

## **An Assessment of Ethical Involvement in Eco –Tourism:Thenmala Eco -Tourism**

**Sheeba Chandy<sup>a</sup> , Biju T<sup>b</sup>**

<sup>a</sup>Research Scholar in Commerce, K.G.College, Pampady, Kottayam, Kerala, India

<sup>b</sup>Assistant Professor, Department of Commerce, Bjm College, Chavara, Kerala, India

### **Abstract**

Kerala is blessed with its unique culture and biodiversity. Tourists have a wide variety of tourism destinations in Kerala. By visiting each destination the tourist is getting sweet memories in their life. Tourists are expecting natural beauties and memories as well as ethical aspects from the destination. Eco-tourism projects are helping to promote ethical sustainability of tourism industry. This study made clear that the ethical involvement in Eco-tourism projects in Kerala. The primary data collected from tourists at Thenmala Eco-tourism destination.

**KEYWORDS:** ethical sustainability, eco-tourism

### **INTRODUCTION**

Kerala is a masterpiece of diversity of culture, climate and destinations. Kerala blessed with its unique culture and geographical features attracts tourists from all over the world. It is blessed with its natural beauty, festivals, beaches, lakes, forests, waterfalls, wildlife sanctuary, hill stations, historic monuments, climate, health package and art forms. Each place in Kerala is unique in itself are absolutely unforgettable for a tourist. Thenmala is a village located in the south eastern part of Kerala. Thenmala Ecotourism Promotion Society (TEP) was registered in July 1998 under the Travancore Cochin Literary Scientific and Charitable Societies Act 1957. The objectives of TEPS are as given below.

1. To develop Thenmala dam and its surroundings as a major tourist destination.
2. To promote eco-tourism on the basis of sound principles of ecological sustainability in the surrounding areas of Thenmala.
3. To have a well-planned tourism destination with emphasis on sustainable tourism development so as to become a model for other destination development programmes.

Thenmala Eco-tourism destination is having six visitation zones include culture zone, leisure zone, adventure zone, deer rehabilitation centre, deep woods and wildlife sanctuary boating. Culture zone is an assembly point for visitors for basic infrastructure like the information centre, interpretation centre, toilet, restaurant, amphitheatre, musical dancing fountain, children's park and butterfly safari. Thenmala Eco-tourism project is a versatile project and gives absolutely unforgettable moments for tourist.

Tourism ethics defined "as the study of the moral adequacy of the interaction between human and environment for the purposes of tourism". Sustainable tourism is defined as 'tourism that respects both local people and the traveller, cultural heritage and the environment'. Sustainability maintains harmony between people and nature as well as fulfills people's economic, social and other needs. All tourism activities need to be sustainable. Eco tourism is a sub-component of the sustainable tourism. Eco tourism maintains the fulfillment of ethical sustainability with its own maximum strength.

### **Statement of Problem**

Kerala is a divine masterpiece in terms of its diversity of culture, climate and destinations. Each place in Kerala is unique in it and gives absolutely unforgettable moments for a tourist. Tourism is to contribute not only to mere economic benefit but also to social development means sustainability such as environmental, economic, social, cultural, ethical and participatory. Everything people need to survive and flourish depends on our natural environment. Sustainability maintains harmony between people and nature as well as fulfills people's economic, social and other needs. Eco tourism maintains the fulfillment of ethical sustainability with its own maximum strength. This study helps to measure the involvement of ethical sustainability in eco-tourism projects.

### Objectives

1. To study ethical involvement in the Eco- tourism industry in Kerala.
2. To study satisfaction of tourists in the attractions of Eco- tourism industry in Kerala.

### Hypothesis

1. There is no significance difference in customer satisfaction among different age groups.
2. There is no significance difference in Ethical Perception among different age groups.

### Research Methodology

The primary data are collected from 50 tourists in the Thenmala Eco-tourism destination. Convenience sampling method is used for the data collection through questionnaire. The relevant secondary data have been collected from journals, reports and websites. The collected data have been analyzed by Simple percentage analysis and One Way ANOVA.

### Data Analysis and Interpretation

**Table 1: Gender-wise classification of the respondents**

	Frequency	Percent
Male	24	48.0
Female	26	52.0
Total	50	100

Table 1 shows that 48 per cent of the respondent belongs to the male whereas, 52 per cent of the respondent belongs to the female. Female visitors are more visitors compared to male visitors.

**Table 2: Age-wise classification of the respondents**

	Frequency	Percent
Below 25 years	10	20.0
25- 45 years	19	38.0
Above 45 years	21	42.0
Total	50	100

Table 2 shows that 20 per cent of the respondent belongs to the age group of below 25, 38 per cent of the respondent from the age group of 25-45 and 42 per cent of the respondent belongs to the age group of 45 and above.

**Table 3: Inspiration of the respondents to visit the destination**

	Frequency	Percent
Eco-friendly nature	17	34.0

Natural Beauty	31	62.0
Others	2	4.0
Total	50	100

Out of total respondents of 50, 34 per cent respondents inspired by eco-friendly nature of Thenmala to visit, 62 per cent respondents inspired by natural beauty and only 4 per cent to visit by other attractions.

