



## THE NILGIRIS AN INTERNATIONAL TOURIST DESTINATION IN INDIA

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**Abstract:** *Tourism industry is one of the major segments of our economy, it contributes major part of foreign exchange and generates employment and helps infrastructure development. Government of India has formulated policies to boost the tourism industry. The present study is an empirical study based on both primary and secondary data. Required primary data were collected through a questionnaire and interview schedule from the tourists (approximately 100) who are the itinerants traveling from one place to other. The scores of the 100 respondents were calculated. For the purpose of in-depth analysis, the respondents were grouped according to their Age, Native, Qualification, Monthly Salary, Marital Status, No.of children, No.of dependents, Mode of transport, Time duration of Touring, Purpose of visit. The attitude of the tourists was measured with the framed explained below. Significance of the relationship of independent variables with the tourism factors have been analyzed by applying the statistical techniques such as ANOVA, Pearson Correlation, Factor Analysis and Multiple regressions. For the purpose of analysis frequency tables showing percentage analysis have been worked out. Nilgiris must be able to provide hotels to cater to all segments. It must market is camping facilities more and ensure that they are safe to use. It must open more avenues for business opportunities, could be tourism related itself or tribal studies, Low cost airlines and helicopter services, Unique entertainment facilities, More sources of communication, Family entertainment facilities, more playgrounds and parks, Film city, Insurance, Melas and festivals must be held so as to include the tourists, Orchards and forests may be promoted as tourist picnic spots.etc. Foreigners loved Nilgiris extremely and like to visit again. Foreigners are mainly from Switzerland, United Kingdom, France, Australia, Singapore, Malaysia, and other European countries too. At Nilgiris they loved the Indian food, and also commented that food is too spicy and oily. At Nilgiris they love to have the fresh vegetables as salads, boiled vegetables, hot drinks, Continental food/Chinese food and also love to enjoy flesh food without spices and masalas.etc.*

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## **INTRODUCTION**

Tourism is a pleasure activity in which money earned in one's normal domicile is spent in the places visited. Tourism is an activity involving a complex mixture of material and psychological elements. The material one are accommodation, the attractions and entertainment available. The psychological factors include a wide spectrum of attitudes and expectations.

Tourism contribution to the world economy is second only to that of oil and is set better it in another few years. It is therefore a small wonder that many countries in the world are concentrating on the tourism sector to boost up their economies. This makes tourism the fastest growing industry worldwide. Thus the tourism industry contributes to the following:

- Economic development
- Infrastructure development
- Employment generation
- Community development
- Restoration of culture
- Environmental preservation
- Promotion of harmony and understanding

## **TOURISM MULTIPLIER**

It is evident that the earnings from the tourism occupy an important place in the national income of a country. Without taking into account receipts alone contribute a great deal. The flow of money generated by tourist spending multiplies as it passes through various sections of the economy. In addition to an important source of income, tourism provides a number of other economic benefits, which vary in importance from one country to another, depending upon the nature and scale of tourism. The benefits from infrastructure investments, justified primarily for tourism such as airports, roads, water supply and other public utilities, may be widely shared by the other sectors of the economy. Tourists facilities such as hotels, restaurants, museums, clubs, sports complexes, public transport, and national parks are used also by domestic tourists and visitors, businessmen and residents, yet a significant portion of the costs may be borne by international tourists. Tourists also contribute to tax revenue both directly through sales tax and indirectly through property,



profits and income taxes. Tourism provides employment, brings infrastructural improvements and may help regional development.

Since the tourism industry is to influence a number of industries, it is pertinent that all the allied industries, such as hotels, communication, banking, trade and commerce, transport, insurance are familiar with the emerging trends in business vis-vis the changing expectations of users. In 1985 the American Marketing Association defines marketing as the performance of business activities that direct the flow of goods and services from the producer to the consumer or user. However, tourism industry is unlike many other industries in many ways: unseen before selling, intangibility, paying time and money before actually using, direct or indirect reservation in advance, far away from customers, combinations of resources from a variety of businesses, cannot be stored, limited supply in short term, instability of demand, and high elasticity of demand. The objective of marketing is to reflect the present marketing plan assessment, create the right image for the tourism product and satisfy consumers. There are several factors attracting tourists in the above areas. Hence it is felt that this present study will help to understand by considering the factors influencing for attracting Nilgiris as a Tourist place to raise the country's economy and thus aims to:

- Improve the image of Nilgiris
- Increase tourists arrivals
- Attract tourists conveniently suited for Nilgiris climatic conditions
- Combat the competition by newly developed tourist destinations
- Make full use of the potential of Nilgiris

### **SCOPE OF THE STUDY**

Tourism results in expansion of the mind and adventure of the adventure of the soul; it promotes peace and amity in this strife torn world; it is an exercise in deontology to conserve the resources; an environmental pilgrimage; and can also work for the benefit of the poor destitute. This "smoke-less" industry acts as a catalyst for socio-economic development and also encourages mutual understanding by bringing into its fold a large variety of activities and individuals which include trades, businesses, shopping, lodging, catering, transport arts and crafts, religion etc. Tourism today offers a strange world of experiences that needs to be studied thoroughly.



