

**CONFERENCE PROCEEDINGS**  
**1<sup>ST</sup> ASIAN TOURISM RESEARCH CONFERENCE**

**INTERPRETING THE LANDSCAPE OF ASIAN TOURISM**

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**1-3 DECEMBER 2020**

EDITORS

**Robinet Jacob  
Toney K. Thomas  
Sindhu R. Babu  
Anita T. A.**

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**School of Tourism Studies,  
Mahatma Gandhi University, Kottayam, Kerala**

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# ASIAN TOURISM RESEARCH

1<sup>ST</sup> ASIAN TOURISM RESEARCH CONFERENCE

Interpreting the Landscape of Asian Tourism

1<sup>st</sup> – 3<sup>rd</sup> December 2020

EDITORS

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SCHOOL OF TOURISM STUDIES, MAHATMA GANDHI UNIVERSITY, KOTTAYAM, KERALA

## WELCOME NOTE

On behalf of Asian tourism research, a warm welcome to the “1<sup>st</sup> Asian Tourism Research conference themed ‘Interpreting the landscape of Asian tourism’.

The recent transformation of tourism indicates that tourism is one of the fastest changing industries in the World. One of the most important transformation of tourism expected is, the significant growth and contribution of Asian tourism, especially the emerging economies of Asia. This growing trend has been fuelled by the transformation of the tourism industry to include the middle-class majority in Asia and Global South. The aspect of changes and transformation is a key research area in tourism. Therefore, the 1st Asian Tourism research conference jointly organized by Mahatma Gandhi University, India; Far Eastern University, Manila, Philippines, Sunway University, Malaysia; 30 Minutes talk and India City Walks focuses on key transformative aspects of Asian tourism. To accomplish this, interdisciplinary inquiries into the details of the present Asian tourism scenario are a must. Every stakeholder including tourism and hospitality practitioners, educators and scholars plays an important role in this transition.

The 1<sup>st</sup> Asian Tourism Research Conference, entitled ‘Interpreting the landscape of Asian Tourism’ as an international conference focuses on a broad range of topics related to tourism. Due to the Global pandemic, the conference is organised in virtual platform, yet expecting a great outcome through the engagement of academics, researchers, industry stakeholders and practitioners to discuss and learn the different dimensions of tourism development in Asia.

### CONFERENCE COMMITTEE

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## **TOUR 0134**

### **A CASE STUDY OF POTENTIAL OF FOLKLORE TOURISM IN KERALA**

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#### **Abstract**

Kerala is not only diverse in its geography and climate conditions, but also in the religious faith. The state has people belonging to different communities and religions living in harmony. The different religions of Kerala have influenced the culture of the state. The Kerala folklore comprises the entire culture of the state. It is the body of expressive culture including music, dance, legends, oral history, proverbs, jokes, beliefs, customs, rituals and so forth within a particular population comprising the traditions of the culture, sub culture or group. Kerala folk are a continuation of Sangam tradition. Here natives and migrated groups are living together. The land Kerala contains such a diversity of ethnolinguistic and religious groups that it is very difficult to generalize its folklore. Each of it has its own sub culture, customs, and traditions.

**Key words:** folklore, Sangam tradition, diversity, ethnolinguistic, migrated.

#### **INTRODUCTION**

Folklore is included in Peter's inventory of tourist attractions. In the studies about the elements of tourism folklore is included as an element of tourism. Folklore tourism is comparatively a new term in this field. It is quite different from other forms of tourism. The folklore studies related with tourism is very few. In 1989, Journal of American Folklore published an article by Regina Bendix named Tourism and Culture Displays-Inventing traditions for whom? In this article she pointed the impact of tourism on 'authentic' folklore. In 1990, Indiana University press published the English translation of the book named 'folk Culture: in a world of technology' by Hermann Bausinger. In this book, he explains how tourism made changes in the folklore. According to him, traditions of refugees at first seem to be a special case. These traditions are radically torn from their original contexts and are transplanted in to a new environment. However, our description has shown that the form and functions, which consequently develop, do not differ from those that can be observed among the local population.

