TAMIL NADU ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES AND JOINT ACTION
WORKSHOP

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98 A KOOTURAVUNAGAR
DINDIGUL 624 004
TAMIL NADU

PAPER
BY
LATHEEF KIZHISERI
RESEARCHER, EQUITABLE TOURISM OPTIONS, BANGALORE 560 008

"TOURISM DEVELOPMENT AND ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES"

A CLOSE LOOK AT TAMIL NADU

EQUATIONS
168, 8th Main, Behind Indira Nagar Club, Bangalore 560 008
Ph: 558 2313
Tourism Development And Environmental Issues
A Close Look At Tamilnadu

Latheef Kizhisseri

"The tendency for those who are not poor to become mere sightseers in the world of those who are is one of the central problems of international development".

Graham Hancock: Lords of Poverty. 1993

Introduction

Environmental issues achieved major significance during the last three decades. Good. But, on the other end of the scale, environmental destruction and degradation during the last three decades went on a high gear. Sustainability rhetoric articulated by western governments, organisations and media exhibited panic of the priests of progress and plenty caught in their own high-tech life style. The politics of sustainable development hungrily espoused by the west is nothing but a last straw to maintain the castles of plenty for the few who own it now at the cost of poverty of the majority.

Acute anthropocentrism and sustainability are strange bed-fellows. Western (read, westoxified) paradigms of sustainable development are trying to carry these two together. The result of such Cartesian scientism is self-evident. Jonathan Raban puts it clearly: "In an underdeveloped country, don't drink the water, in a developed country, don't breathe the air". (1)

Life style changes are still an anathema to most of the western environmentalists and they try to "teach sustainability" to others. It is like the story of the blind people who saw the elephant. Traditional societies living sustainably and in perfect harmony with nature were forced to 'develop' by the western "Development Incorporated" (2) and "taught" to live sustainably. This is absurdity par excellence.

Tourism is a centuries-old activity. I mean 'travel'. It is not limited to humans: birds, animals, fish and even microbial beings travel a lot during their life-time. Tourism as an organised human activity is of recent origin.

Saturation of agriculture and manufacturing in the JUNA (3) resulted to increased importance to service sector activities, including tourism. This is the direct result of over-mechanisation of production activity in the primary and secondary sectors of the economy. Service sector is the last point of the vicious circle of plenty.

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Researchers/INIFOS, Bangalore. Opinions expressed in this paper are not necessarily those of INIFOS.
Tourism development has been projected as the best magic cure for the "ailing economies" of the world, by the 'Development Set' and the governments of AALA (4) countries. They orchestrate this in an automatic chorus. The global traps of this "new development paradigm" is hidden behind high-tech verbosity and astronomical figures, like the paradigms of the past, proposed by the 'Development Incorporated' over the fragile bodies of the poor. The old paradigms helped to maintain 'economic status quo' and the 'new paradigms' are merely old wine in new bottles.

A major myth circulated is that "tourism is a 'no pollution' industry". We have too many examples in our midst to show that this is a timely lie to satisfy those who perform lip service to environment and make profit out of it. Environmental problems associated with tourism may not be as evident as water pollution caused by tanneries or urban decline due to heavy traffic. But it is identifiable. No one can turn a blind eye to the solid waste gathered on the streets of Mamallapuram, Udagamandalam or Kodaikanal. No one can close his eyes when the huge chimneys of five-star hotels show up in our line of vision. No one can deny the huge hill of plastic and other non-biodegradable waste lying all over the Himalayan range.

This paper is an exploratory attempt to look at tourism development with holistic perspective and focusing analysis on environmental issues emerging from tourism development. Attempt is made to achieve a judicious mix of macro and micro realities.

I hope this paper will help in opening up some uncharted frontiers in the development debate. This is not a complete treatise on the issues involved.
The Global Traps of Tourism Development

What is tourism? I have asked this countless times. Every answer differs from the other. I tried to answer it myself. Each time my answer lacks something or other aspect of the ultimate answer.

The question has emerged from the present reality—the presence of organised tourism in our midst, its status as an industry, the mammoth institutions and bureaucracy thriving in its name, the packaging of festivals and rituals for the eye of the elites, the nude memsahibs lounging in Kovalam beach, the promises to run palaces-on-wheels in a country engaged in reinventing the wheel; all these and many other factors prompt the above question.

