

CULTURAL TOURISM: POSSIBILITIES AND PROBLEMS IN INDIA

Dr. Basappa Y. Bangari

Associate Professor & Head, Department of Indian and Foreign Languages
Garden City University, Bengaluru-560049, Karnataka, India
Email - bangari163@gmail.com

Abstract: This paper focused on a study that looked at the extent to which Folk culture is becoming a potential area of tourism in India. It is called as folk tourism here. It is known truth that Tourism especially cultural tourism is considered as an emerging industry and most of the revenue is being generated out of it. Today each and every country is showing its rich cultural heritage to attract travellers towards them. There are many countries like France, Germany, England, America and other European countries are well known for tourist destination centres and tourists from all over the world rush there. Every country does exhibit their native cultural identity, heritage and unique indigenous knowledge. Travellers try to learn something new out of it while exposing them to the new environment in distant lands and do get memorable new experiences. Most of the travellers are visiting distant lands only because of change of place and for recreation. Some others travel for specific purposes like higher education, research and searching better job opportunities. Today Tourism sector has taken different dimensions like heritage tourism, ecotourism, village tourism and world tourism etc. We can see Village tourism and Folk tourism which are becoming very popular in these days. Travellers do prefer to Village tourism. They like to utilise their valuable time in countryside climatic conditions. Most of the working folks do like to visit countryside tourist destination and want to spend time in solitude. Some resorts make the tourists to switch off their mobiles and refrain from some electronic gadgets. Travellers learn to live without modern gadgets which are really eating our valuable time and energy instead they can read classics at their pace.

Key Words: Cultural, Tourism, Foods, Festivals, Rituals, Folklore, Identity, indigenous.

1. INTRODUCTION:

The study of this paper is mainly based on researcher's personal experience during several fieldworks during last decade and secondary sources like related literature, articles, newspapers and magazines. Most of the resorts situated in such a place that away from town limit and isolated places. But there are some exceptional cases. The Taj Group of hotels named one of its hotels as Taj Village at the sinquerim beach in Goa. By eye catchy names they attract travellers who like to stay in village side resorts.

These hotels do inculcate rural food habits and use folk art and artisans.

According to OECD, "It is generally agreed that cultural tourists spend substantially more than standard tourists do. This form of tourism is also becoming generally more popular throughout the world, and a recent OECD report has highlighted the role that cultural tourism can play in regional development in different world regions." OECD (2009) It has been observed that development of cultural tourism can pose more problems than mass tourism (Roy,'79; Singh, T.V. 1991). Richards, G defined in his 'Cultural tourism in Europe' as "the movement of persons to cultural attractions away from their normal place of residence, with the intention to gather new information and experiences to satisfy their cultural needs." Richards, G. (1996).

India abounds in heritage resources, with all its human history and the wondrous doings of man in the form of art, architecture and archaeology besides other cultural expressions that manifest themselves in performing arts, dance, drama, fairs, festivals and the like. These assets have carelessly been harnessed for tourism promotion with a little or no research base and in many cases without sufficient planning and development policies. All this has resulted in cultural shocks and resource damage (Chopra, S., 1991). Cultural tourism among rural folks representing their tradition and culture of the communities in which festivals, fairs, value systems, unique lifestyle rituals and indigenous knowledge.

2. POSSIBILITIES:

Folk Tourism would become popular and homestays are part of this. In homestays, travellers enjoy the rural environment and folk foods and witness the traditional culture of the region and state. There are many homestays in Kodagu (Coorg) and travellers visit those places regularly to spend their weekends. They enjoy the way they get hospitality. The beach places like Gokarna, Belikeri, Kasarkod, Honnavar, Kumata, Mangaluru-Panamburu, Malpe etc. reflect our folk culture and tourists rush towards these places to rejuvenate themselves. Resorts in Kerala and Goa provide a variety of services as per the need of travellers. Locally available resources, folk foods, folk arts are representing in these resorts. Apart from travel agencies, blogs and websites are guiding travellers to plan their weekend programmes and to choose destinations.

A like-minded group of teenagers especially Bullet Association have close contacts with few apps and social networking sites like Facebook. They share their plans within few minutes and start their journey. Such associations plan their tour well in advance and book accommodation in few decent places. They make adventure trips with the help of local folks of the village where they plan earlier. They go trekking and spend nights amidst of thick forest. Here local tribal and forest guards help them out. Such group of travellers does visit new places once in a fortnight or a month. Their plan can be modified at any point in their journey. The resorts and hotels where they stay make these travellers feel free and spend their weekend with facilities. Multinational companies and organisations are supporting their employees to spend their weekends in such places and ask them to rejuvenate. Some companies sponsor such short-term trips. Some travel agencies offer a discount for the travellers who book the first time and make it a habit. Folk tourism attracts travellers from different places. Folk foods, folk arts and culture of the place teach many things. It is an opportunity not only to taste folk foods but also to learn many moral and cultural things which are liable to inculcate in our day to day life.

Tourist destination might be the knowledge centre for tourists. Tourists feel free in a rustic environment and improve their physical and mental health. Folk tourism is cheaper than foreign destinations. Folk tourism needs a little support from the government side and most of the time owners invest in this industry. Tourists do enjoy the native folk culture in the form of folk dance, folk songs, folk theatres, folk medicine, indigenous knowledge of farming, cultivation, harvesting, food grain preservation techniques, animal husbandry, dwelling system, sharing system, social justice and so on.

3. DIFFICULTIES:

It is difficult to identify a safe and soothing place. Difficulties are there in choosing a folk destination and route. A difficulty is in getting a suitable and reliable folk companion. Further difficulties are there in choosing, tasting and digesting unfamiliar folk food and drinks.

4. CONCLUSION:

Since there are modern gadgets are with us it is easy to find a new tourist destination and spend weekends. Travellers do prefer to stay in homestays which are situated in a rural area and enjoy folk food as well as the folk environment. Village and folk tourism needs to be improved and government support is must to popularise it.

Local self governments and NGOs have to look in to the matter very seriously in order to protect their traditional culture and at the same time earn revenue which can be used for the development of the folk culture of the region. Fairs and festivals, rituals and ceremonies are unique identities of a cultural group or society. By selling their art and artisans to the tourist the folk culture of the area can be shown to the distant places. Tourists do carry their memories with such folk materials and share their experience with members of their family and friends.

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AUTHOR BIOGRAPHY:

Dr. Basappa Y. Bangari has 15 years of teaching experience both in UG and Post Graduate level. He is in the educational sector since 1996. Presently serving as an Associate Professor and Head Department of Indian and Foreign languages at Garden City University, Bengaluru. He also served as a Private Secretary to the Hon'ble Vice-Chancellor of Karnataka Janapada University, Gotagodi for seven years. Served as Teacher Educator. Presently serving as a casual News Reader at All India Radio, Dharwad. Served as a Special Correspondent for 'Samajveer' Kannada Daily for 25 years. Involved research in Folklore of Karnataka and social sciences along with English language, literature and translation. Apart from participation and presented papers on various topics in National, International seminar and conferences, published 14 books and 26 research papers in refereed journals related to language, folklore, culture, communication and translation. His six translation books are ready for publication.