"According to Atul Chandra, the folklore tourism presents folk life in a natural setting" A folk tourist is not so much childish, he visits an area for not simply to see a sanctuary or for bird watching etc...

They loved peace: they lived for peace and they moved for peace. The folk lore tourism not only provide venue for entertainment but also provide an undefined original spirit of tourism.



## **OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

The aim of the study is to understand the possibilities of the folklore tourism in a practical manner. Folklore tourism aspects the idea of sustainable development. Sustainable development meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. Sustainable development must lead to an improvement in mankind in living conditions without exerting excessive burdens on the eco systems. According to the folklore perspective tourism must, in the long term, be made both ecologically and economically viable as well as ethically and socially acceptable.

## **METHDOLOGY**

This is a study of exploratory nature. Data of this study is collected from the offices of the various District Tourism Promotion Councils in Kerala, art and craft villages, venues of art festivals, website of Kerala Tourism, home stays, different tourist centers and a couple of eminent folk artists have been interviewed for this study.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

Folklore tourism studies initially concentrated on popular antiquities. It can be noticed that such extensiveness was lost at a later stage. By the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century there were many changes in the extend of the folklore. Everything that existed in the society at a particular point of time as a part of traditions was considered to be folklore. Now the study of the folklore concentrates on the goodness of the folk tourism. The study receives the ideas of the tourism management and related studies. The term folklore tourism is comparatively new. The geographical area of the study is the various districts of Kerala. The state is blessed with folk art diversity that provides immense scope for folklore tourism. Moderate climate and rich folk-art culture are positive factors to promote folk lore tourism in the state. On tourism publications are many, whereas in the subject folklore tourism, so far, no serious studies or publications have not come out.

## **FOLKLORE TOURISM: DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY**

"Folklore tourism is a purposeful travel to primary context of folklore performances to see and understand a particular folk, taking care not to interrupt the folk's daily life". Here the tourists are hosted as paying guests with the local people. The house owner or his close relative's works as tourist guides. They lead the tourists into the nearest folklore tourism centers where rituals and customs of different folk are performed and show them, temple festivals, folklore forms, traditional dances, traditional dramas, traditional ceremonies, martial arts forms, folk games, and traditional boat races are in its original contexts. Besides this for them a folklore tourist guide provide opportunity to hearing the folk music, dialects etc. and lead them to houses where handicrafts are made, traditional farms and show them various folk medicinal practices in the martial art training centers etc.

Folklore tourism takes into account the interconnected environmental, socio cultural and economic aspects of tourism, creating better places for people to live in, and better places to visit. Folklore tourism aims to provide the required support for the promotion of Ecotourism, Responsible Tourism and Sustainable Tourism Practices. Folklore tourism aims to achieve environmentally responsible travel to natural areas,

to enjoy and appreciate nature, promote conservation and provide for beneficially active socio-economic involvement of local people. Folklore tourism policy includes: - Low Impact Visitor Behaviour, Appreciation of local cultures, Protection of bio diversity, support for local conservation efforts, Sustainable benefits to local communities, Local participation in decision making, Educational benefits for traveller and local communities. Responsible tourism is treating others the way they wish to be treated. All tourism related activities potentially have an Environmental, Social and Economic impact on the destination involved

### **ASSUMPTIONS OF FOLK TOURISM**

- 1 Tourist wish to visiting different places with the curiosity to know that land and its culture.
- 2 Human society is a combination of different heterogeneous groups.
- 3 Each folk is unique in its character and it attracts others.

### **IMPLIMENTATION OF FOLK TOURISM**

For implementing folklore tourism, the following steps are to be considered

- 1 To find out houses those are willing to provide home stay to thetourists.
- 2 The house must be comfortable tostay.
- 3 No special arrangement is needed for tourists in the selectedhouses.
- 4 To prepare and serve native food in the house for thetourists.
- 5 The home stay providing must be near to the destinations: if possible, it should be a walkable distance from thedestinations.
- 6 The house members can work as tourist guide.