The study is confined to the development Tourism in Nilgiris

- The study analysis responses provided in the questionnaire by the tourists who have visited Nilgiris
- The study analyses the spending habits, perceptions, preferences, satisfactions of 100 respondents only

## **METHODOLOGY**

The present study is an empirical study based on both primary and secondary data. Required primary data were collected through a questionnaire and interview schedule from the tourists (approximately 100) who are the itinerants traveling from one place to other. Required secondary data will be collected from the sources like websites of Government Tourism Board, various publications, journals, Reports, Season reports in Ooty etc.

## **LIMITATIONS**

- The study is restricted only to 100 respondents who visited the Nilgiris District
- It is limited to the information provided both by primary and secondary data
- The proportion of foreign tourists in the analysis was very less

## **QUANTIFICATION AND MEASUREMENT OF THE FACTORS WHICH ATTRACTED THE TOURISTS TO VISIT NILGIRIS DISTRICT AS A TOURIST DESTINATION**

To measure the perception of the Tourists, Rensis Likert's summated scaling technique was adopted. On a convenience method 100 respondents were selected by the researcher for the purpose of the study. The researcher identified 53 factors that influencing tourism in Nilgiris District. A five point scale questionnaire was prepared and the data was collected. The respondents were given option to indicate their response with each statement. The various responses are assigned scale values. In this study 5, 4,3,2,1 scale values were used to measure the factors influencing the Tourism in Nilgiris District. Following were the rates indicated as Strongly Agree, Agree, Neutral, Strongly Disagree, and Disagree.

## **DISTRIBUTION OF SAMPLE RESPONDENTS BY THEIR LEVEL OF ATTRACTION ON TOUR**

The scores of the 100 respondents were calculated. For the purpose of in-depth analysis, the respondents were grouped according to their Age, Native, Qualification, Monthly Salary, Marital Status, No.of children, No.of dependents, Mode of transport, Time duration of



Touring, Purpose of visit. The attitude of the tourists was measured with the framed explained below. Significance of the relationship of independent variables with the tourism factors have been analyzed by applying the statistical techniques such as ANOVA, Pearson Correlation, Factor Analysis and Multiple regressions. For the purpose of analysis frequency tables showing percentage analysis have been worked out.

## **NILGIRIS DISTRICT: A STUDY ON TOURISM**

The Nilgiris, because of its natural charm and pleasant climate, was a place of Special attraction for the Europeans. John Sullivan, the then Collector of Coimbatore was greatly interested in this part of the country. He established his residence there and reported to the Board of Revenue on 31<sup>st</sup> July 1819. The Name 'Nilgiris' means Blue hills (Neelam – Blue and giri – Hill or Mountain) the first mention of this name has been found in the Silappadikaram. There is a belief that the people living in the plains at the foot of the hills, should have given the name, the Nilgiris, in view of the violet blossoms of 'kurinji' flower enveloping the hill ranges periodically.

### **Geographical Location of the District**

The Nilgiris is situated at an elevation of 900 to 2636 meters above MSL. Its latitudinal and longitudinal dimensions being 130 KM (Latitude : 10 - 38 WP 11-49N) by 185 KM (Longitude : 76.0 E to 77.15 E). The Nilgiris is bounded on North by Karnataka State on the West by Coimbatore District, Erode District, South by Coimbatore District and Kerala State and as the East by Kerala State. In Nilgiris District the topography is rolling and steep. About 60% of the cultivable land falls under the slopes ranging from 16 to 35%

### **Area and Population**

The District has an area of 2452.50 sq.km. As per 2001 census the population of this district is as follows

	<b>Total Population</b>	<b>Male Population</b>	<b>Female Population</b>	<b>Sex Ratio</b>	<b>Area</b>	<b>Density</b>
Total	762141	378351	383790	1014	1806.16	421.97
Rural	307532	151874	155658	1025	742.84	413.99
Urban	454609	226477	228132	1007	2549.00	178.35

### **District Administration**

The Nilgiris District Comprises of six taluks viz Udthagamandalam, Kundah, Coonoor, Kotagiri, Gudalur and Pandalur. These taluks are divided in to four Panchayat Unions viz.,



Udhagamandalam, Coonoor, Kotagiri and Gudalur besides two Municipalities, Wellington Contonment and Aruvankadu Township. The District consists of 56 Revenue Villages and 15 Revenue Firkas. There are two Revenue Divisional in this district viz., Coonoor and Gudalur. There are 35 Village Panchayat and 13 Town Panchayat in this District.

Name of the Revenue Division	Name of the Taluk	No. of Revenue Firkas	No. of Revenue Villages	Town Panchayat		Village Panchayat
Coonoor	Udhagai	3	13	Udhagai	4	13
	Kundah	2	7			
	Coonoor	3	9	Coonoor	4	6
	Kotagiri	3	15	Kotagiri	1	11
Gudalur	Gudalur	2	8	Gudalur	4	5
	Pandalur	2	4			

### Literacy

	Total Literates	Male Literates	Female Literates	Literacy Rate	Area	Density
<b>Rural</b>	202668	113834	88834	74.26	742.84	413.99
<b>Urban</b>	338431	182739	155692	83.9	2549.00	178.35
<b>Total</b>	541099	296573	244526	80.01	1806.16	421.97

### Transport

The Nagapattinam - Gudalur National Highway Passes through this district. All the taluks are connected with Major District Roads. The village roads are maintained by Panchayat Union. There is no sea port or Airport in this district.

