



# Cultural Preservation and Its Impact on Tourism in Manipur

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**Introduction:** Culture and tourism are two different terms. These two had interrelated that make strengthen and attractive each other. The Art and Culture which is the part of our history is an important element for tourism and tourism provides to enhance development for the region (Arzeni, 2009). Preservation of our rich culture is the way of protection of it and it reflect the deep history of our past. Human civilisation and globalisation affect preservation and protection of historical sites. Tourism can be broadly classified as cultural tourism (urban, archaeological, literary etc), natural tourism (ecotourism, agrotourism etc), active tourism (adventures, sports, spatial, medical, religious etc.), business tourism (business, congresses, events, incentives etc.) and others. The interest of people for history, arts and culture in general is motivated the growth of tourism, which is one that aim to enjoy cultural assets such as historical heritage, artistic, architectural, museum, gastronomy, craft and other which create direct contact with other community or population causing to meet the real test of culture (Zagade & Deore, 2020). The cultural tourism required to invest huge amount to preserve and protect the valuable tangible and intangible cultural assets which includes cultural site (historical site, monuments, handicraft, religious site etc) (Petrovic & Barovic, 2019). The cultural heritage site and its components gradually transformed as tourism products and became a major attraction and motivation for tourists in different parts of the world to visit the cultural sites and places (Kumar, 2019). The study focuses on cultural heritage site of the state and analyse in four selected cultural site and preservation of the state, its challenges in promotion and impact on tourism.

## Theoretical Background of the study

**Culture:** It is the most important medias that bring together people of different caste, creeds and status as well as different countries of the world on one platform (Kumar P. 2019). In the study of Rao & Rao (2022), culture can be defined in different ways from the different philosophers, such as-

*“the collection of distinctive spiritual, material, intellectual and emotional characteristics of a society or a social group, and that it includes, in addition to art and literature, lifestyles, ways of living together, value systems, traditions and beliefs”.* By United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO, 2002)

**Tourism:** It is, the sum total of the operation that are mainly related with the economic activity, such as entry, stay and movement of domestic and foreigners from within the nation as well as from other country.

**Cultural Tourism:** It is the force for cultural preservation, which is considered to covered all those aspects to travels, whereby people learn each other's ways of life and thought.

*“Culture motivated travels, such as study, theatre and cultural tours, travelling to festivals and similar events, visiting historical localities and monuments, travelling in order to explore nature, folklore or art and pilgrimages”*. By **UN World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO), 1985**.

**Shiteo(2015)** cited on his thesis name as “Problem and Prospect of Cultural Tourism in Kerala” in 2010, an Australian economist, **Hermann V Schullard** described the tourism as “*the sum total of the operation, mainly of an economic nature, which directly relates to the entry, stay and movement of foreigners inside and outside a certain country, city or region*”. Again, he mentioned another meaning which is defined by Swiss professors, **Hunziker and Kraph** as “*the sum of the phenomena and relationship arising from the travel and stay of non-resident, in so far as they do not lead to permanent residence and are not connected with any earning activity*”. **R. De Mayer** defined tourism as “*a collective term for human movement and its attendant activities caused by the exteriorization and fulfilment of the desire to escape that is more or less latent in everybody*”.

**Methodology of the Study:** The dados for the study is based on secondary data. The required information are collected from journals, books, thesis, government records and internet search.

### Objective of the Study

- i) To analyse the importance of cultural preservation in future
- ii) To analyse the progress of tourism in Manipur.
- iii) To find the challenges face by tourist in Manipur.

### Review of Literature

**Durovic & Lovrentjev (2014)** studied on indicators of sustainability in cultural tourism. They found that tourism is the third largest economy in the world and the economic forces required the implementation of sustainable concepts to its strategy and operation for long term success. Cultural tourism identified the socio-cultural attitude of local community and its identity to the world. But it is necessary to take care of all these cultural and heritage for more development and more explored to others. The sustainability tourism has different set of indicators from selected pieces of information and the right indicators provides the most authentic results to the needy people.

**Agisilaos (2012)** studied the relationship between cultural heritage, tourism and environment. However, there are certain dangers in exploitation of cultural heritage which is necessary to protect them with political action from responsible bodies. Culture contributed to the preservation of our historical past and boosted with the employment of cultural resources. It helped to increased GDP of the nation as well. The study mentioned that the traditional communities take the major role to preserve the cultural, tourism and environment of the tourism site.