### **FOLKLORE TOURISM PRODUCTS**

#### **1 ATTRACTION**

Ben Amos "folklore is an artistic communication in small groups". Each part of the folk performances is very much attractive. The folk genres like folk art forms, folk ceremonies, folk festivals, folk music, folk dance, native food items, folk soft drinks, folk medicines, folk games, customs, and rituals etc. are the folklore tourism attractions. It varies in each place and attracts the tourists to see and get experience it. It provides both entertainment and knowledge to the tourists.

#### **2 ACCOMODATION**

The accommodations provided to the tourists are considered to the home away from home. The services provided to the guest are purely natural and it is very close to the destinations of folk tourism. The stay must provide a first-hand experience to the tourist and above all these it provides more opportunities to interact with the local people.

#### **3 TRANSPORTATION**

While considering transportation in folklore tourism the priority is given to the interest of the tourist. In folklore tourism there is no long journeys between

destinations and provides many chances to walking and can use bullock carts, horse ridden carriages. Bicycle etc.

#### 4 RECREATION

Here the tourist is getting opportunity to entertain with natives. It provides unique experience to the tourist he / she has never experienced in his life.

#### 5 RESTAURANTS

In all major folklore tourist destinations folk food stall should be introduced, the foods served in their must not use artificial ingredients for taste.

#### 6 SHOPPING

In all folklore tourist destination handicraft selling stalls must be operated, Different souvenirs are sold here. Often, the tourist get chance to buy souvenirs from the hands of the handicraft makers.

### **FOLKLORE TOURISM: EXPECTATIONS ABOUT TOURISTS**

Folklore tourism expects five types of tourist's likewise hard-core folklore tourists, dedicated folklore tourists, main stream folklore tourists, casual folklore tourists and pilgrim folklore tourists.

#### **HARD CORE FOLKLORE TOURISTS**

The aim of these types of tourists is to study folklore and done researches among the folk; they are academicians. They have the knowledge about the folklore and the relevance of the contexts. The folklorists and folklore activists come under this category.

#### **DEDICATED FOLKLORE TOURISTS**

They are not academicians but they are so interested to know the cultural history of the folk. They are so dedicated and also behave politeness to the folk.

#### **MAIN STREAM FOLKLORE TOURISTS**

They are the tourists who wish to see the rare folklore performances of various folks.

#### **CASUAL FOLKLORE TOURISTS**

They are not real folklore tourists but they are so much interested to witness folklore. During their journey they casually reach before the folk performances. Among them have different caste and religious groups. They have different expressions to it.

#### **PLIGRIM FOLKLORE TOURISTS**

Actually, they are pilgrims. While their journey between the worship places they see folk performances in the worship places. In that time, they express respect to the performers and the performances.

### **FOLKLORE TOURISM PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT AND ENHANCEMENT**

- 1 Determine significance and distinctiveness (how unique)
- 2 Emphasize quality of the product (real and perceived; understandable and enjoyable)
- 3 Arrange physical clustering and activities.
- 4 Develop small and medium sized handicrafts businesses that focus on locally themed and made items.
- 5 Make all destinations possible for all people including physically handicapped; new lifts and entrances; discounts to children and senior citizens and disabled persons.
- 6 Arrange multi-lingual signage and programs
- 7 Tailor opening hours of sites to meet the needs of tourists

### **FOLKLORE TOURISM: SUPPORT SERVICES AND QUALITY**

- 1 Enhance mediating service such as tourist offices, tour operators, and internet services.
- 2 Arrange inter city transportation services direct airline to key cities
- 3 Arrange intra-city transportation- taxi, bus, rail and ferry services.
- 4 Support folk food serving restaurants, hotels, souvenirs, shopping.
- 5 Tailor opening hours of support services (including tourist offices) to meet the needs of tourists.