None of the policy documents or master plans define ‘tourism’. They enumerate the ‘benefits’ and enlist the changes and structures needed to achieve the ‘benefits’ that will fall like ‘manna’ to the lap of the hungry millions. Tourism development has been projected as the best magic cure for the ailing economies of the world by the ‘development Incorporated’. Liberalisation and globalisation were proposed as the wonder medicines to cure the sickness of the welfare state. Tourism suddenly gained the status of the only high growth industry suitable for the AALA countries.

"In the name of tourism, capital and modernised peoples have been deployed to the most remote regions of the world, farther than any army was ever sent. Institutions have been established to support this development, not just hotels, restaurants and transportation systems, but restorations of ancient shrines, development of local handicrafts for sale to tourists, and rituals performed for tourists. In short, tourism is not just an aggregate of merely commercial activities: it is also an ideological framing of history, nature, and tradition: a framing that has the power to reshape culture and nature to its own needs.” (5)

Yes. Our governments - Union and States - are busy with framing of history: they are even engaged in rewriting of history to suit the needs of the tourists. (6) Tourism promotion agencies of the governments are all out enlisting capital and techniques of the “modernised” peoples, using every possible avenue, to package nature and culture for the enjoyment of the “modernised” peoples. The human and environmental costs of this “framing” are underplayed or astronomical arithmetics of “benefits” are manufactured to mesmerise people with the intention of herding them to accept the “top-down” plans for tourism developments.

MacCannell adds: "... paralleling the movements of tourists, there has been a rapid growth of a reverse movement of peoples from formerly remote regions of the world into the centres of wealth and power: the current African and Asian diasporas, the flight of peasant refugees from central American fascism, the migrations of agricultural workers, the Southeast Asian ‘boat people’. The departures of these peoples from their creative adaptations to their new lives, are changing the neighbourhoods of Los Angeles, London etc., and even small towns. Every major city in the West has been transformed into a living version of the fictional compression of cultures as represented at Disney World. But the modern polyglot, composite
community is not sanitised and actually de-humanised as occurs at Disney Land, where Cyborgs play the part of pirates. Nor is it re-humanised as occurs at Disney World and other similar attractions where, for e.g., Mormon College students play the part of Tahitian ‘natives’ .... The adaptations of international migrants and refugees are as much as part of emerging world culture as the resorts and ‘Pizza Huts’ for tourists which have recently been built on the beaches of their countries”. (7)

The ongoing invasion of the post-colony (the post-modern invasion) through trade and tourism is structurally different from its predecessors, the pre-colonial, the colonial and the post-colonial. But the objectives of the post-modern invasions are as sinister as its predecessors and it is more sophisticated than its predecessors. In the pre-colonial, it was pure armed conflict; in the colonial, it was a mixture of crude trade and tactical war; in the post-colonial it was a hidden mixture of eco-political war. The post-modern invasion is based on a mixture of trade, aid, tourism and thought control.

Tourism is not an innocent commercial aggregate as is held out by official propaganda. The hidden dimension of domination, dependence and destruction are not proper elements in the process of promoting paradise. Therefore, governments and tourism promoters expend peoples’ money to conceal the true facts from peoples—both guests and hosts. Tourism departments have mastered this art of telling lies in the garb of truth.

“Tourism literature attempts to ‘mystify the mundane; amplify the exotic; minimise the misery; rationalise the disquietude; and romanticise the strange’”. Tourism is sold through and indulged in the myth that the sun always shines; the natives always smile, and as The Economist states in its 1991 global survey on tourism, ‘every evening ends with the best sex you ever had’ (8) This is not an exception. This is the rule of tourism promotion in AALA countries. The glossy brochures and guide books produced in millions by tourism departments spread out between Kanyakumari and Kashmir are living evidences for this callous attitude. In this process, they are assisted by international ‘assistants’, especially the World Tourism Organisation and the UN Development Programme (UNDP), chain hotels, transport monopolies and others who are in the business of making fast bucks out of every possible corner of the world.

