

CHAPTER 10

TOURISM, CULTURE & HERITAGE

Tourism has emerged as a fast growing economic activity of great importance throughout the world. It has a vital role in the development of different destinations all around the world. When systematically planned and effectively managed, it not only becomes a marketable commodity but also helps to improve the environment and the infrastructure benefiting the local population. Cultural tourism is the subset of tourism concerned with a traveller's engagement with a country or region's culture, specifically the lifestyle of the people in those geographical areas, the history of those people, their art, architecture, religion, and other elements that helped shape their way of life.

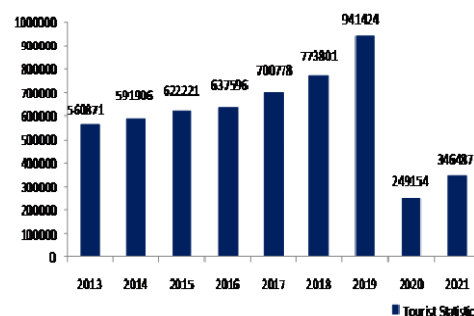
10.1 EXISTING STATUS

Kannur is famous for its beaches, mangroves, bird sanctuary, historic temples and churches, unexplored back waters, Ayurveda and Kalari healthcare systems and the delicious Malabari cuisine. With the Western Ghats in the east and Arabian Sea in the west, Kannur district is bounded by wealth of natural beauty.

In addition, Kannur is the home of Kerala folklore academy. A large

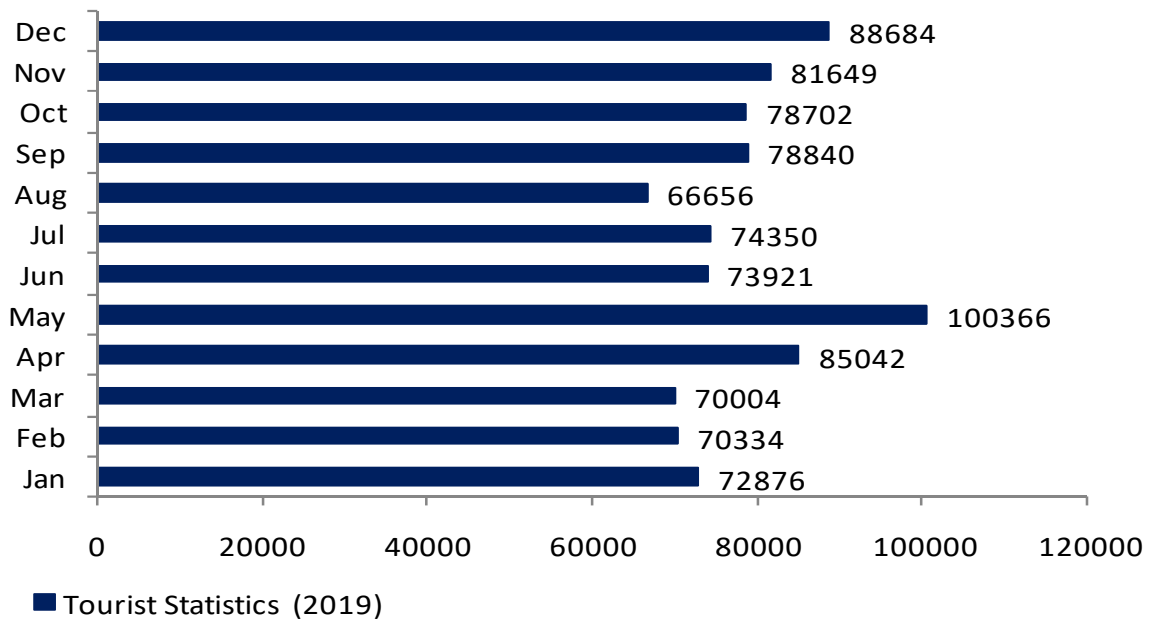
number of folk plays and dances are prevalent among the scheduled castes and tribes there. Each tribe has their own glorious collection of folk plays and dances which are performed during festivals. Theyyam or Theyyattam is an ancient and still popular ritual dance. It's a unique combination of dance, music and worship. It reflects the main features of a tribal culture. It is generally performed in front of the village shrines. There are a large number of temples in Kannur where Theyyam is performed.

