



SOCIETAL ASSOCIATION AND ENDURABLE LIVELIHOOD OF WOMEN IN TOURISM: THE ROLE OF ENTREPRENEURIAL NOVELTY-A CASE STUDY

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Abstract

Entrepreneurial innovation plays a significant role in tourism development, especially in communities with limited experience or expertise in tourism. Innovation in tourism business, are likely to be more useful to the local community in terms of job creation and economic connection. Such forms of tourism could offer new forms of livelihood for the marginalized people. Making an effective tourism strategy would fetch assorted livelihood. Initiatives established on Society-based tourism can also help in forming community networks that facilitate involvement of local people in a more efficient manner.

A case study of an ethnic resort and a cultural centre, 'KADAMBAVANAM', Madurai, Tamilnadu, the southern tip of peninsular India, illustrates how entrepreneurial innovation helped in forming a community network and offer sustainable livelihood, diversified job opportunities to the natives in the boundary of tourism.

This paper analyses the role of entrepreneurial innovation in facilitating the local people and ensuring their endurable livelihood through tourism.

Keywords: *Ethnic Tourism, Sustainable, Livelihood*

Introduction

Tourism is an important sector of the economy and contributes significantly in the country's GDP as well as Foreign Exchange Earnings (FEE). With its backward and forward linkages with other sectors of the economy, like transport, construction, handicrafts, manufacturing, horticulture, agriculture, etc., tourism has the potential to not only be the economy driver, but also become an effective tool for poverty alleviation and ensuring growth with equity. The tourism industry is the largest service industry in India, contributing 8.6% to the national GDP.

Ethnic Tourism

Ethnic tourism is "travel motivated by search for the first hand, authentic and sometimes intimate contact with people whose ethnic and /or cultural background is different from the tourists". Ethnic tourists are driven by the desire to see something different where curiosity is the ultimate factor. The travelers choose to experience firsthand the practices of another culture, and may involve performances, presentations and attractions portraying or presented by indigenous communities. In a broader perspective, it includes cultural, heritage, anthropological, tribal, village and similar forms of tourism. Ethnic tourism, if properly planned and managed, can be promoted as sustainable form of tourism and can be utilized as a tool for the preservation and conservation of culture and heritage as well as poverty alleviation. India, rich with its cultural diversity, grand heritage and inimitable history, is a world famous cultural tourism destination. The focal point of India's attractiveness as a destination is its diverse ethnicity.

Cultural Tourism

Cultural tourism is the subset of tourism concerned 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(s), and other elements that helped shape their way of life. Cultural tourism includes tourism in urban areas, particularly historic or large cities and their cultural facilities such as museums and theatres. It can also include tourism in rural areas showcasing the traditions of indigenous cultural communities (i.e. festivals, rituals), and their values and lifestyle, as well as niches like industrial tourism and creative tourism. It is generally agreed that cultural tourists spend substantially more than standard tourists do. This form of tourism is also becoming generally more popular throughout the world, and a recent OECD report has highlighted the role that cultural tourism can play in regional development in different world regions.

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. These cultural needs can include the solidification of one's own cultural identity, by observing the exotic "others".'

KADAMBHAVANAM

Kadambavanam situated in Madurai, Tamilnadu, the southern tip of peninsular India, the country that is home to the oldest surviving civilization in history. As the logo represents, Kadambavanam is a centre for Tamilnadu.



Tamilnadu, relatively insulated from external invasions and influences, reveals a highly evolved and peaceful civilization deeply rooted in cultural values and traditions, that continues to exist today as it did centuries ago. Kadambavanam captures the essence of this living tradition at Madurai, where Goddess Meenakshi, the fish eyed, warrior queen, reigns supreme with her consort Lord Sundareswarar, the manifestor of the 64 Divine plays known as Thiruvillaiyadal. Kadambavanam offers an authentic cultural experience into the Tamil way of life as reflected in its Tradition and Culture, Arts and Crafts, Food Varieties, Games & Sports, Spiritual Practices, Language and Literature.

