

**Subject: Tourism & Hotel Management**

Production of Courseware  
 - Content for Post Graduate Courses

**Paper : 2. Tourism Products of India**  
**Module 28. Tourism Product Regional: South India - II**



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Items	Description of Module
<b>Subject Name</b>	Tourism and Hotel Management
<b>Paper Name</b>	Tourism Products of India
<b>Module Title</b>	Tourism Product Regional: South India-II
<b>Module Id</b>	28
<b>Pre- Requisites</b>	Elementary knowledge of History, Geography, Religion and Culture
<b>Objectives</b>	i) to give basic knowledge of variety of tourist centers in South India ii) highlight the most important tourist centers and their importance
<b>Keywords</b>	Tourist Centers, Tourist Destination, Tourism attraction

### QUADRANT-I

Module 1: Tourism Product Regional : South India –II
1. Learning Outcome
2. Tamil Nadu
3. Puducherry
4. Kerala
5. Summary

## 1.0 Learning Outcome

This module is a continuation of the previous module on South India. Tourism products of Tamil Nadu, Puducherry and Kerala are discussed detail in this module. There is an ethnic, linguistic and cultural linkage between the states discussed in this module and students will get a better understanding of the general tourism characteristics of the states are also discussed.

## 2.0 TAMIL NADU (Marketing Tagline: Enchanting Tamil Nadu)

Tamil Nadu is known for its rich cultural heritage and ethnic identity of people. Tamil is one of the classical languages of India and the literally meaning of Tamil Nadu is land of Tamils (Tamil speaking people). It is the second largest economy of India and stands on the top chart of foreign tourist arrivals to India. Intangible cultural heritage such as life style, traditions, language and literature, tangible heritage for example historic buildings, temples, natural attractions such as hill stations, beach resorts, wild life sanctuaries etc. attract large number of visitors to Tamil Nadu. The state has a very rich history as the rulers of Pallava, Chola and Pandya dynasties contributed a lot to the state and southern region. Chilapathikaram (a Tamil literature) is treated as one of the greatest works ever written. The ports of Tamil Nadu had been connected with China, Arabian countries, Greece and Rome from the very early period. Another important literary work is Thirukkural. One of the very prominent leaders of Tamil people is Periyar, whose ideologies and philosophies still influence everyday life of people.

### 2.1.0 Popular attractions

Madurai: The Meenakshi Temple of Madurai is attracted by large number of people every year. The Sangam literature names the city as Kadamba Vanam (Forest of Kadamba trees). It was the capital of Pandya Kings and it is one of the oldest cities in India. Thirumalai Naicker expanded the temple in to its present form. This temple is built on Dravidian Architectural features, has the Gopuras (entrance towers) which resembles which distinguish from Dravidian temples and other styles. The towers are further decorated with sculptures of gods, goddesses, birds, animals and human beings. Meenakshi Amman (Goddess Parvati) is the presiding deity of the temple. The temple also features multiple gopurams, thousand pillar hall, with musical pillars is really an architectural marvel.

Other important sites include Teppakulam, Gandhi Museum and Alagar Covil (approximately 15 km from Madurai).



The Temple Gopuram, (Source: Google)

Rameshwaram: Rameshwaram is revered by everyone in our county as it is one of the Char Dhams according to Hinduism. It is situated approximately 570 k.m. away from Chennai. It is believed that Lord Ram prayed Lord Shiva to absolve his sins and consecrated Shivlinga after returning from Sri Lanka with Sita Devi. There are 22 wells in the temple denoting 22 arrows of Lord Ram. The Ramanathaswamy Temple is renowned for its corridors. It is the longest temple corridor in India strikingly beautiful with the paintings on ceilings and the stone columns.

Longest corridor Rameshwaram Temple  
Source: Google



Ooty: Also known as Udhagamandalam, it is situated on the edges of the hills of Western Ghats at an altitude of 2200 meters above sea level. It was the summer resort of British Officers, but the indigenous community called ‘Todas’ used to live in the hill ranges for many years before the arrival of people of main land. Ooty is a very popular holiday destination for people during summers, due to the pleasing weather features and landscape. The Nilgiri Mountain train connects Ooty with Mettupalayam, which is listed in UNESCO World Heritage Sites. This hill station also has a botanical garden and a lake that allows the visitors to spend their leisure time. Coonoor located 20 km from Ooty is a favourite picnic point for the tourists. The Sims Park, Tan tea museum are the main sites to visit.

