

Role of Indian Folk Culture in Promotion of Tourism in the Country

Savitri Dhole

JVM's Mehta College, Airoli, Navi, Mumbai, E-mail Id: savitribora19@gmail.com

Abstract

India is the land of immeasurable diversities, offering unique culture exploration and immersion opportunities. The unique assets of Indian Art, culture and heritage have always been a captivating destination for travelers from all over the world. The unity of Indian reflects a diversity of religions, cultures, customs and languages. This diversity itself is the pride of this nation. Cultural tourism has changed the Indian tourism scenario once it was begun to be promoted by the Government of India, starting with the incredible India campaign in 2002. In recent time due to the Global canvassing of the culture, the folk culture has captivated more tourism in India. Folk art in India apparently has a great potential in the international market because of its traditional aesthetic sensibility and authenticity. The rural folk paintings of Indian bear distinctive colorful designs, which are treated with religious and mystical motifs.

KEY WORDS: Culture and tourism, Cultural heritage, Indian folk culture and Tourism

INTRODUCTION

Indian culture has been shaped by its long history, and its diverse geography. The ancient heritage of the Indus Valley Civilization has been preserved even while absorbing customs, traditions and rituals from both immigrants and invaders. India's different religions followed by its vast populace have contributed to making its culture as diverse as it is unique. The epics of Hinduism – the Ramayana and the Mahabharata which serve as folk epics have greatly influenced Indian culture. The fabric of Indian folk culture has been spun with yarns from different cultures: the Persian, Arabic, Turkish, and English cultures. And it is this cultural diversity that makes Indian folk culture interesting and colourful. India's folk dances or its folk songs they all tell a story. All this wealth of cultural diversity has made India to meet a growing thriving tourism industry. Tourism is one of the fastest growing industries of the world. It plays vital role in the economic development of a country. India is one of the popular tourist destination in Asia. Bounded by the Himalayan ranges in the north and surrounded, on three sides by water (Arabian sea, Bay of Bengal and Indian Ocean), India offers a wide array of places to see and things to do. The enchanting backwaters, hill stations and landscapes make

India a beautiful country. Historical monuments, forts etc. add to the grandeur of the country. They attract tourists from all over the world.

The Elements of Folk Culture of India And Their Role In Promotion of Tourism In India

A) INDIAN FOLK DANCES

India is a land of diverse cultures and traditions. Each region of the country has a unique culture, which is also prominently visible in its various art forms, specific folk music and dance, which proves to be a wonderful way of expression of their community and its traditions. Though these folk dances are not as complex as the classical dance forms, they are very beautiful, because of the essence of rawness in them. Be it the Bihu of Assam, Dol-Cholom of Manipur, Hikal of Himachal Pradesh or Chhau of Bihar, each of the Indian folk dance forms comes across as a reflection of the deep sited beliefs and traditions of a particular culture. These Incredible traditional dances of India are originated during the ancient times and considered the mother art of classical dances. The popular folk dances of India are as follows:

1. **Bharatanatyam – Tamil Nadu:** Bharata Natyam is considered to the oldest form of dance and mother of all other style of classical dance in India. The classical Indian dance Bharatanatyam originated from the art of temple dancers in the South India state of Tamil Nadu. Bharatanatyam is reworked form of dance from the traditional sadir and combination of expression, music, beat and dance. Bharatanatyam or the fire dance is one of the most popular styles of dance performed by male and female dancers.
2. **Kathak – Uttar Pradesh:** Kathak is originated from Uttar Pradesh and one of the eight forms of ancient classical dances of India. Famous Kathak dance is derived from Katha or story-tellers, people who narrate stories during the whole art of Kathak dance.
3. **Kathakali – Kerala:** Kathakali is one of the most attracting classical Indian dance-drama performed by well trained artist. Kathakali is originated in God's own country Kerala in 17th century and got popular at every corner of India. The attractive make-up, detailed gestures and elaborate costumes of the characters along with body movements with playback music are best experience to watch.
4. **Kuchipudi – Andhra Pradesh:** The Classical Indian dance form originated Andhra Pradesh state and got its name from Kuchipudi village near the Bay of Bengal. Kuchipudi is the most popular traditional dance form in South India performed with violin, flute and the tambura instruments and the characters first introduces them self by the dharavu.
5. **Odissi – Orissa:** Odissi is the oldest surviving dance form in India, originates from state of Orissa. The Odissi dance form is known for its style, the independent movement of head, chest and pelvis. Beautiful Odissi Dance is traditional and ancient style of dance performed in the temples.

