

# **Planning Strategies for Development of Sustainability in Regional Tourism in Karnataka: a Case of Melukote, Karnataka**

**K.V. Vishruth**

Doctoral Student,  
School of Planning and Architecture,  
University of Mysore,  
Mysuru-570006. Karnataka.

**Dr. H.S. Kumara**

Associate Professor,  
Urban and Regional Planning, School of Planning and Architecture,  
University of Mysore, Mysuru-570006. Karnataka

## **Abstract:**

Tourism has emerged as one of the largest industries in globally. Heritage and regional tourism is considered as one of the fastest growing sector in India, which is propel growth, contribute foreign exchange, enhance employability and result in community development in the regional scale. The present study identifies the concept of sustainability and to find a balance between economic, social, and environmental development in regional scale. The Melkote is the historical, religious and heritage regional tourism center in the state of Karnataka. This paper examines and explores the regional tourism potentials in the context of population growth, tourist inflow scenario and existing infrastructure provisions in the study. Further concludes that sustainable regional tourism will create direct and indirect employment opportunities, encourage promoting local peoples by providing a platform to showcase and sell their products, practice and preserve their cultural activities.

**Keywords:** Sustainable tourism, sustainability, economic, social and environmental.

## 1. 0. Introduction

Tourism has emerged as one of the largest industries in globally. Regional Tourism has the potential to not only be the economy driver, but also become an effective tool for poverty alleviation and ensuring growth with equity. Tourism has been growing at a remarkable rate in the post Second World War period and the World's annual tourism growth rate is over 7% (*World Travel and Tourism Council, 2016*). Tourism were to be a separate state, it would now be the third largest economy in the world, after the USA and Japan (*Jefferson, 1991*). Travel and Tourism is an important economic activity in most countries around the world. The tourism sector is account for 10.4% of global GDP and 313 million jobs, or 9.9% of total employment, in 2017. (*World Travel and Tourism Council, 2018*). Among the emerging economies, China and India have started the year 2015 with double digit growth between January and July 2015. India has great potential and opportunities for the promotion of tourism (*Iqbal and Sami, J Tourism Hospit 2016*). Sustainable tourism and hospitality aims to create economic value, while preserving the natural and social resources of the territory.

Tourism is the largest service sector industry in India and tourism industry provides heritage, cultural, medical, business and sports tourism. India's Travel & Tourism industry is the 7<sup>th</sup> largest in the World, contributing nearly 9.6% to India's GDP and estimated to grow by 6.9% p.a. in the next ten years, to become the fourth largest globally (*World Travel and Tourism Council, 2016*). This will create a multiplier impact on India's socio-economic growth through infrastructure development, job creation and skill development, amongst others. The GDP of tourism sector will grow at the rate of 7.85 yearly in the period 2013- 2023 (*Iqbal and Sami, J Tourism Hospit 2016*). It accounts for one-third of the foreign exchange earnings of India and also gainfully employs the highest number of people compared to other sectors. This sector also attracts the domestic tourist and foreign tourist in an enthusiastic way which resulted in improving well balanced economy in India (*Bhutia, S. 2015*). India, with a diverse cultural heritage and unique traditional values, is among the most preferred destinations for inbound tourism, with 8.8 million Foreign Tourist Arrivals (FTA) during 2016 With a wide variety of price-competitive offerings, India continues to remain a preferred business travel destination and is ranked 10<sup>th</sup> among the world's largest business travel markets. Sustainable tourism is tourism hat minimizes the cost and maximizes the benefits of tourism for natural environments and local communities, and can be carried out indefinitely without harming the resources on which it depends (*FICCI, 2016*).

