



ECOTOURISM AND SUSTAINABLE LIVELIHOOD IN TRIVANDRUM

- DR. MEERA RANJITH

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ABOUT THE BOOK

In the face of rising global environmental challenges and the need for sustainable development, ecotourism has gained recognition as a tool that can simultaneously promote conservation and socio-economic upliftment. This study examines the role of ecotourism in fostering sustainable livelihoods in Trivandrum district, Kerala, a region endowed with rich biodiversity, cultural richness, and natural beauty. Focusing on key ecotourism destinations—Neyyar, Kottoor, Peepara, Ponmudi, Kallar, and Mankayam—the research explores the complex interplay between tourism, community development, and ecological preservation.

A mixed-methods approach was employed, integrating both quantitative and qualitative data. Primary data were collected through field observations, structured and semi-structured questionnaires, interviews with stakeholders, and photographic evidence. The sampling frame included 116 tourists, 93 employees from forest, wildlife, and tourism departments, and 105 households from indigenous communities living around the ecotourism sites. Secondary data were sourced from academic literature, reports, policy documents, and official websites. Quantitative data were analyzed using statistical tools and Geographic Information System (GIS) techniques, while qualitative data were examined using content, document, and narrative analysis.

The findings reveal fluctuations in tourist arrivals over the years, with a notable decline in foreign tourist numbers in recent times, likely due to external factors. Domestic tourists dominate the tourism landscape, with Trivandrum emerging as a significant revenue-generating region, especially in ecotourism. The destinations attract a predominantly young demographic, drawn by the region's natural beauty, cultural richness, accessibility, and hospitality. These patterns suggest strong potential for further development and targeted promotion of ecotourism.

Importantly, the study highlights the positive socio-economic impacts of ecotourism on local communities, including increased income, employment opportunities, and empowerment—especially among indigenous populations. However, it also identifies critical challenges such as seasonal dependency, inconsistent visitor trends, and limited foreign tourist engagement. The inclusion and active participation of local communities, particularly in the planning and management of ecotourism projects, is essential for ensuring equitable benefits and long-term sustainability.

In conclusion, the study underscores the value of ecotourism in Trivandrum as a tool for community development and environmental stewardship. It recommends targeted infrastructure improvements, policy interventions, and inclusive governance strategies to enhance tourist experiences and strengthen community involvement. By addressing these factors, Trivandrum can further position itself as a model ecotourism destination that balances conservation goals with sustainable livelihood outcomes.

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"Gratitude makes sense of our past, brings peace for today, and creates a vision for tomorrow." – Melody Beattie"

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About the Author



Dr. Meera Ranjith is a Lecturer at Mahatma Junior College of Education. She holds a Doctorate in Geography from the Department of Geography, Mumbai University. She has completed her post-graduation in Geography from Kerala University and a post-graduation in Education from Mumbai University.

With over 20 years of teaching experience across ICSE, CBSE, State Board schools, and junior colleges, Dr. Meera has made significant contributions to both teaching and research. She has 25 international and 10 national publications to her credit and has presented numerous research papers at national and international conferences and seminars.

She has also worked as a curriculum developer for international schools and is well-versed in planning and conducting institutional as well as national-level academic activities. Dr. Meera has conducted several workshops for teachers and students, enriching the teaching-learning process with innovative strategies.

Her contributions extend to authorship, with the publication of three books and two magazines, and to media, having released two documentary films – Hope Ek Umeed and Bharat Ek Nayi Soch. She has actively participated in community outreach programmes.

In addition, Dr. Meera has been recognized for her innovation, holding one international patent, one Indian patent, and three design patents. Her dedication to education and research has earned her several awards at the district and national levels, including Balasaheb Thackery best teacher award, Dr. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam Award, National Level Pratibha Samman Achiever's Award, Best Innovator Award District Level, and Best Researcher Award.



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