted with tea gardens will soon be one of India’s foremost ecotourism projects. The hill station is an amalgamation of natural beauty, religious mysticism and colonial legacies. The important tourist attraction of Vagamon is the Kurisumala hill, which is ideal for trekking.

Many types of flora and fauna in varied colours and species can be located easily in this hilly region. While long grasses and shrubs are present in lower altitudes have evergreen trees. Apart from the natural trails in the hills of Vagamon, wild buffaloes, rare species of birds, insects and big elephants can also be located in the forests. Pine forests, grasslands, meadows and even a popular suicide point at Thangal Hill, adds to the natural beauty of Vagamon. Travelling through the main road in this division is an exciting experience with deep valleys and splendid sites throughout. Vagamon has amenities for trekking, paragliding, mountaineering and rock climbing. However business persons are trying their best to exploit and sell and market Vagamon for tourists. How much benefits the local people are receiving from tourism boom is to be seen here. The drive up to this hill town is scenic with winding roads, fresh mountain air, the sound of gurgling streams and chirping birds. Green capped mountains and rolling plains provide for panoramic views which are sure to take your breath away.

5.7.3 Farms Galore

There is plenty of scope for far tourism in the hill slopes of Vagamon which is an ideal destination for a break away from the fast life of city. The farm tourism destination of Vagamon is a popular spot for trekkers. Vagamon serves as both a hill station as well as a farm tourism destination. The land is fertile and fit to
be cultivated, offering scope for agriculture, horticulture, floriculture and sericulture. It also offers the tourists the opportunity to undertake various ecotourism activities. Placid lakes are present where you can sit idle for hours or can go for boating. You may spot wild animals like elephants and wild buffalos if you venture deep into the forests. Various ecotourism centres in and around Vagamon are:

- **Waterfalls** - This is essentially a lake and its catchment area, with grassy hillocks stretching into the forest on one side and ending at the cliff on the other. This large tract of land has a small stream originating at the lake. The steep hill tract which provides access to the waterfall area is along the ridge and there can be many pavilions along that to enjoy rain, wind and the infinite view of the hills capes. There can also be performance podiums with the mountainous landscape as the background. The stream goes along the ravine and can be developed as a trekking path as it is a rugged route, with rocks and rough undulations. A reservoir up stream would ensure the presence of enough amount of water even during dry season. A stepped path leading to the waterfall itself is a thing of interest.

- **Rocky Out Crop** – The steep rocky hill tract is almost mountainous in character. The cliff and ravine topography area is ideal for adventure activities that would attract people who like gliding, rope climbing, jumping and the like. There can be viewing pavilions in the vertical surface of the hill which would attract people for staying inside. This can be carved out of the rocks and would provide an adventurous stay.

- **Forest** - Around 100 acres of forest area could be developed as a holistic health care centre with Ayurveda as the theme. Providing treatment, health care facility, rejuvenation centres, yoga and meditation centre, naturopathy clinics, herbal garden etc. emphasising the theme of living with nature and exploring the aeons old way of life. Tree walks, medicine preparation areas etc. are here.

- **Vagamon Kurisumala** - Kurisumala is a Christian pilgrim centre and one of the main attractions at Vagamon. The main day of attraction is on Good Friday. This is where hundreds of devotees from far and near converge during the holy week and after to climb the hill carrying wooden crosses.
Kurisumala Ashram is at the heart of the Sahya Mountains, which run parallel to India’s south west Coast. Kurisumala Ashram, a monastery for Christian ascetics, who have a belief in the Christianity along with the Indian spiritual beliefs, is worth visiting a place in Vagamon.

- Pine Forest- Pine forests are the important attraction in Vagamon. Walking through pine forest gives an unforgettable experience to tourists.
- Green Meadows- Green grass lands with cool breeze going around all day long. This is a better place in Vagamon.
- Ulipooni Wildlife Sanctuary- Ulipooni Wildlife Sanctuary is situated 10 km from Vagamon town. Boating facility will also available here.

5.8 Periyar Tiger Reserve

The Periyar Tiger Reserve comprises a thick evergreen forest with exotic wildlife. It lies at an elevation of 900-1800 metres above sea level on the hills of Western Ghats. The forests around the Periyar Lake were declared as Reserved Forests in 1899 and turned into a Sanctuary in 1934. It was declared as a Tiger Reserve in 1978 under the Project Tiger Scheme. In 1982 the core area of the reserve was notified as National Park. This is the only sanctuary in India where we can have the unique experience of viewing wildlife at close quarters from the safety of a boat on the lake. The greatest attraction of Periyar remains the largest herds of wild elephants that come down to the lake’s edge. Statistics shows that 184643 domestic tourists and 77623 outbound tourists visit Periyar Tiger Reserve in 2010.

