



ISSN Print: 2394-7500
ISSN Online: 2394-5869
Impact Factor: 5.2
IJAR 2017; 3(5): 107-109
www.allresearchjournal.com
Received: 16-03-2017
Accepted: 17-04-2017

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A study on prospects and problems of heritage tourism in Karnataka

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Abstract

Heritage tourism plays a significant role to attract tourists in destinations. Heritage Tourism is considered as one sector that shall propel growth, contribute foreign exchange, enhance employability and result in community development. The most important dimension of heritage tourism is the cultural exchange among various nationalities that visit the country and the cross cultural interface that shall pave way for universal peace and harmony. The present paper attempts to summarize the potentials and problems of heritage tourism in Karnataka, which can help in shaping our society. The state has everything to offer to a tourist. In spite of its high potential in heritage tourism product development and tourist infrastructure, Karnataka state has not attracted the maximum number tourists as expected. Therefore the need of the hour is to study the heritage tourism potential of Karnataka and measures for improvement.

Keywords: Heritage tourism, Karnataka, prospects and problems

Introduction

Heritage Tourism is the activities of persons travelling to and staying in places outside their usual environment for not more than one consecutive year for leisure, business and other purposes not related to the exercise of an activity remunerated from within the place visited. Heritage Tourism is travelling for recreational or leisure purposes. The World Tourism Organization defines tourists as people who "travel to and stay in places outside their usual environment for not more than one consecutive year for leisure, business and other purposes not related to the exercise of an activity remunerated from within the place visited".

Heritage tourism is a form of tourism, which involves travelling of people to heritage destinations. It is concerned with study of country's art and architecture.

One of the definitions of heritage recalls 'the rights, burdens, or status resulting from being born in a certain time or place; 'birthright'. The heritage of a country such as India is truly enormous, encompassing the wealth of a structural and material heritage, diverse natural bounty, and a vibrant living culture of many communities and religions. The rights, burdens, and status of this birthright; of this diverse, rich, and ancient heritage, is equally prodigious. The future of this heritage is a matter of grave concern, for it is this that makes India what she is, bestows an 'image' that determines how she is conceived and understood by people of different cultures and lands.

India is a vast country of great beauty and diversity and her tourist potential is equally vast. With her rich cultural heritage as superbly manifest in many of the architectural wonders (palaces, temples, mosques, forts, etc), caves and prehistoric wall paintings, her widely varied topography ranging from the monotonous plains to the loftiest mountains of the world, her large climatic variations ranging from some of the wettest and the driest as well as from the hottest and the coldest parts of the world, beautiful long beaches on the sea coast, vast stretches of sands, gregarious tropical forests and above all, the great variety of the life-style, India offers an unending choice for the tourist.

In India, the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) is responsible for all historical and heritage objects. It was established in 1861. It is a functionary body attached to the Department of Culture. Its main activities are: maintenance, conservation & preservation of centrally protected movements/sites and remains; conducting archaeological explorations and excavations, chemical preservation of monuments and antiquarian remains, architectural

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survey of monuments, development of epigraphically research; setting up and re-organization of site museums in India, development of environment at centrally protected monuments and training in archaeology.

As on 2014, there are 32 heritage monuments are recognized by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) in India. These heritage destinations are of importance of both natural, manmade and cultural as described in the UNESCO World Heritage Convention, established in 1972. Out of these 32 world heritage sites, 25 are cultural sites and the other seven are natural sites.

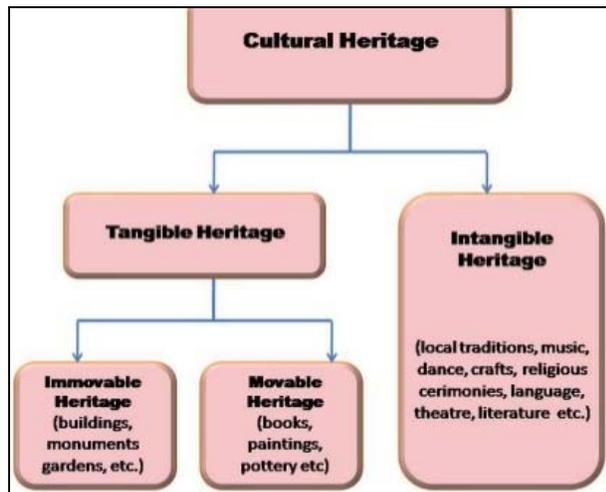


Fig 1: Forms of Cultural Heritage

Research methodology

The emphasis of present study is to recognize the important heritage monuments in Karnataka. The present study is based on secondary data, which is collected from reports of dept of tourism, govt of Karnataka, articles and thesis on heritage tourism, books and various journals.

Prospects of heritage tourism in Karnataka

Karnataka is a state with a huge variety of tourism products. It offers a totally different tourism experiences with its unique cultural tourism products from culture, food, music, fairs and festivals etc.

Karnataka has rich treasure of relic’s ancient remains, vestiges, ancient monuments of archaeological and also historical importance. Karnataka has many megalithic and Neolithic heritage sites. The ancient heritage monuments of noted ruling dynasties have stood the test of time even after thousands of years. Their style, inbuilt sculpture and architecture have attracted number tourists from all over the world.

