



ROLE OF CULTURAL HERITAGE IN PROMOTION OF TOURISM: A STUDY ON DAKSHINA KANNADA DISTRICT, KARNATAKA

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ABSTRACT

Cultural heritage is the fast growing tourism sector in India. Cultural Heritage sites and places represent a huge and varied collection of human creation of different forms. Millions of tourists visit India to experience our rich cultural diversity every year. Cultural Heritage has a positive impact on the social and economic development of a region. Dakshina Kannada is well known for number of cultural heritage sites which have social and religious significance. Tens of thousands of people visit these Cultural Heritage sites every year. These cultural heritages directly contribute to the promotion of tourism in this region. From this perspective this empirical paper focuses on the contribution of cultural heritage on the promotion of tourism in Dakshina Kannada district of Karnataka. The main objective of this paper is to analyse how the cultural heritage directly and indirectly contribute to the promotion of tourism in this region. The study focuses on the qualitative analysis and the results of the study can be applied in the promotion of cultural heritages of the country.

KEYWORDS: Cultural Heritage, Tourism Promotion, Tourism Marketing, Karnataka Tourism

INTRODUCTION:

Tourism is one of the largest service sectors of India. Tourism is the second largest service sector which comprises of attractions, accommodation and accessibility to a destination. Tourism attractions comprised of both natural and man-made such as forests, rivers, beaches, mountains, buildings culture, heritage etc. Cultural heritage is the major segment of international tourism. Cultural heritage is a phrase of the living ways established and developed by a community and passed on from generation to generation. Cultural heritage includes customs, practices, places, objects, artistic expressions and values. Cultural heritage is either intangible or tangible in nature.

The tangible representation of cultural heritages are the value systems, beliefs, traditions, lifestyles etc. Today promotion of a destination is a challenging task worldwide. Cultural heritage has a key role in the phase of social development of a region. India is the hub of cultural tourism which attracts millions of tourists every year. Tourists visit temples, shrines, mosques and other sites which are the proud symbol of cultural heritage. Tourism and culture are the major drivers of destination attractiveness and competitiveness. Destination attractiveness and competitiveness are the major tools of tourism promotion. Thus cultural heritage results in the promotion of tourism.

RESEARCH GAP

Cultural Heritage have significant role in the development of tourism. Earlier researchers have focused on how the cultural heritage impact on the tourism promotion of various destinations. No study has

been conducted on the cultural heritage tourism promotion in Dakshina Kannada district of Karnataka. The study aims at identifying significant relationship between cultural heritage and tourism promotion.

OBJECTIVES

Main objectives of the study includes,

- To examine the role of cultural tourism in tourism promotion of Coastal Karnataka as a tourist destination
- To analyse the impact of cultural tourism in the tourism promotion of Karnataka
- To suggest the tools, ways and measures to promote the cultural tourism in Karnataka

LIMITATIONS

The study is confined to the Dakshina Kannada district of Karnataka. The study focuses on the role of cultural heritage in tourism promotion. Around ten cultural tourist attractions of Dakshina Kannada were observed for this empirical study.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Cultural Heritage

Cultural heritage are those attractions which have socio-historic and religious significance. Cultural Heritage is an expression of the ways of living developed by a community and passed on from generation to generation, including customs, practices, places, objects, artistic expressions and values. Cultural Heritage is often expressed as either Intangible or Tangible Cultural Heritage (ICOMOS, 2002). Cultural heritage is the past part of our life (Simon Thurley, 2005) which includes both tangible and intangible products and services. Cultural heritage includes resources from which our cultural identity is formed. Culture is present, so cultural heritage is historical. Cultural heritage is active not passive, even though choices may have been made for us by our parents, teachers, and other influential individuals. Culture and cultural heritage are both an individual and a group phenomenon. Cultural heritage influences our knowledge, beliefs, and emotions of people. Today cultural heritage have greater influence on the religion, lifestyle and the economy of a nation. Cultural heritage being a tourism product attracts millions of people across the world.

Cultural Tourism in India

India is the cradle of cultural heritage. Millions of people visit the cultural heritages sites every year to experience the rich diversity. Being one of the 8th largest countries in the world India has 32 world heritage sites. 25 among them are the cultural sites and the remaining 7 are the natural sites. There are thousands of other cultural heritage sites which make the country unique tourist destination. Apparently cultural heritage has major influence on the life of the people of India. Many cultural heritage sites are the source of income for the local community and major contributor for the revenue generation of that particular area. Religion, lifestyle, rituals, customs, dance and music forms are the major cultural tourism products of India. However the buildings, forts and palaces, temples and other religious sites considered to the cultural and heritage tourism sites of India. Belur, Halhebeedu, Ajanta Ellora, TajMahal, Quth – Ub – Complex, Agra fort and Forts of Rajasthan are some of the examples for Cultural Heritage sites of India.