Kanyakumari: Kanyakumari (Cape Comorin) is famous for its meeting point with Arabian Sea, Indian Ocean and Bay of Bengal. The sunrise point attract thousands of people every day to this place. Swamy Vivekananda mediated on the rocks which are located at the southernmost tip of Indian subcontinent and Vivekanda Rock Memorial and the statue of Thiruvalluvar indicates a prosperous India these spiritual leaders dreamt of.

Mahabalipuram/Mamallapuram : Mahabalipuram is a world famous site that attracts large number of tourists. It is situated on the shores of Bay of Bengal, approximately 45 km from Chennai. The site features carvings in stone and monolithic temples all represents various themes of Mahabharata dates back to Pallavas (AD 650’s). It is also a UNESCO listed World Heritage Site. Arjun’s Penance (bas relief- A monolithic stone platform on which the sculptures of Gods, saints, animals, and Arjuna doing tapasys illustrated), The shore temples (monolithic stone temples), and the Varaha Temple are the main attractions of this site.



(Shore Temples, Mahabalipuram, (Source: Google))

**Kodaikanal:** It is a very famous hill station located approximately 80 km from Madurai. The cliffs, lakes, valleys and waterfalls and very comfortable weather features during summers offer a tempting destination during the hot summers in plains. These hills form the easternmost part of the Western Ghats. The meadows, parks, grasslands attract large number of tourists from various parts of the country.

### 2.1.1 Natural Attractions

**Hill stations** (Two prominent hill stations are Ooty and Kodaikanal which are already mentioned above)

**Yelagiri Hills:** It is situated in Vellore district at an altitude of 1410 meters above sea level. It is a less explored destination in comparison to Ooty and Kodaikanal.

**Beaches:**

**Marina beach:** It is situated in Chennai. The long sandy beach is the longest beach in India.

**Mahabalipuram Beach:** Though it is not a long beach as Marina, this beach also attract tourists from different places.

**VGP Golden Beach.** It is a private beach situated near Chennai.

**Nagapatnam** is another beach attract large number of people.

**Waterfalls**

**Courtallam Falls:** Situated in Tirunelveli district, Kurtalam falls are very popular in South India as the waterfall creates cascades and several small falls. People believe that water of this area has medical quality and large number of people reach here to collect water as well as take up the showers.

**Hogenakkal Falls:** It is another beautiful fall formed from River Kaveri, located in the Salem district of Tamil Nadu. It is situated 180 k.m. east of Bengaluru. Hoge means smoke and kal means rock; Hogenakkal means smoking rock.

### 2.1.2 Wildlife

**Mudumalai Wildlife Sanctuary:** It is located at the edges of Western Ghats at an elevation of 1140 meters above sea level, which shares borders with Kerala, Karnataka and Tamil Nadu. This sanctuary homes a variety of animal species, birds and biodiversity. Elephants, deers, wild dogs etc. are frequently sighted, but tigers and panthers are also found here. Mudumalai is also known for elephant treatment centre.

**Mannar Marine National Park:** It spread over Rameshwaram and Tutucorin, but extends to Kanayakumari. It is one of the richest region in terms of the marine bio diversity. The area comprises of islands, lakes, mudflats, estuaries, rivers etc.

**Vedantagal Bird Sanctuary:** It is a lake eco system situated close to Chennai known for a variety of migrant bird species. The period between November to March attracts Darter, Grebes, White Ibis, Grey Pelican, Grey Heron, Spoonbill etc.

### 2.1.3 Heritage/Religious/Spiritual

The following four temple complexes are listed by UNESCO as world heritage sites.

**Tanjavur :** The big temple of Tanjavur is said to be constructed during the Chola Period. The entire temple is in stone, built in 1010 AD spread over a vast area. The fourteen storied tower is the tallest with a height of 60.96 meters. The temple is built on a raised platform of approximately 5 meters. The big Nandi built in monolithic stone is second biggest after Lepakhsi. The Shivlingam is 3.7 meter high. The outer wall of the temple has dance postures.

**Darasuram Temple :** Airavateswara Temple, dedicated to Lord Shiva is located 4 km from Kumbakonam. It was built during the rule of Chola Dyansty in 12<sup>th</sup> Century AD. The columns of the temple has numerous sculptures, well preserved even today. It is built on Dravidian Style, classified as Karak Kovil according to Tamil texts.