Heritage tourism is one of the most promising tourism industries in Karnataka. Karnataka is blessed with rich heritage monuments which constitute the state’s core cultural tourism products. Karnataka ranks 4th popular tourist destination among all the states in India. It offers a number of natural and made tourist attractions that are sufficiently varied and interesting so as to attract different types of tourists. There are well defined circuits in the state for the tourism development. Karnataka which has around 319 tourist destinations including adventure, heritage, medical and health, beach tourism and world heritage centres.

The heritage tourism in Karnataka provides an opportunity for the tourists to experience the culture in depth by visiting various heritage monuments, historical or culture relevant destinations or by participating in fairs and festivals. Heritage tourism in Karnataka is based on the traditions, fair and festivals, art forms, architecture styles etc. So the domestic and foreign tourists who are interested in heritage tourism would visit or take part in the following activities.

- The Museums and art galleries
- Fairs, Festivals, concerts and performances.
- Visiting the heritage monuments
- Heritage walk

There is an array of ancient sculptured temples, modern cities, scenic hill ranges, unexplored forests and endless beaches. Karnataka has been ranked as the fourth most popular destination for tourism among the states of India. Karnataka has the second highest number of nationally protected monuments in India, second only to Uttar Pradesh. Most significantly, Hampi group of monuments and Pattadakal group of monuments are recognised as world heritage centres by UNESCO. These world heritages centers attract large number both domestic and foreign tourists all over the world. The Karnataka tourism dept is planning to promote heritage tourism. Hampi, Pattadakal, Aihole and Badami heritage monuments will be given preference for heritage tourism. In Hampi, a 232- acre patch located in close proximity to the heritage site is readily available for a heritage village.

As per the department of Archaeology, museums and Heritage, Govt of Karnataka report there are 752 states protected, 608 centrally protected monuments are there in Karnataka

Table 1

Division	State Protected	Centrally Protected	Total
Bangalore	90	63	153
Mysore	110	71	181
Belgaum	356	311	667
Gulbarga	196	163	359
Total	752	608	1360

Source: Department of Archaeology, museums and Heritage, Govt of Karnataka

Karnataka is having highest number of heritage monuments, at present there are 752 state protected, 608 centrally protected monuments are recognised by the ASI in Karnataka. The ASI has divided the archaeological monuments of Karnataka in two circles, Bangalore and Dharwad circle. The Bangalore circle consists of 208 protected heritage monuments and the Dharwad circles consist of 299 heritage sites protected by ASI. Some of the important heritage monuments of Karnataka are as follows.

- Hampi group of Monuments (recognised as a world heritage centre by UNESCO)
- Daria Daaulat Bagh, Srirangapatnam Keshava Temple,
- Pattadakal group of monuments (recognised as a world heritage centre by UNESCO)
- Aihole Temples and Archaeological Museum
- Amba Vilas Palace, Mysore
- Halebidu Hoysaleswara Temple
- Tipu sulthan Palace, Bangalore
- Badami Rock Cut Temples(recognised as a world heritage centre by UNESCO)

- Gol-Gumbas, Bijapur
- Hitradurga fort
- Somanatahapurea Chennakeshave Temple etc

Problems of Karnataka heritage tourism

Karnataka has a large number of heritage monuments, spread all over the state. These heritage monuments are great treasure for humanity. Apart from 752 state protected, 608 centrally protected, it is estimated that there are nearly 25,000 to 30,000 unsung monuments in Karnataka which have to be documented sequel to their preservation and primary conservation. Many heritage monuments may vanish due to lack of conservation and maintenance of monuments. According to the Times report, 11 percent of Karnataka monuments encroached, which stands second highest number of encroached monuments in the country after Uttar Pradesh. The temples in Hampi, Gol Gumabaz in Bijapur are highly encroached by the local people, which houses 182 heritage monuments, has the highest encroachment by the people. The state government is keen interested in preserving the heritage monuments. Awareness among local people and tourists is very much necessary towards the rich heritage. Karnataka state govt's" one state many words" promotional campaign is attracting millions of tourists to heritage sites. But still the tourism industry in Karnataka is facing several problems like

- Lack of Master Plan
- Encroachment by the local people and lack of clear defined boundaries by the govt
- Lack of information for tourists
- Lack of basic hygienic facilities at tourist destination
- Tourist activities at the destination
- Lack of sound marketing strategy
- Environmental Pollution
- Light & Sound Shows
- Lack of Public –Private partnership
- Challenges in planning, regulating and implementing regulations in the built environment of protected monuments
- Poor maintenance of heritage centres
- Lack of professional trained tourist guides
- Poor administration and management
- Absence of national policy and legislation for heritage protection and management
- Availability of beggars around heritage monuments centres.

Conclusion

Karnataka with its rich history and amazing culture has all the potential and ingredients of heritage tourism development. Heritage tourism can make a significant contribution in the economy of Karnataka. The rich heritage of Karnataka state needs to be preserved for the future generations. Karnataka state is having many ASI protected heritage monuments, which has huge potential for the sustainable heritage tourism development. Other than the ASI protected heritage monuments, it has number of monuments, which are neglected and discarded due to lack of govt policies, lack of economic feasibility of preservation.

Heritage tourism must be managed well by ensuring Tourist's facilities such as food, shopping, transportation, professional qualified tourist guides; accommodation etc.

should be developed to meet the basic needs and expectations of the tourists. The private and public sectors should come forward and join their hands with govt to make heritage tourism successful in Karnataka. There is need of creating awareness among the local people about importance of heritage and tourist destination.

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