Cultural Tourism in Coastal Karnataka

Karnataka is well known for the Cultural Heritage Tourism. Hampi, Beluru, Halhebeedu, Pattadakallu, ShravanaBelhagola, Mysore Palace, Chitradurga, Golgumbaz fort are the major cultural heritage sites of Karnataka. The government of Karnataka has key role in developing the cultural heritages of the state. Dakshina Kannada, the coastal district of Karnataka has number of cultural heritage sites. VenuruMahabali statue, JainaBasadi (Thousand pillarsBasadi) and a number of Temples, chapels and mosques are the proud represents of Dakshina Kannada. Besides these Dakshina Kannada is also famous for unique culture such as

Bhootha kola, Kambala, Cock fight and various festivals, dance and music. These cultural practices attract thousands of tourists every day.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

An online survey was conducted to know the role and importance of Cultural Heritage sites in the development of Coastal tourism. 50 respondents were considered for the study. The study found the following key points which directly or indirectly contribute to the development of tourism in this area.

80 percent of the respondents like to visit the cultural heritage sites for once in two years. 15 percent of respondents prefer to visit once in 2 years and the remaining 5 percent are the frequent visitors. Interestingly for 70 percent of respondents' cultural heritage is not the primary reason for the visit. 30 percent of respondents say that the motto behind their visit is the cultural heritage. When it comes to the type of traveller 48 percent of visitors travel with their family. 30 percent was the school trip and the remaining 22 percent of visitors were either individual travellers or prefer to visit with the friends.

When it comes to the total expenditure, 86 percent of respondents prefer to spend less than INR 10000 for their cultural heritage trip. 14 percent of respondents prefer to spend between INR 10,000 and INR 20,000. Interestingly every respondent has the opinion that the cultural heritage promotes the tourism in the state. When it comes to the satisfaction level, 56 percent of respondents are highly satisfied with the tourist attractions. 28 percent are satisfied and the remaining 16 percent of respondents are dissatisfied with the tourist attractions.

In the era of electronic media referrals play a vital role in deciding the destination. 42 percent of respondents visit the cultural heritage site which is suggested by their friends or family. 38 percent of respondents browse through the internet and remaining 20 percent of the respondents get to know through the media and other sources. When it comes to the facilities, tourists find that the accessibility, shops and shopping facilities and sign boards and location tracking system is excellent in a cultural heritage site. Food and restaurant facility, local fairs and festivals are good; accommodation and promotion are average and the entertainment facilities, drinking water, park and parking, toilets and sanitation facilities is very poor in the cultural heritage sites.

Majority of respondents are excited to visit Thousand Pillar Basadi and the Mangaladevi temple which are the most fascinating site among the respondents. However respondents are not happy with the promotional strategy of the government and the local bodies. 35 percent of respondents are very happy with the promotional activities. 55 percent find it average and the 10 percent finds the promotional activities very poor. 60 percent of respondents say that the tourism board has major role in promoting the cultural heritage sites of Coastal Karnataka and remaining 40 percent holds the opinion that the local authorities and the local people need to concentrate on the promotion of heritage sites of Coastal Karnataka. To promote coastal heritage sites the respondents believe that electronic media is the best tool. Brochures, hoardings and the blogs also play a good role in promoting the tourist sites. Interestingly 76 percent of respondents would like to refer the cultural heritage sites to their family and friends wherein 2 percent are not sure about referring the sites to their relatives and friends.

KEY POINTS

Coastal Karnataka has a good number of heritage sites and these heritage sites attract thousands of tourists every day. But the heritage sites are failed in attracting the frequent visits. Heritage sites of Coastal Karnataka are not the primary reasons of visit by the tourists. This is because of lack of promotion and developmental activities of the heritage sites. Tourists don't prefer to spend huge amount in the tourist attractions as the sites don't have shopping and other amenities and activities. Role of local authorities is very less in terms of promoting the heritage sites of Coastal Karnataka. Basic infrastructure, health and sanitation and the promotion are the basic requirements for the promotion of tourist attractions of Coastal Karnataka

SUGGESTIONS

Coastal Karnataka is famous for heritage sites, temples and the beaches. Considering these three factors as the unique product the government and the local authorities need to develop a heritage circuit in this region. The heritage sites of Coastal Karnataka need the development of infrastructure facilities. Developing Coastal Karnataka as a heritage and religious circuit, improving the accessibility services would develop the tourism in this region. Railway network is one of the largest contributors to religious and heritage tourism hence the railway network of Coastal Karnataka needs to be strengthened. Product diversification by introducing various events and activities in the cultural heritage sites may improve the percentage of second time or repeated visitors. Aggressive promotion through various Medias and involving the celebrities at local and international level, hosting international festivals are some of the ways to improve the tourism activities in this region. Local community shall be given authority and freedom to indulge in the tourism activities. Encouraging group visits, local community participation, financial inclusion and effective policy making are some of the measures to improve the tourism in the coastal area.

SCOPE FOR FUTURE STUDY

The study is confined to the coastal district of Karnataka. Major cultural tourism attractions of Coastal Karnataka are considered for the study. However there are thousands of cultural heritage sites in Karnataka which have greater influence on shaping the tourism economy of the state. This study can be a platform to evaluate these sites in a global perspective.

CONCLUSION

Dakshina Kannada has the perfect confluence of the Sun, Sand, water and culture. The region is also famous for the cultural heritages which have international relevance. However the tourism activity has not been aggressively initiated in this region. The government of Karnataka has to focus on the development of cultural heritage tourism, beach tourism and the religious tourism through aggressive promotional activities. This may redress the regional imbalance and also develop the economy of this region.

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