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Jatayu Earths Center: India's foremost legend tourism initiative

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ABSTRACT

India in recent years has gained good exponential growth in the Tourism industry. Today India is the most preferred destination for both domestic and overseas travellers. Indian tourism industry is ranked 11th in the Asia Pacific region and 62nd overall, moving up three places on the list of the world's attractive destinations. Jatayu Earths Center is the first legend tourism initiative of the state and it is a novel model to the country in the field of Tourism sector. The destination is a masterpiece combination of artistry, mythology, technology, culture, adventure, leisure and wellness put together to give every visitor a spellbinding experience. It helps to enhance the experience of the mythology get mesmerized at the virtual reality museum and the theatrical magic, rendering the story of the mythical bird Jatayu and its era. Later, the place Chadayamangalam in Kollam district (in Kerala, India) may be termed as the "Terrain of Jatayu" in the world tourism map. This may accelerate the economic and cultural development of the district thereby contributes to the economy of the nation.

KEY WORDS: *Tourism sector, Kerala tourism, legend tourism*

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INTRODUCTION

In India, Tourism is the largest service industry with a contribution of 6.23% to the country's GDP and 8.78% of the total employment of the nation. Indian tourism is ranked 5th in the long term (10year) growth and expected to be the 2nd largest employer in the world by 2019. Indian tourism industry has got a major boost because of the booming IT and outsourcing with increased number of business trips made by foreigners to India, who will often add a weekend break or longer holiday to their trip. They spend more time here in India than almost any other country worldwide.

TOURISM IN KERALA

Kerala is termed as God's own country. The sole geographical features and pleasant climate have made it one of the most sought after tourist destinations in Asia. Magnificent waterfalls, endless shoreline with serene beaches, sprawling plantations and paddy fields, Ayurvedic health resorts, tranquil stretches of emerald backwaters, ever green forests, lush hill stations and exotic wildlife, divine cuisine, literate people, enriching art forms, historic and cultural monuments, magical fairs and festivals are the unique features of the State. Most of the tourism products of the State are based on nature. The diversity of tourism products are capable of satisfying all types of tourists, namely; children, youngsters, couples, aged people, pilgrims, illiterate and educated people.

Foreign and Domestic tourist arrival to Kerala during the year 2017 is 1091870 and 14673520 showing an increase of 5.15% and 11.9% respectively. Total increase of tourist arrival to Kerala during the year 2017 is 10.94%. Taking into considering the figures the total revenue (direct and indirect) from Tourism during 2017 is Rs.33383.68 Crores, showing an increase of 12.56 over previous years figure Rs.29658.56 crores.

EXPANDING TOURISM PORTFOLIO IN KERALA

In order to develop itself as a world class tourist destination, Kerala has successfully adopted the following strategies: a. Strong Brand Positioning b. thinking out of the Box c. Product Differentiation d. Model Public / Private Partnership e. tremendous political Support; and f. Public Acceptance.

TOURISM PRODUCTS OF KERALA

The tourism products are divided into two; primary tourism products and secondary tourism products.

Primary Tourism Products of Kerala

The primary tourism products of the State are

- A. Natural environment product,
- B. Symbiotic environment product,

C. Manmade environment product and

D. Cultural environment product.

A. Natural Environment Products

1. Beach Tourism

Kovalam, Shankhumugham, Poovar, Chowara, Varkala –Papanasham, Kollam Beach, Thirumullavaram, Alappuzha Beach, Thangassery, Fort Kochi Beach, Cherai Beach, Cherai Beach, Vallikunnu Beach, Padinjarekkara Beach, Kozhikode Beach, Beypore Beach, Kappad Beach, Payyoli Beach, Vadakara Sandbanks Beach, Payyambalam Beach, Meenkunnu Beach, Kizhunna Beach, Muzhappilangad Beach, Bekal Fort Beach, Kappil Beach, Kanwatheertha.

