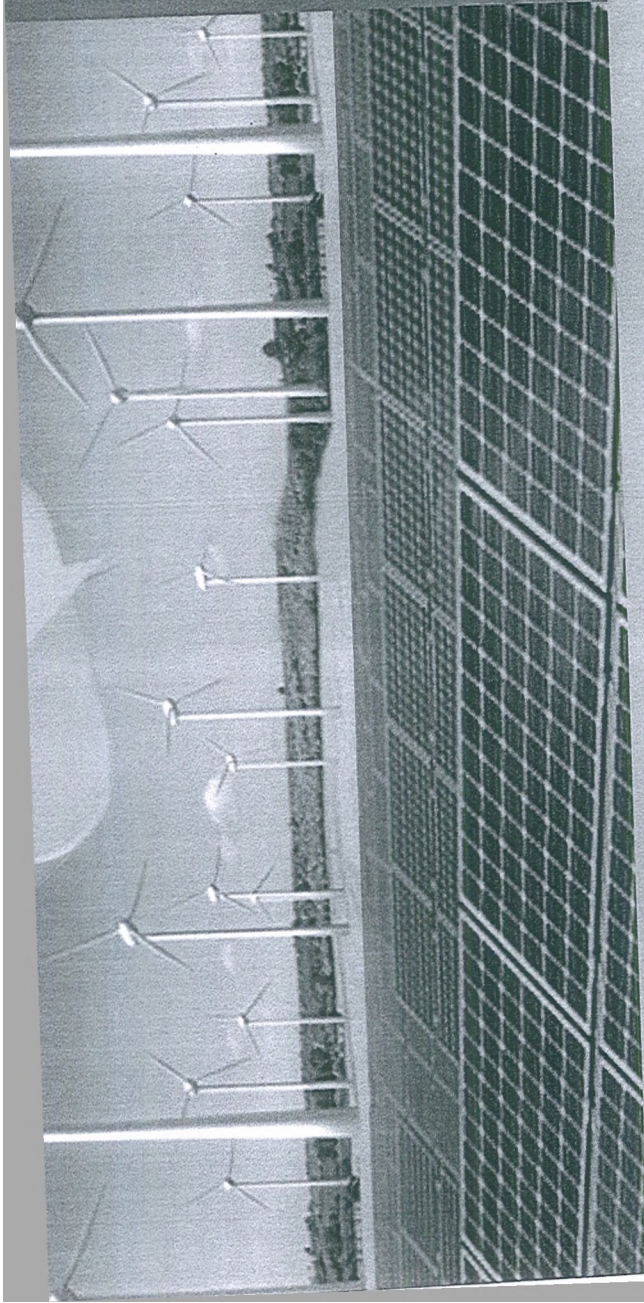


CORPORATE AND BUSINESS RESPONSE TO CLIMATE CHANGE

FROM AWARENESS TO ADOPTION-TRANSCENDING THE BOUNDARIES





Dr. A. Elangovan



**Corporate and Business Response to
Climate Change - From Awareness to Adoption
Transcending the Boundaries**

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A STUDY ON THE ECOTOURISM IN KANNUR DISTRICT, KERALA

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As the fastest growing sector in the tourism industry, ecotourism is an attractive investment proposition. Ecotourism is a new concept in tourism. It is a purposeful travel to natural areas to understand the cultural and natural history of environment, taking care not to alter the integrity of the ecosystem, while producing economic opportunities that make conservation of natural resources beneficial to local people. Its purpose may be to educate the traveller, to provide funds for ecological conservation, to directly benefit the economic development and political empowerment of local communities, or to foster respect for different cultures and for human rights. Generally, ecotourism focuses on volunteering, personal growth and environmental sustainability. Ecotourism typically involves travel to destinations where flora, fauna, and cultural heritage are the primary attractions. One of the goals of ecotourism is to offer tourists insight into the impact of human beings on the environment, and to foster a greater appreciation of our natural habitats.