5.8.1 India Eco-Development Project at Periyar Tiger Reserve

An experiment in forest management called India Eco-Development Project (IEDP, the World Bank funded participatory bio-diversity conservation programme) was started at Periyar Wildlife Sanctuary in Thekkady and it has developed an ecotourism component, the ‘Thekkady Tiger Trail’ in 1998. The concept and implementation of India Eco-Development Project made the managers of Periyar Tiger Reserve think seriously to identify sustainable tourism activities that ensure local participation in its fullest sense and the reduction of human dependence on the forest for their livelihood. This was done by addressing the economic needs of those living in and around the park (about 2, 50,000 people) by finding out viable and innovative livelihood alternatives for them.
The objectives of Project at Periyar are to manage protected areas and to get the involvement of local people in it and thereby giving them an opportunity to get an alternative livelihood. To implement the project initially, local communities living off the forest that is organised in Eco-Development Committees (hereafter referred to as EDCs). Basic objectives for the EDCs were to reduce negative impact of local people on the Sanctuary and to involve encroachers in conservation instead of exploitation. Ex-Vayana Bank collectors, who involved in the illegal de-barking of Cinnamon trees (Vayana) as well as in Sandalwood smuggling and poaching have formed an Eco-Development Committee in 1998, with an initial project fund of Rs.3.5 lakh. Like the Ex-Vayana EDC, several other EDCs were formed with local communities under the World Bank – funded IEDP. The Tribal Trekkers Eco-Development Committee, a group of 20 young tribal youth and the Periyar Tiger Samrakshan (PETS), a group of 70 members who were earlier employed by the Forest Department as watchers have an involvement in the sustainable tourism activities. They provide services like day treks through the forest, arranging nature camps, horse riding and special programmes for the tourists. The earnings from these sources go into a community development fund. The local women have formed a body called Vasanta Sena to look after Periyar Tiger Reserve. The Vasanta Sena comprises 100 women belonging to eight different EDCs who form groups of seven and patrol the forest on a rotation basis from 10 am to 4 pm daily. They do it in reciprocity for benefits accrued through the India Eco Development Project that gave each family a loan of Rs.12,500 at the start of the project through their respective EDCs. The loans repaid went into Community Development Fund (CDF), which in turn helped setting up of self-help groups, benefiting the community. In Mannakkudy and Paliyakudy Tribal settlements, there are 4 EDCs and 385 families. Their financial status has significantly increased since the past 5 years. The opportunities of employment to the members of EDCs in various Protected Area Management activities such as habitat improvement, fire protection, tourism etc. increased. Realising the necessity for financial support in future, all the EDCs are generating their own funds known as Community Development Fund (CDF). Most of the EDCs have collected reasonable sums in their CDF accounts that are being reused for the welfare of the members of the EDCs. As an organised bodies and partners of Forest Department
in Protected Area Management, the EDCs have begun to exhibit a greater social cohesion and improved self-esteem.

The Eco-Development Project in the Periyar Tiger Reserve can be reviewed on the basis of ecotourism principles like nature-based, ecological sustainability, scope of education and interpretation, benefits to local people etc.

- **Nature-Based:** All the activities in the eco-development project are nature based. Programmes like the tiger trail, bamboo rafting and day trekking are carried out in the interior parts of the sanctuary. At the beginning, the trekking follows an easy foot path, but then the team enters shifting terrain and vegetation of varying difficulty, to penetrate an untouched landscape without tracks.

- **Ecologically Sustainable:** The eco tourists are expected to accept the environment as it is, without trying to change it. This is also the case for less attractive portions of the sanctuary. The only facilities are a few bamboo rafts used to cross lakes and ponds with. No foot bridges or other installations to facilitate trekking are planned to be laid out.

- **Education and Interpretation:** Opportunity for learning is also available at the Tribal Heritage Center, the bamboo grove, the visitor center and at the Rajiv Gandhi Centre for Nature Education and Research. Crash courses for the Eco tourists are provided here.

- **Benefits to local people:** A major part of the earnings from the bamboo-rafting programme goes to the community development fund from which the members earn a monthly wage of rupees 3,500. The earnings from various activities and services also go into a community development fund. This project gives employment opportunities to local people.

### 5.8.2 Community Based Eco-Tourism at Periyar Tiger Reserve

People oriented and park centred community based ecotourism is the hallmark of Periyar Tiger Reserve. These programmes are conducted by local people. By taking tourists along, they are involved in the conservation of the forests of Periyar and some valuable revenue is generated for community welfare.
5.8.3 Eco-Tourism Activities

Evergreen, grassland and moist deciduous forests are found here with various species of flora in each type of forestland. The Periyar Reserve shelters over 1800 flowering plants including 171 grass species and 143 species of orchids. The only south Indian conifer, podocarpus wallichiana grows here. A host of ecotourism activities have been developed for nature lovers in this unique spot.

- **Nature Walk** – This involves trekking through nature trails accompanied by trained tribal trackers cum guides. A three-hour interpretative programme, it takes one through interspersed evergreen and moist deciduous forests and providing incredible opportunities for close observation of birds, butterflies and wildlife.

- **Jungle Camp** – Apart from camping in tents located on the bank of Periyar River at Vallakkadavu inside the Reserve, the package includes optional activities like visits to Vanichivayal tribal colony and the historical Mullaperiyar Dam, trekking in the forest, tea factory and spice garden visits, vehicle safari, rafting boating in the Periyar Lake etc. Two to maximum thirty people can participate in this camp.

- **Jungle Patrol** – Visitors will be accompanied by two watchers and armed forest guards in this night patrolling programme which also helps the forest department in protecting the Reserve. Only up to 24 persons will be allowed per day.

- **Border Hiking** – A conservation-oriented, hard trek along the boundary of the Tiger Reserve gives you a glimpse of the rich flora and fauna. Two guides and an armed forest guard accompany trekkers on this full-day programme that accommodates minimum two persons to maximum 10 persons in two groups each.

- **Tiger Trail** – This is a protection-oriented trekking and camping activity with reformed poachers as tourist guides. The most significant aspect of this package is the focus on prevention and detection of illicit activities within the forest. There are two programmes organised twice a week.

- **Bamboo Rafting** – The programme involves dawn to dusk trekking and rafting across some of the most luxuriant forest tracts of the Periyar Tiger
Reserve. An armed guard and four guides accompany tourists in this programme.

