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A STUDY ON CULTURAL AND HERITAGE TOURISM OF INDIA

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Abstract : This review article traces the development of cultural and heritage tourism. The research is based on divergent views, which has been expressed by contemporary historians. Cultural heritage refers to those monuments or group of buildings and sites with universal aesthetic, archaeological, scientific, ethological or anthropological value. Those properties which cover the living style of the people like customs, traditions, dress, food habits, music, dance etc comes under cultural heritage. The protection and conservation of these heritages is an important function and the duty of every government and every citizen of the country. Education and creating awareness about the significant characteristics of these places to public is essential for the conservation and protection of these heritages. Heritage tourism has become an important source of income and major source of information about the past. It can strengthen the local economy, promote resource protection, increase visitor's expenditure, generates employments and preserve the unique character of the local community. It can assist the cultural heritage resources to generate enough revenue to preserve, protect and promote further cultural resources. It can foster recognition on regional and community level. It is a category or a market segment that includes historic sites, museums and art galleries. It is difficult to exactly define heritage because a large number of activities cover it.

Keywords

Cultural Tourism, Tangible, Intangible, Heritage Tourism, Employment, Preserve, Income, Market Segment, Blend, Uniqueness, Future Generations, Assets.

INTRODUCTION

India has a rich cultural tradition. There is a harmonious blend of art, religion and philosophy in Indian culture. They are so beautifully interwoven in the fabric of Indian way of life and they are inseparable. Indian people, by nature are tolerant and fatalists did not at any time ridicule the traditions of foreign civilization. On the other hand, Indian mind has assimilated much of the thinking of the other cultures, thus enriching it and there by becoming unique in its character. Today, it is the uniqueness which attracts the western societies to the Indian culture. Disillusioned with their materialistic lives, they turn to India for solace and peace.

OBJECTIVES OF STUDY

Two broad questions that have led me to study the subject:

- ✓ To study the assets of our heritage
- ✓ To know about the legacy of our past, what we live with today and what we pass on to future generations

METHODOLOGY

The Methodology adopted is secondary data analysis by analysing, trying to prove the conclusion. This article is purely descriptive and required information collected from secondary sources like Journals and other publications relating to the Culture and Heritage are invaluable assets which have been inherited by us which is to be preserved for future generations.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Literature survey reveals that now a day's tourism has developed into global phenomenon. Most of the countries, both developed and developing have established tourism as an important sector in economic, social and cultural development. Many people think that all available resources are for our use only. But we are only the custodians of these resources. Therefore it is our duty and responsibility to preserve all these heritages for future generations.

According to Prof. K.S Nagapathi in Tourism Development –A New Approach, Culture has been viewed as information and communication system. Cultural tourism is frequently used to describe certain segment of travel market. It may be associated with visit to historical, artistic and heritage attractions. The United Nations World Tourism Organisation has given definitions. In the

narrow sense, Cultural tourism includes 'Movements of persons for essentially cultural motivations such as study tour, travel to fairs and festivals, and other cultural events, visits to sites and monuments, folklore arts and pilgrimages'.

According to Praveen Sethi in Heritage Tourism, by the end of 19th century the beginning of packaged heritage tourism with Thomas Cook's first holidays to see the ancient historical monuments of Egypt existed. The development of heritage centres tells the story of an area or a specific theme, often using novel methods of interpretation such as interactive video. Heritage tourism has become a tool of government, regional and economic policy with historic docklands are being developed as tourist attractions in USA and UK and the use of rural traditions and gastronomy to attract tourists, so that farms can be kept viable in rural France.

The linking of the arts and heritage to create new tourist attractions such as live theatre performances at National Trust and English Heritage properties and opera performances amongst the pyramids or the Roman Theatre at Orange in France. Increasing efforts are being put for conserving and enhancing the environment of whole towns or city centres which makes them attractive heritage destinations.

According to Varun Naik in Cultural Heritage of India, the British to a certain extent were responsible for the revival of intellectual curiosity. A deep interest was taken in the story of India's past and to preserve the country's rich cultural heritage.

