

RESHMA ELIZABETH GEORGE | Dr. Shailaja Nair

Eco-Tourism Development Plan: A Case Of Thannithode Panchayat, Pathanamthitta District

Ecotourism is a sustainable form of tourism-dependent or focuses on natural resources, which has grown into an important economic activity in the natural areas around the world. It involves enjoying and experiencing nature, local environment, and culture, to understand the importance of biodiversity conservation and unique indigenous culture. Ecotourism is a booming sector of economic and social growth in Kerala and will generate many new possibilities in the future. So, it is important to research the various possibilities and existing areas of intervention of the ecotourism sector to strengthen and aid in the management and sustainable development of tourism of the region. This study brings out the need to develop the tourism sector in the Pathanamthitta district and also develops a framework to identify the ecotourism potential regions of the district. The framework consists of Ecological, Physical, spatial planning, and socio-cultural factors that analyse the best ecotourism potential sites in Pathanamthitta district, and thus narrows down to choosing an action area for the study, i.e. Thannithode panchayat. So, this study aims to prepare an Ecotourism development plan for Thannithode panchayat which includes analysing the demographic, physical, environmental, economic, and social characteristics of the panchayat to arrive at a final set of recommendations and implementation strategies for strengthening the ecotourism development of the panchayat.

Keywords: *The Ecotourism development plan, Thannithode panchayat, Pathanamthitta district*