The WTO is busy making ‘targets’ and facilitate destruction in the name of ‘development’ as was done by the international aid and development agencies during the last 50 years. “Despite the fads, fancies, ‘new techniques’, new directions and endless ‘policy rethinks’ that have characterised the development business over the last half-century, and despite the expenditure of hundreds of billion dollars, there is little evidence to prove that the poor of the world have actually benefited”. (9) WTO and the governments of the AALA countries are merely replaying the sinister game mastered by FAO, WHO, UNDP, USAID, ODA, OECD etc., in other ground to make every hill, valley, backwater and beach of the AALA countries a ‘paradise’ for the leisure class and a hell for the local people.

The government of India and state governments have become consenting players in this post-modern game against their own people. People opposing the game are coopted through astronomical statistics of ‘gains’ manufactured by ‘experts’ nesting in New Delhi or New York; the remaining opposition will be suppressed by other means, including policing actions (10).
A self-revealing statement by the Committee on Tourism set up by the government of India amply illustrates the global traps of tourism, though it requires a reading beyond the lines:

"The growth of protectionist sentiment in industrially advanced countries has tended to constrain the expansion of exports from developing countries. In the case of tourism, however, the urge to enjoy holidays, satisfy the wanderlust, and know and understand other people has yet to reach a saturation point. The efforts on the part of the developing countries to attract larger numbers of tourists from the affluent countries may prove to be less daunting and more rewarding than the struggle to obtain fair prices for primary commodities or expand the exports of manufactured products."

The escapist, anti-people adhocism of the government of India and its total failure against the anti-poor activities of the rich countries are clear from the above. The same government of India is herding its people to another sacrifice at the alter of the rich, for the benefit of the rich through the proposed tourism development.

A balanced analysis of the politics and economics of tourism reveals the cruel reality embedded in the tourism development plans of the government of India and state governments. The present tourism development in the AALA countries represent the leisure greed of the affluent and the greed of the domestic elites to make a few, fast buck out of it. This process reinforce the rights of the aristocracy of mercy to trample the poor and their rights to enjoy at any cost. This is a worst form of human rights violation, planned and implemented by the so-called champions of human rights.

Economic ordering of the global village (no villager will be there; all villagers will be wiped out by multiple displacement) within a frame of giver-receiver, guest-host, master-servant, rich-poor” paradigm is the hallmark of the present development strategies. This applies to tourism also. Equity and justice are totally absent from this paradigm. It is founded on the principle that equity for the rich only, justice for the rich only, leisure for the rich only. This, in turn, reinforces the “grab psyche” or, in plain words, the theory of survival of the richest(fittest). The claim of ‘highly civilised’ and ‘highly human’ by the modern humans, especially the high-tech westerners seem to be a myth.

*The ‘No Pollution’ Myth*

Tourism has been projected as a ‘no pollution’ industry. Official propaganda orchestrate this myth time and again. The flimsiness of the ‘no pollution’ argument comes to light when one starts asking specific questions about the impacts of tourism.

Pollution seems to be understood by many in a very narrow sense-either as air-pollution or as water pollution, caused by factories and vehicles. Any alteration in nature, whether dangerous or not should be seen as a potential source for pollution because it will destroy the balance of nature sooner or later. Sometimes fatally, sometimes mildly. For e.g. exploitation of ground water will lead to chain reaction: first degrading the soil, then affecting vegetation and then resulting in reduction of air quality: this process will go on cyclically if not corrected in the root itself. Cosmetic treatments in the form of treatment of pollution can’t solve the problem.

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EQUATIONS
168, 8th Main Road,
Near Indiranagar Club,
Bangalore-560 003, INDIA
There is no need to go far away to experience the reality of pollution and degradation of the environs due to tourism. Right in front of us there are enough examples - Ooty, Kodaikanal, Kovalam, Mamallapuram etc. In 1992, the Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu, Ms. Jayalalitha, said: Ooty is getting defaced with a proliferation of ugly buildings and is losing its salubrious climate. Hence, efforts should be made by the government with the cooperation of the local people to restore this hill station to its pre-eminent place as the Queen of Hills rather than offering concrete solutions to the problems. After one year, in 1993, the District Administration is on a collision course with the Save Nilgiris Campaign, instead of cooperation.(13) The sweet talk of our political elites and the arrogant attitudes of our officials will lead us straight into dooms day instead of promised ‘development dinner’.