- **Tribal Heritage – Visit to the tribal heritage museum inside the mannan settlement that showcases various attractions of the tribal culture. The tour also involves a trek through the tribal hamlet within the periphery of the Reserve accompanied by a tribal guide.**

- **Bullock Cart Discoveries - Visit to farmlands of a tiny hamlet beyond the mountains of Periyar where guides enlighten tourists on the different traditional ways of farming. This three-hour package will have maximum 9 persons and minimum 2 persons.**

- **Day Trekking Programme – Trekking programme conducted by EDC, an Eco-development Committee(involving tribal trekkers cum guides) formed by 20 selected youths from the nearby tribal hamlets, offers a possibility to know the richness of an ideal tropical evergreen forest within a short span of time. The trekking duration is 3 hours. Five guests will be accommodated in one slot and they will be accompanied by one tribal youth. Born and brought up right in the lap of forest, the guides are well familiar with the forest life. The guest will be taken through selected nature trails. The programme is also ideal for bird enthusiasts as it starts early morning.**

- **Learning Programme in Bamboo Grove - Typical tribal like huts and tents created right in a vast bamboo grove in the middle of Anavachal Vayal are offered to serious nature lovers for their experiential learning programme. In addition to the huts and tents, a seminar hall also exists for conducting sensitisation programmes. These programmes include interactive lectures by topic specific faculties/professionals, simple food, accommodation in the tent etc.**

- **Wild Adventures- This programme involves a close interaction with the nature in the midst of a typical evergreen forest in Gavi, about 40kms from Thekkady. The full programme is conducted by the eco-development committees of Meenar, Gavi and Kochupampa. The package includes vehicle safari from Thekkady to Gavi and trekking in the forest. Night-stay is also facilitated for a limited number of tourists. Rowing, bird watching,
outdoor camping in the forest, tree-top stay and night safari are also arranged on request.

5.8.4 Topography

Dense evergreen, semi evergreen and moist deciduous forests adorn the hills. There are extensive stretches of savannah grasslands on the upper slopes.

5.8.5 Flora and Fauna

The evergreen forests have lofty tree and the canopy is closed. Some of the common dominant trees are Vateria indica, Diptera carpus indicus, Cullani excels, Plaquium ellipticum etc. The main species of grass are elephant grass, saceharum etc, which are commonly grazed by elephant, gaur and sambar. The varied habitat naturally supports a variety of species of mammals, birds, reptiles, amphibians and fishes. Tiger, panther and wild dogs, elephant gaur, sambar, barking deer, wild boar, sloth bear, Nilgiri Tahr, Nilgiri Languar, lion tailed macaque otter, Malabar giant squirrel, civets are generally sighted.

5.9 Eravikulam National Park

Eravikulam National Park is 97sq.km in extent and is situated along the crest of the Western Ghats in the high ranges of Idukki district of Kerala. The park holds the largest viable population of the endangered Nilgiri Tahr. Apart from Tahr, the park is the abode of other little known fauna such as Nilgiri Marten, ruddy mongoose, small clawed otter, dusky striped squirrel etc. It is ideal place for seeing the biodiversity of high elevation shola-grass land eco system. Visitors are taken to Rajamalai in forest department vehicles and given an opportunity to see all this. Private vehicles are not allowed here. The national park is usually closed at the time of calving of Nilgiri Tahr which is usually during the early months of every year.

The national park comprises of the shola grassland ecosystem. Because of its close proximity to Munnar, a unique tourism destination in the region, Eravikulam National Park has got an important position on the tourism map of India. From a few hundred during the end of 1980s, the number of visitors has gone up to over three lakhs in 2007.

A protected area, the sanctuary is divided into three regions-the core area, the buffer area and the tourism area. The park is administered by the Department of
Forests and Munnar Wildlife Division. The main body of the park consists of a high rolling hill plateau with a base elevation of about 2,000 m.

A well scripted and a definite history marks how the Eravikulam National Park has come into existence in 1877, the Poonjar chief sold a tract of land known as Kannan Devan Anchannattu Mala to J.D. Munroe, an officer of the Independent Kingdom of Travancore. This land later came to be known as Kannan Devan concession land in which the Kannan Devan Hills Produce Company Limited, a subsidiary of the British Finley was formed in 1928. The High Range Game Preservation Association was convened in 1971. Eravikulam was handed over to the Forest Department of Government of Kerala under the KDH Resumption Act. In 1975, Eravikulam was declared as a sanctuary for the protection of Nilgiri Tahr. Subsequently, considering its ecological, faunal, floral, geomorphologic and zoological significance, Eravikulam was declared as a National Park in 1978.

5.9.1 Topography
The area is undulating, dotted with grass hillocks and sholas, Anamudi is situated in the south of the park.

5.9.2 Climate
The park experiences a climate which can be described as tropical montane. The area receives heavy rains during both the monsoons. This is one of the wettest areas of the world. During the winter months of December to February, the occurrence of frost is quiet common. The average annual rainfall is about 3,000mm. In winter, the temperature goes even below freezing point.

5.9.3 Forest Types
The major portion of the area is covered with grasslands, but there are several patches of sholas seen in hollows and valleys.

5.9.4 Flora and Fauna
Three major types of plant communities are found in the park-grasslands, shrub lands and forests. The terrain above 2000m is covered primarily by grasslands. However, there are numerous small patches of forests in hollows and gullies in these areas. Shrub lands predominate along the bases of the cliffs and interspersed in rocky slab areas. The antibacterial Eupatorium Gland Losum is found here.
Twenty six species of mammals have been recorded in the park including the largest surviving population of Nilgiri Tahr, estimated at about 750 in number. The other ungulates are Gaur, Indian Muntjac and Sambar Deer. 12 species of birds have been recorded. Endemic butterflies confined to the shola-grass land ecosystem like the Red Disk Bush Brown and Palani Four wing are important among the 101 species in the park. 19 species of amphibians have been recorded in the park.

An amenity center run by the members of eco-development committee provides basic facilities to tourists. It is also possible to have a short walk from the Interpretation Center along the road through the grasslands. There are eco-shop which sells different products and the benefit goes for the conservation of the National park. The Park remains closed for about two months during the calving season that occurs between January and March.

