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UGC MINOR PROJECT ON

‘Problems Prospects and of Ecotourism Industry in Kerala with Special Reference to Thenmala’

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ABSTRACT

Thenmala is the first planned eco-tourism destination in India. Thenmala in Malayalam means “honey hills”. The present study made an evaluation of the eco-tourism project at Thenmala with the specific objectives of analyzing the barriers to develop eco-tourism and eco-enterprises and to find out the socio economic impact. The study has carried out primary survey among the executives, guides, staff, local people and tourists using a structured interview schedule. The time series and cross sectional analysis helped to draw inferences and make projections on the immense potential of Eco-tourism Centers in promoting ecological balance, traditional culture and values, rare artisan skills and handicraft industries of rural Kerala. The unparalleled and unique eco-diversity and scenic beauty of Thenmala is definitely attracting international acclaim. The centre was incurring losses in its infancy, but since 2007-08, it is showing an increasing trend in profit. The advantage of the centre is that it satisfies all four categories of eco-tourists-dedicated, general, casual and recreational. The study found that the implementation of the project was according to the basic principles of eco-tourism and that the centre has succeeded in achieving the desired objectives to a great extent. The distinctive character of the centre deserves national attention of policy makers in the economic, environmental and tourism spheres.