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## TOURISM DEVELOPMENT IN KODAGU DISTRICT

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### ABSTRACT

*Kodagu district is well known in the country as the Scotland of India. It is the smallest district in the old Mysore region of Karnataka state. It has abundant natural resources, rich cultural legacy, historical significance and prominent tourist destinations. The Cauvery river is the lifeline of the people of Kodagu district. Tourism is a fast growing service sector in Kodagu district due to considerable increase in both domestic and foreign tourist arrivals. Tourism sector is contributing commendably to the District Gross Domestic Product. It has also enhanced infrastructural facilities, civic amenities, income generating opportunities and gainful employment opportunities in the district. The tourists are fascinated by the eco-tourism sites, cultural heritage sites and other centers of attraction. The district contributes sizable amount of revenue to the state through tourism centered activities. The development of tourism in Kodagu district is amplified in this article on the basis of secondary data analysis.*

**KEYWORDS:** *Tourism, tourists, foreign tourist arrivals, infrastructural development*

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### PREAMBLE

Kodagu district is well known in the country as the Scotland of India. It is the smallest district in the old Mysore region of Karnataka state. It has abundant natural resources, rich cultural legacy, historical significance and prominent tourist destinations. The Cauvery river is the lifeline of the people of Kodagu district. Tourism is a fast growing service sector in Kodagu district due to considerable increase in both domestic and foreign tourist arrivals. Tourism sector is contributing commendably to the District Gross Domestic Product. It has also enhanced infrastructural facilities, civic amenities, income generating opportunities and gainful employment opportunities in the district. The tourists are fascinated by the eco-tourism sites, cultural heritage sites and other centers of attraction. The district contributes sizable amount of revenue to the state through tourism centered activities. The development of tourism in Kodagu district is amplified in this article on the basis of secondary data analysis.

### TOURIST ARRIVALS IN KODAGU DISTRICT

Kodagu district is well known in Karnataka state for tourism development potentials and opportunities. Tourism is a fast growing service sector due to an increase in both domestic and foreign tourist activities. Tourism has become a boon to the local populations since it has contributed for infrastructural development, basic needs, civic amenities, economic development and employment generation. The cultural heritage, natural resources, hospitality management services and supportive civil society have resulted in the development of the tourism sector in Kodagu district.

**Table No.1: Tourist Arrivals in Kodagu District for the Period 2000-2018**

Sl. No.	Year	Domestic Tourists	Foreign Tourists	Total Tourists
1.	2000-01	7,57,984	348	7,58,332
2.	2001-02	8,14,565	332	8,14,897
3.	2002-03	9,42,729	338	9,43,067
4.	2003-04	10,13,028	356	10,13,384
5.	2004-05	10,89,257	379	10,89,636
6.	2005-06	11,27,654	383	11,28,037
7.	2006-07	12,13,328	389	12,13,717
8.	2007-08	13,38,963	392	13,39,355
9.	2008-09	16,32,729	401	16,33,130
10.	2009-10	18,14,405	412	18,14,817
11.	2010-11	19,33,355	417	19,33,772
12.	2011-12	20,15,355	419	20,15,774
13.	2012-13	21,07,499	423	21,07,922
14.	2013-14	13,93,738	442	13,94,180
15.	2014-15	12,90,224	626	12,90,850
16.	2015-16	13,52,653	1524	13,54,177
17.	2016-17	14,42,923	1632	14,44,555
18.	2017-18	14,78,113	1704	14,79,817
19.	2018-19	8,32,124	328	8,32,452

Source: Department of Tourism, Kodagu District, Government of Karnataka.

Table No.1 provides the statistics about the arrival of both domestic and foreign tourists to Kodagu district during 2000-2018. The data reveal that Kodagu district has received sizable domestic tourists over a period of time. A microscopic minority of foreign tourists have also visited Kodagu district during this period due to unfamiliarity with the tourism

potentials and prospects among the foreigners in Kodagu district. There is consistent increase in the arrival of both domestic and foreign tourists during 2000-2017. There was drastic decrease in the number of domestic and foreign tourists during 2018 which witnessed worst kind of natural disaster.