Karnataka is located in the southern region of India. Karnataka is the eighth largest state in India in both area and population. Karnataka's manifold natural and cultural resources attract all kinds of tourists and visitors. Karnataka has always been a favorite destination for the foreign as well as domestic tourists. Being the most rapidly expanding industry tourism is contributing over 10.4 percent to global GDP (*World Travel and Tourism Council, 2016*). Travel and tourism industry's contribution to Indian industry is immense. Tourism is one of the main foreign exchange earners and contributes to the economy indirectly through its linkages with other sectors like horticulture, agriculture, poultry, handicrafts and construction (*World Travel and Tourism Council, 2016*)

For decades tourism has been used as a tool for regional development in peripheral areas ( Hall & Jenkins, 1998). Due to the economic and employ- ment significance of the industry, it has also become a crucial policy issue in

many countries in Europe and therefore, tourism has taken an important position in the European Union's regional development work (Hall, 2005, p. 166). At the regional and national levels, the aim of tourism development is to balance regional disparities, whereas at the local level the main objective is to control the structural changes of declining rural areas and industrial towns, as well as to diversify the economic base of those areas (Allan M. Williams, 1999). Particularly in peripheral rural areas, characterized by unemployment, out-migration and an ageing population, among many other challenges, tourism is usually considered the only industry having realistic growth prospects in the future.

## **2.0. Sustainable regional tourism**

Sustainability has become a key variable in the competitiveness of tourist destinations and, consequently, a primary objective for public managers. Sustainable tourism can be defined as "tourism that takes full account of its current and future economic, social and environmental impacts, addressing the needs of visitors, the industry, the environment and host communities" (UNWTO, 2005). Additionally, World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO) emphasizes that 'sustainable tourism provides more meaningful connections with local people, and a greater understanding of local cultural, social and environmental issues'. The UNESCO World Heritage and Sustainable Tourism Programme represents a new approach based on dialogue and stakeholder cooperation where planning for tourism and heritage management is integrated at a destination level, the natural and cultural assets are valued and protected, and appropriate tourism developed. Few studies reveals that, in the later 1980's the term Sustainable tourism emerge and become firmly established in tourism policies, strategies and tourism research. From the perspective of regional development, the positive economic impacts of tourism are often highlighted. Recently, discussions on tourism planning have underlined the need for sustainability which, along with the ecological issues, pays attention to economic and socio-cultural factors (Peter Hall 2000). Further, the various studies highlight that, tourism destination and safety protection it deals with the current trends of making safe environment for local inhabitants, healthy partnerships in safe tourism development and large reserve not only at the level of pathologic phenomena prevention, but also in co-operation among individual partners (Simkova, Hoferkova and Rybova, 2016).

## **3.0. Significance of study**

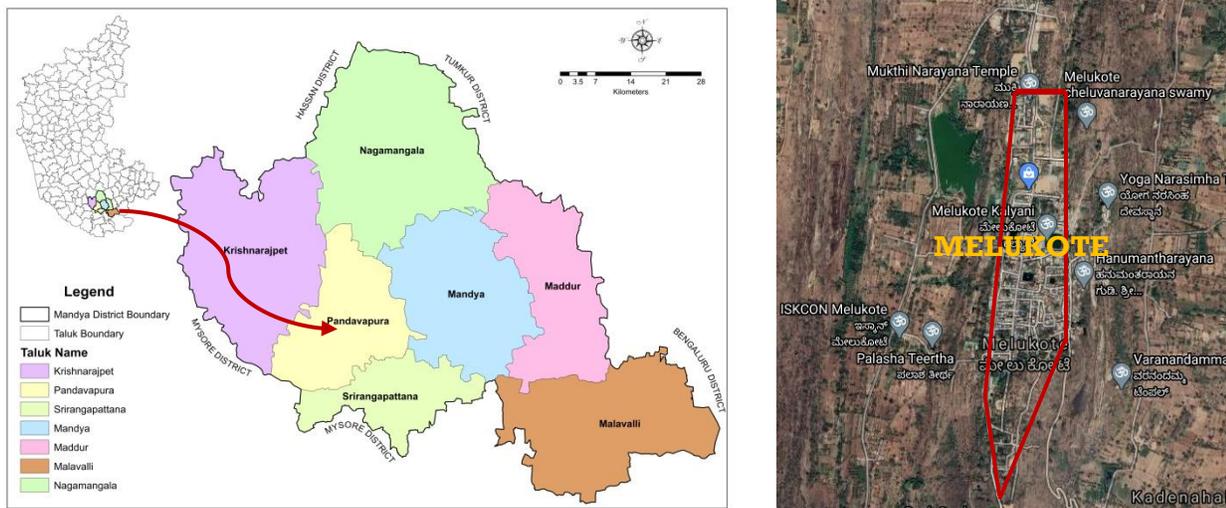
Development of tourist attractions, facilities and infrastructure and tourist movements generally has positive and negative impacts on physical environment. Right type of planning can ensure that the natural and cultural resources for tourism are indefinitely maintained and not destroyed or degraded in the process of development. Planning provides a rational basis for development staging and project programming. These are important for both the public and private sectors in their investment planning. Sustainable Tourism Development is not only a complex multidimensional process, embracing visitors, residents and environment, but also dynamic approach of connecting all stakeholders in one thread. The main focuses of the study is to assess the regional tourism potentials and planning strategies for development of sustainability in regional tourism in Melukote.

