

## **1. Introduction**

Tourism industry has steadily acquired an increasingly significant position in the global economy. A naive impression of the same may illustrate it merely as a provider of basic facilities with a view to meet the expectations and perceptions of the tourists. A closer look would, however, reveal that, it incorporates and entails a whole set of complex factors and forces. Tourism promotes people – to - people contacts, ethnic cultural understanding, mutual appreciation and co-operation and thereby promoting peace. The development of tourism depends on the various factors such as attraction, accommodation, transportation, recreation, restaurants, shopping, hospitality, safety and security, attitude of host community, tourist destinations and so on.

In India, tourism has been gaining popularity with the active involvement of Government and other promotional agencies. India with diverse culture and geographic areas and its relatively low cost man-power is suitable for the development of the industry. Tourism in India is growing well as is evident from the tourism statistics.

Kerala, a State situated on the tropical Malabar Coast of south-western India, is one of the most popular tourist destinations in the country. Named as one of the "ten paradises of the world" and "50 places of a lifetime" by the National Geographic Traveller, Kerala is famous especially for its ecotourism. Its unique culture and traditions, coupled with its varied demography, has made Kerala one of the most popular tourist destinations in the world. Growing at a rate of 10 per cent, the tourism industry is a major contributor to the State's economy. Today, Kerala tourism is global super brand and regarded as one of the destinations with highest brand recall. In 2010, Kerala attracted 0.66 million foreign tourists and 8.6 million domestic tourist an increase of 18 per cent in foreign tourists and 9 per cent increase in domestic tourists arrivals when compared to the previous year(Tourism Statistics, Government of Kerala) thus making it one of the fastest growing tourism destination in the world. The State's tourism agenda promotes ecologically sustained tourism, which focuses on the local culture, wilderness adventures, volunteering and personal growth of the local population. Efforts are taken to minimize the adverse effects of traditional tourism on the natural environment, and enhance the cultural integrity of local people. The most significant

contribution of the tourism is the creation of employment in rural areas by stimulating local art, handicrafts and folklore. Tourism employs 10 per cent of total workforce and also contributes 5 million US Dollar annually as foreign exchange to the State (Economic Review, Government of Kerala).

Popular attractions in the State include the beaches, hill stations, national parks, wildlife sanctuaries and the backwaters. Hill tourism is one of the fast growing tourism sectors in Kerala, contributes 40 per cent of the total revenue from tourism sector (Tourism Statistics, Government of Kerala). Eastern Kerala consists of land encroached upon by the Western Ghats; the region thus includes high mountains, gorges and deep-cut valleys. The wildest lands are covered with dense forests, while other regions lie under tea and coffee plantations or other forms of cultivation. The Western Ghats rises on average to 1500 metre elevation above sea level. Certain peaks may reach to 3000 metre. The Kerala hills offer pleasant and pleasurable diversions that range from going on hiking, biking, trekking and hill climbing tours, wildlife safaris to the numerous wildlife sanctuaries located on the hills. The mist covered Kerala hills with clear blue skies as the perfect background and evergreen forests that clothe these hills create a visual panorama that heightens the pleasure of all the tourists.

## **2. Statement of the Problem**

It is a boom time for Kerala tourism. Along with the growth of the Kerala economy in general, the tourism sector has also witnessed huge buoyancy in recent times. Kerala today is considered as the top ten tourist destination in the world. Innovative and market-focused advertisement campaigns help Kerala to boost its tourism inflows of both volume and value. About 17 per cent of the foreign and 30 per cent of the domestic tourists who came to Kerala visit the hill destinations of Kerala (Tourism Statistics Government of Kerala, 2010). The major portion of revenue of hill areas is from tourism and also it offers a lot of employment opportunities for the host community throughout the year (Economic Review, Government of Kerala, 2010). Even though hill tourism has an important place in the economic development of hill areas in particular and the tourism sector of the State in general, no pragmatic effort has been made by individual researchers or institutions to

explore the potential of hill tourism in Kerala. It is in this context that the present study titled “Hill Tourism in Kerala” has been undertaken.