Responsible ecotourism includes programs that minimize the negative aspects of conventional tourism on the environment and enhance the cultural integrity of local people. Therefore, in addition to evaluating environmental and cultural factors, an integral part of ecotourism is the promotion of recycling, energy efficiency, water conservation, and creation of economic opportunities for local communities. For these reasons, ecotourism often appeals to environmental and social responsibility advocates.

The World Tourism Organization predicts that:

- India will be hosting 5.08 million tourists in 2010. That figure will rise to 8.90 million by 2020. Ecotourism if properly implemented can integrate conservation and rural development by helping to protect valuable natural areas, by generating income, stimulating economic development through tourism expenditures and providing jobs and market for local goods. The effect on the local level can be anywhere from minimal to substantial, depending on the scale of ecotourism relative to the size of the local economy.

BENEFITS FROM ECO TOURISM

- Employment:
- Work opportunities for local people
 - Indirect employment generation for people in other states.
- Financial:
- Foreign exchange earning
 - GNP
 - State taxes
 - Income for business and individuals
- Development:
- broadens economic base
 - Encourages entrepreneurial activity
 - Infrastructural provision
 - Improvement of services
 - Promotes regional development
 - Enhances local understanding of the importance of Eco Tourism

Indian - Opportunity Beckons

Tourism attractive aspects of India

- Flora and fauna
- Coastal region
- Archaeological sites and bio-diversity conservation potential
- Spirituality and yoga centres, International Yoga Festival in the first week of January.

- Small scale local industry – Fisheries, Coir, traditional craft.

PROBLEMS FACED BY TOURISM INDUSTRY

- Lack of community participation and awareness of benefits
- Lack of involvement of the rural sector
- Lack of concern of sustainability
- Complex visa procedures
- Lack of quality infrastructure
- Lack of emphasis on product quality
- Lack of hygiene
- Low utilization of modern marketing and publicity tool
- Absence of consensus on role of tourism
- Lack of priority to tourism on account of unappreciated potential
- Relatively low levels of investment
- Lack of interest on the part of state governments – the primary players

A research study was conducted during 2009 in Kannur district, Kerala.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To examine the potential of ecotourism industry in Kannur district to find out the problems and offer suggestion

Scope of the Study

Geographically, this study is confined to the district of Kannur and the tourism activities in the district.

Period of Study

For the purpose of this data on study tourism of the district for eight years period between 2001-02 and 2007-08 have been collected and analyzed.

Methodology

The data for this study is mainly primary data collected directly from the DTPC Kannur and from the tourists by questionnaire method.

Eco Tourism in Kerala

Kerala of all the states in India offers the maximum potential for the promotion of ecotourism. In order to keep this good will and to stay ahead Kerala tourism has attempted a series of eco-initiatives to make the tourism

industry truly environment friendly. Tourism is an environment dependent industry. The physical and cultural environment of a destination is often the major attractions. Being the leader in innovative tourism initiatives, Kerala Tourism is now poised to convert the entire Tourism industry in Kerala into Eco-friendly mode. Miles and miles of endless serene beaches, tranquil stretches of emerald backwaters, pristine valleys and mountains, exotic species of rare flora and fauna, wild life sanctuaries and national parks, enchanting art forms, magical festivals and cultural monuments are all unique to Kerala and has given it the sobriquet of "Gods own country". The national geographic traveller has labelled Kerala as one of the 10 paradises in the world. Kerala is thus ideally suited for the promotion of ecotourism and has already initiated several steps in this direction.

In Kerala 56 places have been identified for development as ecotourism destinations giving emphasis to conservation, ecological sustainability, environmental education and local community benefits. Keeping this objective in mind the Kerala Tourism has setup a separate ecotourism wing to give policy support for the development of the ecotourism destinations in the State. Ecotourism destinations give emphasis to conservation and environmental education. The products such as trekking, bird watching trails etc. can be developed and operationalised through the constitution of Eco-development Committees. Eco Tourism Kerala has not developed to its true potential in Kerala, though the tourism authorities are trying their best. But, in a way Kerala tourism is parallel to the concept of eco-tourism like green and natural beauty. The Western Ghats region in Kerala can be projected as eco-tourism zone in the true sense.