### Electricity

There are 8 Hydel Power Houses in this district.

### Health Infrastructure

There are one District Head Quarters Government Hospital, 5 Taluk Hospitals, 28 Primary Health Centres, 194 Health Sub-Centres and 5 Plague circles.

### Nearest Airport is Coimbatore (100 Kms)

Nearest broad gauge railway head is in Mettupalayam(46 Kms). Major broadgauge and metre gauge railway junction is Coimbatore (89 kms). Coimbatore is connected with all



major cities. Mettupalayam to Ooty, is connected Mountain Railway. To reach Ooty by Mountain Railway is 4 hours journey. Ooty is connected by good motor able road.

### **Places of Worship**

**Temples:** Murugan Temple, Elk Hill, Venkateshwara Perumal Yemple, Sri Mariamman Temple, Subramania Swamy Temple, Vittoba Temple, Balamurugan Temple, Iyappa Temple, Muniswarar Temple, Jain Temple, Mooyulaka Arasiaamman Temple, Kandal and Kaasi Viswanatha Swamy Temple, Kandal.

**Church:** St. Stephen's Church, Union Church, Holy Trinity Church, St. Thomas Church, Sacred Heart Church, St. Mary's Church, St. Theresa's Church and Kandal Shrine.

**Mosque:** Big Mosque, Lower Bazaar.

**Mutt:** Ramakrishna Mutt, Ramakrishnapuram, Ooty. Narayana Gurukulam, Manjanakorai, Ooty. Abu Babajee Trusttt, Wood Cock Road, Ooty. Diyanamyam (PBKS) Ettins road, Ooty. Raghavendra Mutt, Bombay Castle, Ooty, Dakshinamurthy Madalayam, Kandal, Ooty, Sampurna Ashram, Naduhatty, Kattabettu Post, Nilgiris, Bahai Prayer Hall, Snow down road for prayer, Yoga, Meditation etc. Ooty is a hospitable town with innumerable hotels of star status, budget hotels and time-share resorts to suit every tourist's pocket.

### **ANTI- PLASTIC BAN IN NILGIRIS DISTRICT**

In the past years in Nilgiris the use of plastic has been causing extensive damage to the environment in and around the Nilgiris. Since number of tourists visit the hills they bring along with them disposable plastic plates etc. One could see the beautiful grasslands and forests littered with disposal plastic item every where. There were also instances where animals like horses; cows die due to suffocation after eating plastics. In one or two instances some wild elephants have also found to be affected due to eating of plastics. In addition to the damages caused to the flora & fauna plastic have been real menace and responsible for blocking the drainages, water supply channels in the Nilgiris District. Plastic have also been entering through the channels into the Ooty Lake causing pollution to the Ooty. This has been going on in the Nilgiris without any check. However a programme against plastics has been launched and named as "Anti-plastic Campaign". Several steps are being taken with the co-operation of the local residents, NGOs and business community to protect the Nilgiris from the plastic menace. In the past few months from its inception "Anti-



plastic campaign” has been responsible for effectively checking the use of disposable plastic and its littering in and around the whole of the Nilgiris.

## **ANALYSIS & FINDINGS**

Nilgiris, the Queen of Hills is a plastic free district. Natural beauty of the Nilgiris draws tourists away from the crowded and polluted towns and cities. It attracts Tourist all throughout the year for its hospitable people, Richness in flora and fauna. It has attractive tourist centers which make people to visit again and again. Pleasant and lovely weather ideal for tourists for summer and off seasons to escape the hot climate of the plains. It is famous for its Golf area, Tea, flowers, eucalyptus oil, bakery items, chocolates, tribal products including tribal jewelry etc. It is a calm and admirable place to relieve stress. It is a treasure hunt for Cinema shooting. It is a place to admire the life style of tribes like Kurumbas, Todas, Panniyaas, Kotas and Irulas. It has its own credit for good Schools. It is a destination for Global English. The Nilgiris is an excellent study of inter-tribal relationships.. The Nilgiris (Blue Mountain or nil giri) are so named of the blue mist that envelops them and because of the kurinji (*Strobilanthes kunthianus*) flower. The Nilgiris is rich in plant diversity and about 3000 varieties of flowering plants have been identified here. Of the identified species of animals are 74 mammals, 342 birds, 120 reptiles and 49 amphibians, besides many butterfly and insect species. The unidentified probably runs into thousands. Wild life in Nilgiris contributes to a major share in the total wild life in India. One of the major wildlife attractions in Nilgiri hills is spotting a **Nilgiri Tahr** (an endangered mountain goat). Elephants, deer, bison, peacocks, panthers, hyenas, bear; wild boars are some of the notable species in Nilgiris. Nilgiris has to offer untouched natural mountains and forests which attracts trekkers from all over the world. Trekking is so famous in Nilgiris that it is also known as **‘Trekkers’ Paradise’**. A trekking in these mountains will give you an insight into the variety of flora and fauna that this heavenly place has to offer. Shopping in Nilgiris is a real charm and exciting. Ooty, the headquarters of Nilgiris, is a beautiful town with road side flower shops to big shopping malls with exclusive Nilgiri products including Nilgiri tea, Home-made chocolates, Fruits, natural oils like Eucalyptus oil, Toda embroideries, and plant nurseries are easily available. The arrival of the plaque that represents the Garden of Excellence award bagged by the Centenary Rose Park here was greeted with joy by the district administration and the Department of Horticulture on Thursday. The World





Federation of Rose Societies had given the award to the Centenary Rose Park during May 2006 at Osaka.