2. Hill Stations

Munnar, Mattuppetti, Ponmudi, Agasthyakoodam, Devikulam, Pattumala, Rajamala, Pullumedu, Marayoor, Peermedu, Vagamon, Bhoothathankettu, Kodanad, Nelliampathy, Attappady, Nilambur, Vythiri, Thusharagiri, Lakkidi, Pythal Mala, Kottancherry, Ranipuram.

3. **Waterfalls** -Palaruvi Waterfalls- Athirappalli Waterfalls - Vazhachal Waterfalls- Attukad - Waterfalls of Munnar- Thommankuthu- Thusharagiri – Meenmutty – Chethalayam - Sentinel Rock Waterfall.

4. Rivers of Kerala

- i. East Flowing Rivers - 3 nos.
- ii. West Flowing Rivers –41 nos.

5. Monsoon Tourism

B. Symbiotic environment products

1. **Backwater Tourism** – Veli, Akkulam, Tiruvallm, Thiruvallam, Kappil, Kollam, Sasthamkotta, Alappuzha, Kuttanad, Pathiramanal, Kumarakam, Kochi, Bolgatty Island, Willingdon Island, Kozhikode, Valiyaparamba

2. **Wildlife Sanctuaries** -Neyyar Wildlife Sanctuary, Idukki Wildlife Sanctuary, Shenduruney Wildlife Sanctuary, Peppara Wild Life Sanctuary, Periyar Tiger Reserve, Thekkady, Eravikulam National Park, Silent Valley National Park, Thattekkad Bird Sanctuary, Wayanad Wildlife Sanctuary, Chinnar Wildlife Sanctuary, Aralam Wildlife Sanctuary, Chimmini Wildlife Sanctuary, Peechi-Vazhani Wildlife Sanctuary, Parambikulam Wildlife Sanctuary

3. **Ecotourism** – Thenmala ,Gavi.

4. Ayurvedic Health Tourism.

5. Plantation Tourism / Green Farm Tourism.
6. Tourist Villages, Picnic Centres
 - i. Veli Tourist Village
 - ii. Akkulam Tourist Village
 - iii. Ashramam Tourist Village
 - iv. Aranmula Heritage Village
7. Adventure Tourism
8. Forest Tourism

C. Manmade environment products

1. Food Tourism
2. Amusement Parks – Veegaland- Fantasy Park - Silver Storm, Happy Land, Vismaya.
3. Health Tourism

D. Cultural environment Products

1. Palaces, Museums, Monuments, Architecture, Historical and Cultural Centres.

SreeChithra Art Gallery- Napier Museum - Kuthiramalika (Puthenmalika) Palace Museum - Koyikkal Palace – Padmanabhapuram palace - Indian School of Martial Arts - CVN KalariThiruvananthapuram - Lighthouse, Thangasseri - Krishnapuram Palace - Bolghatty Palace - Hill Palace Museum, Thripunithura - Dutch Palace, Mattancherry - The Synagogue, Fort Kochi - Jew Street, Fort Kochi - Museum of Kerala History, Edappally - Paliam Palace, Chennamangalam - Elephant Training Centre, Kodanad - St. Angelo's Fort - Thalasseri Fort - MalayalaKalagramam - Bekal Fort - Chandragiri Fort - Poonjar Palace- Archaeological Museum- Kerala Kalamandalam- Bepore - Pazhassiraja Museum and Art Gallery - Palakkad Fort - Ambalavayal Heritage Museum- Edakkal Caves- Punnathoorkotta
2. Art Forms of Kerala Ritual Art Forms
3. Fairs and Festivals
Onam Festival - ThrissurPooram - Boat Races
4. Pilgrim Tourism
Sabarimala, Guruvayoor Temple, PadmanabhaSwamy Temple, Beemapalli, Parasurama Temple, Thruvallam, JanardhanaSwamy Temple, AttukalBhagavathy Temple, MalanadaDuryodhana Temple, St. Mary's Orthodox Church, Parabrahma Temple, Ochira, Cherizheekal Temple., Achankovil, AranmulaParthasarathy Temple, SreeVallabha Temple, Thiruvalla, Thekkekudi Cave Temple- Mannadi - Niranam St