The different aspects of Indian folk dance elements attract special interest tourists i.e. cultural tourists, artists and dancers from all over the world.

B) FOLK MUSIC OF INDIA:

India is a land of huge cultural diversity and has an incredibly rich tradition of folk music. Each region consists of its own form of folk music. This genre of music is very active in rural India as well as in some cities. Despite the fact that folk music has lost much of its popularity with the arrival of pop music culture and cinema music; there are many people out there who love this particular type of music. The presence of traditional folk music in India is still very large and is basically a village representation of Indian Society.

People tend to club together folk music with tribal music but actually there is a huge difference between the two. Folk music represents a larger society while tribal music represents the culture of a particular group. Indian folk music has a raw appeal that is difficult to describe. A number of delightful sounds can be heard in folk music across India because of unique assembly and arrangement of handmade musical instruments. Folk songs are mostly sung in a semi-classical way and most of them are dance oriented. They are very pleasurable and have captivating tunes. There are surplus songs for special occasions like wedding, births, etc and are typically sung in small village functions. Lots of songs are associated with planting, harvesting and local festivals too.

The musical instruments used in folk music are often different from those found in classical music. The singers generally craft their own musical instruments, using most commonly available materials. Simple forms of instruments like Dholak, Ektara, Dhaf, Dotar, Nal, Saringdaetc are used in folk music. They are quite often known as their local names.

The sparkle and wealth of folk music is spread all across India. This genre of music can be found in different regions across India, some of the most popular ones that have global recognition are mentioned below: -

1. **Rajasthani:** Rajasthani folk music is quite popular on an international level and has a huge assortment of music. Musician castes like Langas, Bhopa, Sapera, Manganiyar and Jogi are found in Rajasthan. The melody of Rajasthani folk music from archaic musical instruments like Ektara, Sarangi, Shehnai, Tarpi, Kamayachaetc provides enjoyable music that enlightens the listeners. From huge colorful Dhols to tiny Damrus, the musical instruments come in all sizes, shapes and colors. The spirit of Rajasthani music comes from the artistic symphony of musical instruments, accompanied by melodious voice of folk singers. The presence of Rajasthani folk music can be seen in cinema music too.

2. **Lavani:** Taken from the word “Lavanya” which means Beauty, this form of folk music is quite popular form of music along with dance in Maharashtra and Madhya Pradesh. The songs are traditionally sung by female artists but occasionally male artists may sing too. Performed to the captivating beats of “Dholika”, a Drum-like music instrument, it’s a combination of traditional songs and dance. The songs are sung in fast tempo and women in sarees dance with enthusiasm on fast rhythm and beats of Lavani.
3. **Bihu:** The festival symbolizes the beginning of a New Year for the people of Assam. The festival is dedicated to nature and man. Traditional drums and wind instruments along with Bihu dances and songs are an important part of this festival.
4. **Bhangra:** Originating in Punjab, [Bhangra](#) is an energetic and colorful form of dance and music. Being a part of harvest celebrations, it has become a part of various occasions like weddings, New Years, Events etc. Bhangra Enjoys a worldwide popularity, there is lot of mixing and fusion going on with other popular genres like Hip-Hop, Reggae etc
5. **Uttarakhandi folk music:** Born in the lap of nature, the music is blessed with the warmth and touch of Mother Nature. The music in these parts relate to various festivals, traditions, stories and the simplicity of life in the Himalayas; giving us a pure reflection of their cultural heritage.
6. **Dandiya:** From the state of Gujarat comes Dandiya, a form of dance-oriented folk music. With changing times the music has also been adapted for pop music. It is actually a kind of dance rather than music.
7. **DolluKunita:** Named after the percussion instrument “Dollu”, it is performed by men of Kuruba community in Karnataka. 16 dancers wear the drum and beat it rhythmically while dancing. The beat is controlled by a leader with cymbals who is positioned in the center. Slow and fast rhythms patterns emerge making it an energetic performance.
8. **Bhavageete:** A form of expressive poetry and light music on subjects like love, nature, values etc the music is similar to Ghazals. This type of folk music is pretty popular in many parts of India, especially in Karnataka.
9. **NaatupuraPaatu:** Originated in Tamil, the folk music consists of Gramathisai i.e. village folk music and Gana i.e. urban folk music.

