

IMPACT OF FOLK MEDIA IN SPIRITUAL TOURISM

(WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE IN NADIA DISTRICT, WEST BENGAL, INDIA)

DR. GOPA PRAMANIK

Assistant Professor

Dept. Of Journalism & Mass Communication

West Bengal State University

Kolkata-126

Abstract

Tourism is a worldwide phenomenon. Tourism as an industry has been growing with the pace of time and people from different countries and cultures are interchanging their views and lifestyles among themselves. The positive effects of spiritual tourism through folk media always promote arts and culture. Through this promotion of tourism along with art and culture it creates new jobs opportunities and revenue generated from foreign exchange earnings, investments and payments of goods. As tourism has many segments, and the oldest form of tourism is religious tourism so it itself broaden the way of forming tourism. So this paper analyze how folk media Promoting Spiritual Tourism in Mayapur, Nadia district, West Bengal.

Folk Media, Spiritual Tourism

Introduction

India with its unique cultural diversity and reach cultural tourism components invites a great number of tourists to visit India. All the Indian states is remarkably good in their cultural representation, thus West Bengal is one of them with reach cultural tourism product. Folk culture creates authenticity and distinctiveness in the global and regional tourism market. Tourism experiences which can connect people and visitors to local cultures are very important in this regard. All folk art and culture forms of West Bengal are ethnic in nature. They remain within a particular geographical region – Bhadu and Jhumur of Bankura, Jhumur and Nanchni of Purulia are the finest example. Folk culture tourism also encourages the continued recognition of culture as economic drivers by local, regional tour operators, local people and tourism marketing organizations. This paper examines how folk culture tourism allows producers and performers keep their trends alive through increasing revenue.

Role of folk culture in tourism promotion

Folk culture includes folk dance, rural drama and musical variety of the village people. Traditional folk culture just not only describes dance and music, it also includes art and crafts. Indian folk performance is a fine art and it's a creation of art by the fusion of elements from music, dance, versification, epic ballad recitation, religion and festival. It includes ceremonials, rituals, beliefs and the day to day image of the social system. It is just only a glimpse of music, dance, dress and rituals of the people in rural set up. The collection of great mythological heroes, sweet medieval romances, day to day social customs and rituals, people' included in the list of Masterpieces of the Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity by UNESCO. Folk culture creates authenticity and distinctiveness in the global and regional tourism market. Tourism experiences which can connect people and visitors to local cultures are very important in this regard. Theme of destinations is also linked to specific folk cultural events which may also play a role of catalyst in the development of tourism. Any product may it be manmade or nature made, it is not valued to the tourists until

it has any cultural importance. Folk culture builds a cultural value and strength and helps marketing the product. It emphasizes the quality and authenticity of the visitor's experience and attracts more tourists to the destination. It also conveys the richness and diversity of a place or culture and meets the visitor's demand and knowledge. Folk culture involves both visitors and host community at the same time and it has a power of creating a new form of tourism without any high capital investment with its dynamic and changing nature. It may develop interpretation programs designed to inform, educate and interest visitors for the various parts of the world and can minimize cultural exploitation by creating awareness among the host community about their own folk culture. It has a great potential for generating income in a particular region and can be one of the prime tools for community development. On the other hand, preservation of traditional folk culture can be done with help of promoting folk tourism as local community starts understanding values of their culture when appreciated by visitors from various countries. West Bengal is a great source of folk culture and traditions. Folk culture is derived from the experiences, customs, traditions, practices and beliefs of particular communities of different parts of the state. The most ancient culture which is not only aboriginal but also a kind of Spiritual recreation which helps us to understand our ancestors. Enriched with cultural ingredient and practices of such things West Bengal has an enormous source of cultural tradition, belief, art and performance which can be used as a promotional tool for tourism.

Objective:

To analyze how folk media Promoting Spiritual Tourism in Mayapur, Nadia district, West Bengal.

