

Kalamandalam as a Cultural Destination: A Study of the Impact of Art Tourism on the Preservation & Promotion of Traditional Art Forms

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Abstract

Kerala Kalamandalam, a renowned institution in Kerala, India, is a treasure house of traditional art forms. As a cultural destination, Kalamandalam attracts art enthusiasts and tourists from around the world. The institution is dedicated to preserving and promoting traditional art forms such as Kathakali, Koodiyattam, and Thullal. With the growing interest in art tourism, Kalamandalam has become a significant cultural hub. This study aims to examine the impact of art tourism on the preservation and promotion of traditional art forms at Kerala Kalamandalam. It will examine how tourism has influenced the institution's efforts to conserve and showcase traditional art forms, and what implications this has for the future of these art forms. The study collect data from a sample of 130 respondents, comprising Teaching & non-teaching staff, artists/performers from Kerala Kalamandalam, tourists who have experienced the traditional art forms at the institution and local people including students who has visited the institution. Purposive sampling is used for data collection, where respondents will be selected based on their experience, expertise, and relevance to the study. The findings of this study will contribute to a deeper understanding of the effects of art tourism on cultural heritage and provide insights for policymakers, cultural institutions, and tourism stakeholders to develop strategies for sustainable cultural tourism practices.

Keywords: *Art Tourism; Traditional Artform; Preservation; Promotion.*

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I. Introduction

Kerala Kalamandalam, one of India's most prestigious institutions for traditional performing arts, has been a cornerstone of Kerala's cultural heritage since its establishment in 1930. Founded by the eminent poet Sri Vallathol Narayana Menon, the institution was created with the aim of preserving, promoting and revitalizing Kerala's traditional art forms. Since, its inception, Kalamandalam has been committed to safeguarding and transmitting classical dance and theatre traditions such as Kathakali, Mohiniyattam and Koodiyattam. Through its systematic approach to arts education and training, the institution has played a significant role in making traditional arts accessible to a wider audience and ensuring their continuity across generations. Today as a deemed university fully funded by Government of Kerala, Kalamandalam offers academic programs ranging from high school level to doctoral levels through its 14 departments, while continuing to serve as a leading destination for artistic excellence and cultural preservation.

Situated on the scenic banks of the Nila River at Vallathol Nagar, Kerala Kalamandalam has also emerged as a prominent cultural tourism destination. The institution offers visitors an immersive cultural experience through its unique "A Day with the Masters" guided tour programme, developed in collaboration with Kerala Tourism. This initiative provides tourists, researchers and art enthusiasts with an opportunity to witness Kerala's living artistic tradition in their authentic environment. Visitors can observe and engage with the practice and performance of diverse art forms, including Kathakali, Mohiniyattam, Koodiyattam, Thullal, Carnatic music and traditional percussion arts. The programme also enables interaction with artists, faculty members and students, allowing visitors to gain first-hand insights into the rigorous training process and cultural significance of these art forms.

As a cultural destination, Kerala Kalamandalam offers experiences that extend beyond artistic performances. One of its most notable attractions is the Kuttambalam, a traditional temple-theatre structure designed according to the principles of the Natyasastra. The architectural grandeur of the Kuttambalam is enhanced by its granite pillars carved with the 108 classical dance postures, or karanas, making it an important

cultural and architectural landmark. Visitors can also observe classroom sessions and rehearsals, providing a unique opportunity to understand the processes through which intangible cultural heritage is preserved and transmitted. The vibrant artistic atmosphere of the campus, combined with its educational and cultural significance, makes Kalamandalam an important destination for those seeking meaningful cultural experiences.

The visitor experience is further enriched by attractions such as the Art Gallery and the Vallathol Museum. The Art Gallery houses sculptures, exhibits, and visual displays representing Kerala's major performing arts traditions, offering valuable insights into the region's artistic heritage. The Vallathol Museum preserves the legacy of Vallathol Narayana Menon through an extensive collection of manuscripts, personal belongings, photographs, costumes, and archival materials that document the history and development of the institution. Together, these cultural assets transform Kerala Kalamandalam into a living centre of heritage where visitors can experience the interconnected dimensions of art, history, architecture, education, and cultural tradition. As a result, the institution serves not only as a premier centre for arts education but also as a significant cultural destination that promotes a deeper appreciation of Kerala's rich artistic and cultural legacy.