#### **TOURISM AND DISTRICT GDP**

**Table No.2: Percentage of Share of Service Sector to District GDP and Share of Tourism Sector to Service Sector for the Period 2000-2018 (in Lakh).**

Sl. No.	Year	Share of Service Sector to GDP	Share of Tourism Sector to GDP
1.	2000-01	34.19	12.03
2.	2001-02	39.30	9.63
3.	2002-03	39.52	9.84
4.	2003-04	44.05	10.74
5.	2004-05	49.92	14.23
6.	2005-06	63.84	14.76
7.	2006-07	44.3	13.07
8.	2007-08	44.6	13.24
9.	2008-09	44.78	13.62
10.	2009-10	43.31	13.70
11.	2010-11	45.05	13.86
12.	2011-12	47.10	14.25
13.	2012-13	47.49	14.36
14.	2013-14	48.08	14.52
15.	2014-15	49.05	14.16
16.	2015-16	49.74	14.28
17.	2016-17	49.62	14.16
18.	2017-18	49.68	14.36
19.	2018-19	49.70	14.64

Source: Kodagu District Statistics at a Glance – 2000-2018.

Table No.2 provides the details about the percentage share of service sector to GDP and tourism sector to GDP in Kodagu district respectively. There is consistent increase in terms of the percentage share of service sector to GDP during 2000-2019. The tourism sector has also consistently contributed to GDP in Kodagu district. The percentage share

of service sector to GDP during 2018-19 was 49.70% while the tourism sector has contributed to GDP was 14.64 during this period. The data reveal that tourism sector is one of the vital sectors of service sector which has contributed to district GDP in Kodagu district. The data also reveal casualty between service sector and GDP and tourism sector and GDP.

### TOURISM DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES

**Table No.3: Details of Tourism Development Activities in Kodagu District (2014-2019)**

Sl. No.	Tourism Development Activities	Amount Estimated	Amount Released	Amount Due	Agency Undertaking Works	Remarks
1.	Construction of Kodava Heritage Centre (2013-14)	268.04	171.93	96.11	Public Works Department, Madikeri	Work in Progress
2.	Construction of platform, railings, pathway and steps at Abbey falls	86.20	75.00	11.20	KRIDL	Work Completed
3.	Integrated Developemnt of Raja Seat, Madikeri	455.00	218.0	237.00	Public Works Department, Madikeri	Work in Progress.
4.	Link road development – 2 kms	300.00	225.00	75.00	Public Works Department, Madikeri	Work in Progress
5.	Construction of concrete road from Nanjarayanapattana to Dubare	132.00	132.00	-	Public Works Department, Madikeri	Work Completed
6.	Development of parking space at Dubare	102.00	86.00	16.0	Public Works Department, Madikeri	Work in Progress.
7.	Construction of platform, railings, pathways, steps, parking area and shopping complex and steps at Abbey falls	192.92	140.00	52.92	KRIDL	Work in Progress
8.	Tourism Infrastructure Development at Tavarekere, near Kushalanagar	50.00	20.00	30.00	KRIDL	Work in Progress
9.	Construction of tourist rest room and toilets	36.60	16.00	20.60	KRIDL	Work in Progress
10.	Nalkunadu Palace, Madikeri, link road construction	300	114.00	186.00	Public Works Department, Madikeri	Work in Progress
11.	Construction of Hanging Bridge at Dubare, Somavarpet Taluk	223	148.00	75.00	Public Works Department, Madikeri	Work in Progress
12.	Construction of parking and garden at Irpu Water Falls	50.0	50.0	-	Forest Department	Work in Progress
13.	General Timmaiah Memorial Renovation, Madikeri	142.25	76.10	66.15	Public Works Department, Madikeri	Work in Progress
14.	Construction of railings, steps, toilet, drinking water, seats and other facilities at Mandal Pettige, Madikeri.	549.4	312.00	236.76	Public Works Department, Madikeri	Work in Progress