### **3. Scope of the Study**

The present study aims to explore hill tourism in Kerala. More specifically, it aims to assess the accessibility and amenities in the hill tourism destinations in Kerala and the socio-cultural, economic and environmental impact of hill tourism on the host community. The role of promotional agencies in the development of hills of Kerala as tourism destination also comes under the purview of the study.

### **4. Significance of the Study**

There are more economic benefits commonly associated with tourism. Tourism can also have a positive impact on regional development, and may help to even out some of the inequalities between different parts of a given country. Regions which do not have access to other major resources or do not have major urban centres may be able to use tourism to improve regional incomes and reduce out-migration. It has also been suggested that tourism may encourage entrepreneurship and the development of new small businesses, particularly among groups who might not have easy access to formal labour markets. Special interest tourism, because of its relatively early stage of development, is thought to be particularly conducive to entrepreneurial activity. Such entrepreneurial activity can range from specialised tour and guiding services to new types of attraction to the provision of local handicrafts. In this context, a study on the hills, which are isolated from the plain lands for several decades, as tourism destination, particularly the facilities provided for the tourists and also the impact of tourism on the host community is very much significant. It is hoped that the present study would be beneficial to tourists, host community, service providers and also the government and other tourism promotion agencies for formulating suitable policy decisions for the betterment of hill tourism.

### **5. Objectives of the Study**

The study aims at the following objectives:

1. To assess the accessibility and amenities in the hill tourism destinations in Kerala.
2. To assess the socio-cultural, economic and environmental impact of hill tourism in Kerala.
3. To study the role of promotional agencies in the development of hill tourism destinations in Kerala.

## **6. Hypotheses**

In line with the objectives, the following objectives were formulated:

1. The tourists are not satisfied with the tangible facilities available at the hill destinations in Kerala.
2. The tourists are not satisfied with the intangible facilities available at the hill destinations in Kerala.
3. The cost of accommodation at the hill destinations in Kerala is not high.
4. The increased tourists' arrival does not affect the culture and tradition of the host community at the hill destinations in Kerala.
5. The increased tourism activity does not affect the cost of living of the host community at the hill destinations in Kerala.
6. The increased tourism activity no way results the degradation of natural resources at the hill destinations in Kerala.

## **7. Variables Used for the Study**

The following variables identified based on an exhaustive literature survey have been used for analysis

### **7.1 Accessibility and amenities in the hill tourism destinations in Kerala**

- i. Regularity of Visit
- ii. Frequency of Visit
- iii. Source of Information about the Destination
- iv. Purpose of Travel
- v. Mode of Transport

- vi. Companion
- vii. Type of Accommodation
- viii. Road Network to the Tourism Spots
- ix. Restaurants
- x. Pure Drinking Water
- xi. Sanitation Facilities
- xii. Public Lighting System
- xiii. Communication Facilities
- xiv. Banking Facilities
- xv. Shopping Facilities
- xvi. Hospital Facilities
- xvii. Recreation Facilities
- xviii. Publicity of Tourism Products
- xix. Tourism Information Centre
- xx. Sight seeing Packages
- xxi. Facility for Adventure Activities
- xxii. Safety and Security
- xxiii. Rejuvenation Facilities
- xxiv. Law and Order at the Destination
- xxv. The Service of Tourist Guide
- xxvi. Overall Environment at the Destination
- xxvii. Attitude and Approach of Host community
- xxviii. Cost of the Facilities at the Destinations

## **7.2 Socio-cultural, economic and environmental impact of hill tourism in**

### **Kerala**

- i. Social interaction
- ii. Cultural Exchange and Education
- iii. Cultural Advancement
- iv. Preserves the Cultural Identity
- v. Revival of Traditional Art, Craft and Culture