Cultural Significance and Heritage Preservation

Kerala Kalamandalam is a vital cultural institution and prominent tourist attraction, offering visitors an immersive experience of traditional South Indian performing arts (Nattika Travel Book, 2022). As a cultural hub, it fosters a spiritual connection between body, mind, and soul through live performances, interactions with masters and students, and cultural education. This aligns with Kerala's broader focus on heritage and cultural tourism, which integrates local arts, cuisine, and performances to enhance the state's tourism appeal (Tata Economic Consultancy Services, 2002).

The institution plays a crucial role in preserving and promoting Kerala's cultural heritage, ensuring its transmission to future generations (Government of Kerala, Kerala State Planning Board, 2022-2027). With its rigorous training, research, and performance, Kalamandalam safeguards and celebrates Kerala's cultural heritage, fostering social cohesion and pride among the community. Its commitment to heritage preservation has earned it international acclaim, attracting esteemed theatre makers and scholars worldwide. In recognition of its cultural significance, the Kerala government plans to elevate Kerala Kalamandalam to a state cultural university, ensuring its continued role as a center of excellence for traditional art forms (The New Indian Express, 2023).

The Intersection of Art Tourism and Cultural Heritage

In recent years, Kerala Kalamandalam has become a popular tourist destination, attracting visitors from around the world. This influx of tourists has raised important questions about the impact of art tourism on the preservation and promotion of traditional art forms. As a premier institution for traditional Indian arts, Kalamandalam is at the forefront of navigating the complex relationships between art tourism, cultural heritage, and traditional art forms. This study will examine the ways in which tourism affects the institution's mission to safeguard cultural heritage, and explore the strategies that Kalamandalam has employed to promote traditional art forms while navigating the challenges of art tourism. By investigating the impact of art tourism on the preservation and promotion of traditional art forms at Kerala Kalamandalam, this research aims to contribute to a deeper understanding of the complex relationships between tourism, cultural heritage, and traditional art forms.

This study focuses on Kerala Kalamandalam, a premier institution for traditional Indian arts in Kerala, and examines the impact of art tourism on the preservation and promotion of traditional art forms such as Kathakali, Koodiyattam, Thullal, Mohiniyattam, and traditional percussion arts including Chenda, Maddalam, and Thimila. As growing tourism presents both opportunities and challenges for the sustainability and authenticity of these art forms, the study explores how art tourism contributes to their preservation and promotion, while identifying the factors influencing the development of art tourism within the institution. The findings are expected to provide insights for cultural institutions, tourism stakeholders, and policymakers in developing strategies that support sustainable tourism and the long-term conservation of Kerala's traditional artistic heritage.

II. Review of Literature

Sebastian and Kalaiselvi (2023) conducted a study on the significance of heritage tourism in Thirunelli, Kerala. The study aimed to assess the cultural significance of Thirunelli, analyze the economic impact of heritage tourism, and investigate tourist perceptions and motivations. The findings revealed overwhelmingly positive tourist sentiments, with 77% of visitors rating Thirunelli's heritage sites as "excellent" in 2021, increasing to 80% in 2023. The study identified Thirunelli's unique charm, cultural significance, and natural beauty as key attractions. The results also highlighted the importance of infrastructure, accessibility, and

local cuisine in enhancing the tourist experience. The study's findings underscore Thirunelli's potential as a sustainable tourism destination.

Jhala and Chundawat (2023) investigated the significance of traditional paintings in Udaipur as cultural draws for sustainable tourism management. Their study revealed that traditional paintings hold immense cultural significance, attract tourists, and contribute to sustainable tourism management. The findings underscore the importance of preserving and promoting traditional paintings as a vital part of Udaipur's cultural heritage and tourism development strategy.

Tyagi N., Saxena S., & Tyagi A.(2022) examines the cultural tourism status in India, exploring its trends and prospects. The researchers investigated the significant cultural factors that determine Indian regional efficiency in optimizing tourist flow. The findings revealed that cultural factors have a substantial impact on tourism development in India. Intangible Cultural Heritage was found to play a crucial role in promoting cultural diversity and sustainable development. The study also highlighted the importance of responsible use of cultural heritage for tourism, which can increase income, generate employment, and reduce poverty. Overall, the study emphasizes the need for sustainability, protection, and preservation of culturally rich destinations to attract tourists in the long run

Research on the transmission of cultural and educational values in the context of performing arts education has gained significant attention in recent years. A study by **Thamarasseri (2020)** explored this phenomenon at Kerala Kalamandalam, highlighting the significance of cultural transmission theory and cultural reproduction theory. Thamarasseri's findings emphasized the importance of integrating performing arts and Indian Knowledge Systems (IKS) to promote multicultural understanding and social justice, as advocated by the National Education Policy 2020 (NEP 2020).