5.9.5 General Guidelines of Forest/Wildlife Tourism

- To provide livelihood opportunities to local community through their involvement in services delivery through ecotourism.
- To underline the vital role of forest/wildlife ecotourism in sustainable development of natural resources.
- To utilise the potential of pristine forest areas for tourism as a key economic force for the conservation of nature.
- To facilitate the viability and performance of ecotourism enterprises and activities through effective marketing, education and training.

5.9.6 Key Elements of Forest/Wildlife Eco -Tourism

1. Existence of Tiger Reserve/National Park/Sanctuary/Forest Area as a prime attraction.
2. Should be ecologically, socially, culturally and economically sustainable.
3. Should have participation of the local stakeholders (host community).
4. Should benefit local community.
5. Should be a low profile venture.
6. Should be capable of dovetailing in the existing tourism of the state.
5.10 Chinnar Wildlife Sanctuary

Chinnar Wildlife Sanctuary is one of the twelve wildlife sanctuaries among the protected areas of Kerala. Chinnar is the habitat for the endangered Giant Grizzled Squirrel of India. Their total number would be less than 200. Located in the rain shadow area of the Western Ghats, unlike other sanctuaries in Kerala, Chinnar gets only less than two months of rain every year. Rich in wildlife, the mixed deciduous forests here are ideal for trekking. This is also an ideal place for watching herbs of gaur and elephants ample past. Dry deciduous forest, high sholas and some grassland add to the diversity of the sanctuary. Lying in Devikulam taluk of Idukki district, Chinnar was declared as a wildlife sanctuary in 1984. It is the second habitat for the endangered giant grizzled squirrel in India. With an area of 90,422 sq.kms, Chinnar has the unique thorny scrub forest with Xerophytes species. The undulated terrain with rocky patches increases the scenic splendour of the sanctuary. As the altitude varies from 500 to 2,400 meters within a few kilometres radius, there is drastic variation in the climatic and vegetation.

5.10.1 Eco -Tourism Activities

All the ecotourism activities are organised jointly by the Forest Department and the Eco Development Committees of the local tribal communities. The activities are designed to offer a wide spectrum of wilderness opportunities to the visitors and to provide means of sustainable livelihood for local communities. Ecotourism facilities include:

- River trekking
- Trekking to the cultural site
- Nature trail to the watch tower
- Trek to Thoovanam falls
- Interpretation activities and medicinal garden
- Tree house at Chinnar
- Trekking and camping at Vasyappara

5.10.2 Flora and Fauna

The famous ‘White Bison of Manjampatti’ has been recently reported from this rich Chinnar. With 225 species of birds, Chinnar is rich in its diversity. The fauna includes 34 species of mammals, 50-60 Indian elephants, 245 species of
birds, 29 species of snakes, 42 species of fishes and 156 species of butterflies. Most of the South Indian wild animals can be found in this forest.

There are 965 species of flowering plants. Eco regions of the sanctuary comprise mostly grassland and wet grasslands vegetation and some South Western Ghats montane rain forests and high shola at the higher Western elevation. South Western Ghats, the moist deciduous forests at mid elevations give way to dry deciduous forests and thorny scrub forests in the lower dryer eastern edge of the valley. The Marayoor sandalwood forest is located here.

5.11 Idukki Wildlife Sanctuary

Idukki Wildlife Sanctuary which came into existence in 1976, spread over an area of 77sq.kms. Situated at an altitude of 450-748m above sea level, this sanctuary occupies the forest land between the Cheruthoni and Periyar Rivers. There is a scenic lake around the sanctuary, covered by an enchanting canopy of tropical ever-green and deciduous trees and offers boat ride. The sanctuary has a large variety of flora and fauna. One can sight here numerous animals like elephant, bison, sambar deer, wild dog, jungle cat, tiger and wild boar. The wildlife here is similar to that of Thekkady. This sanctuary lies adjacent to the world renowned Idukki Arch Dam.

5.12 Other Major Eco-Tourism Centres in Idukki District

There are so many fresh destinations have been founded in Idukki. They are:-

- **Peermade** - The famous plantation town takes its name from Peer Mohammed-Sufi Saint and close associate of the erstwhile royal family of Travancore. Wide vistas of tea, cardamom, rubber and coffee plantation interspersed with silver cascades, sculptural rocks, meadows and mist-cloaked hilltops make Peermade an unforgettable experience. The most delightful trekking tails complement the panoramic landscape. Monuments like the summer residence of the royal family add to the splendour of the land. The summer residence is converted into the government guesthouses under the Department of Tourism offers comfortable accommodation. There are so many tribes live in the hills of Peermade. The main tribal settlement here is Plakkathadam, which is also known for its trekking trails. This idyllic hill station is ideal for mountaineering, trekking and cycling.
Now sophisticated sports like paragliding too is done here. The place is known as Kerala’s Own Ooty. It stands at an altitude of more than 1000 meters above sea level. The climate is always pleasant here. There are more than a hundred varieties of flowers here shining in various colours. The major plantations here are tea, but there are others too including spices like pepper, vanilla, cloves, cardamom etc. Fruits and vegetables like cabbage, oranges, strawberry etc. are also grown here. Peermade is becoming as a centre of education and meditation.

- **Kuttikkanam** - It is a place for adventure tourism and trekking or even a languorous, tranquil break. This picturesque plantation town washed in the fragrance of cardamom is surrounded by lush and green hills.

- **Ilaveezhapoonchira** - This is another picnic spot located in the midst of beautiful hillocks near Kanjar. Surrounded by three enchanting hillocks-Mankunnu, Kadayathoor mala and Thonippara-this place is ideal for trekking.

- **Pattumala** - Lofty peaks, little streams and ever expanding tea plantations are the attractions of this place. The nearby flower garden consist different colours of roses, orchids and anthuria.

- **Thommankuthu** – The seven steps waterfall here is much attractive picnic spot. At each step there is a cascade and pool beneath. Thommankuthu is an ideal place for adventure tourism. Meenuliyarmudi, Keezharkuthu and Irukallumud near Thommankuthu are also famous small tourist centres.