- vi. Restoration of historical sites
- vii. Commodifies culture and traditional way of life
- viii. Changes in the Art, Craft and Festival
- ix. Demonstration effect
- x. Crimes
- xi. Vandalism
- xii. Exploits host community
- xiii. Drug use and alcoholism
- xiv. Sex abuse and prostitution
- xv. Diseases
- xvi. Degradation of local language
- xvii. Friction between Host Community and Tourists
- xviii. Effect on the community's way of life
- xix. Displacement of community
- xx. Employment generation
- xxi. New Business Units and Expansion of Existing Units
- xxii. Income of the community
- xxiii. Educational Facilities
- xxiv. Standard of Living
- xxv. Investment in the Area
- xxvi. Infrastructure
- xxvii. Development of nearby areas
- xxviii. Foreign Exchange
- xxix. Price of land, houses and essential commodities
- xxx. Availability of consumables
- xxxi. Other productive industry
- xxxii. Tax burden
- xxxiii. Cost of living
- xxxiv. Environmental consciousness
- xxxv. Quality of Public Services

- xxxvi. Waste management
- xxxvii. Income for the preservation of nature
- xxxviii. Pollution
- xxxix. Water and Electricity
  - xl. Drainage and Sanitation
  - xli. Climate change
  - xlii. Degradation of Natural Resources
  - xliii. Deforestation
  - xliv. Biodiversity and quality of landscape

### **7.3 Agencies in the development of hill tourism destinations in Kerala**

- i. Form of various agencies
- ii. Facilities provided by the agencies
- iii. Facilities maintained by agencies

## **8. Methodology**

The present study is empirical in nature based on both primary and secondary data. The sample, data source and tools of analysis used for the study are given in the following sections.

### **8.1 Selection of Sample**

In Kerala, there were 12 hill destinations (MoT, Government of India, 2010), which constitute the universe for the study. Of the 12 destinations, five destinations constitute the sample for the study, three from the central region (Ernakulam, Kottayam, Iddukki, Thrissur and Palghat Districts ), one from Southern region ( Thiruvananthapuram, Kollam, Pathanamthitta and Alappuzha districts) and one from northern region (Malappuram, Kozhikode. Wayanad, Kannur and Kasargod districts) were selected on the basis of highest number of tourist arrivals (Table 1.1).

**Table 1.1: Destinations Selected for the Study**

Region	Name of Destinations	Sample
South	Ponmudi	Ponmudi
	Agasthyarkoodam	
Central	Thekkady	Munnar Thekkady Neliampathy
	Munnar	
	Vagamon	
	Peerumedu	
	Idukki	
	Neliampathy	
	Dhoni	
North	Pythalmala	Wayanad
	Ranipuram	
	Wayanad	
Total	12	5

The respondents for the study consist of 300 tourists (both domestic (225) and foreign (75)), 250 host community and all the 28 promotional agencies (Table 1.3) for the development of hills as tourism destination. As all the tourism destinations have equal in importance, the selected sample were equally distributed and thus 60 tourists (15 foreign and 45 domestic) and 50 host community were selected from each destination (Table 1.2). The respondents were selected conveniently from the selected destinations by giving due weightage to all the categories. The travel agencies and hotels were excluded from the purview of this study as they were dealing only with travel and accommodation of tourists.

**Table 1.2: No. of Tourists and Host Community Selected for the Study**

Destination	Tourists					Host community
	Foreign		Domestic		Total Sample of Tourists	
	Tourist Population (Average)*	Sample Selected	Tourist Population (Average)*	Sample Selected		
Ponmudi	1848	15	24675	45	60	50
Thekkady	22630	15	125326	45	60	50
Munnar	16257	15	214186	45	60	50
Neliampathy	1512	15	32252	45	60	50



Wayanad	4985	15	365279	45	60	50
<b>Total</b>		<b>75</b>		<b>225</b>	<b>300</b>	<b>250</b>

\*Tourists visited during the peak season (September – March) of the last three years (2008 – 2010)