**Gangaikond Cholapuram:** It is situated at Ariyalur district of Tamil Nadu. The city was the capital of Chola Kings. Rajendra Chola I constructed this temple during his reign.

The following temples are important religious sites, but also heritage monuments



Darasuram Temple, (Source: Google)

Kancheepuram: Kancheepuram is also known for its silk. It is situated 70 km south of Chennai. This old city served as the capital of Pallava Dynasty.

Chidambaram: It is situated 66 km from Pondicherry and 217 km from Chennai. The Natraja Temple built during the 11<sup>th</sup> century is the main attraction of Chidambaram. Annual car festival attracts lot of devotees to this site.

Vellore: Vellore is popularly known as the fort city of Tamil Nadu. Vellore Fort is the main attraction of this place. Sripuram Srilakshmi Golden Temple is another major attraction of Vellore.

Sri Ranganathaswamy Temple, Srirangam (Near to Trichi) is another architecture marvel, built in Dravidian Style. This temple is dedicated to Lord Vishnu. The Rajagopura has a height of 236 feet, which is considered as the tallest in India.

Tiruvannamali: Tiruvannamalai Shiva temple popularly called as Arunachala Temple is very important temple situated 120 km south of Chennai. The temple was constructed by Vijayanagara Rulers during 16<sup>th</sup> century. The temple gopuram, thousand pillar mantapam and the tank were constructed by Krishnadevrayar.

Gingee Fort: It is one of the oldest fort surviving in Tamil Nadu. According to the records of history, the Cholas constructed a small fort at the top of the hills, during the 9<sup>th</sup> century and later controlled by Vijayanagara Empire. This fort was later used by Maratha ruler Shivaji, Mughals, Karnatic Nawabs, French and British.

#### 2.1.4 Religious/Spiritual

Palani : Palani Hills have a very important place in the heart of Tamil People. It is one of the abodes of Lord Kartikaya, the son of Lord Shiva. The idol of the Muruga in Palani, was created and consecrated by sage Bogar, one of eighteen great siddhas.

Vailankanni: This shrine is an important pilgrimage centre for Christians. This was once an important fort which had trade relations with Rome and Greece. The Basilica of our lady of good health is the main attraction of this place and it is known as the Lourde of the East.

Tiruchendur: It is a Murugan Temple (lord Kartikeya, son of Lord Shiva) believed to be older than 2000 years. In this temple, Lord Murugan appears to be with rudrakhs in hand in place of spear. Annual festival Skanda Shashti draws large number of tourists.

Pazhamudir solai: It is located 16 km from Madurai and highly revered by people.

St. Thomas Mount, Mylapore: Located at Chennai, it is a pilgrimage place for Christians. It is believed that St. Thomas, disciple of Jesus was martyred here.

## 2.2 Seasonal/Events/Festivals

The main festivals of Tamil Nadu are Pongal and Deevali (pronounced as Deepavali). There are numerous temples in Tamil Nadu and every temple has its schedule of festivities.

Theppam (Floating festival) is celebrated in Madurai (Theppakulam) and Chittirai Festival is another major in the events calendar of Madurai.

Kartikai Deepam Festival: This festival is widely observed in Tamil Nadu. It is a festival of lights. Thiruvannamalai is a renowned place associated with this festival. Temples are decorated with diyas (oil lamps). Chariot Festival, Rameshwaram: This festival is observed during Shivaratri. Thousands of devotees flock to this place during the festival period. Idols taken in decorated cars re pulled through the streets (Specifically meant for this purpose).

Chariot festival at Chidambaram: the annual chariot festival at Chidambaram is scheduled for 10 days and the day of Maharatsavam which falls on the 9<sup>th</sup> day of the festival.

Natyanjali dance festival, Chidambaram: it is a five days dance festival held in the month of February-March every year at Chidambaram. It begins on Mahashivrari and held in the prakara of the main temple of Chidambaram.

Tyagaraja Music Festival: It is in January every year at Tiruvaiyuru, (71 km. from Trichi) where the Carnatic Music legend Tyagraja lived.

Mamallapuram Music Festival: Held in December –January every year. Renowned artist perform classical dance events during the festival in the backdrop of the heritage site of Mamallapuram.