The analysis on the study on Tourism Marketing in Nilgiris proves that the perceptions of the tourists varied among the 100 respondents, taken for the study. As per the **age of the respondents** between 31-50 of them were the majority of the tourists who love to visit the Nilgiris Hills. Nearly 25% respondents from Tamil Nadu, and 21% of them belong to other countries like Switzerland, UK, Australia and others. Among 100 respondents 32% of them have been **qualified** with Higher Secondary School of Education. This shows that many students visit regularly to the hills.

The respondents who fall under the **monthly salary** above Rs. 30,000 have liking to visit the Nilgiris Hills. **Married** respondents were 35%, and students fall as 49% among the 100 respondents. Nearly 42% of the respondents have less than 2 children when compared to the other respondents. The **number of dependents** in family having less than 2% dependents was only 42% respondents. The tourists usually travel by various **modes of transport** to visit the hills, among 100 respondents 32% have been hiring Taxi for their visit. 48% of the respondents have visited the hills only during season time. The main purpose of their visit was to have relief were quoted by 42% respondents.

**Rensis Likert's five point scale** proves that 42% respondents visited the hills for their love towards nature. 37% strongly agreed for the love for **Flora & Fauna** of the hills, 24% for Nilgiris Toy train, 34% for the **Historical Monuments**, 19% for Heritage Buildings, 16% for their love towards Tea & Coffee estates, 18% strongly agreed for **Parks & Gardens**, 26% for Dams, **Lakes and Boat houses**. 30% of the respondents proved their liking for the **Tribal people and their Hamlets**. 27% of the respondents loved to stay in **Star Hotels** of Nilgiris. 21% like the Hamlets Havelis, old palaces, & Vilas. 27% preferred **YMCA, YWCA, Holiday Hole, Resorts** and Apartments etc, 19% agreed to share that the **Hot water facilities** and Heater facilities in the Hotels were satisfactory. 18% gave good comment about the **comfortable bedding** and laundry in the hotels during their stay, 19% loved to revisit the Spa facilities in the hills, 25% agreed that the **Beauty parlour** in the hills were good. The tourists also felt about the provision of the driver's restroom in the hotels during their stay 22 of the respondents felt it was quite satisfied while 43 agreed the same and 9 disagreed for the same. **Safety locker** in the hotel was satisfactory to 18 respondents 12 disagreed,



and 9 was neutral. The availability of the **doctors and their services in the hospitals** were satisfactory to 24 respondents while 14 had no idea about it. Since the hospital services in hills are not updated with all newly technical equipments and all the people in Nilgiris visit the nearby hospitals at Coimbatore for taking chronic treatment.

The **shopping outlet** in the Nilgiris is really a fun 21 of the respondents felt that shopping is good and satisfactory as many products are unique in the hills. **Room services** and guests' feedback were satisfactory by 18 respondents and 10 agreed while 9 had neutral idea about the room service. **Parking of the vehicles** were felt as satisfactory by 25 respondents and 14 respondents felt that that there is a need have more facilities for parking as it was a difficult task parking in the hills. **Restaurants** in hills were satisfactory by 20 respondents, 9 respondents felt that it was not good to enjoy food in the hills.

**Pubs** in cities give fun and joy for the youth while the same facility is not in hills. **Bars** in the hills were satisfactory by 23, 7 respondents disagreed and 20 respondents were neutral about the Bars services in the hills. **Night life** in Nilgiris is very dull as there is no life after 9 pm, and there is no outlet to roam outside after 10 pm, shops get closed at 8pm-8.30 pm during seasons and regularly mostly all the shopping outlets are closed nearly at 7.30 pm because of the surrounded cold. **Flower show, fruit show & vegetable show** are admirable in the hills during the summer season. Flower show takes place in the Botanical garden & Rose garden Ooty, while vegetable show & fruit show takes place in Coonoor Sims Park and Kotagiri Park.

Most of the respondents were satisfactory towards these shows. Cultural events during the seasons, **Dog show, Antique Car show, Horse race** are accepted as satisfactory by most of the respondents. Cinema shooting takes place in and around Nilgiris, 30 respondents felt happy to say about the **Cinema shooting** because Cinemas of Kananda, Tamil, Hindi, Malayalam, Telugu, Badaga takes place regularly.

**Yoga and meditation** is good for health, Nilgiris hills is a very good place for mediation, nearly 20 respondents felt that this hills was a good place for it while there were 8 respondents to disagree for the same. Horse ride and horse race is a thrill and joy to enjoy fun in the Nilgiris hills. **Tribal dance** is a unique dance in the hills and it was a real time joy to the respondents 51 of the respondents felt it as satisfactory while 4 disagreed as it was a regular event for them. Trekking is yet another enterprising sport available in the Nilgiris.



There are many trekking routes available in the Nilgiris and trekking gadgets could be had on daily rent basis from the Forest Authorities. **Adventure, trekking, Walking, Jogging & Plant collection** etc. was strongly agreed as a satisfaction by 46 respondents while 5 respondents disagreed, 7 respondents had nothing to say about the same. **Photography** is an excellent hobby for many people. Taking photographs on the hills is a total joy to enjoy the flora & fauna of the hills.