**Table 1.3: Agencies Selected for the Study**

Destinations	No. of Agencies Functioning	No. of Agencies Selected
Ponmudi	4	4
Thekkady	6	6
Munnar	7	7
Neliampathy	5	5
Wayanad	6	6
Total	<b>28</b>	<b>28</b>

## 8.2 Data Source

Both primary and secondary data were used for the study. The primary data were collected from the sample respondents on the basis of three sets of scientifically pre-tested structured interview schedules- one for tourists, one for the host community and the other for agencies( given in Annexure I, II and III). The secondary data were collected from books, periodicals, Reports of Government of India and Kerala and other Agencies and the Internet.

## 8.3 Tools of Analysis

The data collected were classified and analysed with the help of SPSS, keeping in view the objectives of the study. For the purpose of analysis, statistical tools viz., average, percentage, annual growth rate and chi-square test were applied. CAGR is applied in order to find the growth trend of tourists, tourism receipts and tourism expenditure. Chi-square test is applied to find out whether there is difference in opinion between foreign and domestic tourists

## 9. Period of the Study

The present study confines itself to a ten year period from 2001 to 2010. It was during this period that the tourism sector in Kerala became the major source of income for the

State and also for the service providers and the host community. Further, it was during this period that Kerala tourism was deemed as global super brand and one of the destinations with highest brand recall. The survey for collecting the primary data was conducted during the period from November 2010 to May 2011.

## **10. Presentation of the Study**

The study report is presented in six chapters.

Chapter 1	Introduction
Chapter 2	Tourism Industries – An Overview
Chapter 3	Accessibility and Amenities in Hill Tourism Destinations in Kerala.
Chapter 4	Socio-cultural, Economic and Environmental Impact of Hill Tourism.
Chapter 5	Promotional Agencies in the Development of Hill Tourism Destination in Kerala.
Chapter 6	Summary of Findings and Suggestions

## **11. Major findings of the Study**

1. Pleasure/Relaxation is the prime motive behind the travel in both foreign and domestic tourists.
2. More than one half of the foreign tourist depend either private or tour operators vehicles to arrive at the destination whereas only less than one half of the domestic tourist depend private or tour operators' vehicles.
3. Most of the tourists as well as host community opined there exists good system of transportation at the destination.
4. Majority of the tourists and host community rated the available accommodation facility at the destination as good.
5. As regards quality of food and beverages available at restaurants, most of the tourists as well as host community opined it as good.
6. More than three fourth of the tourists and one half of the host community opined the sanitation facility at the destination is good.

7. Nearly two third of the tourists are of the opinion that the safety and security facility available at the destination are good.
8. More than three fourth of the tourists are of the opinion that the cost of transportation facilities at the destination is moderate.
9. Nearly 60 per cent of the tourists viewed cost of the accommodation facility at the destination as high.
10. Among the problem faced by tourists at the destination accommodation booking ranked first. Crime and cheating is the least affected problem.
11. A major chunk of host community has of the opinion that tourism promotes social interaction, cultural exchange, cultural education and cultural advancement.
12. A large majority of local community opined that tourism leads to preserve cultural identity, revival of traditional arts and it also ensures restoration of historical sites.
13. A large of host hold the view that tourism leads to have demonstration effect among the community and it also increases number of crimes and creates more vandalism in the society.
14. Most of the local community opined that tourism creates job opportunities, motivates new business, expansion of existing units and also increases income of the local community.
15. Lion share of the people in the destination feels that tourism improves educational facilities in the locality, improves standard of living of the people and the infrastructure of the locality.
16. Large portion of local people opined that tourism leads to shortage of consumables, increases tax burden and also increases the cost of living.
17. As regards the impacts of tourism on environment a lion share of local people opined that tourism increases environmental consciences, improves quality of public services and also improves waste management.
18. A lion share of people in the local area expresses the view that tourism leads to climate change, degradation of natural resources, damages to biodiversity and leads to deforestation.