A comprehensive examination of the interplay between cultural tourism and folk art was conducted, focusing specifically on the painted scrolls of West Bengal. Employing a descriptive-analytical research design, the study, as reported by **Singh (2018)**, analyzed secondary data on cultural tourism and folk art traditions. The findings yielded a nuanced understanding of the interdependent relationship between cultural tourism and folk art, wherein cultural tourism was found to safeguard and fortify the local tradition of painted scrolls. Furthermore, government support for tourism was identified as a key factor contributing to the growth of cultural tourism and the development of folk art traditions. The study underscores the pivotal role of cultural tourism in preserving and promoting folk art traditions.

An investigation examined the viability of festival tourism in Kerala as a means of achieving sustained economic growth. Utilizing a descriptive-analytical research design, the study, conducted by Jose, **Sundararaj, and Manoj (2017)**, analyzed macro-level data derived from secondary sources. The findings indicated a strong potential for growth in festival tourism in Kerala, driven by the state's distinct historical and socio-economic factors. The study also underscored the importance of governmental support, the adoption of information and communication technologies, and environmental sustainability. The results suggest that festival tourism can make a significant contribution to Kerala's economic growth, contingent upon the state's prioritization of sustainable tourism practices.

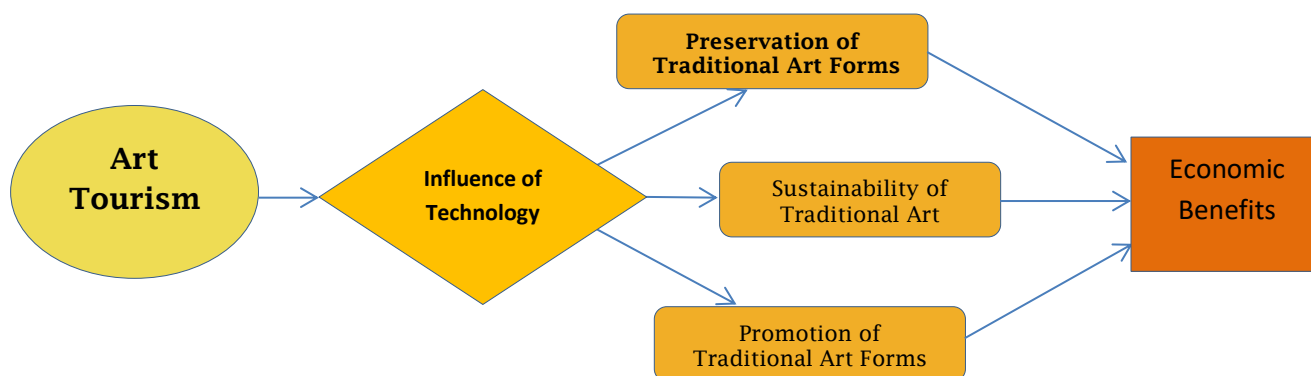
The declining patronage of Kerala's traditional theatre art forms, driven by socio-economic changes and the growing influence of modern media, poses significant challenges to their preservation and sustainability (Jose George, 2002). Although tourism has the potential to support the promotion and conservation of these art forms, limited research exists on its role and impact within cultural institutions such as Kerala Kalamandalam.

Therefore, this study seeks to examine how tourism contributes to the preservation and promotion of traditional arts while addressing the need for a balanced approach between cultural conservation and tourism development, thereby supporting sustainable cultural heritage management in Kerala. The study aims to examine the impact of art tourism on the preservation of traditional art forms at Kerala Kalamandalam and to identify the factors influencing the development of art tourism in the context of traditional art forms within the institution.

III. Methodology

The study employs a mixed-methods approach to examine the impact of art tourism on the preservation of traditional art forms at Kerala Kalamandalam and the factors influencing the development of art tourism. Data was collected from 130 respondents using purposive sampling, through a structured questionnaire distributed via Google Forms. Quantitative analysis techniques including regression, ANOVA and correlation, were applied to analyze the data and assess the relationships between tourism and the preservation of traditional art forms, as well as identify key factors driving the growth of art tourism.

Conceptual Framework



IV. Results and Discussions

Kalamandalam as a Cultural Destination

Kerala Kalamandalam serves as a vibrant cultural hub, dedicated to preserving and promoting traditional Kerala art forms such as dance, music, and theatre. It plays a pivotal role in making indigenous art accessible to the public, fostering both educational and experiential engagement with the region’s rich cultural heritage (Krishna, 2014).