#### 4.0. Study Area profile of Melukote

##### 4.1. Historical Significances

Melkote is situated at a distance of 50 km from Mysuru and 133 km from Bengaluru. It is a historical town located in Pandavapura taluk of Mandya district, Karnataka. Also known as Thirunarayanapuram, it is one of the popular pilgrimage places in Karnataka. There are two popular temples reside in this town, one is Cheluvanarayana Swamy Temple and the other one is Yoga Narasimha Swamy Temple. The town derives its name from two words, Melu means top and Kote means fort. According to the history, the great Vaishnava saint Sri Ramanujacharya lived here for about 14 years in 12th century AD and thus it became a prominent center of the Srivaishnava sect of Brahmins (*Master Plan of Mandya, 2009*).

There are three ponds in the town, two on the foothills and another on top of the hill. Of these, Kalyani Pond near Sri Cheluvanarayana Swamy Temple is the largest and is surrounded by beautiful stone carved pillared mantaps. Rayagopura, about 300 meters from Cheluvanarayana temple is an interesting place and also a favourite shooting spot. Also known as Gopalaraya entrance, Rayagopura is an incomplete structure leading to the Melukote hill. It has four tall pillars and looks similar to Mamallapuram Raja Gopuram. This temple entrance was built by Hoysala king Vishnuvardhana and is said to have been built overnight (*B. N. Sri Sathyan, 1967*).



**Fig. 1: Map showing the location of Melukote**

(Source: Author reproduced)

At a distance of 50 km from Mysore and 133 km from Bangalore, Melkote / Melukote is a historical town located in Pandavapura taluk of Mandya district, Karnataka. Also known as Thirunarayanapuram, it is one of the popular pilgrimage places in Karnataka.

The town derives its name from two words, Melu means top and Kote means fort. According to the history, the great Vaishnava saint Sri Ramanujacharya lived here for about 14 years in 12th century AD and thus it became a prominent center of the Srivaishnava sect of Brahmins (*Master plan of Mandya, 2009*).

There are two popular temples reside in this town, one is Cheluvanarayana Swamy Temple and the other one is Yoga Narasimha Swamy Temple. These temples existed even before Sri Ramanujacharya came to this place. The main temple is dedicated to Lord Vishnu known as Thirunarayana or Cheluvarayana installed by Lord Krishna. The utsavamurthy or procession idol of the deity is referred as Cheluvapille Raya whose original name appears to have been Ramapriya. This utsavamurthy was lost when the Moghuls invaded the place and it was recovered by Ramanujacharya from Bibi Nachiyaar the daughter of Mohammed Shah.

The temple has been under the patronage of the Mysore royal family and is endowed with valuable jewellery given to the lord by the Wodeyars. Two beautiful crowns have been gifted to the Lord by the Wodeyars known as Krishnaraja-mudi and Vairamudi or Vajramukuta. The Vairamudi festival held in March - April is the main festival of Sri Cheluvanarayana Swamy Temple and is attended by more than 400,000 people. On this day the main deity Tirunarayana is adorned with a diamond crown and taken out in a procession.

Yoga Narasimha Swamy Temple is another major temple in Melukote and is dedicated to Lord Narasimha. Built on a hillock, the temple overlooks the town of Melukote. The main deity is in seated posture with the Yogapatta. It is believed that the idol of Lord Yoganarasimha was installed in the temple by Prahlada. The temple is considered to be one of the seven holy centers devoted to the worship of Narasimha. There is a Sanskrit Pathashala inside the temple that dates back to 1853. One has to climb nearly 400 steps to reach the temple from the foothills.