Programmes:

Kerala Tourism Eco-Initiatives envisages a series of programmes which include various components such as Policy initiatives, Destination specific programmes, Support for community led ecotourism initiatives, Consultancy, Research programmes, Awareness campaigns, Human resource management, Focused marketing.

Educational and interpretation packages, Monitoring mechanism etc.

Eco-Certification programmes.

- Introduce Eco-Certification programmes for all stakeholders in the Tourism industry.
- Provide adequate incentives for promotion of eco-friendly technologies in tourism sector.
- Evolve appropriate institutional mechanism to provide technical, financial and infrastructural support to agencies who have got ecotourism resources both public and private.
- Create Awareness.

Kannur- A Fact File

District Area 2997 Sq.km; Taluk's - Thaliparambu, Kannur, Thalassery; Altitude - Sea Level; Season - August to March; Tourist Attractions - Beaches, Backwaters, Wild Life, Water Falls, Forts, Kettuvallam, Other tourist sites; Industries - Cotton, Looms, Tiles, Silks and etc., Other Information - Hotels, Resorts, Hospitals, Ayurveda and Yoga Centres, Cultural festivals.

Ecotourism in Kannur

Kannur district is bound in the east by the Western Ghats, in the West by the Arabian Sea, and surrounded by Kasargode district and Pondicherry. Kannur District is known as the land of looms and lores, because of the loom industries functioning in the district and festivals held in temples. Kannur district is very rich in vegetation. Natural vegetation, except in some coastal regions, consists of different types of forests. But, in spite of generally favourable climatic conditions, vegetation is not uniform. Another conspicuous feature of this area is the mangrove vegetation, found at the estuaries of rivers and backwaters, and often extending to the interior along their banks. Major part of the district comes under midland region with numerous hills and dales and it presents an undulating surface gradually ascending and merging into the slopes of Western Ghats. Typical flora of this area is deciduous forest consisting of a mixture of evergreen and deciduous trees. The enchanting sandy beaches lined with evergreen coconut palm groves at Payyambalam, Muzhappilangad, Kizhunna, Dharmadam and Ezhimala in the

west; the developing hill stations like 'Pythalamala' and 'Palukachi Mala' and the thick forests in Western Ghats in the East. Anjarakkandy and Mabe crossing the paddy fields and palm groves are major tourist destinations in Kannur

The Potential Ecotourism Spots Identified in Kannur District

- Aralam Wildlife Sanctuary
- Pythalamala
- Kottiyoor
- Mangrove based Ecotourism, Kannur

Ecotourism Programmes at Aralam Wildlife Sanctuary

Aralam Wildlife sanctuary is situated in the southeast part of Kannur District of Kerala State. A home to numerous species of birds and animals, Aralam Sanctuary was established in 1984. The headquarters of the sanctuary is near Iritty about 55 kms from Kannur. The sanctuary adjoins a 3060 hectare Central State Farm at Aralam. Cheenkanni Puzha is the main water source of this sanctuary and the scenic beauty of Aralam fringing on this river is truly an exhilarating experience for all nature lovers and photographers. The sanctuary's terrain is rugged in most places with hillocks. The tallest peak here is Katti Betta, scaling to a height of 1,145 m. The hilly terrains provide opportunities for trekking also. Covered with tropical and semi evergreen forests, the Aralam Sanctuary is home to a vast variety of flora and fauna endemic to the Western Ghats. Herds of deer, elephant, boar and bison are common sights. Leopards, jungle cats and various types of squirrels are also seen here.

Flora

The sanctuary consists of various vegetation zones mainly Tropical Evergreen Forest, Tropical Semi Evergreen Forest, Hilltop Evergreen Forest, Moist Deciduous Forest. There are about 490 ha of teak and eucalyptus plantations within the forest area. Myristica Species, Mesua ferrea, Calophyllum elatum, Culleniarosayroona, Magnifera indica, Largestroemialanceolata, Toonacillata, Euphorbia Longana, Strobilanthes, Hopea parviflora, Cinnamomum Zeylanicum, Mechilus mac-

tha, Xylixycarpa, Mallotus are some other species found in the sanctuary.

