
HERITAGE AND TOURISM – A CASE OF JAIN TEMPLES AND MONUMENTS IN UNDIVIDED DAKSHINA KANNADA DISTRICT, KARNATAKA, INDIA

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ABSTRACT

Karnataka being the state of cultural heritage is rich with art and architecture. The historical association of Jainism with Karnataka dates back to the sixth century B.C. The Jainism in Karnataka flourished under the Gangas, Chalukya and Rastrakuta dynasties. Due to the impetus given to them Jainism prospered like never before and what we see today is exquisite creativity that flowered under these dynasties. During the rule of these dynasties numerous monuments in the form of Basadis, temples and magnificent statues and stambhas were built all along to spread the principle and doctrine of Jainism. These monuments and structures are exists still today and drawing the attentions of Jain pilgrims in particular and tourists from all over the world for their historical significance. The focus is to highlight the ever-growing significance of heritage and cultural tourism. It would be worth to make mention of few Jain monuments which are heritage rich and have strong pull force on tourists. Karkala, Moodabidre, Venur, Dharmasthala are mainly identified for study as these are important heritage sites which draws most of the tourists. In this paper the researcher made a sincere attempt to introduce some of the Jain monuments that could be developed further for the promotion and development of tourism and can be formed as pilgrimage circuit by concerned authority. At the end few strategies are recommended that is feasible to promote tourism and increase the tourist flow to these sites.

Key words: *Heritage, architecture, Jainism, monuments, statues, significance, pilgrims, stambhas, tourist, circuit.*

Introduction

Tourism is one of the largest and fast growing industries in the world today. It plays a crucial part in a country's economy as it provides

wide-ranging opportunities for employment, contributes to the balance of payments, and helps economic growth particularly in remote and backward areas. It also strengthens national integrity and promotes international understanding by intensifying socio-cultural exchanges among people from different regions and countries.

Most early travel was associated with trade and commerce. Throughout history, traders and merchants have traveled to far off lands in order to trade with other regions and communities. Travelers from distant lands started moving about in large numbers and visited many places for purpose of commerce. Trade relations gradually matured into cultural relations and better understanding of each others way of life. Although trade and commerce continued to be a strong force for many travelers to undertake journeys to distant lands, seeking new knowledge and exploring the unexplored lands was also a strong urge in travelers.

Today more and more number of tourists are looking for activity based tourism products viz, adventure tourism, eco-tourism, agri - tourism, rural tourism cultural and heritage tourism. Majority of tourists travel to visit heritage sites in the recent years. Heritage tourism is a new term coined in the industry in order to attract the attention of the tourists and promote heritage tourism.

Heritage tourism is one of the leading industries as travelers increasingly seek experiences which provide insight into history and culture. Many tourists want to learn about the history of people and their community. Visiting historic and cultural sites is one of the most popular tourist activities today. Heritage tourism may be defined as “traveling to experience the places, artifacts and activities that authentically represent the stories and people of the past and present.

India has been considered to be a land with rich cultural heritage. Centuries after centuries, India has seen rulers like Rajputs, Mauryas, Kadambas, Chalukyas, Rastrakutas, Cholas besides various religions also flourished at different times in this country. All these factors have played their role in making an impact on the heritage tourism in India. One could easily traces different cultures in music, dance, architecture, festivities, languages spoken, traditional beliefs and customs, food and many more. It is the development of these aspects of life that makes the heritage tourism of India one of the most vibrant and most exhaustive.

Methodology

The study investigates the present conditions of the important Jain temples and monuments scattered across the study area. The research was implemented by the use of structured questionnaires using face-to-face interviews with the concerned authorities and spot visit to the areas. Responses were grouped using an interpretability approach to exploratory factor analysis.

Objectives of the Study

Tourism in the coastal district of Dakshina Kannada is growing at very high speed. This study becomes important in the eve of the state governments plans to introduce heli tourism in the coastal district and have number of tourism development plans in the study area. Therefore an attempt is made to bring out the present status and problems of these neglected areas in order to attract the attention of tourism development authority.