### **MARKETING**

- 1 Promote the folk arts, festivals and events.
- 2 Package arrangements with other cultural and non-cultural activities.
- 3 Work with pvt. Tour companies to establish guided tours.
- 4 Develop a profitable and competitive pricing policy
- 5 Enhance electronic media and local tourism websites with photos; folk festival websites tour operator's websites.
- 6 Enhance print media souvenirs and brochures on folk arts, including each destination and folk art; tourism materials for tour operators, investors, tourist offices abroad and tour groups.
- 7 Produce videodocumentary.
- 8 Support folk programs abroad by citizens or former citizens, folklore activists sponsoring folk festivals.
- 9 Target professional associations and meetings to add cultural dimension to these events.
- 10 Market internationally.
- 11 Provide more information in foreign languages.

### **PLANNING, MANAGEMENT AND ASSESSMENT/EVALUATION**

- 1 Designate an individual and an organization to have main responsibility for promoting folk lore tourism.
- 2 Identify key organizations and individuals in the folk.
- 3 Assess all resources (sites, folk festivals and supporting services)
- 4 Conduct market research.
- 5 Develop a tourism master plan.
- 6 Establish tourism guidelines.
- 7 Coordinate and cooperate with others to create strategic partnerships with govts, non- commercial organizations, and reputed Pvt. Firms.
- 8 Conduct impact assessments, monitoring tourism impact surveys to assure product quality.
- 9 Emphasize management commitment and capability.
- 10 Address seasonality challenges unlike sand surf tourism, folklore tourism has the potential of providing year-round attractions that are not weather dependent.
- 11 Develop and promote sister city concepts.
- 12 Advance plan for all special events in order to tourist organizations to take advantage.

### **POSSIBILITIES OF FOLKLORE TOURISM**

#### **UNIQUENESS OF KERALA CUSTOMS AND RITUALS**

Customs are vital part of human nature. The actions of the primitive communities were caused to the formation of these customs. Local customs, village customs, temple customs and traditional family customs and comity are different types of customs. Often in Kerala one custom in village can't be seen another village. This made custom more unique. The uniqueness of customs generates possibilities of tourism.

#### **INFLUENCE OF RELIGIONS**

##### **HINDUISM**

The third largest religion in the world, it is one of the main religions in Kerala. Nearly half of the population of Kerala comprises of Hindus. The state has a long list of ancient and sacred temples dedicated to different Hindu Gods and Goddesses.

##### **ISLAM**

It is believed that of Islam set its foot in India through Kerala. The Arabs of the Middle East came here for trade and settled here at the coastal areas. Kerala has the oldest mosque in the country. Majority of the Muslim population lives in the coastal areas of central and southern Kerala, especially in Malappuram district.

##### **CHRISTIANITY**

It is believed by the Syrian Christians that St. Thomas visited Kerala in 52 AD and

established seven churches in the region. In 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> centuries, a large number of Jewish Christians from Middle East came to the state. Portuguese who arrived in 15<sup>th</sup> century introduced Latin rites. Few centuries' later missionary movement during British rule brought Protestantism. At present there are five different branches of Christianity in Kerala.

### **BUDDHISM**

Buddhism influenced in Kerala during the period of 650-850 AD. There are various ancient relics in the state showing the importance of Buddhism in Kerala. However, after 8<sup>th</sup> century the religion started fading and completely disappeared by 11<sup>th</sup> century. There is significant impact of Buddhism in temples of where we can see the influences of Buddhist art and literature.

### **JAINISM**

There is an ancient temple known as Jainmedu in Vadakkanthara village, near Palakkad. At present Jainism is restricted to only a small population of Kerala, which mainly consist of Marvati community settled in various part of the state.

### **JEWISM**

According to Jews of Kochi, following the destruction of second temple of Jerusalem, a considerable number of Jews relocated to Kerala. At present there are only few numbers of families in remains Kerala.

