

CULTURAL TOURISM IN KERALA

Cultural Tourism is travel to experience and, in some cases, participate in a vanishing lifestyle that lies within human memory. Destination activities include meals in rustic inns, costume festival, folk performance, and arts and crafts. Music tourism, which could be described as part of cultural tourism is becoming more prominent and brochures frequently list out the musical attractions of the places they seek to advertise.

Music tourism extends the two ends of a spectrum. On one end is the attraction of the music which evokes memories, passion, and nostalgia and above all gives the listener a sense of enjoyment. On the other end is the acute commodification of music, manifested in the memorabilia like glasses inscribed with Beethoven's symphony, Elvis teddy bears and jewellery. Because dance requires a certain amount of musicality and theatricality, it is commonly asserted that it is necessary for a good dancer to take an interest in music and theatre. In any Art, insularity is inexcusable. In taking an interest in an art form other than your own, an artiste undoubtedly becomes more aware and therefore becomes a more 'holistic' artiste.

Culture and tradition play an important role in the promotion of tourism. Kerala State is so much inclined to cultural and health tourism. Festivals, Ayurveda treatment, Martial Arts, untapped rivers, birds and beautiful beaches make Kerala a favorable tourist destination. The inter-disciplinary character of tourism is universally accepted and thus approaching the problem from different angles can develop new perspectives. For tourism to succeed in an area, the tourists, the businesses, the Government and the host community must have a positive attitude towards the industry. Tourism has its bearing on society, economy, culture, history and development. Besides, travel is the language of peace.

Tourism is the fastest growing industry in the world in terms of employment and revenue. International tourist arrivals grew by 4 per cent in 2012 to reach 1.035 billion, according to the latest UNWTO World Tourism Barometer.¹ Comparatively, foreign tourist arrival to India is far less than that to other countries.² The number of International tourists during 2011-12 was only 6.3 million for India whereas they were 62.7 million for U.S.A, 29.3 million for U.K and 82 million for France. The Top 10 International tourism destinations in 2012 were France, the U.S, China, Spain, Italy, Turkey, Germany, the U.K, Russia and Malaysia (WTO).

1 UNWTO

2 WTO website

Tourism has the following features which ³ contribute towards the foreign exchange earnings in any society.

1. Health
2. Relaxation
3. Pleasure
4. Participation in sports
5. Curiosity and culture.
6. Ethnic and family
7. Spiritual
8. Professional or business.

The current global trend towards a more integrated world is challenging our understanding of public health. In recent years, more and more patients have decided to seek medical treatment in countries where they are not resident. Affluent patients might search for the highest possible quality of healthcare, whereas others might be looking for less expensive treatment abroad. That is why Health came up to the first position in the above listing. Health is defined as the general condition of a person's mind and body, usually meaning to be free from illness, injury or pain.

Though tourism is not to be evaluated only in terms of the money involved, it is definitely concerned about joy, peace and leisure. *It has so many categories like Medical Tourism, Ayurveda Tourism, Dental Tourism, Cosmetic Tourism, Spa Tourism, and Yoga/Meditation Tourism and Kalari / Martial Arts Tourism.* A visit abroad is different from a visit to another part of one's own

³ Dynamics of Historical, Cultural and Heritage Tourism, Ratandeeep Slingsh (2000) KANISHKA PUBLISHERS, NEW DELHI

country since it requires much more planning, time and money. The differences in culture and tradition, customs and food make a foreign country a totally different experience- a veritable paradise.⁴ In fact, the first visit abroad is a ‘cultural shock!’ When tourists purchase a vacation as a package, they also buy a culture as a package. Regardless of how ancient or complex the destination culture, it is reduced to a few recognizable characteristics, such as dance, music, martial art and buildings, and is promoted as a commodity.