Also, Kannur is rightly described as "The land of Looms and Lores". It is well known for its handlooms and is one of the major handloom textile exporters in India. There are a large number of tourist locations in the district.



Source: Tourism Department

Figure.10.1 Yearly Tourists data



Source: Tourism Department

Figure.10.2 Monthly Tourists (Year 2019)

The number of tourists from 2013 to 2021 in Kannur district is shown in Figure.10.1. It is clear that the number of tourists is increasing every year. But due to Covid-19 the number of tourist decreased in 2020 and 2021. The monthly count of tourists in the district in 2019 is shown in Figure.10.2. During the vacation months like May, December, November, April and September, the number of tourists is large. There is a rise of tourists in the month of may.

Since Kannur City is a main halt station for most of the tourist spots of the district, even if they are not in the Corporation boundary, they have to be mentioned in the list of tourist spots influencing the Municipal Corporation area. Important tourist locations in

Kannur district are shown in Figure.10.3. The location of Kannur Corporation is also shown in the same.

Different types of tourist spots within and near the city are listed below.

10.2 TYPES OF TOURISM

10.2.1 BEACH TOURISM

Kannur is gifted with immense natural beauty with the Arabian Sea on its west. The Corporation area has a 17 km long coastline.

Payyambalam Beach

Payyambalam beach is one of the beautiful beaches in Kannur. It is located 2 km away from the core of planning area as well as railway



Figure.10.3 Important Tourist Locations in Kannur District

station. This beach is famous for its flat laterite cliffs that just into the sea. The well laid gardens and the massive landscaped mother and child sculpture make it extremely captivating. The beach has been pictured in many south Indian movies also.

There is a park located near the Payyambalam beach. It has ticketing system. But entrance to beach is completely free. The beach houses many leisure activities for children. Camel safari and other activities are also going on there. A cremation ground is also situated in the beach,

where the eminent personalities from Kannur are resting in peace.

The beach recently introduced an open-air gym, called ‘The Amphibian: Where Man Meets Sea’, which is barely 150 m from the sea. It is touted as country’s first beach to introduce a gym in a move to motivate people to take fitness seriously, along with some fun of course. Anybody visiting this beach to spend some relaxing time can also opt for a workout session by the seaside.



Payyambalam Beach

In fact, this is a better idea than the other options such as jogging or going for a walk on the seashore. This beachside gym also boasts of having a special section designed for children, which includes activities like rock climbing. This is to motivate people to try adopting a healthy lifestyle.

Payyambalam beach is a clean and beautiful beach. People come in hundreds to enjoy the beach and it has got high potential for tourism. But there is lack of facilities to support a large number of tourists. There is no public transportation system near to the beach. Private vehicle is the only mean to reach there. There should have good advertisement and signage about the beach to attract more people from distant places

Light House

Kannur light house is Kerala's first light house and it is the only one light house of Kannur. This 75 feet height

lighthouse was first built in the early months of 1903. It a balcony with a light that is lit as the evening breaks in to alert the seamen of the land. Since the lighthouse stands at a considerable height, one is delighted with an enchanting and panoramic view of the entire city of Kannur, the limitless Arabian Sea, the Baby Beach and even parts of Payyambalam Beach. Light house is located about 3.5 km away from the core area.



Light House

Baby Beach

Baby beach is another spectacular beach of Kannur and it is a small and beautiful beach near Payyambalam Beach. It is just 3 km way from the core of the Corporation area. It is well known as beach lover's paradise. It is a small but clean beach. The savoury feel of this racy Baby Beach invites people to spend some good time in the evening. Since baby beach is located in the Cantonment area, the entry is restricted at times.

Ezhara beach

Ezhara Beach lies close to Kizhunna Beach, and both are often referred to as twin beaches. Ezhara on the southern side has a rocky shore bordered by lush green palm trees. This is another pristine stop to capture sunset at its best. The experience of swimming in the coves is truly amazing. The white sandy stretch cradled with palm trees is quiet, peaceful and untouched by commercialisation. The rocky terrain in contrast with the palms looks like a painting. It is located about 12.3 km from Kannur City.

