



ORIGINAL RESEARCH PAPER

HISTORY

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OF NILGIRIS THROUGH TOURISM

KEY WORDS: English Vegetables, beans, cabbage, cauliflower and carrot, Agricultural Economy of Nilgiris

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ABSTRACT

The aim of this paper is to bring to limelight the economic development of Nilgiris district through the movement of tourists. Tourism plays an important role in the economic development of any region. Majority of the writers on Tourism are having the opinion that tourism can make a positive contribution for economic development of the state. It is unanimously believed that the economic effect is variable. It depends upon the stages and types of the growth of tourism. The important economic effects are currency effect, income effect, employment effect and regional equalization effect. Foreign tourists spend money in our tourist spots for various purposes. This gives foreign currency exchange to our government. Income effects mean that the direct income resulting from expenditure by tourists and the indirect income resulting from the tourism creates direct and indirect employment opportunities. Example jobs in hotels are direct employment. Supplying food, beverages and other items are called indirect employment. Regional equalization effect means that tourism makes development in the underdeveloped region that makes equalization of a remote area with the highly developed areas. Tourism changes the economy and society from an agricultural society into a tourism society.

INTRODUCTION

The Nilgiris **'the Queen of South Indian hill stations'** is the most beautiful place noted for natural sceneries. It is situated in the highest elevation at the meeting points of Western and Eastern Ghats in the Deccan Plateau of Tamilnadu. The Nilgiris is located at an elevation of 900-2636 meters above the sea level. The Nilgiris is bounded by Kerala in the east, Erode district in the west, Karnataka state in the north and the Coimbatore district in the south. Nilgiris hills standing aloft from the uplands of Coimbatore is a plateau at a length of 55kms and width of 32kms approximately having an area of 2452.50 Sq. kms. It is watered by the river Bhavani on the southern side and by the river Mayar in the north.³

Lord Lytton, Governor general of India happened to visit Ooty in 1877 writes to Lady Lytton that "The morning was fine and for the first time I have seen Ootacomund. Having seen it, I affirm it to be a paradise, and declare without hesitation that in every aspect it far surpasses all that is said to us about it by most enthusiastic admirers and devoted lovers. The afternoon was rainy and the road muddy. Imagine Hertfordshire lanes, Devonshire towns, Westmoreland lakes, Scotch trout streams, and Lusitanian views, Udagamandalam had a good reach to English and got the infrastructures and cultural domination from the British.

Now a days Agricultural tourism received fresh impetus from the government. Many people interested in forming agricultural farms visited places of agricultural importance. Nilgiris is famous for the cultivation of pepper, ginger, carrot, beetroot, beans, cabbage, potato, tomato and other vegetables. This district exported agricultural items to various parts of our country through Mettupalayam market. Nilgiris vegetables are exported even to the Middle East countries from Bangalore. The British who came to this hill district during the first quarter of the 19th century introduced from England plants of numerous varieties, fruits, vegetables and ornamental flowers. The main contribution to this development was reported to have come from Mr. John Sullivan Arons in 1820 A.D. who had started a farm of his own in a village called Thimpatty near Kotagiri. A fillip was given to the growing of different kinds of vegetables by the distribution of seeds brought from England to the British settlers and then to the local people as well. As such temperate vegetables like the beans, cabbage, cauliflower and carrot thus came to be introduced by the English began to be called as the **'English Vegetables'** even today. Tea plants were introduced in Nilgiris by Dr. Christie in 1832. Lord William Bentinck, the then Viceroy of India sent an agricultural mission to China for the procurement of quality seeds. He invited tea makers from China to India. In Nilgiris tea cultivation was started on commercial basis from 1855 onwards. Now tea is cultivated in more than 30,000 hectares of land in Nilgiris District. Private and government are involved in tea plantation. Public sector undertaking like Tamilnadu Tea plantation corporation cultivated tea in larger areas. During the early fifties coffee

cultivation was also started. At present the coffee cultivation in this district covers an area of 8983.94 hectares. The development was fairly rapid and the peak of prosperity was reached in 1979.

Nilgiris is famous for high quality Rose plants. A large number of nursery gardens are run by private parties. These gardens consist of varieties of flower plants. Many tourists come to Ooty mainly for the purchase of flower plants, in particular rose plant of different colours. Ooty rose and Ooty flower show are very famous all over India. Tourists spend much on the purchase of flower plants, tea plants and coffee plants. Kerala tourists purchase tea and coffee plants for their estate. Tourists from other parts of Tamilnadu and other states purchase flower plants. These activities of the agricultural tourists greatly enriched the economic income of Nilgiris. Collectorate records speaks that Nilgiris district earned large amount of money through agricultural tourism every year.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENTS THROUGH TRANSPORT