### 2.3 Cuisine

The cuisine of Tamil Nadu is distinct from other places. Filter Coffee and Rice based dishes can be found everywhere. But the regional taste and delicacy of dishes vary according to the sub regional areas. The popular dishes of Tamil Nadu are Idli, Vada, Appam, Upma as breakfast items. Lunch include a palette of dishes. The kulambu (gravy) is accompanied for Paratha (a kind of nan, made of refined wheat flour) and a number of non vegetarian dishes including sea food.

Chettinadu cuisine: It is the region of South East Tamil Nadu where the trading community Chettiar families normally live. The cuisine include aromatic, spicy and rich with nutrients.

Nanjilnadu cuisine is similar to Kerala cuisine, in which coconut is widely used.

Kongunadu cuisine is the popular cuisine around Coimbatore, Erode etc.

### 2.4 Souvenirs/Shopping/Handicrafts

Shopping/ Souvenir options	Design/Material name and District	Description
Silk	Kanchipuram	Distinctive designs such as sun, moon, swans, peacocks, etc., woven into the body in gold thread and characteristic contrast borders
Embroidery	Nilgiri	Thoda community, Nilgiri
Metal ware	Tanjavur	
Pottery	Vellore, Usilampatti, Madurai	
Textile	Erode, Tirupur	
Woodcarvings	Virudhunagar	
Stone craft	Mahabalipuram	
Panch loha Chola bronze	Madurai, Trichi	Traditional way of making Panch loha metal for different purposes

Pattamadai Mats	Tirunelveli	Reed mats crafted from Korai grass ( <i>Cyperus pangorei</i> )
Tanjore Gold Leaf Painting	Tanjavur	Gold leaf, gilded metal pieces and semi-precious stones decorate and embellish the figures on the paintings.

**2.5 Dance music and Folk Arts:** Tamil Nadu is the home for classical dance and music forms. Tyagaraja, Muthuswamy Dikshitar, Syama Sastri, etc. were the most prominent experts of Carnatic music through whom it reached its present position. Bharatanatyam is one of the classical dance forms developed in Tamil Nadu. The folk traditions include Kolattam, Karagattam, Kummi, Mayilattam, Puliyattam, villu pattu etc.

### 3.0 PUDUCHERRY (Marketing Tagline: Give time a break)

Earlier known as Pondicherry, this small Union territory was under the administration of French till 1954. It has four districts scattered at different places (Yanam, Karaikal, Mahe and Puducherry, in which Yanam is in Andhra Pradesh and Mahe is in Kerala ). Tamil is the official language and majority of the people are having the ethnicity of Tamil. The city of Puducherry is designed on grid pattern, and French influence can be found in architecture, cuisine and language. According to the historical records, the port had trade relations with Rome in the ancient days. Portuguese, Dutch, English and French arrived here in the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries. At present Puducherry presents a vibrant picture of a prospering state, with high levels of literacy and standards of living. It is one of the getaway destinations from Chennai and Bengaluru.

#### 3.1 Popular attractions

##### Auroville

It is one of the landmarks of Puducherry. The ashram of Aurobindo, Mother attract visitors from India and abroad alike. The matrimandir (meditation temple) located at the centre of the premises is an iconic building, the ashram interpretation centres and the auroville campus is one of the most visited places in Puducherry.

##### Promenade beach

It is the pride of Puducherry. The length of the beach is 1.5 km. The sea front has statues of prominent personalities in history. Mahatma Gandhi, Joan of Arc, Duplex, heritage town hall, old light house etc. are iconic point to remind the visitors about the history.

Other landmarks of the city include Ayi Mandapam, French war memorial, Kargil War memorial etc. Arikamedu is an archaeological site which once stood as a major port of Eastern Coast of India.

French institute, Ousteri lake, French institute, Raj Niwas, Vysial Street etc. are other attractions of Puducherry.

Handicrafts: Major handicrafts of Puducherry are seashell craft, terracotta, kora mat weaving and stone.



A picture of Auroville  
(Source: Google)



## 4.0 KERALA (Marketing Tagline: Gods own Country)

Kerala or Keralam is a small state situated on the southern part of the Subcontinent. It is a marketing synonym for tourism. The state aggressively promoted its natural beauty and tourism potentials. Kerala was part of state of Madras before independence, and the state was formed in 1956 on the basis of language. It shares borders with Tamil Nadu on the east and Karnataka on the north. The western boundary is Arabian Sea, which creates a long coast line of 580 k.m. Kerala was known for high quality spices and condiments grown in the hill ranges, for which traders from China, Arabia, Persia and Rome visit the state. The small areas known as nadus were ruled by the Kings, who possessed trading rights. Muziris, a port flourished in the Malabar Coast was mentioned in the writings of Ptolemy in Periplus of the Erythraean Sea. Kerala identified its tourism potentials during the 1990's and a well set marketing approach, positioning its market with right source markets and ensuring quality in offerings and services. Here we discuss the important tourism products of Kerala in detail.