Thottada Beach

The untouched beauty of Thottada beach makes it one of the most popular places to visit in Kannur. It is located about 7.4 km from Kannur bus stand. The beach is completely segregated from concrete jungles and offers a place full of serenity and tranquillity to its visitors. The cleanliness and solitude offered by this beach are truly unsurpassed.

Muzhappilangad Beach

Muzhappilangad is the longest driving beach in Asia and is featured among the top six best beaches for driving in the world by BBC article for autos. Among the list of six, it is the only one in Asia. It is located about 15 km from the core of the Municipal

Corporation area and 8 km from Thalassery. The beach festival is celebrated in the month of April and it is one of the important tourist attractions in the district.



Muzhappilangad Beach

Muzhappilangad offers some of the most stunning views of the yellow and orange sun setting along the golden sandy beaches of Malabar Coast.

This 4 km stretch drive is providing adventure sports like paragliding, parasailing and microlight flights. Other attractions include water sports, power boating or a simple catamaran ride. Photography enthusiasts can take breathtaking shots of the ocean and food lovers can munch on authentic Malabar snacks sold on the beach. There is no fee charged to enter the beach but for driving a vehicle on the beach, ten rupees is charged.

Kizhunna Beach

It is located about 11 km from Kannur. This beautiful stretch of sand is one of the most secluded beaches in Kerala.

Meenkunnu Beach

Meenkunnu beach at Azhikode Village is about 12 km from Kannur. It is a beautiful beach full of golden sands and tall palms. The place has a slow pace. It is an area of fishing hamlets. As the name says, the beach indicates a strong fishing tradition of beach side villages. Different types of fishing and catching fish right at the beach by the people is an interesting view here. This beach is indeed a refreshing choice for those who find Payyambalam beach a bit touristy and crowded. Meenkunnu beach is 10 km north of Payyambalm along the same stretch of shoreline. The cliff on top of this beach is a good view point.

Chala Beach

Chala beach is just a short stroll away from Meenkunnu beach located 12 km away from the core planning area. Appearing as a northern extension of Meenkunnu itself, Chala beach is narrower although cleaner. It is also more visitors oriented with a beach garden and well laid out beach entrance. This beach strip is remote and so gives privacy.

Ezhimala

Ezhimala is located about 55 km from Kannur. A hillock, which is 286 m high, rises above the beautiful beach here. Carved stone pillars and an efficient burial chamber can be seen at the foot of the hills. The hills are well known for its rare medicinal herbs. A Naval Academy, one of the largest of its kind in Asia, is located here. Permission is required for entry.

Choottad Beach

With casuarina trees providing shade and the beach facing Ezhimala, Choottad Beach is also noticed in the tourist map of Kerala. It shares its borders with Kuppam River on one side and sea on the other. 286 metres above, Ezhimala gives a mesmerizing sight from the beach. The clean sea shore and surroundings attract many tourists.

Under the aegis of the District Tourism Promotion Council, there is a beach park and other facilities. In the Kuppam River near the beach, there are facilities for pedal boats and speed boats. On walking in between the casuarinas trees and reaching the top, there are facilities to sit and relax in soothing breeze.

10.2.2 PILGRIM TOURISM

Parassinikkadavu Temple

It is located in the north east part of Kannur. It is about 18 km away

from Kannur bus stand. The Sri Muthappan Temple of Parassinikkadavu stands on the banks of the Valapattanam River and is one of the most important shrines here. This pilgrim centre is famous for the Muthappan Theyyam performed every morning and evening. Visitors can go around the temple and even enter the sanctorum of the temple renowned for its unusual offering of dried fish and toddy to the deity. A Kathakali Club at the temple arranges shows on request after 11 in the night, which lasts for 2.5 hours.



Parassinikkadavu

Andalurkavu

It is a famous and prominent temple in Andalur in Dharmadam village, located about 17 km away from the core of the corporation area. The Lord Rama and the main festival is celebrated in mid February,

the first week of the month "Kumbham" of the Malayalam calendar.



Theyyam

Theyyam or Theyaattam is the main ritual of worship. It is one of the rare places where Yuddha Kanda of Ramayana, the great epic is visualised and performed.