In 1986, attention was drawn to the impending danger but no meaningful action was taken by the authorities who rule over the Queen of Hills. “Decades of unplanned exploitation and unsustainable development throughout the Nilgiris has resulted in an acute water crisis in Ootacamund, choking under the onslaught of tourists and traffic.”(14) Instead of taking actions, the authorities allowed hundreds of resorts to come up in the fragile environs of Nilgiris during the last eight years.

The ‘resort culture’, which has been spreading like an epidemic, is taking its toll: beautification by destroying bio-diversity, energy-intensive lifestyles for a few in energy deficient areas, water intensive structures in drought-prone areas, destructive leisure activities such as golf, massive drug business, organised but hidden prostitution. The resort model is culturally and politically specific and, for example, seems inappropriate for application to developing countries. (15)

The cover-up for the elite-oriented tourism development rests on astronomical figures of ‘earnings’, especially foreign exchange earnings. Real facts show a different reality. The cover-up stations like a card castle when one starts asking questions about consumer spending patterns of tourists, exchange traps, disbursal anomalies, and real costs. When we add up all hidden costs and leakages against the ‘gains’, tourism shows a negative balance which constantly erodes tax-payers contributions to the state coffers.

Hotels and restaurants constitute the third largest polluting agents in urban areas; in tourist areas, with no other industrial activity, they may be the second largest polluters. the first being vehicles, majority of them used by the tourists coming in thousands. This is an easily observable fact in all tourist locations, both big and small.

Tourism development has become another development trap in which the development demons trample the poor and marginalised people underfoot and deliver irreparable damage to the environment.

Tourism development plans proposed by the central and state governments not only damage the physical capital of the localities but also destroy their cultural capital by making the local people passive hosts living at the mercy of the leisure class. The paradigms employed in the making of these mammoth plans are archaic and tested as total failures in the countries of the west and those who espoused tourism in the AALC countries, such as Thailand, Philippines
etc. Governments, as usual, are repeating history rather than setting new and viable courses for development which can benefit people at large.

The 'Industry 'Myth

Tourism has been declared as an industry by the government of India and many state governments, including Tamil Nadu. (16) None of the policy documents or master plans of state governments provide a proper definition of tourism, instead they engage in verbose hailing of its benefits. This is a first-grade policy ploy to fool people.

Industry status to a particular activity will not automatically help people of the locality of the activity. The present industrial areas are living examples of this reality. But, industry status will help the big and powerful engaged in the particular activity. It will facilitate their smooth sailing from petty operators to millionaires, as happened in India during the last 45 years. Structural advantages, mostly built up by peoples' money, from industry status is a sacred cake to be exclusively apportioned by the elites engaged in the particular activity.

The sudden flood of tourism investors, resort conglomerates, hotel chains, fleet operators, air taxi operators, etc., is a direct result of the sudden elevation of tourism to an industry. They are all set to cash in on the incentives, subsidies, tax holidays and 'free hand' accorded to tourism. All these are just flying above the head of the majority of the people. Of course, the ordinary people may get the leftovers and garbage thrown out of the Boeing windows and five star kitchens.

The real estate boom in tourist locations will make millions homeless during the near future. They will be pushed into the periphery of towns and tourist locations and will become beggars, prostitutes, low-paid servants, garbage collectors, etc. The human and social cost of tourism industry will be far worse than any other industry.

Tourism is a mixed bag, covering two major activities: hotels and transportation. Transport is an industry in its own status. Hotel activity was declared as an industry by some state governments. This is a policy trap to 'manufacture consent' for the official plans. Mammoth figures are formed by adding up statistics concerning transport and hotels along with other minor items such as retail trade, in tourist locations. Employment projections of tourism development are tainted by so many anomalies and inflated figures.

None of the 'developed' countries identify tourism as a separate industry. For example, the business statistics of the Department of Commerce of the USA show separate figures for hotel, transport, retail trade, etc., along with manufacturing, agriculture etc. The tourism game played with the help of inflated and non-existent statistics and international aid and advice from the World Tourism Organisation and other multilateral agencies has become a deadly game in Thailand, Indonesia, Philippines, Sri Lanka and many Afro-Latino countries. They have become 'wastelands and AIDS-lands'.
The right to travel is a basic right of every living being, except perhaps plants which are rooted in a specific part of the earth. Attempts to 'manage' peoples travel through niche marketing and to make huge profits out of it is a relatively new tactic evolved by saturated economies of the JUNA countries. They have made their part of the earth a wasteland of garbage in their greed to get ahead of others. Now they are trying to transfer their waste on to the remaining pristine areas and make a fast buck out of the process of making AALA countries a huge wasteland of culture and life.