### **CHALLENGES OF FOLKLORE TOURISM SEASONALITY OF FOLKARTS**

In most of the cases folklore tourism destinations have seasonality. Failure of one season leads to extreme difficulties mainly for those who belong to the informal sector or providing subsidiary services.

#### **Bureaucracy**

Another one treat is the attitude of bureaucrats and politicians towards tourism. Most of them don't realise that tourism is a sophisticated area and not everyone can plan or manage the overall operations. It is very important to tourism that competent officials who have sound knowledge of tourism industry and impacts handle the issue rather than novices in the area.

### **THE LACK OF AWARENESS**

Another problem is the lack of awareness about folklore and folklore tourism. By awareness we just do not mean as to knowing what is folklore? And what is tourism? Awareness also includes knowledge about the impact of tourism on day to day life of the folk; folk attitudes towards tourism; benefits or loss etc...

### **IGNORING DOMESTIC TOURISTS**

The proportion of the movement of domestic tourists is much higher when compared to foreign tourists. However, the reason of foreign exchange earnings, the emphasis remains on providing facilities for the foreign tourists while domestic tourists are ignored. In folk tourism importance is given to domestic tourism.

## **AUTHENTIC FOLK-ART VENUES**

Folklore tourism is a competitive venture. Tourists have many options and can be selective. A primary draw is the substantive nature of the destination it links with myths, local legends, ritualistic importance and intrinsic nature of folk and their cultures. So, a need to tell a myth to capture the audience and to leave them with a sense of enjoyment, appreciation and understanding. The destinations need to be developed or preserved.

Tourism professionals are needed to be trained in these areas. Transparent visitor's bureau with information on hotels, restaurants and transportation services as well as key attractions for individuals and families. Tourists need to be able to easily discover all the needed information for a trip to be knowledgeable and enjoyable. This aims websites in multiple languages and information offices ideally located at entry points nearby the destinations. The staffs appointed there must be knowledgeable in folklore tourism and well trained in customer service. They need to have information about transportation, accommodation, ethnic/ folk food, shopping and health care as well as the substantive and intrinsic nature of folk-art destinations and performances.

## **CONCLUSION**

The folklore tourism has theoretical rationality. As Dan Ben Amos defined, folklore is an artistic communication in a small group. The inherent nature of folklore is super organic and organic. Folklore forms like mentifacts and artefacts are super organic in the sense that once created in their indigenous environment and cultural contexts are not required for their continuous existence. Background information may be essential for the analytical interpretation of the materials, but none of it is crucial for its existence. He distinguishes folklore forms are other forms of communication with an artistic action involves creativity and aesthetic response which cover in the art forms themselves. In that sense it is a social interaction via the art media and differs from other modes of speaking and gesturing Folklore tourism is the evocation of the past and inherently about visions of the present, and a key justification for the preservation of both material cultures and traditional practices, in what they can tell to the communities or tourists about themselves and others. It is something a paradox of modernity that at the same time relentlessly seeks modern people, also hankers after something older, more authentic or traditional.

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**TOUR 0137****SAFEGUARDING CULTURAL HERITAGE THROUGH FESTIVAL PARADES –  
THE INTERSTATE DIVINE PROCESSION OF NAVARATHRI IDOLS IN  
SOUTH INDIA AND ITS UNIQUE EPITOME OF LEGACY ASSOCIATED WITH  
CULTURAL TRANSFUSION AND EXCHANGE****Dr. KL Ajay**

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**Abstract**

Travancore was the southernmost princely state of India. After independence, Travancore was divided and became parts of two states. Navarathri, celebrated in the months of September or October, is an annual festival that plays an important role in keeping the two linguistic lands together. The associated Navaratri idol procession brings three deities from Kanyakumari district of Tamil Nadu state to Thiruvananthapuram, the state capital of Kerala. Two centuries have passed since the annual journey began, but it is still going on in the traditional way. The associated ceremonies and art performances play an important role in preserving the cultural identity of the region. The places through which the journey passes are also places of historical significance. The journey and its subsequent rituals in two states plays a major role in the continuance of an age old cultural and heritage value, which entices many people and researchers to apprehend this custom at its pristine dimensions, both heritage and culture oriented. The objective of this paper is to analyze this historic journey and its role in safeguarding cultural heritage of the region.

