

A Study on the Silent Tourism Spots in Kerala

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ABSTRACT

The word 'tour' has a source from the Hebrew word 'torah' which means learning, studying or searching. The word 'Tourism' which relates to tour is derived from the Latin word 'tomos' which means a tool for describing a circle. History of civilized world reveals that man has been fascinated by travel and has the urge to discover the unknown, to explore new and strange places, to seek changes of environment and to undergo new experiences. Travel to achieve these ends is not new, but tourism is relatively a modern concept and the development of transport, accommodation and communication facilities make tourism with a broader business base.

1. INTRODUCTION

The spread of education, advancements in science and technology and progress in industrialization have led to tremendous economic and social progress in India and the world at large. In the words of Hunziker&Krapf(1942),“ tourism is the totality of the relationship and phenomena arising from the travel and stay of strangers, provided that the stay does not imply the establishment of a permanent residence and is not connected with a remunerated activity”. Progress and growth in transport and communication, growth in the educational standard, emergence of a class with changed attitude in life style and spending habit, increased stress and strain in life made the people to have more affinity towards tourism in Kerala. Creation of various niche tourism products, branding of tourism, innovative approaches in the government policy towards tourism, conservation of nature and heritage and the effective use of Information Technology in tourism field has facilitated growth in Tourist Arrivals and the total revenue generated from tourism to the State of Kerala at a higher rate than that of the national average, over the last few years and it thus made tourism, both domestic and foreign, a successful and sustainable venture in Kerala.

Kerala has wide potentiality in Tourism industry to enhance the economic development of the country. But unfortunately the state is not utilizing it in its full capacity. There are so many unidentified Tourism spots are there. If it is able to identify these spots and create a tourism channel to connect these spots, it will be a great explore in the area. It will definitely help to commercialize Kerala's tourism industry through revealing these unidentified beautiful spots to the world.

Most of the tour operators especially in the private sector are not interested to encircle the locally available tourism spots in their package. It is observed that even the beautiful historical monuments

dating back to 8-9th century AD presenting the Chola, Dravidian and Pandian architecture with elegant wood work, carvings and murals, granite etc. were left unvisited by many of the tourists

2. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

Since tourism business is directly in touch with the living beings coming from different parts of the world with vivid nature, culture, tradition and outlook, it is ideal to have regular up gradation in the sector to attract more and more new tourists and already visited tourists. This will facilitate to provide information to the planners and policy makers to device appropriate steps and strategies, wherever necessary, to vitalize the tourism industry in Kerala. In this context, the study about the unidentified tourism spots in Kerala is of the greatest significance.

Most of the tour operators especially in the private sector are not interested to encircle the locally available heritage spots in their package. It is observed that even the beautiful historical monuments dating back to 8-9th century AD presenting the Chola, Dravidian and Pandean architecture with elegant wood work, carvings and murals, granite etc. were left unvisited by many of the tourists. Heritage tourism has already become a vital product of Kerala Tourism and places of workshop has accounted for a significant share in this. Sreekovil, Sopanam, Pradakshinavattam, Namaskara Mandapam, Nalambalam and Valiambalam, Balikkalpara, Kodimaram, Anakkottil, Sheevelippura and Pradakshina Vazhi, Oottupura, Koothambalam, Gopuram and Theerthakkulam are the specialties of Kerala Hindu temples.

But many of these temples are not presently included in the mainstream of tourism packages. If more heritage temples/places of worships are included in the heritage tourism map of Kerala, the economic and financial advantages could be boosted up.

3. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The study has the following objectives.

1. To narrate the present position and condition of tourism in Kerala.
2. To identify the unidentified tourism spots.

4. METHODOLOGY

The study is both descriptive and analytical in nature and is based on primary and secondary data. Discussions and interview with officials of tourism department and tour operators, staff of hotels and home stay enabled to secure relevant information pertaining to the study. The information available from published and unpublished materials, computerized data base and internet relating to home and foreign tourists, the destinations visited, number of days stayed etc. were made available

for the study. Information gathered from the officials of Department of Tourism (DoT), Government of Kerala, District Tourism Promotion Councils (DTPCs), and the officials of various heritage centers and different travel agencies were made use of in this study. Separate structured interview schedules were used to interview the foreign and domestic tourists, Tourism officials and tour operators

5. LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY.

Inadequacy of infra structural facilities to entertain viable tourism. Want of sufficient information about these heritage spots. Impediments of adverse location. Religious and conventional dogmas working against the popularization of tourism. Safety and security aspects of adversely affecting the wealth and ancestral property.

NO. OF UNSUNG HINDU HERITAGE TEMPLES IN KERALA

DISTRICT	NUMBER
Thiruvananthapuram	8
Kollam	6
Alappuzha	1
Kottayam	1
Ernakulam	6
Thrissur	4
Kozhikode	1
Kannur	1

TABLE NO 1

- **Thrivikramangalam Temple (Mahavishnu Temple)**Thiruvananthapuram

This very old temple exhibits the sculptural extravagance, depicting Chola features of 11th and 12th centuries. The figures of Dwarapalakas, Singers and Mridangists, and the exquisite dance poses on the balustrade to the lateralstepleading to the sanctum sanctorum are really worthy.

- **Kottukal Rock Cut Temple** Ittiva village in Kottarakkataluk, kollam District It dates back to 8-9th centuries AD, representing the outstanding and typical example of the rock cut temple style. It has two cells on either side with *Shivalingas* and a projection carrying the figure of *Ganapathi* at the centre. The *Mukhamandapa* of the large cell has two pillars carved in rock. The wall of the *Mukhamandapa* carries a *Ganapathi* figure. There is a monolithic Nandi in each cave.

- **Pundareekapuram Devaswom**Place : Vaikom of Kottayam district This temple is dating back to 17-18th century AD, displays *chathurasravimanah* having sheet roof. Square ardhmandapa has beautiful carvings on the ceiling. *Dwarapalakas* present. Main deity is

Vishnu with *Sathyabhama* seated on Garuda. Beautiful murals are seen on the lime plastered granite walls of the *garbhagriha*.

- **Chottanikara Temple**Place : Chottanikkara, near Ernakulam A major temple coming under the administration of Cochin Devaswom Board, consists of Kizhukkavu Bhagavathy temple, temples for Sastha, Siva, Ganapathi, Nagas and other Upa-Devas.

6. FINDINGS

Inadequacy of infra structural facilities to entertain viable tourism. Want of sufficient information about these heritage spots. Impediments of adverse location. Religious and conventional dogmas working against the popularization of tourism. Safety and security aspects of adversely affecting the wealth and ancestral property

7. SUGGESTIONS

More efforts to improve the infrastructural facilities are required. Concerted effort of religious organizations are highly required to highlight these temples to the main stream of the people at large. Effective arrangements shall be enforced by various agencies to market these heritage spots to the tour operators, both domestic and foreign. Viable integration between pilgrim and heritage tourism will add economy to the sector.

8. CONCLUSION

It is to be understood that Kerala has many unidentified tourism spots, which has to be properly mapped and brought to the stream light of tourism industry. If government of Kerala takes proper initiative for the same, it will result a drastic growth in the tourism map of Kerala.

9. REFERENCE

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