Those who remain in the vicious circle of poverty are targeted by those who are in the vicious circle of plenty - the result of such a targeting will be wiping out of the target and get hold of everything there. This attitude is in no way different from Columbus' and those who followed him, during the last 500 years. The governments of AALA countries have become consenting sepoys of the successors of Columbus, for the kickbacks and commissions offered by the post-modern colonisers. Whether we should consent to this arrangement or not depend on our judgement of the arrangement.

PART II

Tourism in Tamil Nadu: An Overview

Tourism in Tamil Nadu remained a low key affair until recently. The culture-nature cliché was the main thrust of tourism promotion by the Department of Tourism of the Government of Tamil Nadu and the government owned TTDC (Tamil Nadu Tourism Development Corporation).

Tourism activity in Tamil Nadu was centered around Madras, Madurai, Kancheepuram, Mudumalai, Rameswaram, Kodaikanal, Chidambaram, Thanjavur, Kanyakumari, Vedanthangal, Mamallapuram, Udagamandalam, Courtallam, Tiruchirappalli, Poompuhar, Hogenakkal, and Yercaud. It is clear from facts that most of these places are pilgrimage centres visited mainly by domestic tourists. Remaining places are associated with natural peculiarities or historical significance. The two places favoured by foreign tourists and non-Tamil tourists are Ooty and Kodaikanal, both endowed by nature and put under severe pressure by resort culture.

Tourism planning of the government of Tamil Nadu and TTDC is similar to other states and say the same story, the story of financial loss to the state coffers and unquantifiable loss to people and environment.

Recently, the TN government has proposed a master plan of Rs. 591.34 crores to boost tourism through central assistance. Tourism is fully opened for private participation. The master plan of TN government is a parrot song of tourism master plans of other states. The thrust of the plan is to create infrastructure facilities and additional attractions to visiting tourists. The centre has recognised almost all southern states as 'prioritised states' for tourism development.
The TN government is planning massive incentives to the tourism sector—reduction in luxury tax, tax holidays, concessional land, income tax deduction, speedy clearing of projects etc. Private sector is invited to come up with new hotel projects in existing tourist areas and new areas such as Palani, Pollachi, Gingee, Yelagiri etc. (17)

A Special Tourism Development Authority (STDA), headed by the Chief Secretary, was constituted to coordinate tourism promotion of the special areas identified for intensive development. The special areas identified include the Madras-Pondicherry belt, Kancheepuram municipal area and the Tranquebar belt. Areas identified for intensive development are the Hare Island in the Gulf of Mannar, Vandalur, Coimbatore (Peelamedu). Master plans are prepared for the entire state and each of the areas. (18)

The plans offered are in tune with the Tamil Nadu Tourism Policy 1992 which proposed development of heritage towns, tent tourism, paying guest scheme etc. to boost tourism all over Tamil Nadu. Incentives offered by the tourism policy and the master plans resulted in a construction boom (19) all over Tamil Nadu, including remote localities in the western ghats region. Illegal and unauthorised structures are coming up all over the tourist areas. Most of the authorised construction activities are undertaken without environmental impact assessments.

Town Development Authorities are proposed in the Tourism Areas to prepare detailed schemes and implement the proposals in the master plans. They will function concurrently with the Special Tourism Areas schemes and the STDA. (20) A large scale creation of massive Tourism bureaucracy is on the anvil.

The massive plans propose astronomical benefits but the share of it available to the local people is untraceable. It is natural because the thrust of the plans is on private investors with money, either black or white, to throw in for real estate development in the form of star hotels, amusement parks, Disneylands etc. It is needless to say that Palace-on-wheels' and AC coaches not only exclude common people as beneficiaries but also participants. Most of the schemes proposed clearly violate one or other provisions in the environmental laws. Governments are encouraging this violation by supporting limitless changes in tourist areas.

