INTRODUCTION

The study entitled “History of Tourist Centres in Kanyakumari District with Special Reference to its Impact on Culture” is an earnest attempt to study in depth, the various tourist centres in Kanyakumari District, that are situated in the southern most extremity of the Indian Peninsula. Tourism occupies an important place in the changing trends of the modern World.\(^1\) Everyone in this World desires to enjoy life with refreshment and entertainment not as a whole but as a part of life free from mental and physical unrest. It is multi-faced and multidimensional with a large number of consequences on society, culture, environment and economy of a region. The contribution of tourism towards the economic as well as regional development is relatively significant. Tourism has produced both positive as well as negative impacts.\(^2\) Traditionally, tourism has been viewed as a great force in promoting understanding among nations and within the national boundaries, facilitating national integration.\(^3\) Tourism has been accepted as an important medium for economic development recently. The economic contribution is measured in different terms such as employment generation, foreign exchange earnings and income generation and output growth.\(^4\)

Significance of Tourism

As per to the estimates by World Tourism Organization (WTO), the international tourists arrivals reached an all time record of 763 million in 2004. The World wide earnings on international tourism reached in 2004 a record value of $ 622 billion against $ 525 billion in 2003.

The year 2004 has been a highly successful year for Indian tourism. The foreign tourist arrivals estimated at 3.37 million.\(^5\) The foreign exchange earnings also recorded an unprecedented growth of about 38% with receipts at US $ 810 million. The dramatic growth of tourism over the last twenty-five years is one of the most outstanding economic and social phenomena of the period.

Tourism activity has long lasting socio-economic impact on the host economy and community. Tourism industry employs a large number of unskilled and semi-skilled personal. The employment generation potential of this industry is more than that of other general industries for a given capital investment. The hotel and restaurant are the key components of the tourism which creates 89 jobs as against 44.7 job in agriculture and 12.6 in manufacturing industries. There has been a significant growth in employment generation of tourism industry. The total labour force had been increased from 3 percent in 1983 to 5 to 8 percent of the total employment in 2000.\(^6\)

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Tourism is an important medium of social and cultural development. It builds lasting good will and friendship among the nations. It helps in regional development of the country and acts as a means of social education and better understanding instrument in integrating this World into a “Single Universe”.

It has also an important cultural significance as it brings contact with people of different races, nationalities and background. Tourism greatly enriches and promotes friendship and good will. People who belong to different countries with different language can come closer and become friends, that also strengthen the amalgamation of various cultures.

Kanyakumari District is also not exempted from the above socio-economic and cultural impact of tourism since it has been considered as one of the most important tourist destinations of the World. These aspects of tourism created an inspiration to conduct a study in a scientific way. This study, somehow, enables to perceive how travel and tourism are considered as an important factor for the socio-economic and cultural promotion of the region. This study helps to know the positive and negative impacts of tourism.

**Aim of the study**

The present research aims at highlighting the profile of Kanyakumari District with special reference to the tourist significance. It also provides a clear picture about the historical and cultural settings of the District. The

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District of Kanyakumari is completely meant for pilgrim purpose in association with three major religions such as Hinduism, Christianity and Islam. The study covers the importance of pilgrim centres in Kanyakumari District. The research also gives a comprehensive account on places of tourist interest in the District. It also aims at mentioning the socio-economic impact of tourism with its positive and negative aspects. The weightage is to be given for throwing much light on cultural impact of tourism in Kanyakumari District.

**Area and Scope of the Study**

Improving tourism in Kanyakumari is one of the major objectives of the study. Tourism plays an important role in the economic development of a nation. The area selected for study is around the Taluks of Agatheeswaram, Thovalai, Vilavancode and Kalkulam in Kanyakumari District. The region is highly potential for tourism and many other means. The findings of the thesis would be of great help to the policy makers and administrators in overcoming the problems of tourism development. No scholarly attempt has been made on this area based on original documents. The present study is largely based on primary sources.

**Limitation of the Study**

An attempt has made to collect as many information as possible and analyse the subject in a systematic way. As tourism is a growing industry in Kanyakumari, it is very difficult to get all information properly. The study is
mainly centred on to the important tourist places of Kanyakumari District. For some of the areas the data is available in abundance and for certain areas relevant records are not available. Hence conducted interviews with eminent personalities and experts in tourism and utilized it as a corroborative data.

**Hypothesis**

The study seeks to bring out the places of tourist interest in Kanyakumari District to the lime light of global Tourism. It sheds knowledge to other World bodies about the historical tourist places of Kanyakumari. It brings out the cultural impact of tourism in Kanyakumari which helps to create socio-religious harmony that led to national integration. It provides job opportunities besides improving the social status of the people.

**Methodology**

The methodology has been applied in this work is purely descriptive analytical and interpretative. In order to describe the major developments in the historical sequence and to establish their interconnectedness, a chronology based narration becomes essential. In highlighting the most significant tourist centres in Kanyakumari District, historical explanation and critical interpretation become imperative. Hence this method is applied to find out the truth in history.
Review of literature

This section reviews the literature on the topic “History of Tourist centre in Kanyakumari District with special reference of its impact on culture”. The work of Tennyson analyses the Vijayanagar style of Padmanabhapuram. The works of A. Sreedhara Menon deal with the stone sculptures. The studies of Gopala Krishnan deal with the tunnel factor of the mount in Padmanabapuram.