Rajarajeswara Temple

It is a Shiva temple located in Taliparamba, about 23 km away from Kannur bus stand. The temple is regarded as one of the existing 108 ancient Shiva Temples of ancient Kerala. It also has a prominent place amongst the numerous Shiva temples in South India.

10.2.3 CULTURAL TOURISM

There are a number of festivals across the breadth and length of Kannur which underlines the scope for cultural tourism promotion. Kannur district is known as "the land of looms and lores", because of the loom

industries and ritualistic festivals held in temples. The district is a major centre for Theyyam, a ritual dance of northern Kerala. Small shrines known as kavus, are associated with the Theyyam.

The flavours of Kannur region are unique making it a paradise for food lovers. “Thalasseryi Dum Biriyani” is one of the tempting dishes every traveller should taste at least once in their lifetime. The list of other lip smacking items includes Ari Unda, Neypathiri, Unnakkaya, Pazham Nirachathu, Elayada, Kalathappam and Kinnathappam. Thus, it is an irresistible place for all food lovers.

10.2.4 HERITAGE TOURISM

St. Angelo’s Fort

St. Angelo’s Fort is one of the historical forts in Kannur district located about 3 km from the city. This sea front laterite fort was constructed in 1505 AD by Don Francisco De Almeda with the consent of the ruling Kolathiri Raja. The fort is a composite feature of the Portuguese, Dutch and the English architecture (colonial architecture).

After changing hands from the Portuguese to the Dutch and then to the English, the fort became one of the important military centres of the British in Malabar. St. Angelo Fort offers a fascinating view of the Mappila Bay fishing harbour.



St. Angelo’s Fort

Ammunition dumps, stables, underground jails, secret tunnels to the sea and an old dilapidated chapel are well preserved within its precincts.

Even though the fort is located close to the core planning area, there is no public transportation network available. The visitors can depend only on auto or private vehicles. Since there is no auto stand, the return journeys of the visitors is very difficult and are forced to walk or depend on autos that came for unloading other passengers.

Arakkal Kettu Museum

This historical museum, which faces the Arabian Sea is located about 3 km from Kannur bus stand. It was actually a section of the Arakkal Kettu (Arakkal Royal Palace) which was the residence of the former Arakkal Ali Rajas, the only Muslim royal family of Kerala.



Arakkalkettu Museum

Protected by archaeological and tourism department, this palace complex is today a museum housing splendid display of numerous artefacts and heirlooms belonging to the Rajas. Presently, the palace is in a completely deteriorated state even though some parts of the palace are functional (Durbar Hall, Masjid).

Gundert Bungalow

It is located about 20 km from Kannur. Dr. Herman Gundert, the revered German missionary, scholar and lexicographer lived in this bungalow for 20 years from 1839. It was here that the first Malayalam dictionary and the first Malayalam newspaper – Paschimodayam – took shape. The bungalow is at present occupied by a technical training institute.

Chirakkal

Chirakkal is located 6 km from Kannur City. There is a splendid

folklore museum here. In an effort to preserve the rich heritage of the 130 year old abode of Chirakkal family, the Chirakkal Kovilakam was converted into a museum. The Kolathiri Rajas once lived here.

Kerala Folklore Academy

Kerala Folklore Academy, an independent centre for cultural affairs, was established on 28 June 1995. The main objective of the Academy is to promote and protect the traditional art forms of Kerala. Kerala Folklore Academy, an autonomous centre for cultural affairs, is located about 7 km away from Kannur. The institution was constituted by the Government of Kerala and functions under the Cultural Affairs Department, Government of Kerala. The institution provides financial assistance to folk artists. Economic aid programs and academic councils are conducted to promote the traditional Kerala art forms.



Kerala Folklore Academy

Malayalam Kalagramam

It is located about 29 km away from the core of the Corporation area. This renowned centre for arts and culture conducts courses in painting, sculpture, music, dance and pottery. The centre also has an art gallery, exhibition hall, library, a 300 seat auditorium, a sculpture garden, cottages for staff and students, separate guest houses for visitors and a canteen.