Thomas Church- PandalamValiyaKoikkal Temple- AmpalappuzhaSree Krishna Temple - Edathua Church- Parumala- MannarasalaSreeNagaraja Temple - ChettikulangaraBhagavathy Temple - St. Mary's Church, Manarcad - Mahadevar Temple, Ettumanoor - Vavarambalam, Erumeli - Magala Devi Temple - Chottanikkara Temple - Kanjiramattom Mosque - ThrikkakaraVamanamoorthy Temple - CheramanJuma Masjid, Kodungalloor- Vadakkumnathan Temple - Thiruvallathoor Temple- IrinjalakudaKoodalManikyam Temple -Basilica of our Lady of Dolores- St. Mary's Forane Church, Koratty - Kumarapuram Temple - Thirumandhamkunnu Temple- - Jama-Ath Mosque, Ponnani - Navamukunda Temple, Thirunavaya - Vettakkorumakan Temple, Nilambur-Tali Temple- Korome Mosque -- Varakkal Devi Temple - Mishkal Masjid, Kuttichira - Thirunelly Temple -- Parassinikadavu Temple - Raja Rajeswara Temple - Ananthapura Lake Temple- - Madhur Temple - Malik IbnDeenar Mosque

5. Handicrafts.

6. My Village, Tourism Friendly Village-Village Tourism

Secondary tourism Products of Kerala

A. Built environment product

1. Superstructure Environment Products

- a. Accommodation Facilities
- b. Food

2. Infrastructure Environment Products

- a. Roads
- b. Ports and Waterways
- c. Railways
- d. Air Transport
- e. Travel Agents and Tourist Services
- f. Communication Facilities
- g. Drinking Water
- h. Power Supply
- i. Tourist Information Centre
- j. Tourist Safety and Security Services
- k. Healthcare Facilities
- l. Public Toilet, Comfort Station and Bathroom Facilities
- m. Banking facilities

- n. Sewage and drainage facilities
- o. Sign board showing tourist destination
- p. Parking facilities
- q. Recreation facilities

B. Human Environment Product

C. Economic Environment Product

D. Social and Political Environment Product



LEGEND TOURISM INITIATIVE - JATAYU EARTHS CENTER

Jatayu Earths Center is the first joint effort by the Tourism department of Kerala and Mr Rajiv Anchal (a film director, screenwriter, and sculptor who works in Malayalam language cinema, Kerala, India) along with private equity holders to create a destination, which is a unique combination of all aspects of tourism and offers a complete Kerala, God's own Country experience to every tourist. Jatayu Earths Center tourism project is spread over 65 acres of multi terrain landscape at Jatayupara near Chadayamangalam town in Kollam district of Kerala. The giant concrete statue of Jatayu is built on a mighty rock named Jatayupara. The colossal statue is 200 feet long, 150 feet wide and 70 feet making it the largest functional bird sculpture in the world with an entry into the Guinness Book of World Records.

Jatayu Earths Center is a glorious example of sustainable and eco-friendly tourism in India. The hills, valleys, caves and vegetation spread across 65 acres remain almost unaffected even though a crowd-pulling tourist destination is built right there. Moreover Jatayu sculpture stands as a guardian to the hills and rocks by protecting them from mining. Hence the name Jatayu Earths Center is most appropriate for this project. The electricity required for the smooth functioning of the Jatayu Earths Center is domestically harnessed from solar power.

A planned agricultural society is formed to promote organic farming in the adjoining cultivable lands. Special stalls will be set up at the Earths Center for visitors to buy fresh products from those farms. Thus Jatayu Earth's Center is conceptualized and implemented with environmental protection and ecological equilibrium

About Garuda- the Eagle God

Garuda was married to Unnati, and they had two sons – Sampati and Jatayu, both of whom play important roles in the Ramayana. He has many names. He is Rakta-Paksha, Gaganeshwara -

‘Lord of the sky.’ Suvarna kaya- ‘Golden bodied,’ Sweta-Rohita- ‘The White and Red,’ Khageshwara- ‘King of the birds,’ Taraswin, ‘The Swift,’ and Vajrajit.