The work of Pichimoorthy reveals about the temple sculptures. The work of S. Padmanabhan describes the inscriptions in Chitharal and Hindu temples of Kanyakumari District. The work of C.M. Agur describes the origin of churches and church history of Travancore. The works of C. Bhaskara explain the temple and culture of Tamils. The works of M. Immanuel evaluate the architects of Kanyakumari District. C. Prathap Singh describes the tourists significance of the District.

The works of K.K. Pillai reveal the importance features of Suchindram temple. The writings of S. Nadarajan explain the history Mandaikadu. Mrs. Akshara Poojas study reveals the importance of Kollemkode temple. The works of R. Ponnu mention about the history of Vaikunda Swamigal of Swamithoppu. The works of Joy Ganadason depict the forgotten state and J. M. Villayarayan narrates the details of Kottar Diosease. Dr. Bright Devasahayam writes about the history of Kumari Catholic churches. The work of Muthukumar explains the tourists pilgrims and Thambi narrates Islam of the Districts.
Sources for the study

Sources are very important for any study. Sufficient sources are utilized for highlighting this study extensively. They are primary and secondary sources.

Primary Sources


Information collected from Tourism Information Office, Kanyakumari and data collected from the tourists, both domestic and foreign through the structure questionnaire are the important primary sources.
Secondary Sources


The secondary data collected from different published sources viz. reference books, journal and magazines are highly useful to strengthen the facts of the work.

**Design of the Study**

The thesis has been organized into six chapters excluding introduction and conclusion. “Introductory” chapter deals with the importance of the topic objectives of the study, significance of tourism, scope of the study, methodology, sources of information and chapterisation.
The first chapter entitle “Profile of Kanyakumari District” deals with the location, physical features, formation of the District, climate, rainfall, socio-economic conditions, land and people, political condition, natural division, roadways, ports, irrigation facilities, rivers, dams, forest, religion and castes, significant industries and agriculture sectors in a lucid manner.

The second chapter “Brief History of Tourism” throws light on the origin and development of tourism, types of tourism, applicability and significance of tourism with special reference to the Kanyakumari District.

“Historical and Cultural Settings of Kanyakumari District” forms the third chapter of the thesis. It highlights the historical significance of the District with special reference to cultural settings. Special mention has been made for the intermingling of the Tamil as well as Malayalam cultural contact and settings of the people of Kanyakumari. Art and architectural specimen of the District have also been mentioned here.

The fourth chapter, “Pilgrim Centres of Kanyakumari District” analyses the various pilgrim and holy places and their spiritual significances in a grand manner. As the District is meant for multi-religious, multi-lingual and multi-cultural one, special mention has been made for the notable pilgrim centres of the Hindus such as Kanyakumari Bhagavathi Amman temple, Suchindram Triumvirate temple, Mandaikadu Bhagavathi Amman temple, Thiruvattar Adikesava Perumal temple, Velimalai Kumarasamy temple and Nagercoil Nagaraja temple. This chapter also pictures the important pilgrim centres of the Christians such as Kottar St Xavier’s Church, Puliyoorkurichy martyr,
Devasahayam Pillai shrine, Kattadimalai Devasahayam Pillai shrine, Nagercoil Home Church, Mylaudy London Missionary Church, Martandam Sinclair Memorial Church and Vettumani Caltholic shrine. The Muslim pilgrim centre Peer Mohammad Durgah of Thuckalay and the Jain Holy centre at Chitharal have got a unique representation in this chapter.

The fifth chapter “Other Important Tourist Centres” examines the tourist and historic places of the District such as Udayagiri fort, Vivekananda rock memorial, Thiruvalluvar Statue, famous Gandhi mandapa at Kanyakumari, Padmanabapuram palace, Deloney’s tomb, Vattakottai, Pechiparai dam, Perunchani dam, Chittar dam, Kothayar Power generation project, Mathur basin bridge, Ulakkai falls, Thirparappu falls, Colochel natural harbor Manavalakurichy Rare Earth factory, Thengapattanam backwater lake, Chothavilai beach, Muttom beach and Light House.

The sixth Chapter “Cultural Impact of Tourism” analyses the existing social and economic conditions of the Kanyakumari District and also the impact of tourism on the social and economic aspects of the District in which Tourism acts as a tool for social integration. It also serves as an effective instrument for national integration. It protects the arts and folk arts preservation, historical monuments, improvement of human relationship, exchange of ideas, conservation of heritage, development in education etc, have been lucidly mentioned in this chapter. Besides to these, special mention has been made to the negative impact of tourism in Kanyakumari District too.
It also analyses the local culture, traditional customs, conventions, fairs, festivals, rituals and ceremonies to stage spectacles for the benefit of international visitors. This chapter is specifically meant for the analysis of the cultural revival, restoration and preservation of the rich and varied cultural heritage of the Kanyakumari District. Arts, crafts, food, dress and the mode of living of the people in the District have been brought to light in a comprehensive and detailed manner.

The concluding part contains the summary of all the six chapters with its positive and negative impact, historic importance of the District, the intermingling of culture, generation of foreign exchange and pre-eminent position of the District in the realm of World tourism. It also furnishes the research findings and provides suggestions for further development of tourism in Kanyakumari District.