ROLE OF FOLK TOURISM IN THE SOCIO -ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Culture plays an important role in the development of India. It represents a set of shared attitudes, values, goals and practices. Culture and creativity manifest themselves in almost all economic, social and other activities. A country as diverse as India is symbolized by the plurality

of its culture. India has one of the world's largest collections of songs, music, dance, theatre, folk traditions, performing arts, rites and rituals, paintings and writings that are known, as the 'Intangible Cultural Heritage' (ICH) of humanity. In order to preserve these elements, the Ministry of Culture implements a number of schemes and programs aimed at providing financial support to individuals, groups and cultural organizations engaged in performing, visual and literary arts etc. Tourism is the second largest foreign exchange earner in India. The tourism industry employs a large number of people, both skilled and unskilled. There are historical monuments, beaches, places of religious interests, hill resorts, etc.

Similarly folk tourism is also playing a major role in development of the economic growth of the particular region .Every region is identified with its handicraft, fairs, folk dances, music and its people. The Departments of Tourism promotes international and domestic tourism in the country. The Tourism Advisory Board recommends measures for promotion of tourist traffic in India.

Tourism involves cultural exchanges and results in cultural enrichment of those who travel as well as those at the receiving end. Cultural factors attract tourists to destination- architecture, sculpture, painting, historical monuments and birthp laces of famous people- are often visited by tourists. Culture is tourism's main attraction – without culture to make the difference, every place would seem bluntly the same. World Heritage Sites are nothing but cultural sites, such as the Pyramids in Egypt, the Tower of London, the Great wall of China, the Taj Mahal of India etc. It can also include tourism in rural areas showcasing the traditions of indigenous cultural communities (i.e, festivals, rituals), and their values and lifestyle. It is generally agreed that cultural tourists spend substantially more than standard tourists do. This form of tourism is also becoming immensely popular throughout the world and a recent OECD report has highlighted the role that cultural tourism can play in regional development across the globe. Cultural tourism has been defined as 'the movement of persons to cultural attractions, away from their normal place of residence, with the intention to gather new information and experiences to satisfy their cultural needs.' Cultural tourism may also be defined as special interest holidays, essentially motivated by cultural interests such as trips and visits to historical sites and monuments, museums and galleries, artistic performances and festivals as well as life Folk culture of India has helped in the growth and diversification of the Indian tourism industry - yet it is still largely an untapped segment in many states. Folk culture tourism fosters community skill empowerment whilst safeguarding intangible cultural heritage. Though this segment of tourism brings with it the impacts of commoditization and trinketization of culture and creation of pseudo culture, yet it can be consider done of the most environment-friendly forms of tourism if we have a pro-poor and responsible approach towards planning it. Because we have to keep in mind that, in the modern age of touristification, folk culture is being used towards meeting consumption ends, therefore their intrinsic characteristics are increasingly getting lost as destinations serve as an answer to the tourists' expectations of the experiences which they wish to live.

CONCLUSION

Folk Tourism is a major social phenomenon of modern society. Today Folk tourism is not just about sightseeing and entertainment but also an agent of economic development of the country which generate revenue generation. It plays a very significant role in accelerating the pace of economic development by generating employment opportunities, enhancing social progress and strengthening communities, encouraging the protection of environment and contributing actively to conservation. As such if proper infrastructures are built and access to the State is thrown open, then tourism can bring millions of people to the region

REFERENCES

BOOKS

- 1) Abid Husain, S., 1978, The National Culture of India, National Book Trust, New Delhi.
- 2) Amiya Kumar Pattnaik, 2005, Socio Economic Impacts of Tourism, The Green Portal, Vol2, No.1.
- 3) Bryden, J.M., 1973, Tourism and Development: A Case Study of the Common Wealth Caribbean, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.
- 4) Chakraborti, B. (2010), Folk Folklore and Folkloristics : Interpretation of society and folklore, Mitram I
- 5) Mc Kercher, B., 2002, 'Towards a Classification of Cultural Tourists', The International Journal of Tourism Research V4 n1: 29-38.
- 6) PrincyVij, 2008, Heritage Tourism, Tourism : Theory & Practice, Page 26-38.

WEBSITE

1. www.uneptie.com
2. www.ne.icrindia.org
3. www.travelbizmonitor.com
4. www.studentexcursion.org