**Key Words:** *Navarathri, Cultural heritage, ritualistic ceremonies***Introduction**

Festivals, art forms and processions are among the most visible and exuberant celebration of culture. They exist not only as a manifestation of but also as propagations of the culture of a region or community. Procession of idols is closely associated with cultural celebrations in Indian sub-continent. It creates a simulacrum of divinity along with extolling culture. The procession of Navarathri idols in South India is a unique spectacle of such a simulacrum blended with literal journey of the idols. It forges a divine union of the idols along with harmonizing the cultures of Southern Kerala and Tamil Nadu that were erstwhile parts of the princely state of Travancore. The statues of the gods are manifestations of the myriad religiosity of the regions that they hail from and the journey through the heartlands of the two states intertwines the culture of these places. Though the idols create only a simulacrum of divinity, through the journey and through the exuberance of cultural celebration, it creates a unique epitome of legacy associated with cultural transfusion and exchange. Authors, through this paper are trying to highlight the cultural significance of an age old custom of Navarathri procession of idols and associated destinations.

**The Journey of the Idols**

Padmanabhapuram, now in the state of Tamilnadu was the capital of the then Travancore dynasty. The age old tradition of bringing Navarathri idols has around 200 years of legacy. Goddess Saraswathy is considered as the mother of knowledge by

the Travancore Kings, so is it for the people of Kerala.

The traditional journey of Saraswathy along with two other deities (Murugha and Munnootti Nanga) has not yet changed its path or procedure even after the sovereignty of Kings has been replaced with democracy. The festival of Navarathri and its associated parade of the deities is truly a festival of cultural heritage rather than a ritualistic existence. The two bordering states of the country, Kerala and Tamilnadu, jointly celebrate it without any geographical differences or political disparities. The three deities have got their Puranic/colloquial names as *ThevarakettuSaraswathy of Padmanabhapuram Palace*, *Kumara Swami of Vellimala*, *Munnootti Nanga of Suchindram*. Nanga is often hailed as the official deity of Travancore family. Kumaraswamy or Murugan is the God of weaponry and Saraswathy, as mentioned earlier is the mother of letters and knowledge.

The Golden era of Maharaja (King) of Travancore, SwathyThirunnaI witnessed the institutionalization of Navarathri musical festival. Many veteran singers and musicians all over the country will perform concerts at Navarathri Mandapam near the majestic Padmanabhaswamy temple in Thiruvananthapuram on the occasion of this festival. It is for their convenience that the idols from different places are assembled here.

### **Traditional Practices in-between the Journey**

The deities are carried in three separate carriages (*Pallack*). Each of them are carried by four to seven people who are specially trained. The journey will extend for three days with two halts in two states (one each). The first halt of the parade is at Siva temple at Kuzhithura (Tamilnadu). The second halt will be at Sreekrishna Swamy temple at Neyyattinkara (Kerala). The government authorities will give an official welcome at the border. The presence of silver horse statue, which carries the deity; Murugan is a special attraction to the parade. The statue was donated to the temple by the famous *Diwan* of Travancore, *VeluthampiDhalava*. The journey through the hinterlands of three holy rivers, *The Thamrabharani* of Tamilnadu, *Neyyar* and *Karamanayar* of Kerala is another specialty of the parade. The sacred bath (*Aarattu*) will be offered to Saraswathy in each of these rivers.