- **Odamedu & Vellaramkunnu** – This is a beautiful location of coffee, cardamom and pepper plantations. This is situated 8 km from Kumily.

- **Ramakkalmedu** – This village gives a vantage view of Tamilnadu for moles on end. The wind energy station of Kerala is situated here.

- **Idukki Dam** – The Idukki dam, built across the Kuravan and Kurathi hills is the world’s second and Asia’s first Arch Dam. The Idukki dam, lying close to the Cheruthoni barrage is 550ft.high and 650ft.wide. The Idukki project consists of three dams-the 550 feet high arch dam, 454 feet high Cheruthoni Dam and Kulamavu Dam.
• **Nadukani** – The place offers an ideal spot to catch panoramic views of the nearby low lying areas. A two storied pavilion has been erected here to better view.

• **Anchuruli** – Five mountains in Idukki Lake looking like five vessels turn upside down. Waterfalls to Idukki Lake through Kalyanathandu tunnel.

• **Narekakanam** - This place is situated 8 km from Idukki. This place is famous for its numerous waterfalls.

• **Meenuli** – This place is noted for two acres of evergreen forests upon a huge rock. The rock is more than 500 acres in area and is an ideal spot for mountaineering.

• **Keezharkuthu** – This place is famous for its splendid rainbow waterfalls cascading down from a height of about 1500 meters.

• **Kuthumkal Waterfalls** – The Kuthumkal waterfall provides a picturesque view of the water, cascading down from dazzling heights.

• **Panchalimedu** – It is considered to be the place where Pancha pandava lived during their forest life. Green mountains, the stone like furniture which are believed to be used by Panchapandava can be seeing here.

• **Murinjapuzha Waterfalls** – This waterfall is near Kuttikanam. This picnic spot is in the developing stage.

• **Parunthupara** – This place is also known as Grampi Rocky Plains, lush hillsides, forests, trekking trails and picturesque view lent charm to this destination.

• **Hill View Park** – True to its title it offers a panoramic view of a large area than one can experience from any high mountain peak. Scene of wild elephants in their natural habitual provide a good experience to the visitor. Spread over an area of 8 acres of land this aesthetically designed park has a natural water body at the hill top and pedal boating facility is available here. The herbal garden and children’s play area are added attractions. Visit to this park makes Idukki visit a memorable one.

• **Mullaperiyar Dam** – Mullaperiyar Dam was built by British in 1895. It stands on Periyar River whose flow originates from Thekkady. The dam was built mainly for watering the paddy fields of Tamil Nadu perennially.
drought-prone. Even though the dam is now in Kerala, most of the water in the reservoir is still released to Tamil Nadu and is cause for considerable political tensions between the two states. The Dam is 175 feet tall in height and is 5704 feet long.

- **Anamudi Shola National Park** – Anamudi Shola National Park is a protected area located along the Western Ghats in Idukki district. It is composed of Mannavan Shola, Idivara Shola and Pullardi Shola; covering a total area of around 7.5 Km². This Park is administered by the Department of Forests and Wildlife. This National Park forms part of the Anamalai sub-cluster.

- **Kurinjimala Sanctuary** – Kurinjimala Sanctuary protects the approximately 32 km² core habitat of the endangered Neelakurinji plant in Kottakamboor and Vattavada. The sanctuary was declared on October 7, 2006. This sanctuary would ensure the long-term protection of the unique biodiversity of the area, especially Stroblianthes Kunthiana and its habitat. The sanctuary is home to threatened species of Elephant, Gaur, Nilgiri Tahr and Deer.

- **Pampadum Shola National Park** – This is the smallest National Park in Kerala state. The park adjoins the Allinagaram Reserved Forest within the proposed Palani Hill Wildlife Sanctuary and National Park. The Park protects a moderate amount of montane evergreen shola forest that is associated with the wildlife rich Eravikulam National Park. There are various types of medicinal plants in Pampadum Shola National Park.

- **Lakkam Falls** – Lakkam waterfalls near Vagavurai Estate is situated amidst wilderness and it is about a 5 minute drive from Munnar-Marayoor road.

### 5.13 Problems

Like any other ecotourism site, lot of problems of ecotourism development have been observed in Idukki district. Some of the ecotourism projects in Idukki district are in a developing stage. Vagamon is an example. The initiatives carried out in the name of ecotourism have adversely affected people and the environment in some areas. The major problems are discussed below:
5.13.1 Infrastructural Bottleneck

Lack of some minimum facilities has been the major deterrent affecting the flow of tourists to Idukki district. Despite having potentialities, some ecotourism projects in Idukki district still fails to attract foreign tourists to the desired level due to the lack of proper infrastructure. The infrastructures of the most of the ecotourism spots in Idukki district have not been developed up to the level of expectation.

5.13.2 Lack of Adequate Safety and Security Measures

Lack of adequate safety measures have been observed here. Thekkady Boat Tragedy is the outcome of this. Lack of adequate lifeguards and life-jackets were the important problems in Thekkady. It is necessary that both domestic as well as foreign tourists can always enjoy their time under a peaceful atmosphere.

5.13.3 Logging Expansion of Plantations

Logging expansion of plantations is another problem confronting here. Coffee plantations were raised in Munnar and Vagamon, which were further, converted into tea or abandoned following the decline of production. The bridle path that connected these plantations paved way for encroachments, forest fires and subsequent degradation of forest tracts in the region. Construction of roads to some remote areas in Idukki inflicted considerable damages to the forests. The forest department also entered the plantation sector. A vast area of forest was cleared for rehabilitation plantations, resettling construction of dam and others lead to degradation of forest. Disproportional use of land and exploiting natural landscape are other problems.