There are three ponds in the town, two on the foothills and another on top of the hill. Of these, Kalyani Pond near Sri Cheluvanarayana Swamy Temple is the largest and is surrounded by beautiful stone carved pillared mantaps. Rayagopura, about 300 meters from Cheluvanarayana temple is an interesting place and also a favorite shooting spot. Also known as Gopalaraya entrance, Rayagopura is an incomplete structure leading to the Melukote hill. It has four tall pillars and looks similar to Mamallapuram Raja Gopuram. This temple entrance was built by Hoysala king Vishnuvardhana and is said to have been built overnight (*B. N. Sri Sathyan 1967*)

#### 4.2. Population, growth rate, tourist details

Melukote has population of 3315 of which 1652 are male and 1663 female and about 767 families were residing (*Census of India 2011*). It spread over an area of 154 acres. The town is built on rocky hills known as Yadavagiri or Yadugiri overlooking the Cauvery valley. The tourist inflow data shows that it is increasing trend (Table 1 & Fig. 2).

**Table 1: Tourist inflow details in Melukote**

Year	Domestic	Foreigner	Total	Growth rate (%)
2016	1158703	1478	1160181	-
2017	1835114	2528	1837642	36.80

2018	3412040	1245	3413285	46.20
------	---------	------	---------	-------

Source: Tourism Department, Government of Karnataka

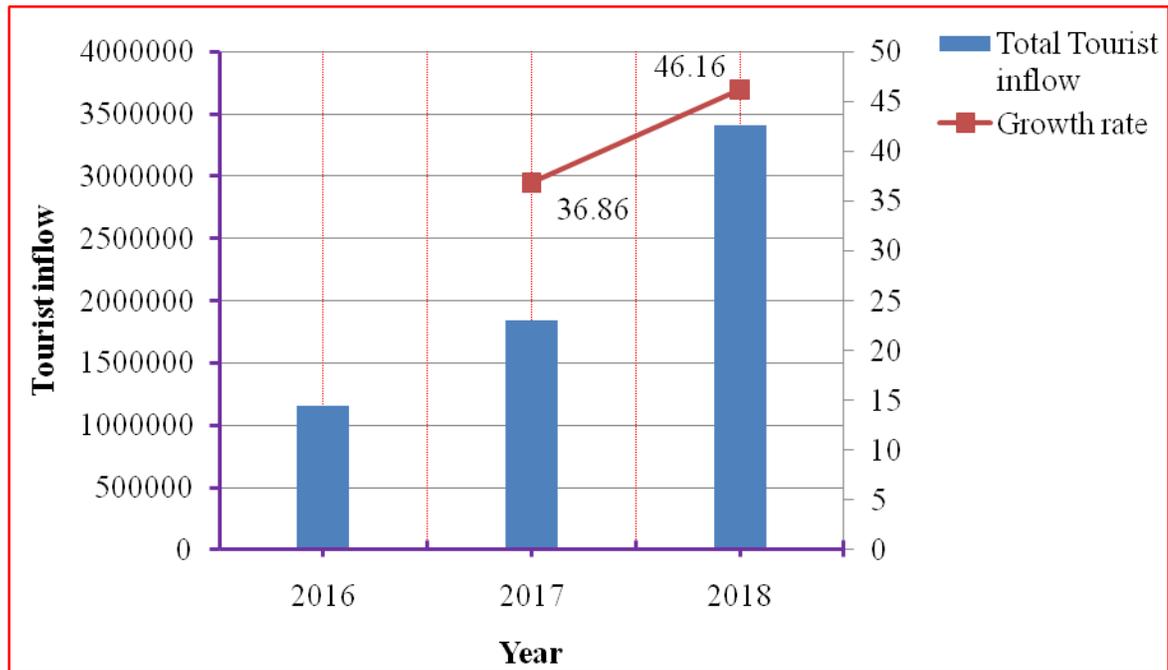


Fig. 1: Tourist inflow details in Melukote  
 Source: Tourism Department, Government of Karnataka

