



Waterfalls and Health Tourism a Case Study on Kodagu District, Karnataka

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ABSTRACT---*It is the common consensus that the waterfall is an attraction than a destination. This paper discusses the essence of waterfalls based on the theoretical framework developed on interview and survey methods. The main focus is on SWOT analysis of waterfalls which is an utero concept in the studied area. Kodagu, the smallest district of Karnataka popularly nicknamed as the Scotland of South India, has potentiality of developing waterfalls as the hub of health tourism, Aurvedic and rejuvenation centers. The concept of monsoon tourism can effectively be applied as a strategic plan to harness the featured resources of Kodagu. A brief description of major waterfalls, the geographical features and various applications is the major concern of the study.*

Key words: Waterfalls, Kodagu, South India, Monsoon, Health, SWOT

1, INTRODUCTION

Tourism is travel for recreation, leisure and business purposes. The world Tourism Organization defined tourists as people who “travel to and stay in places outside their usual environment for more than 24 hours and 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”. In 1976 the Tourism Society of England defined Tourism as “the temporary short term movement of people to destination outside the places where they normally live and work and their activities during the stay at each destination. It includes movement for all purposes” (Geethanjali, 2010). Earlier man was traveling for the purpose of fulfillment of his basic needs. Industrial revolution commercialized mans travel into tourism. People around the world travel for leisure, recreation, entertainment, business and to fulfill their special interests. Tourist attractions have been defined by Goodall (1990:262) as "place characteristics, often unique, e.g. natural environment or historic artifacts, or events, such as festivals and sporting occasions". It will readily be seen that attractions, by this definition, could also include many places regarded as tourist destinations. People were traveling to satisfy their psychological and physical needs during the pre historic period. Tourism became the passion among the people of India only after 20th century. Now a days adventure, special interest and eco-oriented tours are getting more popularity among the youth traveller's. Monsoon tourism is an emerging concept in Indian tourism industry. The Department of Tourism of Karnataka had recently launched Monsoon tourism campaign in 3 most popular rainy districts of Karnataka viz., Kodagu, Dakshina Kannada and Chikkamagaluru. Kodagu is blessed with plenty of rainfall hence it can be a dream destination for those who heckle to enjoy each drop of rain, rhythm of thunder.



2, LITERATURE REVIEW

Among those who enjoy open air recreation and take delight in landscape beauty, there are some who can be variously described as "waterfall lovers", "waterfall buffs" or "waterfall fans" (Plumb 1989:9, 249). There are even "waterfall collectors" (Plumb 1989:13), learned in "waterfall-ology" (Kelliher 1990: ix) who go "waterfalling" (Welsh 1992:7) for pleasure. That waterfalls are enjoyed by many people, young and old, all over the world, is evidenced by the large number of topographical books, travel literature and tourist guide-books which prominently feature these landforms. This enjoyment together with technological innovations, particularly in transport, and the growth in leisure activity over the past century (Roberts 1978), has led to increased numbers of visitors at waterfalls and to the deliberate exploitation of these popular landscape features for recreation and tourism. Sightseers have long been attracted to the spectacle of tumbling rivers and streams and according to Shepard (1967:254) falls "have been primary tourist attractions for a thousand years". Indeed, Eadington and Smith remind us that Tivoli, noted for its gardens and waterfalls, became a popular Roman holiday centre some two thousand years ago. This landscape taste has contributed to the development of many tourist destinations, including Niagara, Victoria and Iguassu Falls where waterfalls are the major attraction, and Yosemite and Yellowstone National Parks, Switzerland, Iceland, Norway and New Zealand, where they are important aspects of the scenic attractions. Much has been written on waterfalls as energy resources, but as resources for recreation and tourism they have been largely neglected in scholarly literature. While most waterfalls remain more or less in their natural state, many of the more popular ones have undergone some development which may include food and drink outlets of different kinds and even accommodation. The Kodagu district is formed by the summits and Eastern declivities of the Western Ghats surrounded by South Canara, Hassan and Mysore districts of Karnataka and Waynad of Kerala.