Most of the respondents felt that photography is a joy and among 100 respondents 46 respondents carried their camera to take photographs as fun and joy while 9 had no idea to say more but 6 had no idea for fun or hobby about the photography. **Nature therapy** is slowly in the hills, 26 respondents felt that it is satisfactory, while 8 respondents had no idea for it, 11 respondents were neutral for it.

**Chettinad food, Andhra food, Kerala food, Chinese food** in the Nilgiris hills is available in and around Nilgiris. 27 respondents agreed it was good, while 4 respondents disagreed and 11 respondents had no positive or negative comment about it. Many of the products sold in the Nilgiris are costly because the products are transported to the hills from the nearby plains/towns. So the 41 respondents agreed that cost was high compared to the town price, while 11 disagreed and 10 of the respondents had neutral view to the price. Service in the hotels/restaurants will be delayed due to the rush of the regular customers and also the visit of the tourists. The **quantity of the food** will differ from restaurant/hotel to restaurant/hotel in the hills. 30 respondents felt it as satisfactory while 9 respondents disagreed and 15 respondents had neutral idea to it. **Better quality** of the food in the restaurants are satisfied to 22% level so there is a need of all the restaurants to provide good quality food to the tourists to satisfy their needs.

**Cleanliness** is lacking in few restaurants where care is needed to control flies, frequent cleaning of tables, providing clean plates, glasses, spoons, etc. and also clean maintenance of the restrooms inside the restaurants. **Drinking water** is available in all the restaurants. There is need to sell good branded water bottles within the expiry dates, and also provide filtered water for the benefits of the tourists. **Waiting time** in the restaurants should not be delayed for a long time, because it might irritate the tourists who will be tired, and hungry, especially children. But in Nilgiris during the summer season entering into the restaurants will be a tough job of getting their food on time.



Many hotels give the instructions to the customers in the menu card itself, and the tourists also should understand the difficulties of the workers in the restaurants. Coffee, Tea, Milk, Ice cream, Cool drinks are sold through the district in all the tourists centers, but still in many isolated hilly areas there are few outlets which may fulfill the needs of the tourists. Pan/Beeda stall are very few in this district which is attached to main restaurants. Parking facilities inside the hotels is also a great problem for the tourists. Big star hotels have enough space for Parking, while 2 star and 3 star have less place due to sloppy areas in hilly regions. In spite of all difficulties, the hotels in the Nilgiris always try to satisfy the needs of their customers. **Restrooms** are another problem in the hills, as the district suffer from water problem, maintenance is difficult.

Tourists' vehicles are plenty in the hills, there are good vehicles which satisfy the tour of the foreigners also. The hotels make all the arrangements whenever the tourists request. Many Petrol bunks are also available in the hills, but few do not have motels, or restrooms attached for passerby. Railway stations are there in this district where the tourists enjoy their journey on the Toy Train which is very famous in the Nilgiris hills. Two-wheeler is also hired to tourists who can enjoy the zeal of driving on the hills and to reach the far away tourists centers. This facility is very helpful to students, youth, young couple and foreign tourists who love the zeal of hill driving.

**Corporation buses** do their services in all parts of the district. **Mini buses** also ply within the reachable region. Corporation buses are not much sophisticated when compared to cities. Many old buses ply to near and far off villages in and around Nilgiris. Air booking services are done to help the tourists to fly from the near by airport at Coimbatore. There is no airport in the hills but the hotels make arrangement of cabs to drop the tourists to the airport. Plenty of Airbuses ply from Nilgiris to Karnataka, Chennai, Coimbatore, Kerala and other places frequently, where they serve the passengers excellently. There are sleeper buses to plying to other states. Pollution Control Board is very active to check the vehicle, verify and certify.

**RTO services** are perfect in the hills, where regular checking is undertaken to check vehicle for Pollution control, providing other state permits for vehicles, checking and verification of Road tax on all the vehicles entering into the hills etc. RTO department checks the heavier loaded vehicle which may cause accident and cause public injury or hazards. There are



Inspectors in the Tollgates also to check the entry of other state vehicles. Private mini buses are plying in the hills to provide the transportation for the local people and to the visitors. The present mini buses services help the local people by reaching into many hamlets by regular trips, for school children, college students, office goers, and others who go for regular work. The people in Nilgiris are very happy with the services of the minibuses. Even the tourist felt the same. Some min buses don't ply to far off sightseeing places. Two wheeler services are provided in and around Nilgiris to satisfy the needs of the local who don't own a two wheeler and also the tourist who would love to enjoy visiting places by self drive.

Especially **foreign tourists** and youth, newly married love the joy of driving tow wheeler in Nilgiris. On-Line booking is possible in the hills to book e-tickets for Air service, Railway tickets and also luxury buses. Nilgiris provide good on –line booking facilities and there are private agents who help the tourists in Hotels also. Round the clock services of the tourists' vehicles are provided in the hills with the help of travel agents, hotels, private drivers etc. **Tourism Department** in Nilgiris is very excellent. They provide good support and guidance to tourists visiting from various states, from the same state, and foreigners also.