Heritage and Tourism

Heritage is using the past for the present through the ‘production, consumption and regulation of the cultural, political and economic meanings of the past’ (Raivo, 2002:12). Lowenthal (1994:43) notes that ‘heritage distils the past into icons of identity, bonding us with precursors and progenitors, with our own earlier selves, and with promised successors’. In that sense, heritage is a set of ideas, symbols and events that establishes and reinforces the social cohesion and identity, real or imagined, of a group of individuals. However, it is crucial to note that heritage is not history. ‘Heritage has greater symbolic meaning than the object, time or place that is the historical reference’ (Edson, 2004:338). The term ‘heritage’ is naturally controversial since it implies at worst, an arbitrary and selective bogus history that trivializes the historical variety of social experiences of class, gender and ethnicity and at best offers a new kind of interest in and understanding of the past (Johnson 1996; Ravio, 2002) it is hardly surprising, then that heritage tourism is equally vexed. Tourism involves the ‘transformation of the object and place into attractions, their gradual movement from a setting to a representation of a setting’ (Wedow. 1977:201). Heritage tourism involves the connection of tourists with a sometimes constructed, often mythical, past by promoting ‘ a vicarious experience that depends on using objects or locations as

means of entering into or living in the past' (Edson , 2004: 337; Voase, 1999). Of course heritage is itself the result of a discourse over 'which representation from a variety of interpretations of place, will dominate' and the sites themselves are this discourse materialized (Hollinshead, 1997; Kruse, 2005:90; Worden, 2003). Heritage tourism is not merely tourist activity in a space where historic artifacts are presented. Rather, heritage tourism should be understood based on 'the relationship between the individual and the heritage presented and, more specifically, on the tourists' perception of the site as part of their own heritage' (Poria et al., 2004: 20). Furthermore, the 'differences in perceptions of a site are reflected in difference in reasons for visiting a site. The link between the individual and the site is at the core of the understanding of heritage tourism as a social phenomenon' Poria et al., 2004: 26). At heritage sites, visitors experience a 'merging of the real and imagined which makes the visit more meaningful' (Kruse, 2005: 89). As such, heritage sites are highly symbolic, for they connect visitors to the personal and collective memories that comprise their identities.

Karnataka and Jainism

Karnataka being the state of cultural heritage is rich with its art and architecture. The historical association of Jainism with Karnataka dates back to the sixth century B.C. The Jainism in Karnataka flourished under the Gangas, Chalukya and Rastrakuta dynasties. Due to the impetus given to them Jainism prospered like never before and what we see today is exquisite creativity that flowered under these dynasties. During the rule of these dynasties numerous monuments in the form of Basadis, temples and magnificent statues and stambhas were built all along to spread the principle and doctrine of Jainism. These monuments and structures are exists still today and drawing the attentions of Jain pilgrims in particular and tourists from all over the world for their historical significance.

Not many people know that Karnataka has many important Jain pilgrim centers, temples and monuments. Shravanabelagola, Dharmasthala, Karkala, Moodabidri, Venur, Humcha will astonish the visitors by their vast and abundant Jain heritage. Jainism with their rich cultural heritage and noble preaching of non-violence and peace always enjoyed a significant status in Karnataka. Jainism had royal patronage in the state and the temples and monuments located at different parts of Karnataka are testimony to the glorious days when Jainism held sway over Kannadigas.

It seems unlikely but true that Jainism was Karnataka's state religion for quite a long period. It has strong roots in the state and the contribution of Jain to Kannada language and literature are many. In fact Pampa, the first Kannada poet was Jain.

Dakshina Kannada

Dakshina Kannada has seen historic happier years by Jain and Jain kings. Jains here belongs to Digambara group. Jainism is spread out throughout the undivided Dakshina Kannada district. Those who are interested in seeing important Jain centers in Karnataka visit only Shravanabelagola which attracts a large crowd every day irrespective of the season or occasion. They miss-out on other equally important places, mostly in the coastal regions. In fact these places are endowed with a rich cultural heritage and Jain legacy. It can attract not only Jains, but people of all religion who come here not for religious reasons but simply as tourists. The following paragraph will give a brief account of some of the most important Jain heritage centers of the study area.

Moodabidri

Savira kambada basadi (Thousand pillar temple)

Moodabidri popularly known as Jaina Kashi is one of the major centers of Jainism in south India has 18 Jain basadis. The most famous among them is Savira Kambada Basadi built in 1462 AD, Basadi of 1000 pillars, famous for its stone sculpture. Mahadwar, Bhairadevi, Chitradevi, Namaskaara are the mantapas here. The idol of Chandranatha is established in the garbhagruha. Supaarshwa and Chandraprabha Teerthankara idols are worth visiting. Navanaari Kujnara, sculptural art piece that appears like an elephant but nine dancers are seen in the figure is the famous art in this Basadi. The uniqueness of this temple is that no two pillars are identical.

