Chapter - 9

Suggestions and Recommendations
In this study, an attempt has been made to identify positive and negative impacts due to eco-tourism in the hilly areas of Chikmagalur district. Through proper planning, development and management; it is possible to reduce the negative impacts. Otherwise in future the eco-tourist places will start degrading and will be of no value. So, the government as well as general public should come forward to solve the problems associated with eco-tourism and we should make it sustainable.

Careful consideration must be given to site selection and preparation. The carrying capacity and limits of acceptable change is also an important parameter to be considered. Construction projects should incorporate alternative energy, water and waste treatment systems in their design phase. It needs an immediate focus on the status of overall conditions which are favourable for the sustainable ecotourism development in the hilly areas of Chikmagalur.

Hence, the following suggestions and recommendations need to minimize or reduce the further deterioration of eco-tourism quality in the study area.

1. Existing buildings located in the coffee plantation areas have been converted into home-stays and all these buildings were constructed when the concept of eco-tourism was not there. In future, it is recommended that the architecture of all facilities like accommodation, signboards etc, which are connected with the ecotourism, be designed to blend in with nature that reflect the local culture and heritage.
2. Recommended to use local building materials for the construction of tourist facilities so that construction activity helps in encouraging the local economy.

3. During construction activities maximum care should be taken to produce very minimum impact on the natural surroundings by incorporating innovative designs resulting in minimal site disturbance.

4. Since eco-tourism's basic objective is to support conservation of nature, eco-tourism entrepreneurs should make all-round effort in this regard and see that conservation activities are being implemented in their premises.

5. At most importance should be given to the creation of hygienic conditions in all activities of eco-tourism. The water, wastewater and solid waste management should be efficient so that there should not be any negative impacts to the local environment.

6. Rainwater harvesting can be introduced in their premises.

7. Maximum area in the hilly regions comes under coffee and tea plantations. Hence, farmers are encouraged to practice natural farming discouraging the use of inorganic fertilizers and pesticides. Good incentive programs can be created to encourage organic farming.

8. Recommended to display dos/don’ts to protect environment at proper places. This makes tourists aware of environmental programmes and learns to respect culture and traditions of the local population.
9. Recommended to adopt energy conservation practices by using renewable energy sources like solar energy, CFL bulbs.

10. Encouraged to create favorable ecosystems to attract all species of birds, butterflies etc. which makes the surrounding area livelier. Erect display boards at proper places with pictures and brief details of local birds and animals.

11. Encouraged to take up eco-certification program. It will assure the visitors that the principles of eco-tourism and sustainable development are being practiced at its optimum level.

12. Local guides are very well informed about the local culture, environment, heritage and food. Therefore local guides should be encouraged. It is beneficial for the tourists and local guides.

13. The tourist spots of the region should be subjected to strict monitoring and they should be declared as well as maintained as litter free zones.

These collective initiatives will ensure sustainability of ecotourism and its related activities.

Further more, it is evident from the research that local economy should be encouraged strongly, which strongly influences the sustainability of the other three pillars for ecotourism – Environmental Sustainability, Social Sustainability and Community Sustainability. People in the hilly areas have demonstrated that there are advantages in taking care of their environment and thus they are capitalizing on this fact. They also realize that it is their responsibility to take care of the environment since that is their USP – Unique Selling Point.
Gender sensitivity is another keen observation made in the research, and clearly both the genders have a strong sense of ownership and opinion of the way they want to approach the management of the environment. However, it is complementary in action.

The study in the hilly areas of Chikmagalur and the impacts of ecotourism thus stands out as a good example which shows how people and environment can co-exist and mutually benefit from each other, and this paves way towards sustainability - development that meets the needs of the present generation without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.