Environmental regulations are openly violated in almost all tourist areas. The new plans will accelerate degradation of environment, especially those fragile eco-systems in the western ghats environs.

**The National Tourism Game**

Massive tourism development plans in the Southern states is a direct fallout of the political instability in the Northern states. Kashmir and the North-eastern states are under the grip of undeclared war against the people by the government of India. Kashmir has become a 'paradise lost' due to the evil greed and deed of the politicians lounging in New Delhi. During the last ten years, western media and governments were constantly warning their people. Don’t go to North India' signs were put up by almost all travel operators in the western countries.
Tourism development received renewed energy through the new economic orderings—globalisation, marketisation, privatisation, liberalisation or whatever you call that multi-tentacled monster. The nation-wide industry status granted to tourism industry also assisted the process of flooding the sector by private profiteers.

The National Action Plan for Tourism (NAPT) of the government of India is the watershed from which all the new changes are flowing. It has identified Muthukkad, near Madras, as a Special Tourism Area (STA) along with Kerala, Lakshadweep etc. The TN government is just repeating the NAPT proposals in its state master plans.

The NAPT is the result of the Report of the National Committee on Tourism 1988. The danger of the game is evident from the observations of the Committee.(22)

The risk factors associated with massive tourism development are very clear. Excessive reliance on foreign tourists increases the risk factor. All over the world real income of the majority of people are falling sharply and real expenses are rising sharply. In such a situation, extreme dependence on tourism will prove disastrous. Apart from this, the negative fallouts of tourism in the form of over-exploitation of water, environmental degradation, deforestation, cultural pollution, displacement of indigenous people etc. add up the risk.

Tourism development in the ALAA countries is an attempt to transfer the leisure burden of over-productive JUNA onto the poor. This will lead to a new form of colonialism.

Tourism and the Environment: Truths About TN

The myth of no pollution has already exploded on the face of its proponents. Yet the governments are keen on pushing the same pattern of lopsided development in all the identified areas for tourism development. This is a fact one can witness all over India.

Ooty and Kodaikanal stand testimony to the pauperisation of the people and environment in the name of tourism development. The Queen of Hills has been turned into a queen of hells.

The socio-cultural costs of tourism development may be difficult to quantify but the economic, political and environmental costs are identifiable and quantifiable. A major political cost is the problems of exclusion of the poor and marginalised. This has reached the level of outright racism in some places(23). Resorts are built exclusively for foreign, white tourists where the entry of Indians and other non-whites are prevented. The alienation of the indigenous people due to strange architecture, amusement devices, flooding of people and high-technology also raises fundamental questions about the present tourism development plans.

LAND: Tourism is a major contributor for degrading soil quality of the localities where tourism boom is evident. The sudden change in land use pattern will result in unforeseen consequences. Regular landslides during monsoons and drought during summer has become a permanent feature of localities developed according to western paradigms. Accumulation of waste and garbage in small areas due to heavy tourist inflow causes irreparable damage to the soil of the area. This is observable in Tamil Nadu. It is more evident in Ooty, Kodaikanal and Mamallapuram.
Colonialists grabbed the lands in Ooty and Kodaikanal from the indigenous people and made into mono-culture plantations to feed their industrial, profit, and ‘good life’ greed. The climatic conditions of the locality attracted many to the place and it soon became a pleasure resort for westerners. Self-reliant communities of indigenous people were thrown out of their lands and were forced to become wage-slaves of the westerners. The pattern is still repeated in the hill areas; the only difference is that the present form is conducted by the governments and the ‘domestic Aryans’.

The latest ‘resort culture’ is delivering blows to the land in the tourist locations. Local people are forced to sell their land due to various pressures. Real estate sharks are all out looking for land all over the tourist localities due to the massive incentives offered by the government for construction activities in the tourist locations. This is a visible feature in all the tourist locations in Tamil Nadu.

**WATER:** Pollution of streams and water sources is a permanent danger associated with tourism development. This is clearly observable in all tourism areas. The streams flowing from Nilgiris are totally polluted by piled up garbage in the upstream areas. The sufferers are those lower riparian people who depend on these streams for drinking water and irrigation. They were forced to be the victims of some activity out of which they don’t derive any benefits. This is injustice of a wildest kind. Apart from human beings, the worst sufferers are the flora and fauna in the down stream areas. Most of the garbage left by modern tourists are not biodegradable and they are a potential source of various diseases, including various forms of cancer. Indigenous people, flora and fauna have no genetic adjustments to these ‘diseases of progress’. Hence, they become easy victims of these diseases.