'Kadambavanam' works on a 'Social Entrepreneurship' model involving local villagers to run the show. Kadambavanam is dedicated to the cause of promoting and preserving our precious art forms for posterity and in the process providing dignity and livelihood to many an impoverished rural artist.

Cultural Centre

Kadambavanam conducts evening cultural activities capturing the different facets of the 'Tamil People'. As we go into the centre under the auspices of Veera Ayyanaar, the village deity of prosperity and valour, get ready for an evening of fun, entertainment and information. We can also catch the village folk playing native games & sports and participate in a host of traditional games such as Kittipul, Pandi, Golli gundu (Marbles) or Pallanguli. Astrology is part and parcel of Tamil tradition. The visitor can take a peek into their future with the kai rekai josier (palmist) or kili josier (with a parrot as fortune teller).

The evening pooja, "Sayaratchai" at the temple complex in kadambavanam can be caught a glimpse of, which has a pantheon of Hindu Gods where the festivity as marked for the day in the Hindu calendar is highlighted. An over view of spiritual practices followed in Tamil Nadu and the gist of Hinduism are explained. The visitor can enter the auditorium to feast their senses on the highly evolved classical arts, heralded by the traditional murasu (an ancient drum).

The classical dance representative of Tamilnadu is, BharathanatIAM. This divine dance form with its graceful movements and beautiful costumes is sure to capture the fascination of viewers. The soul stirring Carnatic music, the classical music of the region, is presented briefly to the audience either as a vocal recital or as an instrumental performance through a veena, violin or flute recital. The evening's program is enriched and made more interesting by explaining the history and meaning of the various artforms presented.

From classical arts meant for a higher plane of consciousness, they take the visitors to the other end of the spectrum – folk arts – an integral part of everyday life in the villages. The guest can treat themselves to a variety of colourful Tamil folk arts such as Karagam, Kavadi, Oyilattam, Thappattam, Poikkal kudhirai.

TAMIL martial arts such as Silambattam or Varmakalai – self defense techniques unique to Tamilnadu, that are practiced more as an art form today can also be witnessed in the resort.



'Thorpavai Koothu' an ancient art form of puppetry theatre using props made of goat hides, depicting stories mostly from the Ramayana at the puppetry theatre fascinates the viewers. As a treat to the nostrils and appetite, Tamil snacks like muruku, thattai, athirasam prepared in extremely hygienic condition can be tasted from the 'snacks bar' and can be enriched with a degree kaapi (rich aromatic South Indian coffee) or a cooling herbal drink such as Thamarai poo theneer (lotus flower tea).

Tamil experience at kadambavanam gets holistic with the dinner at the 'Unavukudil' (Dining Pavilion), A set menu of typical Tamil vegetarian fare, many of which cannot be had at regular restaurants.

Ethnic Resort

The Kadambavanam Ethnic Resort provides an authentic cultural experience through a comprehensively structured daily program of activities.

A ritual in every typical Tamil household is the cleansing of the front yard with water mixed with cow dung, is followed by adorning the space with beautiful 'Kollams', which are intricate geometric patterns laid freehand with rice flour by the lady of the house. At Kadambavanam they repeat this small ritual in front of the hut and would like to share the meaning behind many a traditional ritual followed by Tamil households. Nestled in the lap of Mother nature, the resort is the perfect place for physical and mental rejuvenation, breathing in the pure, fresh air is enough to calm oneself and to extend the tranquility by Yoga and Meditation at the yoga pavilion.

A leisure village walk and observation of the rural living in the small hamlets around can be enjoyed. Travelers can explore Madurai's colorful history by taking detours to several lesser known places in and around that are steeped in tradition and mythology. The guest can also have a dialog with eminent scholars to discover more about the Tamil culture, spiritual practices and the language.