Foreigners are highly benefited with the help of this Tourism Department. They highlight the resources and familiarity of the hills. Accident Prone Zone boards and Suicide places with warning boards are kept throughout the Nilgiris. This information helps the tourists to be aware of the zone. While driving these boards, highlight the accident prone zone, animals' entry point, dangerous bridges, landslide zone, etc. Sometimes tourists do not follow the instruction given on the boards. Milestones, Name boards, and traffic signals are the guiding point to the tourists visiting Nilgiris. Tourists should be very cautious while following the rules on the Ghat roads. The upcoming vehicles on the ghat roads are allowed to move first following the down going vehicles.

**Sign Boards, Maps, information, warning Boards** on the roads instruct the visitors not to carry plastic bags, no overtaking, avoid feeding animals on the road, no smoking, prevent cell phone driving, prevent drinking while driving which cause accidents, protect fauna & flora, caution on hair pin bends, do not horn on certain special zones like hospitals, school, forest area etc. Hill driving is dangerous which needs care and caution. If **traffic rules** are disobeyed will block the traffic and cause problems to all travelers and people who are in



emergency too. Police department in the Nilgiris is very friendly to the public to provide their services.

There are **Police friendly** vehicles on the ghat roads to restrict traffic and avoid accident, illegalities, and other law and order. Highway roads are safe to the extent it is used, heavier vehicles which ply with heavy load may struggle to ply fast on ghat roads. Police department stops vehicles to check the doubtful vehicles. **Bank services/ATMs** are plenty in the hills to serve the public. At any time money help people to get cash on demand.

**Private Sector Bank/Foreign Banks** ATMs too serve the public in Nilgiris. Drug stores are throughout the hills to serve the emergencies. But still there is a drawback that most of the drug stores open their outlet at 9.00 am. and close around 8.00 p.m. There is no 24 hours service of **drug stores** and hence it is a high need to have the same in the hills. Hospitals (ambulances, health insurance scheme) are attached to only few hospitals. There are private owned ambulances owned by many societies, private hospitals, clubs, and youth clubs etc which try to help the people in emergency. Apart from this the Tamilnadu Government 108 services also help the public in and around Nilgiris.

**Post offices** are undertaking their services regularly. Apart from this there are courier services, parcel service's etc to serve the public. Travel agents, Travel passes and guide services are perfect in the hills. **Travel agents** are plenty to serve the public. Travel pass are given to children by the Government to children, students and to senior citizen. Even railway pass are to passengers. Guide services are also throughout the hills. There are persons who call himself as guide and try to fraud the tourists. Tourists should be very careful to trust anyone as guide. Hotels provide guide services together with the tourist vehicle for foreign tourists and also other state tourists. Tribal products are unique in this hill. Tribes perform their services in an excellent way and try to sell their workmanship. Toda tribes are very good in their embroidery and have their own Self Help Group and have their outlet inside the Botanical garden to sell their tribal products.

There are many outlets who sell tribal products in the hills. Keystone foundation have their outlets called "GREEN SHOP" to sell variety of tribal products like, honey, embroidery clothes/material/towels, kerchiefs, outfits, shawls, bags, spices, dolls, pots, oil, perfumes, wax candles, herbal products, Nilgiris products etc. Shopping Malls in Nilgiris are also good in the hills providing variety of products like Indian made and imported goods too. The cost



may vary because of the transportation charges, but all the needed commodities are sold to serve the needy people. Many tourists love to do shopping mainly on Homemade chocolates, bakery items, Warm clothes, Tribal products, Nilgiris products etc. Department stores are many also serve the need of the public. Many shops hold display boards, in languages like Malayalam, Tamil, English, Kanada and Hindi too to help the tourists and visitors. STD, ISD, FAX, XEROX, and INTERNET facilities etc are many in the hills to serve the public. Coin booths are plenty which serve All India connection one rupee. 1. A few E-booking facilities should be provided in the region like Coonoor and Kotagiri. Cell phone towers are everywhere in the hills to provide the network connection to cell phone holders. Many hamlets are in around Nilgiris and few villages do not still have their private Cell phone tower network connection but they are connected throughout with BSNL service connections. Recharge coupons are sold throughout Nilgiris. The accession of all the recharge coupons/Sim cards is sold in the Hills with all the latest schemes. Nilgiris products are famous in the hills. Products like Tea, Coffee, Home made chocolates, Bakery food items, Eucalyptus oil, Lemon grass oil (Tea oil) Oil of winter (Gaultheria oil) Camphor oil, Java Citronella oil, Citriodora oil (Hair oil) Almond Oil (Skin care oil) Geranium oil Olive oil, Rosemary oil, Thyme oil, spices like Caradamon, cinnamon, clove, nutmeg, pepper, vanilla, etc are sold in the hills. Fruits, Flowers, and Vegetable are sold in variety in the hills. Fruits like apple, Egg fruit, Passion fruit, avocado, fig, peach, banana, jack, pear, bilimbi, bread fruit, loquat, plum, Carambola, litchi pomegranate Cherri Moyer, kiwi, rambutan, Chinese gooseberry, Malayan apple, velvet apple, white sappota, mangos teen durian, citrus Surinam cherry rose apple. Vegetable like, Artichoke, carrot, peas, beans, cauliflower, potato, beetroot, kolkhoz, radish, cabbage, leeks, red cabbage, turnip, lettuce, capsicum etc,. Many tourists love to buy the fresh carrot rich in Vitamin A sold in the tourists spot.

