

## **NATURAL HERITAGES OF KODAIKANAL (TAMILNADU): AN INCREDIBLE TOURIST ATTRACTION**

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### **ABSTRACT**

Kodaikanal, a charming hill station and a natural heritage site stands on the upper part of the Palani Hills, an offshoot of the Western Ghats Mountain in Tamilnadu. Western Ghats is the UNESCO declared Natural World Heritage Site and also one of the twenty-five biodiversity hotspots of the world. This natural heritage site has some of the very rare and scarce plants and animals of India. It also has untouched vestiges of original vegetation and a large number of alien plants. The Palani Hill consists of a span of 2068 sqkm land with varied types of flora and fauna and is proud of its heritages and natural beauty. The entire hill is popularly addressed as Kodaikanal. Kodaikanal town is at the elevation of 2133 meters above sea level. It is 100 km from Dindigal and 125 km away from Madurai. It is an international tourists' destination. Today more than 50% of the town's population is dependent on the tourism industry for survival. Many from other states also have their shops selling handicrafts and eatables. This article is written based on the data collected through field visits, observations, discussions with the Tourism Officer, Kodaikanal, officials from the Palani Hills Conservation Council(PHCC), Members of the Anglade Institute of Natural History, Kodaikanal, Sacred Heart College Archives and Library, Reports of the PHCC, Shola Magazine and Cyber sources.

**KEY WORDS:** Bio-diversity, Eco-region, Flora and Fauna, Natural Heritages, Shola and Grassland, Tourism industry.

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