15	Construction of link road, view point observation facility to Abbey Falls, Madikeri	170.85	92.80	78.05	Public Works Department, Madikeri	Work in Progress
16	Construction of parking place, toilet and other facilities at Chikli river, Somavarpet	32.60	22.40	10.20	Public Works Department, Madikeri	Work in Progress
17	Construction of cottages, link road, pathway and other infrastructure at Kushalnagara Nisargadhama, Somavarpet Taluk	500.00	306.00	194.00	Public Works Department, Madikeri	Work in Progress
18	Construction of link road, toilet and CC facility at Jainabasadi, Mullur, Somavarpet	200.00	126.00	74.00	Public Works Department, Madikeri	Work in Progress
19	Construction of Butter fly park, view point and other facilities, Virajpet taluk	350.00	184.00	166.00	Public Works Department, Madikeri	Work in Progress
20	Construction of link road and other facility at Kunda hills, Virajpet taluk	98.00	72.00	26.00	Public Works Department, Madikeri	Work in Progress

Table No.3 provides the details about the various developmental works undertaken by the Government of Karnataka in prominent tourist destinations of Kodagu district. Infrastructural facilities consistently are made available to the tourists' community in major tourist centers. The data revealed that adequate funds are not made available by the Government of Karnataka to undertake the infrastructural development activities and enhance civic amenities in the major tourist destinations. However, there is steady progress in the percentage share of tourism infrastructure development according to the data furnished in the above table.

### QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS

The constant increase in tourist arrivals to Kodagu district has resulted in the expansion of tourism sector in general and development of economic sector in particular. The study emphasizes that the role of tourism sector in raising the district GDP is significant one compared to other sector. The study primarily reveals that tourism sector has contributed to employment opportunities to the local people in different capacities. However, tourism has to go a long way in enhancing the quality of employment of workers engaged in tourism sector. The policy makers and other stakeholders of tourism development are required to undertake suitable measures for the development of tourism sector in the district.

The perceptions of the residents in Kodagu district regarding tourism development provides the stakeholders of tourism development better vision and facilitates reinforcement of positive attributes. The tourism industry is good for the local economy since it is strongly supported by the local residents (Sukhesh and Krishnamurthy, 2012:08).

The authorities have a responsibility of carrying out a more exhaustive and comprehensive investigation on different aspects of tourism development in Kodagu district.

The expansion of tourism activities in Kodagu district gained a new dimension due to increased home stays. They have become important means to earn income and to generate employment in rural areas. The advent of home stays, lodges, resorts and other institutions has boosted tourism development, employment generation, social mobility and economic status of the people in the district (Dayananda, 2014:02).

There is an abundant scope for the development of ecotourism in Kodagu district which has environment landscape and unique cultural features. Lack of environment protection knowledge and mismanagement of tourist spots were found to be the main threat. Ecotourism can contribute to the economic development of the district to a greater extent (Vishwanatha and Chandrashekara, 2014:10). The government has to introduce a separate ecotourism policy with environment friendly measures and principles to promote ecotourism in the Kodagu district.

Kodagu district of Karnataka has beautiful landscape and diversified culture. These characteristics have attracted large number of domestic and international tourists. The district has good potential to development of ecotourism in sustainable way with cooperation of all concern stakeholders of ecotourism (Vishwanatha and Chandrashekara, 2014:11). The picturesque natural scenes, surface streams, waterfalls, evergreen and deciduous forest and other factors have boosted the cultural and ecotourism in the district.

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, Ayurvedic and rejuvenation centers. The concept of monsoon tourism can effectively be applied as a strategic plan to harness the featured resources of Kodagu (Sachin, 2015: 06). Adoption of eco-friendly tourism and health tourism strategies are essential to promote responsible tourism in the district.

The young age respondents were found to be more interested in homestays operation than the old age respondents in the Kodagu district. The homestays scheme is an important instrument for taking advantage of the unutilized family labour as well as generating employment opportunities to unskilled and semi-skilled labours. The rules and regulation of homestays scheme are very stringent which prevent the rural households' participation in homestays scheme (Thippeswamy, 2016:09). Meaningful and constructive homestays scheme would ensure the utilization of unutilized and underutilized family labour in more productive and income generating activities. It is necessary to simplify the regulations and reduce the certification fee for promotion of homestays scheme in rural areas.

Kodagu district offers a good deal of opportunities to ecotourism which has both social and ecological dimensions. Currently, most of the tourists stay near the small towns located near the sanctuary. Activities such as visiting to cultural sites, trekking and nature education is being undertaken by Forest department. Cooperation between the state tourism department, forest department and local organizations is required for boosting up the ecotourism concept in this area (Nandagopal and Venkataramana, 2017:04). Forest department should strictly follow the code of conduct of eco-tourism. More focus should be given on publicity at national and international level.