5.13.4 Lack of Waste Disposal Arrangement

Large quantities of waste are deserted aside the roads. Waste disposal system and drainage system are not working well. If proper measures are not taken, it will become a major problem in the coming future with an increase in visitors. This matter has to be taken up by local bodies. There should also be clear strategy and operational system for waste disposal based on eco-friendly measures.

Besides these, there are some other problems. These are:-

- A low-density rural population is found in Idukki district. Most of these people depend on the use of the natural environment for their livelihood. This leads to resource depletion.
- Large flows of visitors to eco places leads to pollution of waterways, accumulation of garbage which degrades the habitat. Unregulated tourist activity may cause disturbance to the flora and fauna. Influx of outsiders as tourists and entrepreneurs cause social and cultural degradation of local population.

- In Eravikulam, Nilgiri Wildlife Association was formed to monitor indiscriminate killing of the Tahr and other animals. But still killing of animals is continuing.

- In Vagamon, tourists discard several water bottles and it creates serious environmental pollution.

- Lack of scientific knowledge of visitor impacts on remote areas, nature areas, wilderness areas.

- Lack of connectivity with tourist destinations is also considered as a persistent problem of ecotourism sector in Idukki. Poorly developed road network to some small upcoming ecotourism destinations in Idukki district is a major problem. Lack of internal railway network is another problem in the field of transportation in Idukki district.

- Global recession and Mullaperiyar issues took their role and international tourists in 2009 are estimated to have dropped down by 2%.

- Lack of adequate number of trained guides is a major problem in Vagamon, moreover the tourist spots are not properly decorated, lighted and cleaned.

- A large number of tourists are lodging complaints about exorbitant rates being charged by taxi or autorickshaw operators.

- Absence of necessary advertisements and marketing measures.

- Most of the hotels in Idukki district are maintaining very unprofessional approach in serving the tourists.

- Unhygienic conditions, lack of easily accessible information and law and order problems are other main shortcomings in Idukki district.

- Poor visitor experience and inadequate facilitation services are major problems in Munnar and Thekkady.
Distance from major markets, lack of quality shopping and recreation facilities are other important problems faced by ecotourism projects in Idukki district.

Lack of regulatory mechanism for sustainable development and quality controls for ecotourism development.

Lack of co-ordination by various departments such as forest, tourism and irrigation in providing services to tourists.

High percentage of low yield foreign tourists and lack of expertise in preparation of tourism plans.

Pollution is the most important problem in Munnar.

In Munnar, majority of tourists prefer medium-class accommodation, but facilities in this class are few.

Lack of parking lots and narrow roads are the other major difficulties faced by tourists in Munnar. Parking space is insufficient and this often leads to traffic congestion.

Rising population is a major threat to the ecotourism activities. People attack forest for various purposes. Forests are important part of ecotourism.

Boats are very old in Thekkady.

Lack of drinking water facilities especially during December-April months. Water quality and quantity of these areas are major concern. Depleting water resources is a problem here.

In ecotourism activities, greater benefits flow to developers and investors rather than to local communities.

Excess water exploitation in some resorts is a major problem in Idukki.

5.14 Achievements and New Initiatives in Eco-Tourism Development in Idukki District

Ecotourism appears to be a viable option for sustainable development and conservation of rich culture and environment of the Idukki district. The study reveals that the major service factor which attracts the tourists to Idukki is the
condition of environment. In Kerala, Idukki district has the highest ecotourism potential and Wayanad occupies the second position. Munnar is the destination with highest visitation in Idukki district. According to Travellers Choice Destination, Munnar is the best tourist destination in Asia. Munnar got Travellers Choice Destination Award 2010.

The success of ecotourism projects in Idukki district reflects a balance between environment and local people. The involvement of local people in ecotourism activities not only provides an alternative source of income but also increasing their commitment to ecology. There is also a plan to start orchid garden in Vagamon like rose garden in Ooty.

The Forest Department and the Kumily Panchayat have joined hands to begin a plastic waste and sewage treatment plant in Thekkady. Plastic waste will be converted to granule form and it can be used for road repair work. The project will be implemented in two phase. The people in Kumily and Chakkupalam panchayat depend on the Thekkady canal for potable water. But the waste water from Kumily town makes the canal water contaminated. The work is expected to begin soon. Government took so many measures to ensure the safety of tourists in Munnar. Government have taken measures to protect tourists with the help of police force.

In 2010, the Kerala tourism minister Kodiyeri Balakrishnan declared a plan to implement Eco-Tourism Township in Munnar. Government prepared a master plan with the help of local authorities. The important destinations come under this plan are Munnar, Palivasal, Vattavada, Kanthallur, Devikulam and Chinnakanal. Government has also a plan to develop Nedumkandam as a tourist destination. This will help to tap the potential of hill station. The government is keen to develop the potential of lesser known tourism spots in the Idukki district to provide benefit to the local community. The District Tourism Promotion Council is drawing up a master plan to develop Idukki, Nedumkandam and Vagamon clubbing the lesser known tourism spots along with Munnar and Thekkady, the main tourist destination in Idukki district.

In Thekkady also, government took some measures to enhance the ecotourism. Kumily, the nearby city of Thekkady is hugely dependent on ecotourism. During the cancellation of boating in Thekkady because of Thekkady
boat tragedy, hoteliers, travel agencies and business organisations engaged in the tourist activities had been in crisis. In Thekkady during 2008-2009, there is considerable decline in arrivals of tourists. But as a result of government action, now Thekkady is in rejuvenation stage.

Periyar Tiger Reserve got international award by Union Ministry of Forest and Environment and UN Development Committee. This project also got the award for Best Eco-Friendly Tourism Project and the best Maintained Tourist Friendly Wildlife Sanctuary in 2006. In Periyar Tiger Reserve, fire line clearing and awareness campaign have begun to prevent the occurrence of wildfires. Grasslands in some areas in Thekkady forests started drying up in 2009-10 tourist season. To control this, door to door awareness campaign in the wildfire-prone areas had to be started. Awareness classes were also organised for the adivasis living in the grassland areas. Students actively participated in this awareness programme.