A well stocked reading lounge and audio visual library with an impressive collection of materials relating to the heritage and customs, including classic old Tamil movies completes the experience. Special packages for Health and Rejuvenation and Cultural Retreats can be tailor made for groups on request. Outbound camps for corporate and value camps for students are being conducted.

Unavagam

The Ethnic Resort features a scenic Unavagam (eatery) above the site abutting a small hillock, offers a fabulous view of the surrounding greenery. Tamil culinary specialties made from fresh vegetables, meat and herbs are prepared in the traditional way to bring out the aroma and flavor. The tranquil setting of the 'Unavagam' is sure to encourage 'awareness eating' where the mind is focused on the food, bringing out its flavor & enhancing its value.

Major Concerns that Enhances the Societal Association and Endurable Livelihood of Local and Marginalized Women Around Kadambavanam:

1. The cultural centre in the kadambavanam has been given on rental basis for shop keepers, bringing down the aesthetic, devotional and architectural value. The artisans around the place are given opportunity to run shops at the resort, giving them a way to make wealth.
2. Kadambavanam conducts cultural activities like bharathanatyam, carnatic music capturing the different facets of the 'Tamil People'. For which cultural women professionals around Madurai are invited to perform the shows, giving them a chance to grow in their carrier.
3. Sculptures at kadambavanam are highly fascinating. These sculptures are got from the local artisans.
4. Architecture of this resort is much tantalizing as this type is called 'Low-cost and eco-friendly' model of building. Only eco friendly and low cost things are used to build this resort. For this purpose, all the local resources are used from Raw material to labor.
5. The native games are enjoyed a lot by the foreign people in order to encourage the nativity games and also to entertain the tourist, the women village folks are given chance to play their native games & sports and participate in a host of traditional games such as Kittipul, Pandi etc.
6. Astrology is part and parcel of Tamil tradition. The visitor can take a peek into their future with the kai rekai josier (palmist) or kili josier (with a parrot as fortune teller). This encourages these kinds of astrologists, which is vanishing.



7. The tourists are heralded in to the auditorium for watching all the classical items by the traditional murasu (an ancient drum), for which local professionals are engaged for this reception.
8. The visitors are taken to the other end of the spectrum – Tamil folk arts as Karagam, Kavadi, Oyilattam, Thappattam, Poikkal kudhirai. Folk arts professionals around Madurai are invited to play a show for the visitors and these people are paid for the demonstration as a way of enriching their profession and livelihood.
9. TAMIL martial arts such as Silambattam or Varmakalai the self defence techniques unique to Tamilnadu, are practiced and taught here. Kadambavanam tries to sustain these ancient techniques for the future generation.
10. 'Thorpavai Koothu' an ancient art form of puppetry theatre, depicts stories mostly from the epics are shown here. This ancient art is in a dangerous position of getting vanished, as an attempt of rejuvenating this art, professionals are encouraged to do the show in kadambavanam.
11. Tamil snacks and culinary like muruku, thattai, athirasam, sirudhaaniya paniyaram, sirudhaaniya adai are prepared in a hygienic way and served for the tourists. This encourages the cultivation of minor millets around the villages.
12. At the Kadambavanam Ethnic Resort, the front yard of the resort is cleansed with water mixed with cow dung, followed by adorning the space with beautiful 'Kollams' which are laid freehand with rice flour by the lady of the house. For this purpose marginalized ladies from the nearby villages are appointed and salaried. Cow dung is got from the milkman who owns cow.
13. Women are encouraged to buy cows and set up cow farms and the milk are procured from them for the restaurant purpose by kadambavanam.

Conclusion

Developing the source of revenue of the marginalized community especially women through tourism is an entrepreneurial innovation for sure, which also sustain the heritage of the country. Sustaining the livelihood of the local and down trodden people is possible through ethnic and cultural tourism. Kadambavanam is one such novelty which develops the holistic growth of the surrounding villages of Madurai.