#### 4.3. Tourism places and existing infrastructure

Melukote: It is a religious centre which attracts lakhs of people during its annual feast Vairamudi. The temple was reconstructed in the Hoysala style by Visnuvardhana with the guidance of Ramanujacharya, a Visistadvaitist, in the 11th century. There are Cheluvanarayanawamy temple, Kalyani, Hill shrine of Lord Narasimha, Thottilamadu, Dhanuskoti, Academy of Sanskrit Research and many more to visit (Fig 3). The nearest tourist places are Thondanur, Srirangapatna, Karigatta, Nagamangala etc., During Vairamudi which is one of the biggest festivals celebrated in Melukote there are about two lakh people coming to the town to witness this festival. The town is a major pilgrim center for the Srivaishnavas and has a lot of tourist visiting throughout the year. The following facilities need to be provided which cater to tourist needs such as accommodation, unique system of water management through the Kalyani and Kolas, providing amenities and infrastructure being an elevated hill top town. It is an important tourist destination, easily accessible from Bangalore-Mysore road. Some of the proposal such as provisions for toilets, drinking water facilities and parking facilities for selected locations all ready listed in the Tourism Master Plan, 2018 prepared by the INTACH (Map1).

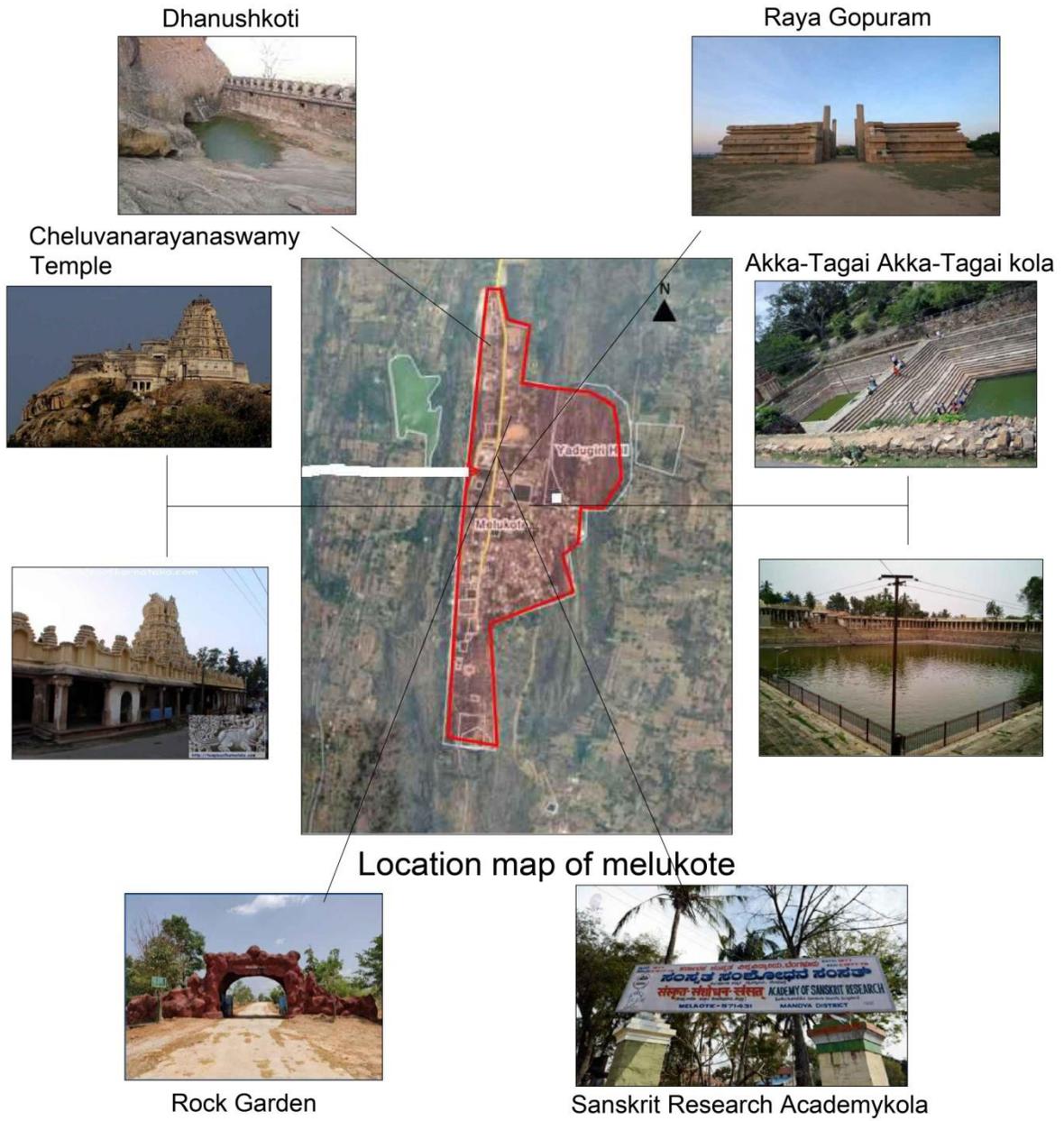
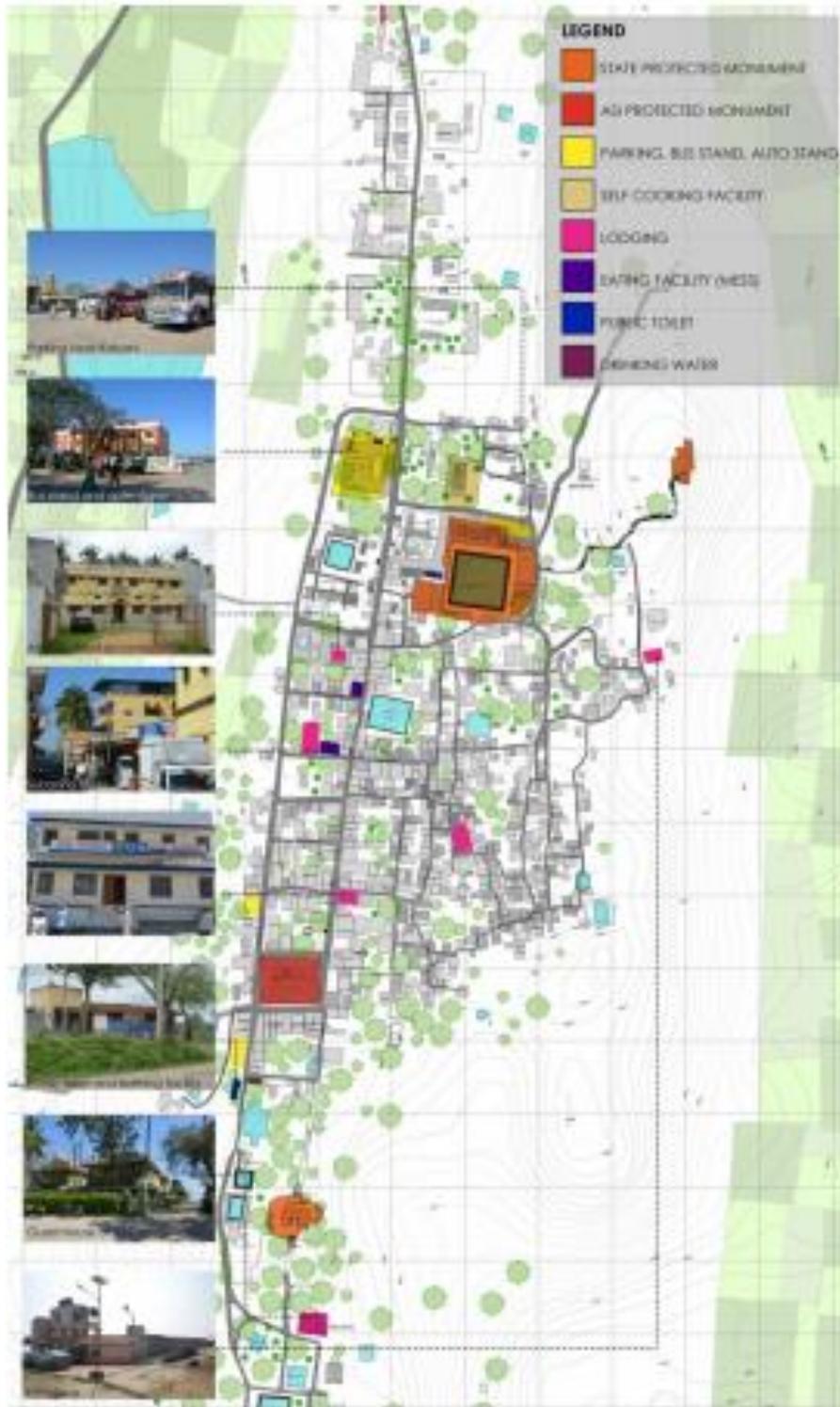