10.2.5 OTHER TOURIST SPOTS INFLUENCING KANNUR CORPORATION AREA

Vismaya Water Theme and Amusement Park

It is situated near to the famous Muthappan temple in Parassinikadavu. It was officially inaugurated in August 2008 and since then it has become one of the favourite holiday destinations in Malabar.



Vismaya Water Theme and Amusement Park

The park is wholly operated by the rain water collected by the reservoir spread over two acres of land with a capacity of 50 million litres of water. It is located about 18 km away from Kannur bus stand.

Parassinikkadavu Snake Park

It is located in the Anthoor Municipality about 16 km from core of Kannur Corporation area. The Snake Park is in Parassinikkadavu, 2 km from National Highway (NH). The park houses a variety of snakes and other small animals, including the Spectacled Cobra, King Cobra, Russell's viper, Krait and various pit vipers. There is also a large collection of non-venomous snakes including pythons. The park is dedicated to the preservation and conservation of snakes, many species of which are gradually becoming extinct.

Parassinikkadavu

It is located about 18 km from Kannur. The DTPC provides pleasure boating and house boat cruises at the Parassini River. Accommodation is available nearby. The snake park here is the only one of its kind in the state. Snake demonstrations conducted every hour draw large crowds. Vismaya Infotainment Centre, one of the largest water theme parks is situated here.

Sadhoo Merry Kingdom

It is the most modern man made sophisticated water theme park, situated on a hillock at Chala Hills. It is located 6 km away from Kannur City/ Railway Station.

Munderi Kadavu Bird Sanctuary

It is a Biodiversity rich wetland area located about 14 km away from Kannur bus stand. This area is famous for migratory birds. Munderi Kadavu is a part of Katampally Wetlands which comprises nearly 4000 acres of marshland, used for paddy cultivation known as 'Kaippad'.



Munderi Kadavu Bird Sanctuary

Vellikkeel Eco-Tourism

It is a tourist place that is open to people to enjoy the flora and fauna of Vellikkeel. Located about 18 km away from Kannur core area, it is a nature lover's delight. This eco-tourism is an ideal destination for one-day trips or

getaways from the city. One can do boating in the serene lake of Vellikkeel or have peaceful nature walks by the lake. The surrounding greenery and mountains will refresh your senses.

Aralam Wildlife Sanctuary

It is the northernmost wildlife sanctuary of Kerala, southwest India. It is 55 km² in area and located on the western slope of the Western Ghats. It was established in 1984. The headquarters of the sanctuary is near Iritty. Aralam Wildlife Sanctuary is situated in the south east part of Kannur District. It is about 62 km away from Kannur City.

Pazhassi Dam and Garden

It is located 37 km east of Kannur. It is an ideal retreat for tourists. This dam site is famous for its scenic beauty.

Vayalapra Floating Park

The Vayalapra Floating Park, also known as V-Pra Park is one of the beautiful picnic spots in Kannur to spend with family and children. It is located about 26 km away from Kannur bus stand. The park started by District Tourism Promotion Council (DTPC), Kannur offers various tourism activities like Pedal Boating and Kayaking.

Madaipara

Madayipara is a flat topped hillock located in the Madayi Village of Kannur district. It is typical Laterite foothills of the Western Ghats. Kuppam River, a major river in Kannur district flows along the place touching this hillock. Madayipara is an ecological paradise rich with wide species of flora and fauna. It has a rare collection of insect - eating plants. It is also home to hundreds of birds and butterfly species. The place has religious significance as well. Madayikkavu, Vadukunda Temple and Malik Dinar mosque are situated here. The Madayi Kavuvu also known as Thiruvarkadu Bhagavathi Temple is of Goddess Kali, and the Vadukunda Temple is dedicated to Lord Shiva. Malik Dinar Mosque is believed to have been originally built by Malik Ibn Dinar, a Muslim preacher. The Madayi Kavuvu is considered to be the mother of all Bhadrakali temples of North Kerala and this kavuvu hosts the Pooram festival, which is a ritual ceremony found in North Malabar region.

Palakkayam Thattu

It is a beautiful and well maintained hill station located about 46 km away from Kannur City. This lesser-known location with a misty mountain in the Western Ghats has an altitude of 3500 Ft from Mean Sea Level.