### **The Legacy of Divine Parade**

The traditional parade of the deities was started in 1839. At first stage of the journey, *Nanga* from *Suchindram* temple receives ritual offerings and will start the parade to Padmanabhapuram. The police department will give guard of honor during this time. Passing through the main highway of *Nagarcoil*, *Nanga* will reach at *PadmanabhapuramNeelakantaswamy* temple in evening and rest there. The next day early morning, the second idol of *Kumaraswamy* will be carried to this temple. The two deities now form a single procession and proceed to join *Saraswathy* at *Thekketheruvu*, a street near the shrine of the goddess. There is a ceremony of transferring the sword of the palace. This is done by the representatives of the temple. With this ceremony the three deities will begin their journey from palace premises. People will offer flowers and other offerings to them, along with the formal guard of honor from police. The parade will take three days and two nights to reach Trivandrum. The path of the parade has much cultural significance. The following are the simplified routes and places that the parade covers

The *Thakkala- Mettukkada road* – Halting at *Keraladithyapuram – Thiruvithamcode* (an old heritage village in Kanyakumari district) – *Azhakiyamandamapam* (Entering the national highway) – *Marthandam* (the business center) – *Crossing the river Thamrabharani* – halt at *Kuzhithura* (Night stay at Mahadeva temple).

During the second day the parade will be welcomed by Kerala Government authorities as the procession crosses the border and enters the state of Kerala. Through National Highway the parade will reach *Sri Krishnaswamy temple* at *Neyyattinkara*, after crossing the second river *Neyyar*, where the idols stay at night. The idols, on the third day of their journey will pass through *Balaramapuram*, the handloom center of the capital. Crossing the third river *Karamayaar*, the procession will halt at *Sathyavageeswara Temple*. A traditional practice of presenting golden gooseberry has prevailed during the reign of kings to the deities as a token of honor. Goddess Saraswathy will be carried in an Elephant adorned with golden caparison, followed by Murugan in silver horse and then Nanga in pally. The parade will be welcomed at the eastern gate of *Padmnabhaswamy temple*.

### **The location of the deities**

When the parade enters the capital city of Trivandrum, the idols will be placed at three different locations. They will remain there for the rest nine days (Navarathri) and offering will be given to them in traditional manner. Goddess Saraswathy will be positioned at *Navarathri Mandapam* on the banks of *Padmatheertha* pond, near *Sreepadmanabha Swamy temple*. *Kumaraswamy* will be placed at *Devi temple* of *Aryasala*. Goddess *Munnootti Nanga* will be dwelling at another *Devi temple* at *Chenthitta*. Devotees visit these idols during the Navarathri days. They are all located at walkable distance. After the completion of Navarathri with last three days special *poojas (Durgashtami, Mahanavami and Vijayadashami)*, the idols will return after one-day rest (Nallirippu) in the same path to their respective places in Tamilnadu.

### **The Simulacra of Divinity and the Perpetuation of a Tradition**

The rituals and procedures of Navarathri idol parade is deep rooted as a cultural emotion in the minds of people. This is more than a belief or it can be comprehended as an accustomed practice. It is an inimitable and distinctive religious/cultural singularity, which is very rare to pin point in any other countries. Here history, bequest, cultural heritage, rituals, traditions, democracy, judiciary and even climate merge together to make the way for an age old custom to be performed as it is, from its beginning even though it underwent a few paradigm shifts in the due course of time.

The parade more or less harmonizes the culture of Kerala and Tamilnadu. The sustenance of a heritage or cultural manifestation not only depends upon how positively, it is apprehended by a civilization, but also, how systematically it gets transferred to the generations. The people since its commencement conserved the parade's wholesomeness and holistic nature and more prominently, disseminated its cumulative knowledge to generations. Concurrently, when emphasizing the part of religious harmony, people despite of their diversity in religious practices and even in religious choices, support this parade of deities wholehearted. The procession therefore created a simulacrum of cultural harmony in the backdrop of divinity.

The destinations through which the parade moves and the halts will factually transform to a heritage environ, hoarding the parade's mysticism and rituality, which is truly an

exuberance of cultural celebration. Exchange of culture should actually start from the minds of individuals. Then only it would get perpetuated and continued along with knowledge. Even though occurring in specific geographical locations, the parade of Navarathri idols and its associated rituals is altogether creating a path of cultural exchange and knowledge propagation.

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