The well-managed ecotourism activities at Periyar Tiger Reserves bring revenue and provide sustainable livelihoods to some local communities. All the ecotourism projects in Idukki district provide employment opportunity to local people. Here almost all the shops are running by local people. This leads to local empowerment. The ecotourism development in Idukki provides a number of other direct and indirect employment opportunities to local people such as guides, helpers in adventure tourism activities, operators of hotels, local business entrepreneurs etc.

5.15 The Economic Significance of Eco-Tourism in Idukki District

The economic significance of ecotourism in Idukki can be explained by using tourist statistics. Idukki district is witnessing an enviable advantage in tourist arrivals during the last ten years. The contribution of ecotourism in Idukki district to the Kerala economy can be explained with the help of following tables:-
Table 5:2
Tourist Arrivals (Both Domestic and Foreign) in Idukki District during 2010

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Month</th>
<th>Number of Domestic Tourist</th>
<th>Number of Foreign Tourist</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>January</td>
<td>48763</td>
<td>8252</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February</td>
<td>48360</td>
<td>7878</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March</td>
<td>40125</td>
<td>3589</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April</td>
<td>47404</td>
<td>2786</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May</td>
<td>47641</td>
<td>1373</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June</td>
<td>22905</td>
<td>965</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July</td>
<td>20065</td>
<td>4179</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August</td>
<td>29580</td>
<td>3068</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September</td>
<td>32620</td>
<td>1838</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October</td>
<td>46070</td>
<td>5270</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November</td>
<td>40530</td>
<td>4334</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December</td>
<td>40060</td>
<td>4763</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td><strong>464123</strong></td>
<td><strong>48295</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Tourism Statistics, Department of Tourism, Government of Kerala.

Table 5:2 depicts the number of domestic and foreign tourist visits to Idukki district in 2010. Total number of domestic tourists is 464123 and foreign tourists, 48295 in Idukki. The number of foreign tourists is low in June and domestic tourists, in July. The number of foreign tourists is high in January i.e. 8252 and domestic tourists is 48763 in January.

A graphical presentation of the data makes the analysis clear. Fig 5:2 shows the month-wise arrivals of foreign tourists in Idukki in 2010:-
Fig. 5:2 shows an irregular trend. In the graph, the line shows a decreasing trend from January to June. Then it shows a fluctuating trend. Number of foreign tourist visits in Idukki is high in January.

Figure 5:3 represents the data regarding month-wise domestic tourist arrivals in Idukki in 2010:-
In case of domestic tourists also, number of tourist visits is high in January. Here the number of tourist visits is low in July. From the above two figures, we can understand that in Idukki, the number of tourist visits is high in January and in December and low in June and July.

Table 5:3 analyses the number of both domestic and foreign tourist arrivals in Idukki district in 2009:-
Table 5:3
Tourist Arrivals (Both Domestic and Foreign) in Idukki District during 2009

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Month</th>
<th>Number of Domestic Tourist</th>
<th>Number of Foreign Tourist</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>January</td>
<td>46887</td>
<td>7434</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February</td>
<td>45996</td>
<td>6676</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March</td>
<td>38581</td>
<td>3131</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April</td>
<td>45146</td>
<td>2579</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May</td>
<td>44944</td>
<td>1002</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June</td>
<td>21209</td>
<td>409</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July</td>
<td>18579</td>
<td>1032</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August</td>
<td>26649</td>
<td>2757</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September</td>
<td>30199</td>
<td>1356</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October</td>
<td>41134</td>
<td>4216</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November</td>
<td>35244</td>
<td>3611</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December</td>
<td>34834</td>
<td>3982</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>429402</strong></td>
<td><strong>38185</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Tourism Statistics, Department of Tourism, Government of Kerala.

The number of tourist visits decreased in 2009 as compared to 2010 as a result of Thekkady boat tragedy and global recession. The number of domestic tourists in 2009 is 429402 and in 2010, it is 464123. The foreign tourist arrivals in 2009 is 38185 and in 2010 is 48295.

Table 5:4 presents the tourist visits in Idukki district from 2000 to 2010:-
Table 5:4
Tourist Visits in Idukki District from 2000 to 2010 (Both Domestic and Foreign)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Domestic Tourist</th>
<th>Foreign Tourist</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>209639</td>
<td>24842</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>324000</td>
<td>26571</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>375820</td>
<td>29300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>420960</td>
<td>31831</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>482183</td>
<td>46031</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>473772</td>
<td>39378</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>515182</td>
<td>31767</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>505229</td>
<td>46463</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>531970</td>
<td>51025</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>429402</td>
<td>38185</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>464123</td>
<td>48295</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Tourism Statistics, Department of Tourism, Government of Kerala.

From table 5:4 it is revealed that during 2000, the number of domestic tourist visits in Idukki district is 209639. This is increased to 464,123 in 2010. The number of foreign tourist visit in 2000 is 24842 and is raised to 48295 in 2010.

Linear trend line of foreign tourist visits in Idukki is given by

\[ Y = 2.43 + 0.222 t \]

Where \( y \) denotes the number of tourist visits in ten thousands and the variable \( t = \text{year}-1999 \). The coefficient of determination shows how good is the above created model.

Coefficient of determination is 0.789.

This value shows the model is apt for data.

The data on foreign tourist arrivals in Idukki from 2000 to 2010 is used to draw the graph 5:4:-
Figure 5:4 shows the fluctuating trend in foreign tourist arrivals in Idukki district from 2000 to 2010. From the figure, it is clear that the highest foreign tourist arrival year is 2008.

Linear trend line of domestic tourist visits in Idukki is given by

\[ Y = 3.013 + 0.215 \, t \]

Where \( y \) denotes the number of tourist arrivals in millions and the variable \( t = \text{year}-1999 \). Here the linear trend line shows the increase in the number of domestic tourist by 0.215 million.