**Mohame (2023)** studied on heritage tourism and cultural identity in China: Challenges and Opportunities for Development. The study found the growth of intermodal connectivity. The interested visitors in heritage enhance due to different cultural view point, awareness of preservation, the architecture etc. The ancient cities, heritage site, historical traditions, old architecture bring more tourist and increased every year. The paper analysed cultural typology which are necessary for cultural tourism, such as arts, heritage, creative, urban culture, rural culture, indigenous culture, popular culture etc.

**Okharedia (2020)**. His paper analysed the relationship between cultural tourism and economic development in African countries. The study discussed the cultural tourism influencers tools in developing African nations. The development of cultural heritage attracted foreign tourist and means to preserved all the historical places, arts and culture which are treated as assets for the people of the nation. The cultural tourism also includes the traditional hospitality and treatment of people by the local people, the traditional housing design, flora and fauna etc.

**Angelini, Borlizzi, Cirlucci, Ciardella, Destefanis, Governale & Morfini (2020)** found in their study about negative and positive impact of cultural tourism on society. Among the negative impact are environment pollution, overcrowded space, loss of cultural identity, speculation on the availability of resources etc. on the other hand the positive impacts are economic benefits, better opportunity for local community, higher circulation of ideas and more considerable attention in how territory etc.

**Petrovic & Barovic (2019)** stated that the cultural tourism is the significant for public diplomat in global level. The cultural tourism is very complex that there are numerous attraction and events that represent the main focus of interest of all the tourist from various places. It also required investment for the development of infrastructure and protection of cultural assets. Cultural tourism includes cultural heritage, arts both visual and performing, creative arts and intangible heritage.

**Shahzalal. (2016)** observed the positive and negative impact of tourism on culture. The study found that the tourist, tourism enterprises and the host are jointly responsible for both damage or keeping safely for future. The study suggested that a democratic management group is needed for the cultural development. The local community should be empowered and given priority to the local people for the cultural development not the product and it should be lead by the government.

**Mahaputra AAGA, Ruastiti & Ruspawati (2023)** They stated that cultural traditions are originated from culture which contain understanding including knowledge, belief, art and customs of society. The social changes affect the social culture which are continued from their ancestral but in reality, people appreciate to maintained their ancestral traditions as their community identity. Thus, the protection and preservation of ancestral art forms (dance, music or visual arts) is necessary for future generation.

## Statement of the Problem

Our past is our identity. The historical background, cultural and historical sites are identity of our past history. Preservation and protection is the way to transfer the past knowledge to future generation. Tourism is the way to expose our rich culture to the world. The development of tourism needed preservation and protection of cultural heritage of the state. The study analysed preservation and protection of cultural sites, its challenges and role of tourism in relation of arts-cultural of the state. The cultural tourism includes all the historical sites, performing arts, visual arts form, traditional foods habits and dresses etc. and it expose to the world with the help of cultural tourism. The development of tourism is growing faster due to different festivals, transport, accommodation and communication. Manipur has its own identity, history and rich culture. The cultural tourism is a growing sector because of local community, historical places, culture and traditions of the specific place. Many tourists are interested to visit Manipur to know the all these things and it is the most important way to reveal the beauty and rich historical site of the state to the world

## Cultural Preservation Sites of Manipur

Among the cultural heritage sites of Manipur, four are selected for the study as *Govindajee Temple*, *Kangla Fort*, *Vishnu Temple at Bishnupur* and *Kaina Temple* to study the importance of historical sites and its deep history of Manipur and challenges for growth and promotion of our rich culture in highest platform through tourism both from national and international level.

**Govindaji Temple Imphal:** The Shree Shree Govindajee temple is situated in Imphal city in Manipur. The temple was build in 1846 A.D during the reign of Maharaj Nara Singh. The temple was damage in 1868 due to earth quake and repaired again in the reign of maharaja Chandrakriti (1859-1886). But in 1891, the idol was moved to Kongba due to Anglo Manipur war and deconstructed the present temple. This temple is historic centre of Vaishnavites in Manipur. Everyday large number of devotees participated in various devotional activities. Tourist are welcomed and come to join the daily devotional activities with *mahaprasadam*.

**Kangla Fort:** Kangla is situated in the heart of Imphal city. This place is closely associated with the people of Manipur. Kangla was the ancient capital up to 1891 AD of Manipur and was a royal palace since the reign of Pakhangba who ascended the throne in 33 AD. From this capital, Ningthouja clan gradually wielded enough political and military power and grew as most powerful dominated clan in Manipur. This place is vary familiar to all the people but its historical importance is known by very few people. From the ancient period, Kangla is closely associated with life style, tradition and culture of the Manipur people. From all these hidden history of Manipur, tourist who are interested to know the architecture, culture and our past attracted to visit the place. The more attraction is given from Kangla Museum in which lots of information, images, old weapons and old dresses of king preserve to gain knowledge to the interested people.