Tourism planning in India started quite late with tourism policy being announced by the Government of India in November, 1982 after tourism was recognized as an industry by the Planning Commission of India set up the National Committee on Tourism in order to formulate plans for this sector. The government's initiatives of incorporating a planned tourism sector in India went a long way in boosting Indian tourism. In may 1992, the National Action Plan for tourism was announced. The objectives of this landmark plan for tourism planning in India were:



- To improve economy category domestic tourism.
- To develop the tourist areas socially and economically.
- To preserve the environment and the national heritage.
- To encourage international tourism.
- To improve in world tourism India's share.
- To increase opportunities for employment in this sector.
- To develop the tourists places
- To develop winter sports, beach resort and wildlife tourism.
- To restore the projects of national heritage.
- To provide in tourists centers economy class accommodation.
- Tourism planning in India has increased by leaps and bounds in the last few years and the government and Department of Tourism needs to make continuous efforts to ensure that tourism planning in India takes the tourism sector of the country to greater heights on a sustainable basis. The tourism policy must ensure sound and directive investment in areas to meet social and economic goals and would specifically encourage investment in tourism business, involvement of local communities, ensure safety to the tourists, responsive and effective legislation, environmental impacts etc.

It is therefore, essential that policy makers recognize tourism as a legitimate and effective tool for poverty reduction. It is not enough to simply mention the tourism and poverty relationship in policy statements—infrastructural changes must be adopted to ensure the effectiveness of sustainable tourism development at the destination levels.

Nilgiris though a tourist place lacks good roads and transportation. It suffers from drainage problem. It suffers with water problem during summer. Only few hospitals with fewer facilities are available, people have to travel to nearby cities for acute and special treatments. The market condition of Nilgiris is quite poor. The closure of the so called sick industry Hindustan Photo Film has ruined many families in Nilgiris.

The perennial problem is the Tea industry. Due to the decline of the green tea leaf price in Nilgiris all the business in and around had faced huge losses and has also left the economic condition of Nilgiris to very bad condition. People in Nilgiris has lost their purchasing power to go in as they like, this has also affected all fronts of the markets. The Nilgiris tea industry





is now in the painful process of positioning itself to meet the emerging competition from India and outside the country. So it is left to the Government of India to take vigorous step to eradicate this perennial problem existing in Nilgiris.

Dangers of landslides are a dangerous problem in Nilgiris. Sullivan introduced tea in the Nilgiris, but it was only after 1865 that tea cultivation became important. Today, nearly 16,900 ha are under tea cultivation, served by highly polluting factories that process the tea and, in the process, pollute the pure Nilgiri air. By law, tea must be planted on slopes of above 330, but this law is easily flouted. Unfortunately, while tea gardens look green, they do not encourage the existence of a natural ecosystem.

The land under cultivation for “English” vegetables has also gone up, to over 12,400 ha. All these plants have short inadequate roots, leading to an increase in the number of landslides. The Pykara Ultimate Stage Hydro Electric Project (PUSHEP) was yet another disaster. Apart from the expansion of the hydroelectric project in prime forestland, 7000 people were settled in Masinagudi and transported daily to PUSHEP across the elephant corridor. Companies like the Government Cordite Factory, Protein Products India and Needle Industries have also contributed to the degradation of the Nilgiris, by the conversion of forest to factories and the pollution of air, land and water. The consequent population pressure has created slums out of the beautiful hill stations of Ooty and Coonoor.

But the Nilgiris are the major watershed for South India, serving three states. If they go, so will our biodiversity, our natural resources, our water catchments, our life giving rains. The survival of the South is heavily dependent on the Nilgiris. Inadequacy of marketing, Lack of adequate infrastructural support. Some places are inaccessible, especially in winter. Funds constraining the development of regions. Scope for Higher education in Nilgiris is not so popular.

The concept of holidaying is gaining popularity in among various classes of people. Thus Nilgiris is an excellent tourist place. Eco-Tourism is gaining popularity. It can be promoted by **Eco Tourism**. To prevent environmental degradation and also to help local groups like the tribes to show case their culture and earn a living. **Medical tourism**: Set up state- of- the art, multi specialty hospitals in Nilgiris- the climate is ideal for recuperating patients foreigners can be attracted to come here for treatment. **Tourist Education**: Nilgiris can be an ideal destination for the students from countries like Thailand, China, Vietnam etc., who want to



learn English encourages the flow of foreign students to English medium schools in the Nilgiris. This helps their parents/guardians, friends and relatives to visit Nilgiris. **Graveyard tourism** also plays a small role in the Nilgiris where the grandchildren of the forefathers of British visit the graves in the hills. **Youth tourism** also plays a main role daily.

Set up a Nilgiris Heritage Museum manned by indigenous groups: This museum can be a forum where tribal art, music, craft, jewellery etc can be promoted,. It can be the venue for tribal dance and music programme, where these programme can be commercialized. This will pave the way for the tribes and the Government to earn profit. The craft centre can promote tribal craft making it a remunerating activity. Organize treks and nature walks in select areas with tribal youth as guides. Promote bird watching, camping, trekking as tourist activities. Get hotels to recycle their waste especially garbage and waste water. Nilgiris contains many unexplored regions.