Ground water exploitation is another cause for worry in the tourist locations. Tourist infrastructure is highly water intensive. For e.g. Average water consumption in star hotels is 36 times more than the average use of water by a person living in an ordinary hotel or house. Most of the tourist areas are suffering from acute water shortage. Ground water exploitation is resorted to escape from this problems. Limitless exploitation of ground water results in dangerous fallouts such as severe drought. Local people suffer the most due to this kind of development. The return from tourism never percolate to the local people; this adds insult to injury.

**AIR:** Air pollution in the tourist areas is acute. A small locality is put under the pressure of thousands of vehicles during a season, mainly private vehicles. The emissions caused by teeming vehicles destroy the air quality of the area. This is observable in Ooty, Kodaikanal and Vemallapuram. Air pollution will result in double impact due to lack of green cover. Green cover of the area is destroyed by construction of concrete jungles. The whole area and its surrounding becomes like a modern city due to its conversion into tourism locality and most of the benefits of such conversion never reach the local people.

**CLIMATE:** Climatic conditions in the tourist localities change dramatically due to tourism development. Garbage, water pollution, deforestation, soil erosion, air pollution, ground water exploitation are related and lead to massive changes in the climate of the locality. Tourists will come and go, providing a few silvers to those able to grab it. The victims of tourism development will be those living in the locality. Tourism results in a kind of a double victimisation—local people lose their life-support systems due to tourism and they become internally displaced; they suffer all the negative fallouts and receive no benefits.
Rainfall in Nilgiris during 1902-1990 (24)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Period (Years)</th>
<th>Mean Annual Rainfall in MM</th>
<th>Average Number of Rainy Days in a Year</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1902-21</td>
<td>1415</td>
<td>106</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1922-41</td>
<td>1300</td>
<td>94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1942-60</td>
<td>1360</td>
<td>99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1961-90</td>
<td>1174</td>
<td>95</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It may be difficult to link up reduction in rainfall to tourism as it is difficult to link up deforestation to reduction in rainfall in a pure quantitative sense. It is clear that tourism development is a major contributor for deforestation in the western ghats region. Hence, it can be concluded that there may be a direct link between tourism and climatic changes, via various factors caused by tourism.

**FOOD DEPENDENCY:** Conversion of agricultural land and forests into commercial sites for building activity is an observable fact in tourism areas. This is at a high rate in Ooty and Kodai kanal. An immediate result of this form of development is the "food dependency" forced upon local people. People in the tourist areas are forced to bring food items from outside. "Imported" food in tourist localities are costly and unaffordable to local people. "Dollar Syndrome" is part and parcel of tourism development. The net result of such a market arrangement is the reduction of food intake among the marginalised people living in the tourist centres.

**ENERGY:** Tourist infrastructure is highly energy intensive. Affluent tourists and local elites will get priority supplies of energy in the name of tourism and the local people will be deprived of energy supplies. The cost of energy supplies in tourist areas is unaffordable by the marginalised people.

The net result of mal-development imposed by the massive tourism development is the total impoverishment of the local people and the limitless destruction of the local environs. Tourism development propaganda and plans conceal these negative factors from the public eye. If they are brought into public eye by concerned groups or individuals, they are countered by using state machinery, including the police.

**Is There A Way Out?**

Right to travel is a basic right. Denial of this right is impossible. If possible it should be seen as a human right violation. Proposals for alternatives to the present tourism development plans should take into account various factors - political, economic, cultural, environmental etc. A holistic analysis of the carrying capacity of the area will give more insights concerning
the possible development model to be adopted for the area. Environmental impact assessment should be made mandatory for every big and small project for tourism promotion.

Local decision making should be resorted to instead of the ‘top-down’ policy formulations now adopted by the governments. Resort culture should be stopped in any case because it is wrong by all counts. Exclusive tourism areas is an unviable model and unconstitutional model due to natural and legal factors prevailing in India.