Table:1 Distribution of Respondents by Purpose of Visit to Kerala Kalamandalam

Purpose of Visit				
Purpose of Visit	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Tourism	34	26.2	26.2	26.2
Academic Research	29	22.3	22.3	48.5
Cultural Interest	49	37.7	37.7	86.2
Professional Engagement	17	13.1	13.1	99.2
Other	1	.8	.8	100.0
Total	130	100.0	100.0	

The survey reveals that the primary reason for visiting Kerala Kalamandalam is cultural interest (37.7%), followed by tourism (26.2%) and academic research (22.3%). These findings highlight the significance of cultural experiences in driving visitation, informing strategies for cultural tourism promotion, education, and professional engagement.

Table:2 Source of Awareness about Kerala Kalamandalam

Awareness				
Source of awareness	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Social Media	36	27.7	27.7	27.7
Educational Institutes	47	36.2	36.2	63.8
Travel Blogs	12	9.2	9.2	73.1
Govt. Campaigns	4	3.1	3.1	76.2
Cultural Exchange Programs	11	8.5	8.5	84.6
Work Engagements	14	10.8	10.8	95.4
International Network	4	3.1	3.1	98.5
Other	2	1.5	1.5	100.0
Total	130	100.0	100.0	

The most significant source of awareness is educational institutions (36.2%), followed by social media (27.7%) and work engagements (10.8%). Other sources such as travel blogs, government campaigns, and cultural exchange programs contribute to a smaller proportion of awareness. This suggests that educational institutions and social media play pivotal roles in informing the public, which may guide efforts in promoting awareness through these platforms for more effective outreach and engagement.

Impact of Art Tourism

The impact of art tourism refers to the various effects—both positive and negative—that tourism centered on art, culture, and heritage has on a destination, its community, and its cultural assets. This impact spans economic, cultural, social, and environmental aspects.

H0: Art tourism does not significantly contribute to the preservation of traditional art forms at Kerala Kalamandalam.

Table 3: Impact of Art Tourism on the Preservation of Traditional Art Forms

Hypothesis	Regression Weights (B)	Beta Coefficient (β)	R ²	F Value	t Value	p Value
Preservation → Art_Tourism	0.963	0.952	0.907	1246.897	—	0.000

This shows a strong positive relationship between preservation and art tourism at Kerala Kalamandalam. A high Beta coefficient ($\beta = 0.952$) and R² of 0.907 indicate that preservation explains 90.7% of the variance in art tourism. The significant F-value (1246.897) and p-value (0.000) confirm that preservation plays a key role in promoting art tourism.

H0: Art tourism does not significantly contribute to the long-term sustainability of traditional art forms at Kerala Kalamandalam.

Table 4: Impact of Art Tourism on Sustainability

Hypothesis	Regression Weights (B)	Beta Coefficient	R ²	F Value	t Value	p Value
Sustainability impacts Art_Tourism	0.811	0.790	0.625	213.211		< 0.001

The study confirms that Art Tourism significantly impacts Sustainability at Kerala Kalamandalam, explaining 62.5% of the variation. As Art Tourism increases, Sustainability outcomes also improve, highlighting its potential to promote sustainable development. These findings underline the need for integrating sustainable practices into art tourism to benefit cultural institutions like Kerala Kalamandalam.

H0: Technological influence does not significantly enhance the promotion of traditional art forms at Kerala Kalamandalam.

Table 5: Influence of Technology on the Promotion of Traditional Art Forms.

Hypothesis	Regression Weights (B)	Beta Coefficient (β)	R ²	F Value	t Value	p Value
Tech_Influence → Promotion	0.761	0.909	0.826	609.108	—	0.000

The regression analysis shows a strong positive relationship between Tech_Influence and Promotion, with a significant unstandardized regression weight ($B = 0.761$) and Beta coefficient ($\beta = 0.909$). The model explains 82.6% of the variance ($R^2 = 0.826$) in Promotion, indicating its strong explanatory power. The significant F-value (609.108) and t-value (24.680) confirm that Tech_Influence is a key predictor of Promotion. These findings emphasize the crucial role of technology in enhancing the promotion of traditional art forms and the importance of incorporating technology in strategies to promote traditional art forms.

H0 : There is no significant difference in mean Education Qualifications across the groups.