Classification of folk culture of West Bengal

Folk Music: Bengali folk music especially folk songs can be lyrical or subjective. Most of the tunes are limited to the notes of half an octave, sometimes pentatonic or else confined to two to four notes or "charan" only, which mainly depicts the day to day life of rural people. These all folk music or songs can be classified into below types, and the details of them are given below. **Devotional Folk Music:** Being a religious land of Gods and Goddesses West Bengal has a deep impact on devotional songs which influences and enriched folk music. Some of them are described in the foregoing section.

Baul: Baul, came from the word batul, means mad. These are "initiates into esoteric practice, who, although they know and some times sing song, do not depend on music for their livelihood. It is perhaps the most famous and well known folk music of Bengal (Openshaw, 2002)". The songs are meant to find god in one's inner self, not to search for any religious places. The singers are called Baul and the songs are called Baul song. The lyrics are highly spiritual and devotional with sweet and sonorous tone. A baul can often be identified by their saffron coloured clothes (alkhalla) and the musical instruments carrying by them (ektara) which has only one string. Lalon Fakir is considered as the most important and influential poet and lyricist of the baul tradition. In 2005; the baul tradition was gramming of the human mind that distinguishes the members of one human group from those of another. Culture in this sense is a system of collectively held values (<http://changingminds.org/>). A culture is a way of life of a group of people, the behaviours, beliefs, values, and symbols that they accept, generally without thinking about them, and that are passed along by communication and imitation from one generation to the next.

Kirtan: The Kirtan is the earliest form of music which consists of sonorous mingles of sweet music and lyrical ballad. Slow measure in ballads is delivered by the main singer of the group and recitation of the same, in same tone and pitch, is defined musically by the rest of the members. The trend follows until the whole song based mostly on mythical episodes or story of God are completed with the same zest and enthusiasm. The musical instruments using by the kirtania (performing group) are Tampura, khol, box harmonium and violin.

In west Bengal most of these kind of famous and popular songs, known also as harinam, based on lord Krishna and Radha.

Fakiri and Sufi: Fakiri music is a genre or song based on Sufism and sometimes inspired by Fakirs. This genre is generally meant as an expression of devotion to Allah-the supreme power, but it also can be a way to enhance the connection between the physical and spiritual aspects of the Preacher and his followers. Many fakiri orders perform this style of music in a variety of sub-genres during special ceremonies. Most of these kinds of songs are related to Nabi, the preacher, and his followers.

Vadu: Bhadu Puja is observed in the Bengali month of Bhadra (mid-August-mid-September) and is a very common festival of the villagers of Purulia, Bankura, Birbhum and some part of Paschim-Medinipur. "People believe that worshipping Bhadu Devi enables childless women to bear children. With this belief the women sing Bhadu songs and worship Vadu songs are composed and sung on the night of the festival; consider vadu as a little girl. The unmarried girls are sung vadu song with drum.

Tusu: Tusu is a folk festival where the village unmarried girls sing tusu songs during tusu parab. This is celebrated in the month of Paush, in mid January. Tusu songs are sung for whole night of 'Makar Sankranti', the end day of Paush. Women exchange garlands and fry eight varieties of pulses which are given as an offering to the goddess Tusu. A temple like structure, popularly known as "Tusu" made by the unmarried girls are carried to the nearby riverbank accompanied with traditional tusu song and drum.