Paithalmala

Paithalmala is just a few kilometers away from Palakkayam Thattu. It is one of the safest hill stations in Kannur for spending time with family. Palakkayam Thattu is undoubtedly a beautiful place for hang out with friends and family. It offers a good off road experience too if you are interested in off road. It is about 63 km away from Kannur City.



Paithalmala

Kanjirakkolly

Kanjirakkolly Hill Station is one of the emerging tourism destinations in Kannur district of Kerala, situated in the Western Ghats, along with the other Hill stations in Kannur, Palakkayam Thattu and Paithalmala. Kanjirakkolly Hill station, situated about 54 km from Kannur town, is the new tourist destination identified by Kerala Tourism. To explore the tourist attractions here, Kerala Tourism has

launched the first phase of developmental works here. Govt. has laid the foundation stone for a tourist facilitation centre recently.

Kanmath para and Sashi para are the View point of Kanjirakolly. Alakapuri waterfall here is the most attractive of all the monsoon scenes. It is essentially a picturesque land of imposing mountains, beautiful valleys and lovely rippling streams. From Sashippara we can see Kanjirakolly Valley, Coorge Forests of Karnataka and other villages. It is an enchanting destination for trekkers, photographers and nature lovers.

10.3 POTENTIALS AND PROBLEMS

The name of Kannur has been marked in the modern history of Kerala for its vast array of heritage buildings and its most enticing culinary culture. The planning area has immense potential for development of tourism sector with a clean and beautiful environment. Kannur Corporation area is a sandy strip of land interlocked with beaches and estuaries. There are some environmentally sensitive areas having reasonable amount of mangroves like Kanampuzha and Thavakkara South.

St Angelo's Fort is definitely one of the most popular and frequently visited attractions of Kannur and for more reasons than one. The polished

yet prehistoric structure of this fortress oozes with unadulterated elegance and overwhelming power. Standing ashore in the Arabian Sea, St Angelo's Fort enjoys a panoramic and unobstructed view of the diorama created by the merger of the magnetic waves and the azure waters. It also overlooks the mesmerising Mopilla Bay, a natural harbour.

The fort is mainly famous for the gripping history and the intriguing tales it has to tell. Walking around the walls of this majestic fort, the visitors can almost picture the battles that this fortress has seen. The tombstones of the soldiers who lost their lives fighting for the fort, barracks and an old chapel altogether constitute the heritage potential of the planning area.

Even though the St. Angelo's fort, light house, Payyambalam beach, baby beach etc. are very close to the city, the accessibility to these places is very difficult and also the road conditions are very poor. Public transportation facilities are to be provided.

The city lacks in tourist infrastructure. The marketing efforts are minimal. Taking into account the tourist inflow into the city the available facilities is found to be insufficient. The tourism within Kannur Corporation area is sadly remains as one day tour. Thus the tourists from Karnataka or other districts come here in the morning and

return by evening due to the very lack of infrastructure ignorance about tourism in Kannur due to the absence of its tourism profile.

10.4 INFERENCE

Though there are quite a number of tourist spots in and around Municipal Corporation area, it is unfortunate that some of these centres and their potentials still remain unidentified and unexplored at international levels.

There is a scope for a boating service through Varamkadavu Pullooppikadavu and Mundrykadavu. Due to the presence of bird sanctuary, it can be enhanced as a tourist spot. There are some environmentally sensitive areas having reasonable amount of mangroves in Kanampuzha and Thavakkara South. Conservation of these areas is very important.

The new international airport offers great potential to this sector. Traditional Ayurvedic treatment can

be rejuvenated and be introduced there by promoting health tourism within the planning area. Since Kannur has a potential of cultural tourism like “Theyyam”, the seasonal scope of that can be utilised to attract foreigners.

Moreover, new tourism circuits need to be developed by connecting the various tourist destinations of Kannur District as well. It is necessary to provide basic amenities including accommodation facilities at all prominent tourist spots considering the growth of this sector in the near future along with enhancement of public transportation.

The details of tourist spots and available infrastructure can be made available to the tourists and public by providing an e-platform like internet, mobile applications etc. proper sign boards, names of roads as well as exact location of tourist spots can be displayed using LED display to encourage tourism.