Pythalmala Ecotourism Project (Work in progress)

This place is 65 km from Kannur town. This charming hill station, situated 4,500 ft. above sea level near the Kerala – Karnataka border, is rich in flora and fauna. This is the Highest Peak in the Kannur District. A large number of tourists are attracted to this place. Meadows at the top of the hills with small patches of Shola Forests present a panoramic view. Trekking in this block will be one of the major attractions.

The proposed programmes to be implemented at Pythalmala :

- Camping area
- Developing of trekking routes
- View point protection
- Information centre
- Ticket counter
- Toilet block
- Water supply facility etc.,

Mangroves, Valapattanam River, Kannur

A Mangrove Theme Park being set up on the Valapattanam river bank in Pappinisseryinchayat of Kannur district. The park will have various facilities like water sports, lodging facilities, a health club and indigenous medicine centre. This project is being launched by people who want to protect mangrove forests and generate income for the local community by utilising its tourism potential.

Kanjirakolly Tourism Zone

Kanjirakolly is an emerging tourism centre in Malabar, Kerala. Endowed with the bounteous splendour of nature, the village of Kanjirakolly located 67km from the district headquarters of Kannur. Kannur, are engaged in ecotourism promotion activities through the KANJIRAKOLLI TOURISM VIKASANA SAMITHI, our front organization and the pioneer in highlighting the ecotourism prospective and potential of Kanjirakolly hill tourism zone, and also try to convert tourism promotion efforts into a people's movement. To achieve this goal, Kanjirakolly

Tourism Vikasana Samithi works as a union of various 'tourism promotion organizations' set up and promoted by 'VALLEY LIFE'.

The results of the research study on ecotourism in Kannur district in Kerala -2009

Table – 1: Foreign and Domestic tourist arrival in Kannur

Years	Number of tourists in Foreign	Number of tourists in Domestic
2001	1197	32663
2002	1014	31787
2003	1438	31938
2004	2516	32364
2005	2090	33385
2006	2730	35130
2007	3067	37525
2008	3937	38222

Source: Tourist statistics 2001 – 2008

The trend of foreign tourist arrivals has been increasing. Kannur received 3,26,632 domestic tourists in 2001 and it increased to 3,19,338 in 2003. Thereafter it showed an increasing trend.

Table – 2: Distribution of Respondents by Nationality and Sex

S.No	Nationality	Male	Female	Total
1	Indian	30	10	40
2	Britain	7	9	16
3	Canada	4	4	8
4	Switzerland	2	2	4
5	Sweden	1	3	4
6	New Zealand	2	1	3
7	USA	2	0	2
8	Spain	1	1	2
9	Austria	0	1	1
	Total	49	31	80
	Percentage of the Total	61.25	38.75	100

Source: Survey data

The above table shows that the largest number of tourists belong to the male category (61.25%). A region-wise analysis indicates that highest rate

of foreign tourist come from Britain followed by Canada.

Regarding the rating of Kannur as a tourist's centre 40% of foreign tourists and 22.5% of the domestic tourists considered Kannur as excellent. 75% of foreign tourists and 5% of domestic tourists rated Kannur as poor.

Findings

- Regarding the rating of Kannur as an ecotourist center 40% of the foreign tourists considered Kannur as excellent. Only 22.5% of the domestic tourists considered Kannur as an excellent ecotourist centre.
- Among the foreign tourists the majority representation is by the nationality Britain followed by Canada.
- Lack of tourist information services and travel arrangement facilities.
- Absence of airways directly to Kannur and lack of better rail facilities.
- Tendency to overcharge tourist for services.

Suggestions

- More attention should be given to the hygiene factors at the tourist spots.
- Sign boards directing the tourists to centers should be exhibited. In order to provide information to tourists more information centers are to be opened.
- Improving beach tourism by beautifying the coastal lines and introducing water sports.
- Exploration of hilly areas for ecotourism and adventure tourism.
- Kannur has the longest seashore in Kerala (82kms). The tourist from Waynad, Mysore and Bangalore are to be attracted by

modifying the Kannur beach.