**Vishnu Temple at Bishnupur:** The Vishnu temple in Bishnupur is dedicated to Lord Vishnu. The idol of Lord Vishnu was presented by Chaopha Khe Khombe, the king of Pong to King Kiyamba of Manipur on occasion of victory over Kyang, Kingdom of Shan in 15<sup>th</sup> century. It is one of the oldest brick temple in Manipur. At present, the temple has no idol for worship but became a historical place that never neglected. According to

history, Kiyamba, the king of Manipur did not have knowledge about the worship of Lord Vishnu. One of his noble suggested that a brahmin conducted the rituals. Hus the king searched a brahmin called Shudhi Narayan for the ritual performance and the king given Phurailatpham title to the brahmin family. This place also covered as historical and cultural site of Manipur. If the government take up infrastructural develop for the place, many tourist will visit both from national and international.

**Kaina Temple:** Kaina is located at Yairipok road, Thoubal district about 29km from Imphal. It is a sacred place for Hindus where king Bhagyachandra received an epiphany to carve a status of Lord Govinda from sacred Jackfruit tree. According to the history, shree shree Govindajee appeared in the dreams of Bhagyachandra Maharaja (1763-98 A.D). In 2014, the state government announced intentions to convert the place as mega tourist spot for the state. Many devotees and people visited the Kaina hill who are interested to know the hidden sacred story of Govindajee and Maharaj Bhagyachandra, the king of Manipur. The Kaina will be a nice tourist spot in near future.

**Table: Progress of Tourism in Manipur**

Year	Number of Tourist Spot	Number of Tourist		
		Foreign	Domestic	Total
2013-14	57	2,588	1,43,059	1,45,647
2014-15	69	2,900	1,34,584	1,37,484
2015-16	72	3,102	1,32,013	1,35,115
2016-17	72	3,036	1,45,685	1,48,721
2017-18	73	3,787	1,64,483	1,68,270

**Source:** *Economic Survey Manipur, 2020-21*

As a part of tourist facilities in the state, the Directorate of Tourism, Government of Manipur has been providing the various infrastructural facilities for future tourism. The Directorate is managing the tourist homes in various places in the state, namely Sendra, Moirang, Phubala, Churanchandpur, Kaina, Khongjom, Tamenglong and Ukhrul as facilities to upcoming tourist. For Imphal area, Imphal Hotel is upgraded for with the modern amenities for national and foreign tourist. The government added another factor that is importance of communication sector. The major connectivity of the state is air service in Imphal with other Indian cities and bus services with north east states. But nearest railway station is in Dhimapur which is 215 km from Imphal.

**Challenges:** Manipur is situated in hilly region of north east India. The geographical region make more challenging to promote cultural tourism in the state. the major challenges are lack of promotion, shortest of professional manpower, lack of government facilities including infrastructural facilities for tourism development, cultural diffusion, lack of awareness about the culture and historical site of the state. The tourism industry of the state is in progress and long way to develop the tourism sector in the state.

## Finding

1. With the help of preservation of culture, the cultural knowledge can transfer to the future gene.
2. Culture reflects the deep history of our past and identity.
3. Tourism helps to expose our rich culture to the other countries.
4. The historical and cultural site of Manipur is under develop and progress is very slow.
5. Awareness on culture and historical site is very less in Manipur.
6. Infrastructural facilities are very less for tourism development
7. Manipur has rich historical sites but lack of accommodation, no. of tourist in the state from Indian other state and foreign nation cannot get what they wish.

## Suggestion

Culture reflects our identity. But the present generation has lack of knowledge about culture and their own identity. If cultural heritage and importance of cultural tourism is included in education, it may reflect some positive results. The development of infrastructure, road and transportation, hotel accommodation, communication, increase of awareness, government facilities on protection and development will take the major role on cultural development in the state. The preservation of culture is the only means to transfer the knowledge in future generation.

## Conclusion

Tourism sector is the newly growing industry. Among the different tourism, the study selected cultural tourism, because Manipur is a rich cultural state of India. Cultural tourism is the means to explore the rich culture of Manipur to outside world. Culture is our identity and it reflect of deep great history. The lack of awareness and challenges make slow to find the potential of the tourist to the state. Cultural preservation is needed for future generation because in this modern world, many young generations absorb in western culture and forget their past history. The government also should take necessary steps with the moder and scientific technologies for preservation of cultural and historical sites of the state.

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