Karkala

Karkala is a little town in the south of Karnataka. It is a historical town and pilgrim center for Jains and Hindus is in the peaceful Udupi district. Its name is derived from the Kannada word karikallu which means black stones. Karkala is primarily home to a Jain stupa and a gigantic statue of Jain god Gandharva.

Gandharva temple

This is a famous Jain temple, which is witness to a different age dating back a thousand years. The lavish architecture with its simple stone framework, flowing stone sculptures and rich carvings bear testimony to probably the combined work of talented sculptors, architects and artists. The statue of Gandharva is worth seeing as it is marvelously carved out of granite rock. The gigantic rock statue of the Gandharva remains a rarity and is one of the three such statues in the whole of India. But the little place remains unmentioned and unknown to many. However its environs are charming, the people are friendly and the place is a delight to visit.

Chaturmukha basadi

Chaturmukha Basadi with a total of 108 pillars sanctified by the Immadi Bhairava. The statues of Sri Arinatha, Mallinatha and Munisuvrathanatha Teerthankaras are installed in 1586 AD, is one of the noteworthy Jain monuments sited at the rocky hill at Karkala. It is built in the form of a four faced hall, with a supercilious doorway and pillared entrance on each of its four sides. Chaturmukha Basadi got its name as four doorways alike each other in four directions lead to the Garbhagriha. The flat roof is constructed with very big granite slabs. Garbhagriha encloses the images of the Yakshi Padmavati and 24th Teerthankara. This is the most famous and attracted temple in Karkala. It had taken 30 years of long time to build this temple. A nice place offers peaceful meditation and prayer. From the basadi, on a clear day, one can see the figure of Bahubali at Sravanabelagola an extraordinary sight indeed. There are many legends attached to this basadi and it could be a wonderful visit for anyone.

Gomateshwara statue

Karkalla has towering statue of Gomateshwara (43 feet). This statue was consecrated by Veer Pandya Deva, the king of Bairarasa family of Karkala in 1432 on a rocky hill. Yearly celebrations are in February and once in 12 years Mahamasthakabisheka is performed.

Venur

Venur on the bank of river Gurupur is a small town near to Karkala. Venur, once the capital of the Ajila destiny, was a great citadel of Jainism. A colossus of Bahubali, 35 feet high built in 1604 AD, constructed

during the rule of King Thimmanna Ajila, is a marvelous attraction here. This statue of Gomateshwara, Lord Bahubali is standing here on an elevated platform without any support. The features of the statue are nicely made and are in proportion. The statue is really wonderful and a valued view.

Dharmasthala

Dharmasthala is also a pilgrim center for Hindus and Jains. The 39 feet Bahubali statue carved out of single rock by celebrated sculptor Ranjan Gopal Shenoy. The statue is consummate work of art and each of its lines and carves convey eternal values of a great religion and tradition. Dharmasthala represents religious tolerance. The Jain Teerthankara is worshipped on the same consecrate grounds as the native devas as Lord Manjunatha (Shiva). The priests are Vaishnavite and the guardian of the temple is Heggade but Jain by faith.

Varanga

The little known Jain temple of Varanga is just an hour's drive from Kundapur. There are three main temples namely Chandranath Temple, Jalmandir, and Naminath Basadi.

The undivided Dakshina Kannada district is flooded with number of Jain pilgrimage centers which are very rare in the whole of India. It is called as Jaina Kashi because of its large number of Jain temples, basadis, monuments and statues. These monuments and statues are very rich in heritage that reflects in the stone architecture and all are more than thousand year old. All these places are well connected and reachable by all modes of transport. These places are located in the beautiful coastal surroundings and interior village setup.

Other Places of Attractions

Several Jain Temples, Some of them dating back to 10th century A.D. built out of hard granite with intricately carved pillars and other panels are found here. There is Basadi's namely Ammanvara Basadi. Leppada Basadi etc. In the nearby one could also visit the birth place of famous Kannada poet Rathnakar Varni. Close to these monuments there lies the rare privilege of visiting Jain Nishidis, unique burial sites of Jain Swamiji's. Little further on the Naravi road one may visit large granite monolith's called Konaje Kallu. The twin peaks of Konaje which was popularly called as the Ass's ears by the old time British sailors who

could see them from the Arabian Sea while sailing down from Bombay to Mangalore.