- Improvement should be made in areas like halting facilities, cleaning, proper and attractive roads and garden near tourist spots to increase the tourist's inflow.
- Big and attractive pictures of tourist spots of Kannur should be exhibited in Airport, Railway station, Bus Stand, travel agencies. This will attract tourists, when they visit a travel agency.
- Maintaining the quality of the destination should be the main priority as the overall development of the tourism industry is mainly dependent on this.
- Include eco-tourism in the school and college curriculum to create awareness among youth.

CONCLUSION

It protects the valuable environment to the mankind. Ecotourism is gaining wide popularity because of the demand by the travelers who search for perfect holiday spots. Kannur is a favorite tourist destination as they focus on developing the tourism in an ecofriendly manner. The attractive places and the biodiversity which is provided by the district make it a unique ecotourism hotspot. Department of Tourism, Government of Kerala, District Tourism Promotion Council, Local authorities etc should take more meaningful and responsible steps to support ecotourism activities in the State. This study establishes the fact that ecotourism develops fastly in Kannur. Ecotourism slowly in its own way contributes significantly to the growth of Tourism Industry in India.

Table 3: Rating of Kannur as a Tourist Centre

Tourists	Excellent	%	Good	%	Moderate	%	Satis factory	%	Poor	%	Total	%
Foreign tourist	16	40	11	27.5	6	15	4	10	3	7.5	40	100
Domestic tourists	9	22.5	12	30	14	35	4	10	2	5	40	100
Total	25	62.5	23	57.5	20	50	8	20	5	12.5	80	200

Source: Survey data

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About the Editor



"Destiny is not already made, it is created by our activities" is the motto that has guided and guiding him. Life is full of struggles but whenever obstacles arise in his course of action, he greets it with stubborn quality until he accomplishes victory over it. Every man has unique strength but he has typical style in all the fields he dwells. He is none other than *Dr. A. Elangovan*.

Dr. A. Elangovan is currently working as Professor and Head, Department of Commerce, Periyar University. His Ph. D work is on environmental marketing - connecting environment and commerce - is first of its kind in India. He has presented twenty research papers both National and International levels. He has produced seventeen popular articles. The author received best research paper award. He is instrumental for forming "Research Forum" in the department and initiated department journal for the benefit of the research community. In his credit, completed two minor projects funded by C.P.R Foundation, DST and running one major research project funded by UGC on "Waste Management". He has organized one international conference, four national level seminars and two workshops. The International conference organized by him is first of its kind on climate change by a Commerce department in India. He has contributed a new knowledge to Commerce, combining Commerce and Environment - how fine-tuning the various activities of Commerce would bring required change in managing global warming induced climate change - much need of the hour. He has introduced two new terms "SUSTACOM and EN GOVERNANCE" hitherto not in use in Commerce literature. The author has conducted more than 50 environmental awareness programmes to school and college students. He inaugurated many International conference and National level conference and delivered inspiring lectures. He is a Co-ordinator of Community College, Periyar University and also a Senate member of the same university. The author is a documentary film maker and made three documentary films focusing sustainable development and consumption and preserving Natural resources thereby passing the Planet Earth to the next generation without much damage. The title of the films are "Making the difference", "Power crisis - Sustainable Consumption is the only way" and "Engengu Kaaninum". Few documentaries under progress focusing on "Water Management", "E-waste - A lethal weapon", "Urbanisation", "Food security", "A death of a lake", "Green Energy" and "Green Technology". The author is a multi-faceted personality in the sense is a poet, essay writer, small story writer, singer, lyric writer and documentary film maker. He has penned one small story book titled "Agrinai Kaadhal", one poem book titled "Vedanthangal", compiled one essay book from his publications titled "Suriya porulatharam" and released self composed, written and sung music album titled "Kaatrin Jaalam". He appeared in leading TV channels, gave live interviews, supplied brand new information for the youths and suggested new avenues for Commerce and Management students to decide their education destination and gave ideas to release stress to employees.

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