**Executive Summary**

**UNIVERSITY GRANTS COMMISSION**

**MINOR RESEARCH PROJECT**

**ON**

**ECO-TOURISM-THE PANACEA TO PROTECT ENVIRONMENT: A CASE STUDY OF ERNAKULAM DISTRICT.KERALA.**

**Smt. ANUMOL.K.A**

**ASSISTANT PROFESSOR**

**Year of starting 2015**.

**INTRODUCTION**

Tourism is the largest peace time movement of people in the history of mankind .Millions of people internationally and domestically travels each year, and this makes tourism one of the largest and faster growing economic sectors in the world. The World Tourism Organization (WTO) defines tourists as people "traveling to and staying in places outside their usual environment for not more than one consecutive year for leisure, business and other purposes“. Globally, tourism has become a popular global leisure activity.

Global is expected to continue to expand because people find more time for travel and leisure and also the underdeveloped and developed countries promote tourism as a means of generating foreign exchange, increasing employment opportunities and attracting development capital.

The present study is focused on Eco-tourism and its impact on environment. By the mid-1990s, ecotourism, as a concept, began to enter a period of maturity. Many of the claims made in earlier years began to be disputed, and the legitimacy of many players to call themselves ecotourism products was challenged. The travelling public either has become more aware of what ecotourism encompasses or more critical about the idea to accept blindly the claims that mass tourism destinations are ecotourism destinations.

**SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY.**

Tourism has the potential to increase public appreciation of the environment and to spread awareness of environmental problems when it brings people into closer contact with nature and the environment. This confrontation may heighten awareness of the value of nature and lead to environmentally conscious behaviour and activities to preserve the environment. Tourism based on the natural environment (ecotourism) is a vital growing segment of the tourism industry and, despite the negative impacts, and given the fact that tourism generates a large proportion of income and that a growing percentage of the activities are nature-based, tourism does present a significant potential for realizing benefits in terms of the conservation of biological diversity and the sustainable use of its components.

Kerala has emerged as one of the most favoured Tourism destination in this part of the world. 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. In this context it is very relevant to understand the Eco-tourism impact on environmental in Kerala with special reference to Ernakulum district.

**OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY**

1) To make an overall review of the economic benefits of tourism in Kerala.

2) To analyse the environmental impact of eco-tourism in Kerala with special reference to Ernakulum district.

3) To make suitable suggestions for more effective use of ecotourism for protecting environment and hence faster economic development based on the findings of the study.

**RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

The present study deals with Eco tourism impact on environment .The following steps are used for the present study.

**COLLECTION OF DATA**

There are mainly two types of data collection as primary and secondary data. The data required for this study were collected from primary and secondary sources. Primary data required for this study was collected from various eco-tourism spots in Ernakulum district. Primary data is derived through sample survey using a questionnaire. The data collected from local people, tourist agents, domestic tourist, foreign tourist etc…In total, sample size of 100 is to be covered during data collection. The questionnaire is designed in such a way that can elicit information on the major environmental impacts of tourism in the district of Ernakulum.

Secondary data is to be collected from sources like Kerala Tourism department, K.T.D.C., I.T.D.C., W.T.T.C., Kerala Institute of Tourism and Travel studies, State Planning Board, local bodies in the study area, university libraries, publications of various government institutions and internet etc.