Major findings of the study

Even with very rare and rich Jain heritage sites in the undivided district, it seems that there is no one coming to the rescue of these monumental sites. There are an enough number of problems with regard to infrastructure, maintenance, and other public utilities to list a few.

Personal interviews, observations and the analysis of the information collected by the researcher in the study region, brought out the following inferences and findings.

Infrastructure

It is one of the common problems in almost all tourist destinations in India. The basic infrastructure and civic amenities are lacking in the area as there is no proper accommodation, drinking water supply, drainage and sewage system and other basic requirements of the tourists.

Lack of awareness

The local people are unaware about the value and significance of these heritage sites and economic value of tourism. As a result the local people are losing the interest in protecting and preserving these valuable heritage resources.

Absence of publicity and information centers

One method of attracting tourists to any attraction is through publicity and availability of tourist information centers. Most of the Jain temple and heritage sites are in Moodabidri and Karkala. But in either of these two places there is no tourist information center to guide the tourist. The sign boards are not seen in important road junctions and in some places these are misleading the tourists also. There is a dearth of publicity materials and readily available travel literature.

Conservation

The monuments and temples sites are more than thousand years old and are neglected by the Government, Department of Tourism and others concerned. The heritage sites are loosing its charm because of lack of protection, renovation, conservation and bad treatment by local people.

Lack of financial resources

Most of the heritage sites are not maintained and preserved because of the lack of fund. No entrance fee is charged on the tourists and only limited number of tourist visit these places. As a result of this there is no income generation to maintain and renovate the decaying heritage.

Strategies for Development

The shifting paradigms of tourism and globalization, restless population and identity conflicts make it incumbent upon management and public to better understand heritage and heritage tourism. The following are the recommendations to develop, maintain and promote tourism in this region.

- Steps should be taken to promote Dakshina Kannada as a tourist destination through proper advertisement on television, internet, radio and billboards in airports and railway stations.
- Need is to have tourist information centers at railways and airports which shall have all the information related to tourist spots, hotels and restaurants, trains, bus and air ticket booking and can arrange the same.
- It is important to identify, train and manage a pool of young specialist and conservation professionals who can restore and enhance monumental heritage. Public Private Partnership (PPP) in management of heritage should be developed. It is also necessary to create a partnership with a civil society in heritage preservation so that they develop an attitude and sense of belonging.
- It is important to find financial resources for conservation and marketing of heritage sites, where perhaps corporate sector can play an important role.
- The social movements in this region should aim towards protection, preservation and creating awareness about the heritage sites. New social movements and participatory processes in tourism department and community based tourism planning will help develop and promote these places of importance.
- Two tourist circuit's i.e. Heritage and Religious and Beach Tourism should be identified and developed by interlinking various tourists spots so that floating population can be increased which will give boost to economy. All the basic facilities should be provided at

identified spots in the circuits.

- Construction of footpaths, road signs and better traffic management will facilitate smooth movement of tourists in reaching their desired destinations.
- Mere conservation of heritage is not enough unless it is supported by prudent financial and heritage management. Historical artifacts are guardians of memory. To protect erosion of this rich past from human memory education is critical.
- Inventories of heritage at different sites in undivided Dakshina Kannada should be prepared to identify and promote the heritage destinations. There should be enabling regulations for heritage sites, which should be implemented by state government and local authorities to protect and preserve both tangible and intangible.
- Clean moderate and inexpensive and adequate hotel rooms and lodging facility should be made available to the tourists. In order to extend the tourist stay, more and more recreational and cultural activities can be offered at these accommodation units.
- Law and order situation should be improved so that tourist would not feel hesitant to move around different places in the city.

Conclusion

This paper has traced the important Jain temples and monuments in Dakshina Kannada district with their present status, problems and challenges. Since the notion of heritage is internally related to the past, it can be argued that heritage tourism is intrinsically about life, existence, belonging and change from the past into the present and future. The undivided Dakshina Kannada is endowed with rich and large number of unique Jain heritage but most of the sites remain unprotected. It can be well projected as major pilgrim centers for Jains in particular and recreational and learning experience for tourist in general. But there is need to create meaningful and effective PPP and have to encourage participatory involvement of the local community and stakeholders. A master plan needs to be prepared and executed and agency needs to coordinate between the ministry and department. The entire community needs to be involved in preserving, promoting and protecting heritage for it to be a success. And till all stake holders are not involved, this would be lost effort.

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