A more just tourism development can be formulated on the basis of geographical fragmentation of tourism rather than concentration in particular localities. There is no lack of ‘attractions’ all over India. Almost every day of the year is a ‘festival day’ in almost all states in India. Instead of the present resort culture a new culture of tourism should be put in place with the participation of people in all areas. Home based hospitality and all season travel experience should be promoted instead of ‘seasonal holidaying’. The paying guest scheme provided in the Tamil Nadu Tourism Policy 1992 should be taken up as a launching pad by NGOs and grassroots groups to mount pressure on the government to prevent the unviable tourism development model.

Massive development programmes such as the East Coast Road (ECR) should be seen as part of the whole unviable development model espoused by the governments. ECR is in perfect fit to the proposed tourism development in the east coast which covers the entire 1000 km stretch of beach of Tamil Nadu. The human and environmental cost of ECR can be equated to the Highway 364 of Brazil which is the major contributor for destroying large tracts of Amazonian forests.

The philosophy of providing easy opportunities to real estate and investment sharks to make a fast buck is embedded in all the tourism development proposals of the government of Tamil Nadu. This is the case in other states also, notably in Kerala. No attempt was made by the government agencies to follow the principle of environmental conservation laid down in the Indian Constitution, Environmental Laws, and International Conventions on Environment signed by the government of India. Governments are keen on repeating mistakes concerning development programmes and keen on wasting tax-payers’ money.

This is in contradiction to the free market ideology the government is preaching now. Local decision making and local effort is inherent in free market ideology. Therefore, government’s attempt to takeover land in the name of public interest and transferring them to only a few big sharks is totally against free market ideology.

Local resistance of these unviable development models should be supported at national and international level to achieve a meaningful result. Piecemeal approach towards these kind of problems may result in shifting the real focus and it may boomerang in another direction. There is an urgent need to place a holistic approach to all development programmes and to place tourism and environment within the frame to be tackled with a holistic approach.
PART III

Case Analysis: Ooty and Kodaikanal

Refer: Annexures

Environmental devastation is the hallmark of tourism in Ooty and Kodaikanal. Campaign against such anti-nature attitude took momentum during the last ten years but meaningful results are minimum. Government's attitude towards environmental conservation is a kind of essentialist bureaucratisation and to win a few laurels and votes for the ruling party. This is evident from the media reports concerning Ooty and Kodaikanal.

Resort culture is spreading in Ooty and Kodaikanal like a wild fire. The result is making a concrete hell in the paradises. The profit goes to few and the negative costs are borne by the majority.

END NOTES

02. See Graham Hancock. Lords of Poverty. 1993. Mandam, London. Development: Incoordinated and Development. See are the two terms Hancock used to refer to the institutions and people engaged in international aid and development. Chief among them are the World Bank, the IMF, UN Development Agencies such as FAO, WHO, UNDP, and the national agencies such as USAID, ODA, CIDA, DANIDA.
07. JUNA refers to Japan, European Community, North America (USA and Canada) and Australia. This term is used to get out of the mathematical gradations and superior inferior notions enforced by terms like First World, Third World etc.
04. AALA refers to Asia, Africa and Latin America. This term is used instead of Third World. See. Ibid. See also. S.C. Gangal: Averting Doomsday. Indian Express, October 27, 1992.
Aala in Hindustani means, the great or superb.
07. Dean MacCannell. Supra. n.05. pp.01-02.
09. Graham Hancock. Supra. n.02.
10. Recently, an activist who held a peaceful satyagraha against the proposed Bekal Special Tourism Area Project was arrested and put in custody by the police at Kannangad, Kerala.
13. Indian Express 8 June 1993. The Distinct Collector. Leena Nair. stated that B.J. Krishnam, the President of the Save Nilgiris Campaign was making exaggerated allegations while referring to an earlier report in the Indian Express 24 May 1993. (Anguish at Destruction of Nilgiris Environ.)
14. Indian Express 17 August 1986
18. Times of India 03 April 1993; Economic Times 04 April 1993; Indian Express 16 June 1993
22. Supra n.11
23. Supra n.06 pp. 12-14
24. The Hindu 10 April 1992
26. Graham Hancock. Supra n.02.

EQUATIONS
168, 8th Main Road,
Near Indiranagar Club,
Bangalore-560 003. INDIA