According to Dr. B.R. Parineetha in History and Tourism in India, the recommendations of the report submitted by Dr. E.R. Allchin the survey revealed that 54% of the tourist enjoyed their stay in India and were interested in this monumental heritage aspect and they were mainly from Europe and America. About 48.3% of the tourists felt that the beautiful and natural scenery created in them an urge to visit India. According to the survey reports many foreign visitors would be delighted to have an opportunity of watching the performances of dancers and singers in India. Finally Dr. Allchin observed in his report "India is a large populous country with a great past and great tradition".

Cultural tourism

India has become one of the world's promoting tourist destinations with large number of visitors each year for its diverse climatic features and heritage cultures. It has a dramatic growth of tourism over the last 25 years and it is one of the most remarkable factors that brought economic changes. India is the only country that offers different kinds of tourism. The Indian government has adopted different approaches for the promotion of tourism. The Indian government decided to increase revenue from the tourism industry sector by projecting India as the ultimate tourist spot. So there is no doubt that the development of tourism industry in India is very strong.

Indian art was influenced by the religious beliefs and the philosophical trends of the times. The temples of the south, the caves of Ajanta, Ellora and Khajuraho are living testimony to the artistic excellence achieved by the Indian artists, sculptors and architects in those expensive and spiritual reawakening on visiting these temples.

Indian Music is remarkable because of the continuity in its growth. There are two major schools of classical music the Hindustani and the Carnatic. Both derive their roots from the classical themes Natyashastra of Bharata and Sangeet Ratnakara by Sarangdeva. There are about 250 Ragas commonly used in North as well as South. Indian Music has impact on the Western Music. Great Maestros like Pandit Ravi Shankar, Zakir Hussain etc have made valuable contribution towards popularising and promoting Indian Music abroad. All these express its people's natural gaiety, sense of abandon and rhythm.

The origin of classical dance is attributed to the Hindu temples. It was in the temples that they were first conceived and nourished. It was also in the temples that they attained their full stature. While it is true that dances were performed in court, and on festive occasions etc yet created an impulse, that gave them birth was religious. There are major systems of classical dances in India Bharatnatyam, Kathakali and Maipuri. Other prominent dances are Kuchupudi of Andhra, Odissi of Orissa, Mohiniattam of Kerala. In dance the concept of rasa holds the central place. In dancing, the rasa is conveyed through Bhava or expressions through the technique Abhinaya. One of the latest developments in the field of dance is ballet which has brought about a synthesis of lyricism, grace and pictorial quality of Indian dance forms, Classical and Folk combined.

Since Independence, Indians themselves have become keen to promote their sense of national identity and cultural unity. In consequences there has been a revival of indigenous folk arts, especially in the realm of music and dance. Now, it is up to our educational institutions to ensure that the younger generation imbibes the torch of spiritual and cultural renaissance for the rest of the world to see and emulate and not to get carried away by the materialistic ideology of the west where man has achieved astounding success in unravelling the mysteries of nature but feels alienated and rootless in his own community and society.

We must ensure that modern India does not at any stage forget its rich cultural heritage a legacy of our ancient seers, philosophers and sages. The success with which festivals of India have met within USA, France and Russia proves the interest of foreigners in our cultural traditions. At home and the government's efforts to promote a revival of interest in our folk arts, music and dance have met with tremendous public response. The classical theatre has a tradition of more than 2000 years. These were mainly performed on platforms raised in temples, courtyards and palaces. The choice of themes was mainly taken from folk stories, epics and religious texts. It was an elaborate affair which combined dance, acting and music. Historically speaking with the passing of early Hindu kingdoms under whose patronage the arts had flourished in.

With the Muslim invasion in the North the dramatic tradition almost died in the North. However, South of India retained a remarkable continuity of its cultural heritage. Virtually, because of its geographical position where the foreign invaders did not meet with much success.