The Acculturation theory asserts that when two cultures come into contact for any duration, each becomes somewhat like the other through a process of borrowing. Borrowing is by no means symmetrical and is largely influenced by the nature of the contact, the socio-economic profiles of interacting individuals or groups and the numerical differences in the population. Since many of the destinations of cultural tourism are in less developed countries, tourists who are generally western and wealthier are less likely to borrow from their hosts than their hosts are from them. It seems to be inevitable that, as host societies adapt to tourism and attempt

4 Shalini Modi, ,(2001), Tourism and Society

to satisfy the needs of the tourists, they will succumb to tourists' attitudes and values and become more like the culture of their visitors.⁵

A nation's cultural attractions must be presented intelligently and creatively. Cultural treasures are of great interest to people all over the world. With this varied culture and heritage, Kerala can improve her tourist numbers. In this technical age of uniformity, the products of one nation are almost indistinguishable from those of another. There is a great need for encouraging cultural diversity. Quality tourism development implies protecting the environment, maintaining cultural identity and achieving high levels of tourist satisfaction while still generating economic benefits.

The marketing of culture is at its worst in developing countries. Cultural tourism relates to the 'doings of man' that lend attractiveness to the landscape. Human resources, coupled with heritage ruins of history, contribute to the richness of any landscape which a student of cultural tourism must study with geographical curiosity. Thus Heritages - Tourism- Health centres - have strong linkages. These linkages always exist in a society but are hardly defined. The benefit of linkages is tried and tested and visible in the growth of cultural tourism.

5 . Shalini Modi-Tourism and society

Cultural Tourism development is community-based, participatory and designed to improve the economic and social well-being of local residents in addition to the concerned institutional and physical environment. India for tourism purposes is projected as a cultural destination. Indian culture is unique in several ways. Indian culture shows a rich plurality of cultural traditions and not a monolithic entity.

Tourism is a genuinely powerful and unique force for change in the community. The tourist has been described as a “temporarily leisured person who voluntarily visits a place away from home for the purpose of experiencing a change. Tourism planning requires a holistic approach to the problems of protection of ecosystem, infrastructure facilities and management of tourism product. Actually tourism serves as a link between society and the political system and cuts across the borders of culture, environment and socio-economic parameters of human life. Tourism is very much part of the globalization process. In essence globalization involves the exchange and flow of economic and intellectual items in terms of goods, knowledge, values and images, as well as people, on a global scale. The interdisciplinary character of tourism is universally accepted and thus approaching the problem from different angles can develop new perspectives.

For tourism to succeed in an area - the tourists, the businesses, the host, Government and the host community --- must have a positive attitude towards the industry. Tourism has its bearing on society, economy, culture, history and development. The national trust's definition of cultural heritage tourism is "travelling to experience the places and activities that authentically represent the stories and people of the past and present. It includes historic, cultural and natural resources." Cultural heritage tourism can have a tremendous economic impact on local economies to economic benefits like new businesses, jobs and higher property values; tourism adds tangible – but equally important - payoffs. A well managed tourism program improves the quality of life as residents take advantage of the sources and attractions tourism adds. It promotes community pride which grows as people work together to develop a thriving tourist industry. Tourism industry needs infrastructure – as roads, airports, water supplies and public service like police and fire protection as well as security.

Heritage is anything that is or may be inherited. According to Collins Dictionary Heritage is "Anything which has been transmitted from the past or handed down by tradition." Cultural Heritage is a tourism product. India mixes such varied and enchanting experiences which are to be preserved by present generation. If we want the future generations to feel a link with their roots, it is imperative that we preserve the physical heritage of the past. Heritage Tourism

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refers to tourism in the natural, cultural and built-environment of an area providing the tangible links between past, present and future.

Healthcare systems contribute much towards the medical bill of a person. Every Indian has to bear 93 per cent of the medical expenses and the balance seven per cent is contributed by the Government. If an average Indian stop using the traditional medical system and follow allopathy only, then every Indian would have to spend \$5,277 a year for medical facilities. Thus preventive methods like *KALARI, YOGA AND MEDITATION* become more popular. Thus Health Tourism is gaining importance. Private sector expenditure on health care in India was three times public sector expenditures. Luckily, the private sector has helped to fill some of the vacuum left by the public sector.