Coefficient of determination is 0.553.

Figure 5:5 shows the trend in domestic tourist arrivals in Idukki from 2000 to 2010: -
Domestic tourist visits are also high in 2008, i.e. 531970. Lowest tourist visiting year is 2000. From 2000 to 2004, domestic tourist arrivals show a growing trend.

The table 5:5 shows that the number of tourist visits in Munnar in 2010:-
Table 5:5
Number of Tourist Visits (Both Domestic and Foreign) in Munnar during 2010

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Month</th>
<th>Number of Domestic Tourist</th>
<th>Number of Foreign Tourist</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>January</td>
<td>23901</td>
<td>3986</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February</td>
<td>26069</td>
<td>3783</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March</td>
<td>23685</td>
<td>1901</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April</td>
<td>28465</td>
<td>1377</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May</td>
<td>30178</td>
<td>750</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June</td>
<td>6679</td>
<td>445</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July</td>
<td>7224</td>
<td>1740</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August</td>
<td>10065</td>
<td>887</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September</td>
<td>15293</td>
<td>439</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October</td>
<td>18184</td>
<td>1554</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November</td>
<td>17222</td>
<td>1462</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December</td>
<td>18779</td>
<td>1366</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>225748</strong></td>
<td><strong>19690</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Tourism Statistics, Department of Tourism, Government of Kerala.

During 2010, total number of domestic tourist visits in Munnar is 225748 and foreign tourist visit is 19690. The number of foreign tourists visit is low in September and high in January.

The domestic tourist visiting shows fluctuating trend. The number of tourist visiting to Thekkady in 2010 shows in table 5:6:-
Table 5:6
Number of Tourist Visits (Both Domestic and Foreign) in Thekkady during 2010

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Month</th>
<th>Number of Domestic Tourist</th>
<th>Number of Foreign Tourist</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>January</td>
<td>17904</td>
<td>4021</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February</td>
<td>12324</td>
<td>3344</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March</td>
<td>11556</td>
<td>1832</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April</td>
<td>9808</td>
<td>1968</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May</td>
<td>12243</td>
<td>610</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June</td>
<td>14302</td>
<td>632</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July</td>
<td>10537</td>
<td>2355</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August</td>
<td>14294</td>
<td>2115</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September</td>
<td>11584</td>
<td>1595</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October</td>
<td>20966</td>
<td>2829</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November</td>
<td>19385</td>
<td>2796</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December</td>
<td>15954</td>
<td>3435</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>170857</strong></td>
<td><strong>27537</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Tourism Statistics, Department of Tourism, Government of Kerala.

In Thekkady, domestic tourist visits are high in October and January occupies second position. In the case of foreign tourist visits, least tourist visiting month is May. Total number of foreign tourist visiting to Thekkady in 2010 is 27537 and domestic tourist visiting is 170857. Among the total tourist visit, domestic tourists occupy the highest position in Thekkady in 2010.

The number of tourist visited Vagamon in 2010 is shown in table 5:7:-
Table 5:7
Number of Tourist Visits (Both Domestic and Foreign) in Vagamon during 2010

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Month</th>
<th>Number of Domestic Tourist</th>
<th>Number of Foreign Tourist</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>January</td>
<td>1847</td>
<td>376</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February</td>
<td>1815</td>
<td>216</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March</td>
<td>1738</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April</td>
<td>1851</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May</td>
<td>1731</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June</td>
<td>980</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July</td>
<td>839</td>
<td>156</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August</td>
<td>1223</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September</td>
<td>1222</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October</td>
<td>2653</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November</td>
<td>1244</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December</td>
<td>1223</td>
<td>161</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>18366</strong></td>
<td><strong>1101</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Tourism Statistics, Department of Tourism, Government of Kerala.

In Vagamon, we can see that the number of foreign tourists is low in 2010. Total number of domestic tourists visited is 18366 in 2010. In October, the number of domestic tourists visited is 2653; it is the highest tourist arrival month in 2010.

Tables 5:8 and 5:9 explain the tourist statistics trend from 2000 to 2010 in Munnar and Thekkady. Table 5:8 shows the number of tourist visits in Munnar from 2000 to 2010:-
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Domestic Tourist</th>
<th>Foreign Tourist</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>187722</td>
<td>10987</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>157121</td>
<td>91241</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>161902</td>
<td>17821</td>
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<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>132245</td>
<td>9723</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>178145</td>
<td>13970</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>257914</td>
<td>11414</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>282319</td>
<td>29397</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>151531</td>
<td>9037</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>143220</td>
<td>9051</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>207622</td>
<td>24904</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>225748</td>
<td>19690</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Tourism Statistics, Department of Tourism, Government of Kerala.

Table 5:8 shows the fluctuating trend both in the case of domestic and foreign tourists. The table 5:9 shows the number of tourist visits in Thekkady from 2000 to 2010:-
Table 5:9
Tourist Visits in Thekkady from 2000 to 2010 (Both Domestic and Foreign)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Domestic Tourist</th>
<th>Foreign Tourist</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>166970</td>
<td>21543</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>187241</td>
<td>29081</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>121450</td>
<td>12590</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>180213</td>
<td>19021</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>114901</td>
<td>15713</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>107187</td>
<td>27061</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>110443</td>
<td>142373</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>35202</td>
<td>18410</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>110834</td>
<td>27986</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>157749</td>
<td>24904</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>170857</td>
<td>27537</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Tourism Statistics, Department of Tourism, Government of Kerala.

The table 5:9 express the trend of tourist visits in Thekkady. We can see that the number of domestic tourists increased from 157749 in 2009 to 170857 in 2010. In case of foreign tourists, the number increased from 24904 in 2009 to 27537 in 2010.
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