The credit goes to the Indian people's tenacity and ability that they were able to retain their essential traditional outlook in spite of fierce onslaughts by invaders. The British to a certain extent was responsible for the revival of intellectual curiosity. A deep interest was taken in the story of India's past and to preserve the country's rich cultural heritage. It was a sign of maturity and foresight on the part of the British to leave the people with their faith and beliefs of which they were not aware. All these are attempts to keep our cultural heritage alive and transmit it to the younger generations.

Heritage Tourism

Heritage tourism is an activity with a long history that can be measured in centuries if not millennia. On the other hand, the term itself is a relatively recent invention, for the world heritage which came to be used commonly in the 1970's. Heritage Tourism is recognized as industry in modern development. Heritage tourism is a loose term that can be interpreted broadly or narrowly. It can be defined as tourism which is based on heritage where heritage is the core of the product that is offered and heritage is the main motivating factor for the consumer.

In this context heritage is taken as history, Culture and the land in which people live. It includes both tangible and intangible elements and includes the following;

- ✓ Historic buildings and Monuments
- ✓ Sites of important past events like battles
- ✓ Traditional landscapes and indigenous wildlife
- ✓ Language, literature, music and art
- ✓ Traditional events and folklore practices
- ✓ Traditional lifestyles including food, drink and sport

Heritage is not homogeneous. It exists in different levels namely global, national, regional and local. Because it is a personal subjective and emotional concept as well as an objective and functional one, each individual views heritage in different way. In the deep South of USA two old men living in the same town will have a different view of the heritage of their area if one is poor and black and the other rich and white. The tourism industry needs to be sensitive to such issues if it is to be managed in a way that is socially acceptable and does not reinforce prejudice, discrimination and resentment. Heritage also means different things to the various sectors of the tourism industry. For many it is attraction, it is the core product while many destinations have developed on the basis of the historical and cultural appeal. To tour operators it is a commodity that helps to sell holidays. Interestingly, now that travel and tourism is a well-developed activity, it is beginning to have its own heritage artifacts'. Examples

- ✓ Trains and rail services such as Orient Express
- ✓ Veteran Airliners
- ✓ The Architecture of the luxurious hotels on the French Riviera, and 18th and 19th century health resorts
- ✓ Museums and Galleries attracts nations heritage

Tourism based on History and Culture is not new. In the Roman Period they were relatively well developed as travel was done for culture and pleasure.

Reasons for the growth of heritage tourism

Heritage tourism has grown rapidly in recent years generally because of increased leisure time, more disposable income, the development of holiday package. There are other specific reasons for the growth of heritage tourism:

- ✓ Higher levels of education - According to reachgate.net Education are one factor that can motivate a person to travel, mainly to increase knowledge and experience. Some researchers indicate that people who have high levels in education will travel more than those having lower education level (Chaipinit 2008). Hence it implies the tourist behaviour in attracting their travel frequency, their motivation and purpose to travel.
- ✓ Media presentations, particularly on televisions, people's lifestyles and special events. The involvement of the internet and the development of social media sites have created emphasis on the growing popularity. (Chanolmsted and Lee 2013). This concept has been widely adopted as one of the most effective communication tools worldwide which brings great benefits to not only the individual users but also organizations who would like to reach more target customers. Social media comprises of Travel and Tourism channels like TLC, a channel on people and culture, Travel XP a channel again on travel, Street food around the world, Anthony Bourdain show on CNN gives you a taste of the unknown, Food Mad with Rocky and Mayne from NDTV Good times gives you a taste of mouth watering vegetarian and non vegetarian food and Sound trek gives a hypotic twist to some of the best Indian classics and at the sometime discovering artists and cultural gems from all over India.
- ✓ The development of new types of heritage tourism products - The heritage tourism product is heterogeneous. Sometimes it is tangible and takes the form of buildings and monuments, while at other times it is an intangible such as folklore event or a particular language. The amount of heritage tourism product available has increased in recent years. Firstly through the opening of many new heritage attractions in the past decades or so in United Kingdom alone the number of museums has doubled in the last twenty years. Secondly, the tourism industry has increasingly packaged heritage products to make them more accessible to more people. In particular, they have now organised short breaks in United Kingdom and abroad based on visiting all kinds of heritage attractions and destinations as well as longer study type holidays.
- ✓ A growing desire amongst holiday makers to learn something new when they are on holiday