**Table 4: Destination wise Satisfaction**

Attractions	N	Mean Satisfaction	Std. Deviation
Waterfalls and river	50	3.80	1.125
Dam	50	3.58	.883
Deer Park	50	3.32	.957
Adventure zone	50	3.16	1.076
Hill rocks	50	3.22	.910
Butterfly Safari	50	2.68	1.019
Children's Park	50	3.32	1.058

Table 4 reveals that different level of satisfaction of visitors in major attractions of Thenmala eco-tourism project. Satisfaction level of visitors ranges from 1 to 5 (1-2 Poor Satisfaction, 2-3 Dissatisfaction, 3-4 Satisfaction and 4-5 High Satisfaction). There is no high and poor satisfaction.

**H0: There is no significance difference in customer satisfaction among different age groups**

**Table 5: Age- wise satisfaction**

Age	Mean Satisfaction	Std. Deviation
Below 25 years	60.0000	10.43281
25- 45 years	67.5188	15.97079
Above 45 years	67.3469	10.52001
Total	65.9429	12.95672

**Table 6: One Way ANOVA – Age - wise satisfaction**

	Sum of squares	df	Mean square	F	Sig.
Between groups	441.764	2	220.882	1.334	.273
Within groups	7784.195	47	165.621		
Total	8225.959	49			

Table 6 shows that the output of the One Way ANOVA analysis and whether there is a statistically significant difference between our groups means. We can see that the significance value is 0.273 (i.e.,  $p = .273$ ), which is greater than 0.05. And, therefore, there is a no statistically significant difference in customer satisfaction among different age groups and thus we accept null hypothesis.

**Table 7: Different aspects of Ethical index**

State of affairs	N	Mean Satisfaction	Std. Deviation
Respect between people and environment	50	3.58	1.032
Waste Management	50	3.56	.907
Security of Tourists	50	3.54	1.373
Cultural heritage	50	3.46	1.073
Sanitation and Cleanliness	50	3.34	1.099

Availability of Healthy Food	50	3.20	1.010
Reasonable Price of Products	50	2.94	.818

Table 7 reveals that range of different State of affairs of visitors to meet the ethical sustainability of Thenmala eco-tourism destination. Higher the mean value shows higher ethical sustainability of Thenmala eco-tourism destination. Lower the mean value shows lower ethical sustainability of Thenmala eco-tourism destination.

**H0: There is no significance difference in Ethical Perception among different age groups**

**Table 8: Age- wise Ethical Index**

Age	N	Mean Satisfaction	Std. Deviation
Below 25 years	10	65.4286	8.45959
25- 45 years	19	67.5188	9.72224
Above 45 years	21	68.4354	8.10524
Total	50	67.4857	8.71388

**Table 9: One Way ANOVA -Age- wise Ethical Index**

	Sum of squares	df	Mean square	F	Sig.
Between groups	61.278	2	30.639	.394	.677
Within groups	3659.375	47	77.859		
Total	3720.653	49			

Table 9 shows that the output of the ANOVA analysis and whether there is a statistically significant difference between our group means. We can see that the significance value is .677 (i.e.,  $p = .667$ ), which is greater than 0.05. And therefore, there is a no significant difference Ethical Perception among different age groups and thus we accept null hypothesis.

**MAJOR FINDINGS**

1. Out of total respondents of 50, 34 per cent respondents inspired by eco-friendly nature of Thenmala to visit, 62 per cent respondents inspired by natural beauty and only 4 per cent to visit by other attractions.
2. Different level of satisfaction of visitors in major attractions of Thenmala eco-tourism project range in medium level of satisfaction. Level of satisfaction of visitors ranges are 1-2 Poor Satisfaction, 2-3 Dissatisfaction, 3-4 Satisfaction and 4-5 High Satisfaction. There is no high satisfaction and poor satisfaction.
3. Range of different State of affairs of visitors to meet the ethical sustainability of Thenmala eco-tourism destination. Higher the mean value revealed higher ethical sustainability of Thenmala eco-tourism destination. Lower the mean value revealed lower ethical sustainability of Thenmala eco-tourism destination.

**CONCLUSION**

Any attempt of tourism planning has to take in account the needs of the local population and the impact of tourism on the society and its environment should be carefully assessed and monitored. Tourism can foster environmentally friendly and sustainable development in a way that is economically feasible for impoverished communities. Tour operators, tourism students, tourism service providers, tourism departments and executives, tourist, government and local communities must have the responsibility to protect our environment and also reduce exploitation of natural resources. Eco tourism maintains the fulfillment of ethical sustainability with its own

maximum strength. This study will help to understand the involvement of ethical sustainability in eco-tourism projects.

#### REFERENCE

1. Enghagen, L. K., & Hott, D. D. (1992). Student's perceptions of ethical issues in the hospitality and tourism industry. *Journal of Hospitality & Tourism Research* , Vol.15.No.2..
2. Wight, P. A. (1993). Sustainable Ecotourism:Balancing economic,environmental and social goals within an ethical framework. *The Journal of Tourism Studies* , 54-64.
3. Lea, J. P. (1993). Tourism development ethics in the third world.
4. Fennell, D. A., & Malloy, D. C. (1999). Measuring the ethical nature of tourism operators. *Annals of Tourism Research* , 928-943.
5. Carbone, M. (2005). Sustainable tourism in developing countries:Poverty alleviation,participatory planning and ethical issues. *The European Journal of Development Research* , 559-565 Vol.17 No.3.
6. Obinali, G. (2014). *Sustaining Development Through Eco-friendly Tourism*. Trivandrum: KITTS.

#### Websites

[www.tourismconcern.org](http://www.tourismconcern.org)

[www.unwto.org](http://www.unwto.org)

[www.tandfonline.com](http://www.tandfonline.com)

[www.keralatourism.org](http://www.keralatourism.org)