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TOURISM PROMOTION OF BACKWATERS AT POOVAR

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ABSTRACT

The This research paper seeks to study the status of tourism promotion of Poovar backwaters in the district of Trivandrum in Kerala State. Domestic as well as foreign tourist visits this place throughout the year. The paper discusses the need for further tourism promotion such as medical facilities, and unavailability of qualified tourist guides. The importance of this backwater and its

further development and its economic importance to the State of Kerala has been discussed.

KEY WORDS: Tourism promotion, qualified tourist guides and medical facilities.

INTRODUCTION :

Poovar is a small coastal village located in the Trivandrum district of Kerala State. Etymologically, the name Poovar, is a conjunction of the Malayalam words 'Poo' means flower 'var' means river. Historically, Poovar was a trading center of timber, sandalwood, ivory and spices. In around 1,000 BCE, it is believed that ships owned by King Solomon of Israel landed in Ophir, which is identified as Poovar. The origin of the name "Poovar" has a story related to the Travancore King Marthanda Varma.



The ancient name of this place was Pokkumoosapuram. During the internal riots in the erstwhile Travancore State the King escaped from the clutches of Ettuveetil Pillamar (Lords of the Eight Houses), and reached Poovar. It was a spring season and the trees on either side of the Neyyar were full of flowers. These flowers fell into the river, making it more attractive. On seeing this pleasant scenery, Marthanda Varma commented it as poo-var, a conjunction of the Malayalam words for "flower" and "river". Among the fascinations the King experienced at Povar during his shelter was the sight of red flowers, chipped out from the Kovala trees standing along the Neyyar river banks, that floats in the river as a red carpet on the water. Then the stream was named as Poovar (meaning a stream of flowers). The

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beauty and greenery of the picturesque and unparalleled silence of Poovar captured the minds of Marthanda Varma. It can be accessed via Kanyakumari to Trivandrum route deviated from the nearby Parasala town. This Scenic spot (Pl.1) is situated at the southern tip of Trivandrum adjacent to Pozhiyoor. This tourist spot has a beautiful beach, Neyyar backwaters, exotic resorts, and estuaries, which attracts domestic and foreign tourists in large numbers.



Pl. 1 Scenic beauty of Poovar backwaters (Source info: Original)

Exotic Resorts

There are a large number of exotic resorts and local tour operators who offers various tour packages based on the necessity of tourist. Almost all the resorts in Poovar offer backwater cruises through traditional Kerala country boats such as vallam, houseboats and motor boats. All these types of boats can carry, maximum of ten tourists at once.

Major attractions

The major attractions at Poovar are the backwaters, mangroves, golden sand beach, and exotic world class resorts such as Club Mahindra, Isola De Coco, Estuary Island, Poovar island resorts, floating restaurants, house boats wide variety of birds and the biodiversity of the place. Normally, tourists indulge in boating, elephant rides, exploring the mangroves and the estuary bird watching and photography.



Pl. 2 Cruising through narrow canals (Source info: Original)

Poovar offers a real fun thrilled experience of visiting tourist while cruising through the nearest near river. Moreover, diversions through the narrow canals (Pl. 2) that seemed totally unexplored to the outside world need to be highlighted to the tourists.

Cruising through the backwaters the major attractions include floating cottages, golden sea beach, mangroves (Pl. 3) and the seaside statue of a holy cross (Pl. 4) located to the west side where a

strip of land separated the backwaters from the Arabian sea.



Pl. 3 Mangroves at Poovar (Source info: Original)

Conservation & Preservation

The beach adjoining the backwaters is neat and tidy as the government of Kerala through its conservation & Preservation act of 2005 kept vital tourism zones under strict environmental conditions.



Pl. 4 Statue of Holy Cross in backwaters (Source info: Original)

Honeymoon cruise

Especially, honeymoon cruises is opted by the foreign tourist. They used to stay at Poovar for two days and one night. Honeymoon cruises (Pl. 5) were decorated with special flowers and complimentary snacks and drinks.



Pl. 5 House boat

In this cruise the major attractions include fishing, estuaries, mangroves and fun at the golden sandy beach. Apart from the honeymoon cruise, sunrise cruise, sunset cruise too available for domestic

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as well as foreign tourists.

Economic importance

The tourist has to pay Rs. 1,500 to 2,500 for a two hour, boat ride that includes 15-20 minutes of stoppage and fun at the golden sand beach located at the other end of the backwaters. As the golden sea beach is nearer to the backwaters a list of adventure water sports can be started by the tourism development corporation of Kerala. This consists of water-skiing, wind surfing, yachting, parasailing, canoe polo, Waboba and Jetski in order to further promote tourism at Poovar. This will fetch additional revenues for the State of Kerala. Even though Poovar is a fishing hamlet a few selected localities can be improved for water sports which will further enhance the tourism promotion of this place. Moreover, a new direction name board has to be set up at the nearby Parasala town and it should be visible to the passing tourists from Kanyakumari to Trivandrum route. Apart from this lack of medical facilities and unqualified local guides is yet another problem for the visiting tourists.

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