Importance of keertana

The signs and the symbols of the folk-media have not been alienated from their village. They are very closer to the rural community. This helps to understand the media and its process correctly. On the other hand the signs and the symbols denote the mass consciousness of the same society. The indigenous knowledge and the traditional wisdom pass through that of signs and symbols from one generation to another future generation. E.g. keertana . Folk-media needs only fewer media Literacy to understand it well than the mainstream Mass Media. The community can maintain better participation with folk-media . There are some characteristics in folk-media literacy. They are the simplicity, devotion, religious worship, respectfulness, use for a many years, loyalty or commitment, familiar signs and symbols. These aspects have caused to understand the traditional folk-media very perspicuously. Folk-media has not distanced with the community. It can be interactive communicated with signs, symbols, verbs, gestures, postures. Traditional folk-media have particular aspects in effective Communication which is different to the mainstream Mass Media .It was also found that the role of traditional folk media on rural development is still viable, that traditional channels of communication such as drums, songs, village crier and folktales are still effective way of communicating development programmes. keertana Song All over south and middle Bengal specially in Nadia district 'Janmastami 'and' Asstaprahar 'shatanam' of lord Krishna. As for example DOLPURNIMA festival appearance day of Lord Chaitanya, PORIKROMA for celebrating birthday of "Lord Sri Chaitynna Mahaprobhu " mainly on March-April. It is a kind of 'monodrama', in which whole presentation is operated or performed by single actor. Such a single actor enters into the topic, by acting different characters lying in it. Here, one actor performs various roles simultaneously, at a time to tell the stories of all characters concerned. That y evolves an environment both interests and attractive moods within the audience. The uniqueness of 'keertana' is, that the a single person carries the entire program, by holding charm of the program as well. Such 'Harikeertana', is widely popular in many states in India like, Maharashtra, Karnataka, and West Bengal etc. Keertana, covers the stories in our 'epic' generally.

Promoting, Spiritual Tourism through Folk Media in Mayapur, Nadia district, West Bengal.

Mayapur City of Spiritual Bliss and Solace



Source – Internet

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Mayapur is a neighborhood of Bamanpukur in Nabadwip CD block in the Krishnagar sadar subdivision of the Nadia district, West Bengal, India. It is situated at the confluence of the Jalangi river and the Bhagirathi, a tributary of Ganges. The area is considered spiritually significant by followers of Gaudiya Vaishnavism.

It is a popular pilgrim centre for Vaishnavites (worship of Lord Vishnu) as it is believed that an avatar of Lord Krishna (an incarnation of Lord Vishnu), Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu was born in the city in 1486 AD. Mayapur is one of the nine dhams of the holy island, which look like petals of a lotus flower. Devotees from all over the world come to Mayapur for this auspicious Parikrama to celebrate the Lord's Divine Appearance Day throughout the years.

Number of Foreign Devotees in DOLPURNIMA

Sl No.	TEMPLE	No. of Foreigners	Year
	ISKCON Chandrodaya Mondir	8 Lakhs	2009
		10 lakhs	2010
		13 Lakhs	2011

Overview

Mayapur tourism is increasing day by day because of Dolpurnima. ISKCON is the place where all the countrymen, foreigners and the people from different religions use to come and join in the holy festival of Dolpurnima. Centering the Dolpurnima devotees and different little shopkeepers use to come here and for the increasing number of the devotees numbers of shops are also increasing. So not only tourists are visiting Mayapur at the time of Dolpurnima but also people are earning their bread centering this festival. Taking interviews from a shopkeeper we came to know that these festivals like Jhulanyatra, Dolpurnima Rash and

Rathayatra are their main source of yearly income as the number of devotees are increasing here, but during Dolpurnima maximum numbers of devotees from different part of the world come and join here to celebrate this festival with pomp and pleasure. The number of devotees increasing every year by almost 20% and assuming in the upcoming years this number will increase by 30 to 40% every year. Not only in ISKCON but also in different other Gauriyo Moths Dolpurnima is celebrates and a huge rush is seen every year.

Conclusion

This way folk media is Promoting Spiritual Tourism in Mayapur (Nadia district, West Bengal) day by day and thus the number of tourists is increased by this folk media and spiritual practice. Five lakhs tourists increased already from 2009 to 2011 so it is evident that the technology and transports along with tourism is will increase in the upcoming decades thus the graph of the tourists will increase in future also.

References

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