Table 6: Differences in Education Qualifications Across Groups

ANOVA					
Education Qualification					
	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	40.016	18	2.223	1.846	.028
Within Groups	133.707	111	1.205		
Total	173.723	129			

The ANOVA test results reveal a statistically significant difference in education qualifications (Ed_Qualification) across the groups, with an F-statistic of 1.846 and a p-value of 0.028 ($p < 0.05$), indicating that the variation between group means is significantly larger than the variation within groups, with a sum of squares of 40.016 between groups and 133.707 within groups. Therefore, we reject the null hypothesis (H0) and accept the alternative hypothesis (H1), concluding that there is a significant difference in mean education qualifications across the groups.

H0: There is no significant difference in Exposure to Traditional Art across the groups.

Table: 7 Differences in Exposure Across Groups

ANOVA					
Exposure					
	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	88.190	33	2.672	1.906	.008
Within Groups	134.579	96	1.402		
Total	222.769	129			

Based on the ANOVA results, with a p-value of 0.008, which is less than the 0.05 significance level, we reject the null hypothesis. This indicates that there is a statistically significant difference in the Exposure to Traditional Art forms levels between the groups. The F-statistic of 1.906 suggests that the variance between the group means is greater than the variance within the groups, further supporting the presence of significant differences in exposure across the different groups. Therefore, it can be concluded that the exposure varies significantly between the groups under study.

V. Findings

The findings reveal that cultural interest is the primary motivation for visiting Kerala Kalamandalam, followed by tourism and academic research, highlighting the institution's strong cultural appeal and the potential of cultural tourism in supporting traditional art forms. Educational institutions and social media were identified as the main sources of awareness, emphasizing their importance in promoting the institution and its cultural offerings. The study further found a strong positive relationship between the preservation of traditional art forms and art tourism, indicating that preservation efforts enhance the attractiveness and sustainability of art tourism. Art tourism was also found to significantly contribute to sustainability at Kerala Kalamandalam, underscoring the need to integrate sustainable practices into tourism activities. Additionally, technology plays a significant role in promoting traditional art forms by improving their visibility and reach, suggesting the importance of digital platforms and marketing strategies for cultural preservation. The results also indicate significant differences in respondents' educational qualifications and levels of exposure to traditional art forms, suggesting that these factors influence their perceptions and experiences, and highlighting the need for greater public engagement and awareness to foster appreciation and support for traditional arts.

VI. Suggestions

- Strengthen Cultural Tourism Initiatives:** It would be beneficial to further promote cultural tourism by organizing events, workshops, and performances, which can attract a wider audience and foster sustained interest in Kerala Kalamandalam's traditional art forms.
- Enhance Digital Outreach:** Expanding efforts in digital marketing and social media could be a valuable strategy to increase awareness and engage a global audience. Utilizing virtual platforms and educational campaigns can effectively promote Kerala Kalamandalam's cultural offerings.
- Expand Educational Outreach Programs:** Developing tailored educational programs for various groups, such as schools, universities, and local communities, could significantly increase exposure to and appreciation of traditional art forms, fostering deeper connections with the institution's heritage.

VII. Conclusion

The study titled *Kalamandalam as a Cultural Destination: A Study of the Impact of Art Tourism on the Preservation & Promotion of Traditional Art Forms* examines the role of art tourism in the preservation and promotion of traditional art forms at Kerala Kalamandalam, a renowned institution for Indian arts located in Cheruthuruthy, Kerala. The scope of this research is confined to Kerala Kalamandalam, focusing on how art tourism influences the institution's efforts to conserve and showcase its diverse range of traditional art forms, such as Kathakali, Koodiyattam, Mohiniyattam, and various percussion instruments.

The findings indicate that cultural interest is the primary motivator for visits to Kerala Kalamandalam, demonstrating the potential of cultural tourism to support the preservation and sustainability of traditional art forms. Educational institutions and social media emerge as key sources of awareness, suggesting these platforms should be leveraged for more effective outreach. Additionally, there is a strong positive relationship between the preservation of art forms and the growth of art tourism, underlining preservation's role in enhancing tourism's appeal. The study also highlights the significant impact of art tourism on sustainability, emphasizing the need for integrating sustainable practices. Technology is identified as a major driver for promoting traditional art

forms, with digital strategies playing an essential role. Furthermore, variations in education and exposure to traditional art across groups underscore the need for tailored strategies to engage diverse audiences. This research concludes that a strategic integration of cultural, educational, technological, and sustainable practices is vital for the development of art tourism at Kerala Kalamandalam.

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