It has been argued that as interest in heritage has grown the tourism industry, it has sacrificed authenticity in its desire to 'milk' this lucrative 'cash cow' by providing non authentic heritage experiences to meet the desires and fantasies of the use of tourists. Authentic heritage is sometimes easy to identify such as traditional landscapes or traditional events that have carried on continuously for many years. However, with the growth of what has been called 'heritage industry' the growing interest of entrepreneurs in heritage, the techniques of theme parks and the theatre have been applied to some aspects of heritage product. Some traditionalists believe that as

entertainment arrives, serious history and education disappear while other people believe that you cannot educate unless you entertain. The blurring of the distinction between entertainment and education, as that between authenticity and fabricated heritage, has been seen by commentators such as John Urry, is a manifestation of post modernism.

World Heritage Conventions

There are a number of natural and cultural heritages in different countries of the world. They were on the verge of extinction due to negligence. These are the treasures of humanity which have to be preserved, protected and conserved, to be passed to future generations. Therefore, there was an urgent need to take up the conservation. Since these sites are not situated in any one country, but in many countries of the world, international co operation was required to take this work. The United Nations Educational Scientific Cultural Organisation took up the responsibility of protecting and conserving these invaluable treasures for the use of future mankind.

The United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization seeks to encourage the identification, protection and preservation of cultural and natural sites around the world which are considered to be outstanding in its value to humanity. This embodied in an international treaty called the convention concerning protection of world cultural and natural heritage adopted by United Nations Educational Scientific Cultural Organisation in 1972.

United Nations Educational Scientific Cultural Organisation, World Heritage Mission

- ✓ To ensure the protection of their natural and cultural heritage.
- ✓ To nominate sites within their national territory for inclusion on the World Heritage List.
- ✓ To establish management plans and set up reporting system on the state of conservation of their World Heritage Sites.
- ✓ To safeguard World Heritage Sites by providing technical assistance and professional training.
- ✓ Provide emergency assistance for World Heritage Sites in immediate danger.
- ✓ To create public awareness regarding building activities to World Heritage conservation.
- ✓ Participation of the local population in the preservation of cultural and natural heritage.
- ✓ Encourage international cooperation in the conservation of world's cultural and natural heritage.

All countries have sites of local or national interests, which are of national pride. The convention encourages each State Party to identify their heritage, and it is placed in wealth and diversity of the natural and cultural heritage of the country. Without the support of the international community some of the world's outstanding cultural and natural sites would deteriorate or disappear, due to lack of funding to preserve them. The convention is an agreement ratified by most of the countries of the world that aims to secure necessary financial and intellectual resources to protect the World Heritage Sites. The idea of creating an international movement for protecting heritage emerged after the World War II. The idea of combining conservation of cultural sites with those of nature comes from America. A White House Conference in 1965 at Washington DC called for a 'World Heritage Trust' that would stimulate international cooperation to protect the world's superb natural and scenic areas and historic sites for the present and future generations.

CONCLUSION

According to Mahatma Gandhi 'A nation's culture resides in the hearts and in the soul of its people'. Therefore local community has been considered as the ultimate ambassador for heritage and cultural tourism in this research paper. India now has 38 World Heritage sites listed, and that makes India one of the top countries globally in terms of several world heritage sites. United Nations Educational Scientific Cultural Organization identifies, World Heritage Sites as places that belong to all the people of the world, irrespective of the territory on which they are located. World Heritage sites in India are considered to be of immense cultural and natural importance in the world. What makes the concept World Heritage exceptional is its universal application. According to the convention, all the State parties have agreed that the sites located in their territory and which have been inscribed on the World Heritage list, without prejudice to national sovereignty or ownership, constitute a world heritage which belongs to international community. We are blessed with a beautiful heritage. We must all take it as our responsibility to preserve the same so that our future generations also get to see and experience the same.

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