About Jatayu

In the Indian epic Ramayana, Jatayu is the youngest son of Garuda. His brother, Sampati, a demigod has the form of a Vulture. Sampati was a friend of Dasharatha (Rama's father). When young, Jatayu and his brother Sampati would compete as to who could fly higher. On one such instance, Jatayu flew so high that he was about to get seared by the sun's flames. Sampati saved his brother by spreading his wings and shielding Jatayu from the hot flames. In the process, Sampati got injured and lost his wings. Hence, Sampati lived wingless for the rest of his life.

Legend

In Ramayana, when Jatayu sees Ravana abducting Goddess Sita, he tries to rescue Sita from Ravana. Jatayu bravely fought valiantly with Ravana, but as he was very old, Ravana soon got the better of him. As Rama and Lakshmana chanced upon the dying Jatayu in the search for Sita, he informs them that he had gone towards South. When Jatayu was wounded and lying on the ground, Lord Ram sensed the end, and he then slammed an arrow into the ground to call all seven sacred rivers, called Teertha so that Jatayu gets Moksha.

It is said that the injured Jatayu and his lost wing landed on top of a rock. In time, the rock got the name Jatayupara. This is where the monumental statue of Jatayu is now built.

There is a pond near the rock which is said to be formed by the stroke of Jatayu's beak. It has water throughout the year and never goes dry. There is a mark of footprint said to be that of Lord Rama. A temple dedicated to him can be experienced in an adjacent compound.

Epitome of valor

Jatayu is an embodiment of valor and chivalry. Risking his life, he tried his best to save Sita from her abductor. Hence the Jatayu sculpture uprights as a towering tribute to women's safety and honour. Jatayu also represents a bygone era when humans, animals, birds and other living forms cared for each other and fellow beings and lived peacefully on this Earth.

JATAYU EARTHS CENTER - AN AERIAL VIEW



Figure.1 Jatayu earths center - World's largest bird sculpture

Hill 1

Statue of women safety and honour

- ✚ Giant rock with a height of 1000 feet.
- ✚ World's largest bird sculpture.
- ✚ The Jatayu sculpture has a length of 200 feet, width of 150 feet and a height of 70 feet.
- ✚ 15,000 square feet of utility space inside this functional sculpture.
- ✚ An audio- visual museum is built inside the sculpture which spans over five levels.
- ✚ A multi-dimensional mini theatre is functional inside the wing of sculpture.
- ✚ Cable car facility has been provided to reach the hill top.
- ✚ A Rama Temple and its mythical markings are in a fenced area on the hill top, which is managed by a private trust.
- ✚ A rain water reservoir is made on the hill top with a capacity to hold 1.5 million litres of water.

Hill 2

Jatayu Adventure Center

- ✚ Jatayu Adventure Center incorporates international standards of safety.
- ✚ Number of adventurists in a group can range from 10 to 100.
- ✚ A distinctive feature is the integrated paint ball station which is spread across the large natural terrain.
- ✚ An hour long trekking through the safe private forest.
- ✚ An audio- visual museum is built inside the sculpture which spans over five levels.
- ✚ Ideal for corporate team- building programs with activities such as: Rappelling, Jumpering, Bouldering, Valley Crossing, Chimney Climbing, vertical Ladder, Archery, Zip-line, Commando Net, Rifle Shooting and Log Walking.

Hill 3
Elephant Rock
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✚ 250 metre long Zip-line zone. ✚ Sky Cycling. ✚ Campfire ✚ Moon light dinner for family with live music. ✚ Live kitchen, Live music. ✚ Opportunity to be a part of forestation.

Hill 4
Kitchen Rock
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✚ Traditional Siddha rejuvenation in natural caves with accommodation facilities. ✚ Herbal garden with wide variety of plants. ✚ Ten-day long Siddha rejuvenation package. ✚ Heli-taxi service available. ✚ An audio- visual museum is built inside the sculpture which spans over five levels. ✚ Opportunity to be part of preservation and protection of natural ecosystem.