Kodagu is famous for its vivid natural beauty and lush greenery. Kodagu receives 2100 mm rainfall annually. The district is located 11*05' & 13*55' North Latitude and 74*40' & 75*07' East Longitude constituting 3 taluks viz., Madikeri, Somavarpet and Virajapet. It has the landscape with the altitude between 850 and 2700 meters above the sea level. Capital city Madikeri lies at the altitude of 1170 meters above the sea level (Lewis Rice, 1876). There are about 20 waterfalls in Kodagu district that are still unknown to the external world. Each waterfall has a mythological relevance which is associated with its name. These falls become active during monsoon rejuvenating Kodagu as the heaven on the earth. Promoting falls tourism during monsoon can be a best option to boost the economy of Kodagu. Since tourism is closely connected with multiplier effect marketing monsoon tourism can be a better solution to standardize the economy of this region (Geethanjali 2010).

These waterfalls house variety of Flora and Fauna which can be the additional attraction to market a tourism destination. Variety of animals and birds constitute wild life tourism in Kodagu (Krishna Moorthy and Yoganarasimhan, 1990 and Manohara, 2008). Both Monsoon tourism and wild life tourism make Kodagu as a dream travel destination. Varieties of spices and



Coorg honey have the brought multiplier effect on Kodagu economy. When the tourists depart Kodagu they purchase various souvenirs including spices and Honey. Large number of tribal groups of this region has associated with extraction of honey from a tall or fallen tree and selling it.

3, RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

- Identification waterfalls
- To understand the influence of waterfalls on local folklore and their medicinal practices.
- Socio-economic significance of waterfalls on local folklore
- Significance of waterfalls in creating and promoting market for monsoon tourism

4, METHODOLOGY

4.1 Study Area

Kodagu district is located 11*05' & 13*55' North Latitude and 74*40' & 75*07' East Longitude constituting 3 taluks viz., Madikeri, Somavarpet and Virajapet. It has the landscape with the altitude between 850 and 2700 meters above the sea level. Capital city Madikeri lies at the altitude of 1170 meters above the sea level. All three taluks of the district are selected for study.

4.2 Data Collection

To realize the objectives of the study, both primary and secondary data is used. Primary data has been collected through survey method with observations, field visit and personal interview with the people in the projected area. Interview was conducted with the officials of Tourism and Forest department at various levels to compare the views expressed by both the functionaries.

Secondary data related to the Monsoon tourism and waterfalls collected from the sources like, Journals, Books, Internet sources etc.

5, WATERFALLS OF KODAGU

Abbi falls, Mallalli falls, Irpu Falls, Abyala falls, Haleri falls, Chelavara falls, Surlabbi falls, Medarahatti falls, Kote Abbi falls, Abhidare falls, Ballamavati falls, Onachilu falls, Jodupala falls, Kanthabailu falls, Ramahalli falls, Umbale Falls.

6, WATERFALLS AND LOCAL COMMUNITY

Waterfalls have positive influence on local community. Kodagu is the Hub of Waterfalls. Exotic canons, Deep valleys and the picturesque scenic beauty attract thousands of tourists every day. Cascading waterfalls, rivers of India have immense significance on Indian tourism Industry from tourism and Medical perspective. Say people believe that a holy dip in River Ganga cures



number of health related diseases. Even some other rivers of India also have the same significance. It's all because of the origin of these rivers in a dense forest area where we find variety of herbal plants and shrubs. Variety of medicinal plants, trees, herbs creepers, climbers and shrubs grow in and around the premise of waterfalls. Most of the waterfalls cascade with white and milky surf during monsoon.