Tourism sector has contributed for the increasing employment opportunities in Kodagu district. The home stays have generated employment in rural areas. They have played a vital role in creating large scale employment opportunities, generating income, improving standard of living and contributing for economic development of the Kodagu district (Dayananda and Leelavathi, 2017:01).

The severe floods in 2018 had resulted in the collapse of main roads and link roads which affected the tourism sector in Kodagu district. The government had to ban the home stays due to natural disaster and other constraints (Shrinivasa, 2018:07). The government is also responsible for undertaking natural disaster management, infrastructure development, expansion of civic amenities and economic development activities in the district.

Kodagu district is known for serene hilly landscapes, eye-catching coffee estates and its sacred groves. It is now reeling from the disaster caused by rains, multiple landslides and incessant flooding. The gradual destruction of the environment has caused the widespread havoc. **Illegal sand mining and destruction of safety ridges** has made the bankments weak and vulnerable to the flood. The topography suggests that the steeper and higher slopes are susceptible to landslides which have destroyed coffee estates, homes and entire district in 2018 (Ram, 2018:05). The authorities are responsible for preventing natural disasters by taking appropriate preventive and protective measures for healthy and safe tourism development in the district.

Kodagu district had witnessed remarkable development in the tourism sector during 2011-2015. Several coffee planters had established home stays and earned sizable income from the travelling publics. The investors had also established resorts which provided necessary services to the tourists including modern amenities. The trend continued during 2016-18 with the expansion of tourism destinations and infrastructural facilities in the district. The occurrence of floods in 2018 had adversely affected the tourism sector (Kumar, 2019:03). The government has undertaken disaster management activities on war footing to regain the confidence of local citizens and travelling publics in Kodagu district.

### **KODAGU TOURISM FESTIVAL – 2019**

Kodagu district was worst affected by the devastating flood which occurred in the year 2018. All walks of life including tourism were badly affected by the natural disaster caused by the system failure and increasing threat to sustainable development in Kodagu district. Several departments like revenue, tourism, horticulture, animal husbandry and culture had organized the tourism festival in January 2019 to attract the tourists and boost the economy of the district. The hotel and resort association, travel association, homestay association and district chamber of commerce had also actively participated in the tourism festival.

The flower show was organized in a prominent tourist destination called 'Raja Seat' located in Madikeri, headquarters of Kodagu district. Several kinds of flowers were exhibited in thousands of flower pots made by the local organizers. There were highly attractive cut outs of Goddess Cauvery, Kuvempu and other great personalities. Entertainment programmes were also organized in the evening to provide unique recreation to the local audience and tourists. The cultural programmes also highlighted the ecological, cultural and historical significance of Kodagu district. The cultural troops also entertained the masses in a highly attractive manner.

Various government programmes were also focused during the tourism festival. The handicrafts, special products and other locally relevant goods and services were also exhibited during the occasion which boosted the morale of the Kodagu people. Animal shows, exhibition of products and cultural events attracted large number of people who participated in the tourism festival. Intellectuals, organizers, leaders, officials and others actively participated in the festival and called upon the people to promote tourism in Kodagu district. Prizes were also distributed to the winners in various programmes including animal shows, flower shows, street festival programme and cultural programmes. The festival succeeded in motivating the stakeholders of tourism promotion and prepared grounds for implementation of various development programmes in the district.

### **CONCLUSION**

Tourism development has become the thrust area of economic development in Kodagu district. There are a good number of tourism destinations which are known for social, economic, environment and cultural significance. The district has a pollution free environment and congenial civil society from the point of view of tourism development. The secondary data analysis reveals that tourism has contributed to the economic development of the district in several ways such as infrastructural development, increase in the District GDP, generation of employment opportunities, availability of quality oriented hospitality management services and financial benefits to host communities. There are certain strengths and

limitations in the economics of tourism sector in Kodagu district. But, the strengths outweigh the limitations according to the existing state of affairs. The administrators are required to excel in the management of natural disasters by adopting the best practices. The residents of Kodagu district have a great social responsibility of minimizing the environmental hazards and promoting tourism sector more economically viable and environmentally sustainable. The public – private partnership would also enhance the status of tourism sector in the district.

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