**Findings of the study**

* Foreign Tourist arrival to Kerala during the year 2015 is 977479. It shows an increase of 5.86% over the previous year’s figure of 923366.
* Domestic Tourist arrival to Kerala during the year 2015 is 12465571. It shows an increase of 6.59 % over the previous year’s figure 11695411
* Foreign exchange earnings for the year 2015is Rs: 6949.88 Crores which recorded an increase of 8.61 % over the previous year.
* Total Revenue (including direct & indirect) from Tourism during 2015 is Rs26689.63 Crores, showing an increase of 7.25% over the last year’s figure.
* During 2015 the maximum number of foreign tourist arrived in the month of February followed by January
* UK occupied the top share in the source market of foreign tourist arrivals in the state; its share had declined from 23.36 per cent in 2007 to 17.1 per cent by 2015. The share of France and USA remained stable while that of Germany showed a marginal decline from 7.9 per cent in 2007 to 6.9 per cent by 2015.the share of Saudi Arabia substantially increase from1.66 per cent to 5.2 per cent between 2007 and 2015.
* Foreign travellers are highly concentrated on the central and southern district of the state. Ernakulum ranks at the top in attracting foreign tourist that is 39.2%.Thiruvananyhapuram rank the second position as 31.7%.
* The contribution of tourism to total employment has direct indirect and induced impact. Job generated by tourism is spread across the economy directly in tourism sector like travel agencies, accommodation sector, airlines, and indirectly to construction, manufacturing, and telecommunication. Kerala tourism sector has generated over 14 lakh jobs in Kerala
* Out of 100 respondents 74 respondents are males and 26 respondents are females.
* Out of 100 respondents 40 respondents belongs to locale people, 20 tourism agents, 30 domestic tourists, 10 foreign tourists.
* Most of the respondents belongs to the age category of 25-30 and 30-35
* 40% of the respondents neither agree nor disagree eco-tourism like boating create water pollution.
* 34% of the respondents neither agree nor disagree increasing number of vehicles create air pollution.
* 31% of the respondents neither agree nor disagree increasing number of tourist create noise pollution.
* 52% of them agree Eco-tourism preserve and conserve environment.
* 34% of them strongly agree eco- tourism enhances the environment.
* 56% of the respondents strongly agree eco-tourism create environmental awareness.
* 54% of the respondents strongly agree eco-tourism protect wildlife.

**Suggestions**

* Policies for community based tourism should be adopted by the public sector to promote the active participation of the local community in protecting the environment in the process of sustainable tourism development
* Creating awareness among the local communities about the importance of tourism for them in terms of increase in source of income, improved living standard and overall development of the area
* Government should take necessary policies for minimise the cost and maximise the benefit
* Promote local arts, cultural, handicrafts etc to generate livelihood in the identified region
* Government should follow as comprehensive area development approach for ensuring all the facilities required by the tourist in the identified
* Waste management is an important aspect for promoting ecotourism. The tourist spots should be ‘plastic free’. Adequate waste boxes should be kept in all tourist areas to keep the surroundings clean. These wastes should be collected and disposed in a scientific manner.
* The central and state governments should allocate necessary funds from time to time for the purpose to improve roadways, transportation, ensure clean and hygienic environment and provision of safety and security conditions at tourist spots. Every year, give separate budget for ecotourism development programs.

**Conclusion**

The present study concluded that Eco-tourism is making positive impact on environment. This study revealed that Tourism can significantly contribute to environmental protection, conservation and restoration of biological diversity and sustainable use of natural resources. This is a welcome development .Ecotourism could be a tool for environmental conservation, local empowerment, and poverty alleviation and so on. Responsible ecotourism programs include those that minimize the negative aspects of conventional tourism on the environment and enhance the cultural integrity of local people. Therefore, to evaluating environmental 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 advocates of environmental and social responsibility. In a nutshell, it can be concluded that ecotourism development and protection of environment can be made possible with the careful planning and execution by the government departments, tourist officials along with the co-operation of the public. In future, ecotourism will continue to grow in several parts of the world as a profitable way of life .

**BIBLIOGRAPHY**

* Sarngadharan and Raju (2000) –“Tourism and sustainable economic development Indian and Global perspectives”
* Kandari and Asish Chandra (2003)-“Tourism, Biodiversity sustainable development”
* Haque Immanuel and Shanawaz Ahammed Dur (2007) - ‘Dynamics of Tourism Economics; Indian perspective
* Shaik Ameer and Yasmin Fathima (2007)-‘tourism growth in india and eco-tourism impact on rural development’
* A.K. Bhatia, International Tourism Management. Sterling Publishers Private Ltd.,

New Delhi (1995) PP 12-24.

* A.K. Bhatia, Tourism Development - Principles and Practices. Sterling Publishers Private Ltd., New Delhi (1995) PP 13-19.
* G. Poyamoli, “Eco-Cultural Tourism in Indian Islands: Some Implications”. TheGreen Portal Tourism Journal, Vol.4, No.1, 2007, PP 16- 25.
* "A study on community tourism and its impact in kerala with special reference to ernakulam district" (pdf). Retrieved 27 February 2013.[permanent dead link]
* Vijaya Kumar, B. “The Trendsetter Kerala”. Kerala Calling, Vol.17, No.11, April 2007 PP 10-13.
* <https://www.keralatourism.org>
* <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tourism_in_Kerala>
* Official Ernakulam District Profile {http://www.onefivenine.com/india/villag/Ernakulam}List of best places in Ernakulam
* Economic review 2016