Monsoon in Kodagu is the shower of water which is followed by numerous health related problems. In particular monsoon and immediate post monsoon is the period of sickness. Kodagu is a hill station hence hospitals and medical centers cannot be accessed easily particularly during monsoon. Hence nativity and native medical practices (Nati) is practiced throughout the district. It leads to have a few distinctive basic questions that, what is the role of waterfalls in Kodagu tourism? How these can be accessed? What are the major Flora and Fauna that can be seen in and around the waterfalls? What are the major herbs grow in the premise of waterfalls? Local medical practitioners and how waterfalls contribute to the art of medication? How the folk medical practices can be marketed in a broad way? What strategies and methods can be followed? If these ideas are practiced what would be the benefit to the indigenous folk? And furthermore study of waterfalls is conducted to venture how it is associated with folk legends of Kodagu.

7, MAJOR HERBAL PLANTS AROUND THE WATERFALLS

Local medical practitioners collect different types of medicinal plants and herbs for curing specific illness. Medicinal plants, roots, barks, twigs, flowers, fruits, stems, tubers etc are used for medicinal practices. People depend on forest for curing the minor health problems. Medicinal plants fetch on an average of 0.38 percent of total income earned from the collection of various NTFPs (Net. Total Forest Products) (C Nanjundaiah, 2004)

Sl No.	Scientific Name	Local Name	Usage
01	Andrographis Paniculata	Nela Bevu	Cholera, diabetes, influenza, piles
02	Arecaceae	Neeru Brahmi	Insanity, Epilepsy, Pox, Fever, Cough, improves intelligence
03	Cassia Fistula	Kakke	Fever, Jaundice, Wounds and Accidental Wounds
04	Cleome Viscosa	Kadu Sasive	Stomach Ache, Skin Diseases, Caugh, Blistering
05	Eclipta Prostrate	Garuda Patala/ Garuda Soppu	For Gray Hair
06	Euphorbia Rhymifolia	Kolu Kalli	Piles, Ring worm, eruptive worms
07	Phyllanthus amarus schum and thorn	Nela Nelli	Eye Diseases Anemia, Jaundice, Leprosy, Urinal disorders
08	Tabernaemontana alternifolia	Kokke kayi	skin infections
09	Ipomoea cairica	Railway creeper	rheumatism and inflammation
10	Stachytarpheta indica	Kariyuttaran	Multi use
11	---	Nai Kabbu	Eye Diseases, Red eye (hyperaemia, Madras Eye)
12	---	Hermane Soppu	Skin diseases, Ring Warm
13	---	Nekki Soppu	Asthama and Lung diseases



*Courtesy: Mr. Manohara A: Research study on forest resources of deciduous forests of Kodagu district

8, SWOT ANALYSIS OF COMMUNITY AND WATERFALLS

8.1 Strength

- Wide ranges of medicinal plants
- Usage of medicinal plants by local community
- Local medicinal practitioner (LMP) (SIDDA and Natural) are many in number

8.2 Weakness

- Local Medical practice is unexplored and untapped
- Negative ideology/image on LMP among the people
- Lack of awareness among the local community

8.3 Opportunity

- A number of waterfalls are unexplored in Kodagu
- Since Kodagu is a hill region people often suffer from minor health issues
- Call on doctor facility is not available.
- Scope for establishing Yoga/Health/Aurvedic/Naturopathic therapy centre's
- Large scope for marketing the LMP

8.4 Threat

- Harnessing the resources would result in imbalance of nature
- Inevitable exploitation of natural resources would dry the waterfalls
- Adverse impact on carrying capacity

9, DISTINCTIVE OPPORTUNITIES

- Introduction of nature oriented activities such as Hiking, Roping
- Cable car in few waterfalls
- Zip lining/boating/rafting/Angling



- Fine dining/multi cuisine restaurants
- Terrace with panoramic views
- Theatre show/ Current pools / Swimming facilities

10, PLANTATION WALK

Plantation walk is a tremendous experience that the tourist can enjoy during the monsoon. Every drop of rain can be enjoyed walking on the wet land rejuvenates a tourist's life. Kodagu has an untapped potentiality to introduce monsoon tourism.

11, CONCLUSION

Kodagu has vibrant potentiality for ventured business in tourism. A number of activities suggested above can be effectively implemented with the active participation of the local authority. A sound governance at the local and the high level can be the effective solution for implementing the above suggested activities.

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