

## **VI.A.2. Sustainable Development of Tourism in Munnar, Kerela: A Case study**

**G.S. Syamlal**

**J.Sujin**

**E. Saravanan**

Centre for Earth Science Studies, Thiruvananthapuram - 31

Hill resorts had a unique position in the tourism map of Kerela. Since Kerela has a vast coastline of about 580 kms and the five moderately developed hill stations, a tourist visiting Kerela can enjoy both the highlands and the seas just by travelling a few kms. The hill resorts of Kerela are Munnar, Devicolum, Ponnudi, Peermade and Neeliyampathy. The other hill resorts, which are in the process of development into tourist sanctuaries, are Agastiar Coodam and the Pooringal-Sholayar ranges.

Munnar, the most important hill resort lies in the Idukki district of Kerela, which is marked by undulating hills and valleys. 'Munnar' literally means three river (Moon - Three, aar - River). Three rivers are Mudrapuzha, Kundala and Nallathanni. Munnar is situated at 100 5\*N and 770 4'E latitudes. It is 145 kms from Cochin and 320 kms from Thiruvananthapuram. It is situated at a height of approximately 4900 ft above sea level. The highest peak of South India, Anaimudi is situated near Munnar with a height of approximately 8841 ft above sea level.

The ecological system in the hills is one of the most delicate one. It is not able to withstand undue pressures, which were generated by the opening of Munnar to tourism. This study concentrates both on the positive and negative impacts of tourism. The impacts of tourism can be seen on the natives, tribal, plants, animals and environment. Uncontrolled tourism growth had started showing its ugly face at Munnar. In order to make tourism a sustainable one, the tourism policy makers should formulate policies which were not only one of environmental friendly, but also fulfils the wishes and aspirations of the natives. In this study, we were able to gauge the views of the natives regarding the employment potential, environmental effects and the future steps which should be adopted to make it a successful one in the long run.