1.3 SCOPE OF THE STUDY

Dr.B.Vijayakumar ⁶ “ Acceptable climate throughout the 365 days of the year, appreciable scenic beauty, many art forms, culture and Ayurveda are the specialties of Kerala. Ayurveda, yoga, nature cure, Kalari Chikilsa all contribute to Health Tourism in Kerala.

⁶Dr. Vijayakumar.B. Aug (2000) Health Tourism pp.77-78

GOODRICH observes: Hotel and tourist centers apart from their usual attractions, prominently advertise their health packages on purpose in order to attract tourists. This is called health tourism. There is an inseparable relation between Tourism and culture. So it is necessary to preserve Kerala's own art forms such as Kathakali , Krishnanattom, Mohiniyattam and also our Martial art like Kalarippayattu. The Healthcare sector in India has witnessed an enormous growth in infrastructure in the private and voluntary sector in the last few years. World class Medical facilities with competitive prices as against that available abroad and quality infrastructure and technology has increased the flow of visitors from abroad specially from USA, UK and other parts of Europe to India for both treatment and relaxation resulting in the concept of “ Medical tourism.”

A study has indicated that our country can earn about RS.100 billion through medical tourism by 2012 and is expected to create about 40 million new jobs by medical outsourcing. In India, medical tourism is a sunrise sector valued at more than \$310 million. The Confederation of Indian Industry expects the Health Tourism in India to increase to 400 crores dollars in 2017.

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Kerala society is emerging as a good destination for tourists. The Kerala state has been named as one among the world's 10 best destinations for taking the family for a holiday in 2014. The Lonely Planet Award for the **Best Family Destination** was bestowed upon Kerala at the World Travel Mart (WTM) in London. Martial Art Tourism combines our culture with adventure.

1.4 Objectives

- a. To study the relevance of Cultural Tourism in different districts- classified as custom/ritual and performances.
- b. To examine the culture inherited from the past.
- c. To suggest measures for blending culture with tourism to attract domestic/ foreign tourists.
- d. To revive the important performing arts to earn more from cultural tourism.

1.5 Methodology

The important cultures in Kerala which can highlight unique features in different districts can be used for the development of Kerala Tourism. Golden beaches, Magical backwaters, Refreshing hill stations, Rejuvenating Ayurveda, Exotic art forms, Colorful festivals, Delightful cuisine and Martial Art- Kalarippayattu- are basically found in this Southwestern tip of India.

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Kalari is an age-old tradition, martial and healing art, now used by dancers and performers. The influence of this Martial art is seen in almost all performing arts and many foreigners are coming to learn Kalarippayattu as a method of self-defense, choreography and health tourism. Festivals are social and cultural stages for traditional arts like Kalari demonstration. Kalari culture heritage can be seen in almost all performing arts of Kerala such as Theyyam, Thira, Kanyarkali, Velakali, Kummattikali, Margamkali, Kathakali, Patayani and Mutiyettu which have strong relationship with Kalarippayattu. **Poorakali**, a traditional folk dance form, prevalent in the extreme north of Malabar, has two distinct and diverse aspects – one intellectual, the other related to dance and physical culture. The direct influence of Kalarippayattu exercises is evident in the movements of the Poorakali artists. This performance requires good physical control which can be acquired only through Kalari training.

Most of the early performers of Kathakali were well-versed in payattu. They were the most preferred natural choice as they had already developed the stamina required for the all-night performance of Kathakali. A Kathakali practitioner should have physical flexibility acquired through regular practice. In olden days, Kathakali artists were selected from soldiers well trained in Kalarippayattu.⁷

7 Dr. K.P.Narayana Pisharodi- Kalalokam.

The following are the Tourism Images with which Kerala State can develop the Tourism.

a) Ayurveda. b) Waterfalls c) Shopping d) Cuisine e) Festivals f) Performing Arts g) Hill stations h) Beaches I) Monuments j) Backwaters K) Marma Treatment (Kalari Treatment), Rejuvenation Therapy.

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