JATAYU EARTHS CENTER – PACKAGES

Sl. No.	Packages
1	15 adventure activities (10am to 4pm)
2	Trekking and Paintball only (3.00 pm to 6.30pm)
3	15 adventure activities and Trekking only (10 am to 6.30pm)
4	15 adventure activities and Paintball only (10 am to 4.00pm)
5	All activities, Trekking and Paintball (10am to 6.30pm)
6	Full Day activities (10am to 6.30pm)

LOCATION

The destination is right at the epic center of the south Kerala tourist spots and is easily accessible, since it is only 500 meters away from the Main Central (MC) road. Jatayu Earth's Center, Chadayamangalam PO, Kollam District, Kerala, India

Nearest railway station: Kollam, about 38 km

Nearest airport: Trivandrum International Airport, about 51 km

CHADAYAMANGALAM (“TERRAIN OF JATAYU”): LANDMARK OF KOLLAM DISTRICT

Economy of Kollam district is primarily dependant on agriculture. The district has a prominent place in the field of agriculture. About 70 per cent of the work force is engaged in agriculture. The total extent of land under cultivation is 2, 18,267 hectares. The major crops grown here are paddy, tapioca, coconut, rubber, pepper, all of which are cultivated in an area of 1, 73,847 hectares. Coconut gardens extend to about 75,454 hectares. About three hundred and forty three million coconuts are produced every year.

Kollam is quite important for the trade and commerce of the state. It is the centre of the country's cashew trading and processing industry.

Kollam is an important maritime district of the state with a coast line of 37.3 kms. Fishing has a prominent place in the economy of the district. Neendakara and Sakthikulangara villages thrive in fishing. An estimated number of 23,000 persons are engaged in fishing and allied activities.

Kollam district ranks first in livestock wealth in the state. Dairy farming is fairly well developed. Milch cattle are found in quite a sizeable amount here in the district.

But at the same time the tourism sector of the district is not at all in a good position. The tourist arrivals during the year 2017 show the real position of the district in the tourism map of Kerala.

Table 1 Kerala tourism statistics – 2017

District	Foreign	Domestic	Total
ERNAKULAM	453973	3285088	3739061
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM	420719	2505333	2926052
THRISSUR	10775	2642546	2653321
IDUKKI	42285	1090086	1132371
KOZHIKODE	13106	932345	945451
WAYANAD	8995	815624	824619
KANNUR	5123	695655	700778
MALAPPURAM	18451	520832	539283
ALAPPUZHA	75037	433456	508493
KOTTAYAM	32350	468593	500943
PALAKKAD	1711	474180	475891
KOLLAM	6227	381829	388056
KASARAGOD	1115	263459	264574
PATHANAMTHITTA	2003	164494	166497
TOTAL	1091870	14673520	15765390

Source: Kerala tourism statistics – 2017 , Department Of Tourism , Government Of Kerala

On the basis of Kerala tourism statistics – 2017, Kollam district ranked 12th position in the number of tourist arrivals both domestic and foreign. It is only 2.46 % of the total tourist arrival of the state.

In this aspect there is a great opportunity for Jatayu Earths Center to contribute more in the development of the district as well as the State as a whole. As a first ever build-operate-transfer (BOT) model private-public partnership in the tourism industry in Kerala, Jatayu Earths Center have become a vital destination in the tourism map of Kerala and it also helps to accelerate the tourist arrival rate in the district.

CONCLUSION

In Kerala, the total revenue generated from Tourism (direct and indirect) in 2008 was Rs. 13130.00 crores but in 2017, the figure shows an increase of 33383.68 crores. A ten year period created a drastic development in the sector. A lot of new initiatives are launched and implemented successfully during this ten year period. Similarly a lot of projects are under process aiming future opportunities in the economy. Both Government and private organisations are also taking more concentration in the area of Tourism. Kannur International Airport is one among them. This project is the millstone of the future development of the Malabar region (Northern Kerala). Similarly, Jatayu Earths Center is a promising project for the economic development of the District and its growth positively influence the other destinations of the Kollam district. It is a model of Legend Tourism for all the states' in the country.

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