Fig 3: Places of interest within Melukote



Map 1: Existing Infrastructure facilities  
Source: Tourist Mater Plan, INTACH, 2018

## 5.0. Conclusions

Sustainable tourism will create direct and indirect employment opportunities, encourage promoting self-help groups by providing a platform to showcase and sell their products, practice and preserve our cultural activities, etc. The Melkote town is situated atop of the hilly and large influx of pilgrims for visiting this town. The town has centrally located Archeological Survey of India (ASI) protected monument and three state protected monuments. Many of the tourists are visiting this place just to see these monuments. There is a need for conservation and restoration of Kalyani and Kolas and conservation of heritage buildings especially structures of old heritage buildings. The analysis and survey results implies that Melukote should expand its Tourism resources and infrastructure to meet the national and international standards in order to compete with others tourism places in Karnataka and create tourist circuit through public transport system.

## References :

- [1] Allan M. Williams (1999) *Tourism and Economic Development: European Experience*, 3rd Edition
- [2] B. N. Sri Sathyan (1967). *Mysore State Gazetteer: Mandya District*
- [3] Bhutia, S. (2015). *Sustainable Tourism Development in Darjeeling Hills of West Bengal, India: Issues & Challenges*, 15(3).
- [4] *Census of India*, 2011
- [5] Hall, C.M. (2005). *Tourism: Rethinking the Social Science Mobility*. Pearson, Harlow, UK
- [6] Hall, C.M. and Jenkins, J.M (1998). *The Policy Dimension of Rural Tourism and Recreation*
- [7] *India as a Hotspot for Inbound Tourism*, FICCI, 2016 <http://ficci.in/spdocument/20236/india-as-a-hotspot-for-inbound-tourism.pdf>.
- [8] Iqbal and Sami, J *Tourism Hospit* (2016), *Global and India's Tourism Scenario*, Department of Commerce, Aligarh Muslim University, Aligarh, Uttar Pradesh, India, <https://www.omicsonline.org/open-access/global-and-indias-tourism-scenario-2167-0269-1000193.pdf>
- [9] Jefferson, A. and Lickorish, L. J. (1991) *Marketing Tourism*, Longman, Harlow, Essex, UK
- [10] *Karnataka Gazetteer, Mandya District- 2009*
- [11] *Master plan of mandya (2009) Department of Town Planning, Karnataka*
- [12] Peter Hall *2000 Creative Cities and Economic Development*
- [13] Simkova E.V.A., Hoferkova, and Rybova M.(2016). *Safe Tourism Destination and the Role of Public Administration in the Czech Republic 2 Problem Formulation*,
- [14] State, C. R., Ewa, J. E., Eze, E., & Bernadette, N. (2011). *The Role of Private Sector Participation in Sustainable Tourism Development in, 2(2)*, 153–160.
- [15] Thuy, H., & Tran, G. (2016). *An exploration of the potential for sustainable tourism development on selected Vietnamese islands An Exploration of the Potential for Sustainable Tourism Development on Selected Vietnamese Islands*.
- [16] *World Tourism Organization (2005), UNWTO Tourism Highlights, 2005 Edition*, UNWTO, Madrid, DOI: <https://doi.org/10.18111/9789284411900>

- [17] Wang, G., & Lalrinawma, H. (2016). Impact of Tourism in Rural Village Communities : India ' s Sustainable Tourism, 5(12), 75–81.
- [18] World Travel and Tourism Council, 2018. Travel and Tourism Economic Impact 2016 in India. <https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/industry/services/travel/indias-is-the-worlds-7th-largest-tourism-economy-in-terms-of-gdp-says-wtc/articleshow/58011112.cms>.
- [19] WTO. (2004). Sustainable Tourism in Protected Areas - Guidelines for Planning and Management World Tourism Organization. Madrid,Spain: World Tourism Organization