The second world war and 1973-74 energy crisis had affected tourist industry. However after 1975, the technological advancement and improved transportation system had a tremendous upward impact on the tourism. Before the nationalisation of private buses in 1973, there were 200 buses owned by 15 private companies plying in the Nilgiris. Tamilnadu government's nationalisation policy removed the private bus operators from the district and the government owned bus company **'the Cheran Transport Corporation'** attained the monopoly in plying of buses. It had a fleet strength of 287 buses with 757 drivers and 748 conductors. Apart from this, inter-state buses are operated by Tamilnadu, Kerala and Karnataka state transport departments. Besides, the aforesaid public transport system, there were 462 taxis 306 auto Rickshaws, 277 Tourist vans of multifaceted models are in service mainly for the purpose of the tourists. The above particulars are taken from the 1987 tourist survey. Now the scenario has improved a lot and a three-fold increase is evident everywhere in the district. Everyday during the season more than 7000 people visited Nilgiris.

Mettupalayam – Coonoor train service was started in 1898 and it was extended upto Udagamandalam in 1904. In spite of the repeated landslides, tireless efforts were taken to keep the train going for the awesome expectations of the tourists. Through rail transport also good number of people visited Nilgiris everyday.

IMPACT OF HOTEL INDUSTRY ON NILGIRI TOURISM

Tourists on their way may need rest and refreshments to continue their programme. So large number of hotels in different types are constructed to fulfill the needs of the tourists. There were not less than 184 hotels of different kinds are functioning in the Nilgiris for the convenience of Tourists. Among them star hotels are 12, Budget class hotels are 60, Cottages are 8, Middle class lodges are 59, Resorts 16, Restaurant 25 and Bhojanalayas 4. Besides, the

government constructed youth hostels in all the tourist places of all the 6 taluqs of Nilgiris. Luxurious group hotels like Welcome group, Taj group, Obroy group are also have their branches in Nilgiris. Tamilagam government guest house is a place of attraction and generates respectable income. There are number of inspection Bungalows of Highways department and guest houses of private companies like Wipro, Ramco cement, Hindustan Lever Limited and so on. Hotel industry yielded a good income to the district and state governments and private parties as well Foreign tourist arrivals brings foreign exchanges to our country.

INCOME TO THE TRAVEL AGENCIES

Travel Agencies helped the tourists for their ticket reservation, sight seeing transport arrangements, accommodation and other works related to tourism. In Nilgiris 43 travel Agents are operating at different places like Ooty – 31, Connoor – 2, Gudalur – 6 and Masinagudi - 6. Travel Agents by performing their duties politely and convincingly earns handful of money with every ones pleasure. Travel agents are giving awareness to the tourists about the places of importance and leading the tourists to the tourists spots. They are the practical working force in improving the local tourist business.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OF SHOP KEEPERS THROUGH TOURISM

Traditional art gallery attracted large number of tourists. In Nilgiris we can see near the Botanical garden, the lake and the town many handicrafts shops. They sold materials like wood and pearl handicrafts, textiles, swatters, toys, technical and electrical appliances. The objects in the shops attract tourist and they purchase the material irrespective of its cost. Most of the tourists visited Ooty will purchase Eucalyptus oil, Tea, Coffee and spices. This is because we can get original items of the aforesaid only from the shops of Ooty. Through the sales of the above items local business people received good income during the season in Ooty.

ECONOMIC PROMOTION THROUGH THE PLACES OF ATTRACTION

Experiencing a stay at Ooty is consistently in every ones dream and to make it true any one has to off load his purse at the foot steps of various doors. The inflow is happening through multiple inlets. Example Entrance fee to the botanical garden is Rs.5/- for children, Rs.10 for adults, Rs.30/- for ordinary camera, Rs.500/- for video camera. In the boat house Rs.5/- for entrance Rs.10/- for camera, Rs.100/- for video camera. Boat hiring charges are collected for riding the boat according to the size of the boat. In Bycara dam's Boat house also similar rents are collected.

Kennadian dam, Kuntha dam, Mukurichi dam, Bycara dam, Kamaraj sagar, the Pine plantations, Citydora gardens, Geranium plantations, Bycara and Singara power projects, Dottapetta peak, Kodanad slope, Thengumarakada village, Kinnakorai Village, Aravancad cardite factory and DSSA college at wellington added scenic beauty and give a panoramic view to Nilgiris, attracted more visitors resulting in generating more income for Nilgiris either through direct or indirect ways.

CONCLUSION

The Nilgiris district is noted for the natural beauty is a heaven on earth remains to be the main tourist attraction in all times. The inflow of tourists is high enough to get an annual bid amount of around Rs.5 crores from tollgates entry points in Nilgiris. The proportionate sales generated in the sector of petrol, diesel and engagements in hotel and restaurants run into multiplies of crores. The sales of TANTEA products like Eucalyptus oil, Geranium Oil and other traditional and artistic items certainly have boosted the economic prosperity of Nilgiris. The government is getting a respectable amount of tax collection through the tourism in Nilgiris. All the aforesaid sources of income has a vibrant effect and impact on the economic development of the Nilgiris.

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