Perils of landslides and earthquakes (during rainy season rarely) are big problems in Nilgiris. Fall in Tea prices are greater threat for the district's economy. It also suffers from Aids and Sickle cell Anemia diseases. Nilgiris lack exposures to new technology oriented industries and transportation. Scope for Higher education with good infrastructure is very poor, and it suffers without Govt. Medical College, Government Veterinary College, etc for the students of Nilgiris. The dropout rate in schools and colleges are high due to lack of motivation and inability, early marriages, financial problems etc. The original Tribal inhabitants have been also destroyed in Nilgiris. Alcoholism is rampant and the tribal population is decreasing. Their ancient inter-tribal barter system has broken down and they lack the skills to make them employable. Governments and the people have destroyed the Nilgiris in their greed to exploit its resources and treasures. With the exception of the Badagas who are educated and prosperous, the rest have been dispossessed of their land, while conversion to Christianity has resulted in many of the tribal giving up their ancient customs. They have become objects of curiosity for gawking tourists, but have been unable to derive any benefit from the tourism industry, unlike locals elsewhere. The destruction of wildlife is unforgivable. It all started with the trigger-happy British hunters, followed, after Independence, by trigger-happy Indian poachers. Habitat loss, increases in population, and pressure on land, water and other natural resources have made the tiger a rarity, the tusker impossibility.



The elephant corridor is heavily encroached, making migration extremely difficult for these huge pachyderms. Poaching has taken a heavy toll of wildlife. The declaration of the NBR (Nilgiri Biosphere Reserve) has not contained the degeneration of the Nilgiris. The major problem is deforestation. The cutting of trees and destruction of forests has resulted in habitat loss for wildlife and soil erosion, the rains washing away the rich topsoil year after year.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

Nilgiris must be able to provide hotels to cater to all segments. It must market camping facilities more and ensure that they are safe to use. Packaged tours have to be marketed. It must open avenues for business opportunities, could be tourism related itself or tribal studies. Railways must be given a boost so that long distance travel to remote places becomes easy. Low cost airlines and helicopter services also can be used to reach the inaccessible regions depending on the climatic conditions. Unique entertainment facilities must be provided in order to ensure a longer stay by the tourists. Newer sources of communication like the internet must be used effectively to influence and advertise. Family entertainment facilities must be developed. More playgrounds and parks must be made. Schools can be also be targeted for excursions. Create new and well planned tourist destinations spots from the unexplored regions which must be opened up at least in the peak months. Basic infrastructural facilities have to be developed further. Roads need to be improved. Parking space must be provided. Basic necessities must be provided. Water availability has to be catered to. A diverse range of culinary must be provided to cater to the wants of the tourists from various places across India and globe. Shopping facilities need a boost. Shopping malls can be opened up. Information must be available to tourists at all places. Eco-tourism must be well developed and promoted effectively. Exploitation of tourists by locals must be minimized. Facilities for higher education must be improved. Local culture, handicrafts must be promoted. It can attract more movie makers since it is endowed with scenic spots. A film city could also be built for this purpose. Insurance could be availed to tourists, especially for adventurers. Melas and festivals must be held so as to include the tourists. Orchards and forests may be promoted as tourist picnic spots. More advertisements in media, magazines etc are needed. Celebrity endorsements could help to market tourism. Cleanliness and environmental sustainability must be taken care of.



## **PERCEPTIONS OF THE FOREIGN TOURISTS**

Foreigners loved Nilgiris extremely and like to visit again. Foreigners are mainly from Switzerland, United Kingdom, France, Australia, Singapore, Malaysia, and other European countries too. At Nilgiris they loved the Indian food, and also commented that food is too spicy and oily. At Nilgiris they love to have the fresh vegetables as salads, boiled vegetables, hot drinks, Continental food/Chinese food and also love to enjoy flesh food without spices and masalas. The love to purchase Cotton readymade garments, women loved Saris and also Bakery products. They are not happy with the awkward look of Indian men on foreigner ladies/girls. They show less interest on the availability of the drinking water and also hate to look at the garbage, and the dirty roads. Few of them feel that India is very hot and the summer at Nilgiris is also very hot to them. They show good craze on the Nilgiris Toy train, Tribal hamlets and love to enjoy the Flora & Fauna in Nilgiris. Their satisfaction is very high on vehicles provided by the tour operators, hotels and restaurants. They are scared of the Indian guides who approach them. Their perception is that India is a noisy place and finds Nilgiris a little calm place to relax with good climate. They are very happy with Bars attached to the hotels and about the TASMACHOP shops. Site seeing spots are excellent according to their perception. They show more interest on the antiques, antique car show, Heritage buildings, Historical Monuments, Dog show, Gardens & Parks. They loved the Tribal products and also the habits of tribes. Foreign tourists show more interest on the fruits and flowers in Nilgiris and also the tribal handicrafts. One UK foreigner explained that he visited Nilgiris to see the graveyard of his forefathers who lived in Nilgiris after the British period. They are astonished with the trees and fruits in the Nilgiris. On the whole their visits are regular to Nilgiris and love to visit again and again. They love to use the Spa and use all the herbal oil products for nature therapy used for physical fitness. There are foreigners who have settled themselves as Research Scholars and also for pleasant stay.

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