### 4.1.1 Popular Attractions

**Backwaters of Kerala.** The backwaters of Kerala and the scenic landscape, coconut groves and numerous canals connecting the lakes are the main attractions of the state. Slow moving Kettuvallams (Houseboats) with its unique patterns in the backdrop of the lakes and scenic beauty offer visitors unique experience. The backwater stretches start at Kochin and extends up to Kollam district.

**Kumarakom:** It is known worldwide as an example of responsible tourism destination. Architecture style of traditional houses, villages on the banks of the lake Vembanadu Lake and the bird sanctuary attracts lot of tourists.



Backwaters and Houseboat, (Source: Google)

**Munnar:** it is a very popular hill station among the visitors, located approximately 130 km, this hill station offers a very pleasing weather. Tea plantations around the locality provides a very beautiful scenic view. A trip to Munnar also include visiting nearby national parks, tea plantations and tea processing units.

**Kovalam:** The beaches of Kovalam are world famous attractions even before any other place in Kerala got in to international tourism map. The light house beach, Hawa beach etc. are the havens of tourists. The arch shaped long sandy beaches, clean water with a back drop of the coconut groves provide a very picturesque view to visitors. It is located 17 km from Trivandrum.

**Sri Padbhanabhaswamy Temple, Trivandrum:** This temple is a very popular tourist attraction among domestic tourists and international tourists alike as it is the richest temple in India. Sri Padbhanabha (Iod Vishnu) was the presiding deity of the Travancore dynasty and the King Marthandavarma surrender his kingdom to the God. He acted as the servant of the God to protect the kingdom and his subjects.

**Varkala Beach:** it is located approximately 50 km north of Trivandrum. The beach is less crowded and also the mud cliffs around attracts large number of foreign tourists to this place.

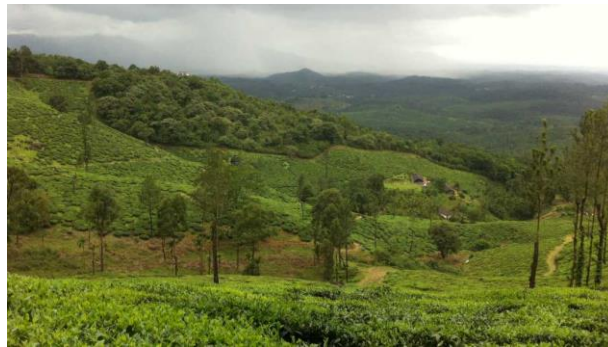
Trissur Pooram: The pooram celebration is conducted during Sri Vadakkumnath Temple Festival of Trissur. The caparisoned elephants line up in front of the temple. The following event is changing of colourful umbrellas amid traditional music thrills the visitors.

#### 4.1.2 Natural attractions

##### Hill Stations

Wayanad: Wayanad is an upcoming tourist attraction. Situated at an altitude of 2100 meters above sea level, the scenic beauty of this place attract lot of tourists. The hills of western ghats, pristine waterfalls, Tea and coffee plantations, wildlife sanctuary, Pookudu Lake, prehistoric site (Edakkal Caves) Banasura Sagar Dam and Karappuzha Dam are the main sites to visit. Wayanad has been considered as a must visit place in the itineraries of foreign tourists due to its historical importance and biodiversity features.

Ponmudi: It is a hill station located at an altitude of 1100 meters, and approximately 55 km from Trivandrum. Peppara Wildlife Sanctuary is situated here. The pleasant weather, scenic beauty and opportunities to take up adventure activities attract tourists to this place.



Tea Plantations: Wayanad (Source: Google)

##### **Ecotourism Centres**

**Kerala introduced green carpet initiative to protect the nature and promote ecotourism at selected sites. 119 such sites have been selected. The following places are the popular ecotourism attractions in the state.**

Thenmala: Thenmala was the first ecotourism site developed in India. This site is situated on the edges of western ghats in Kollam district (72 km from Trivandrum). The basic principles of ecotourism are well implemented here. Sites are demarcated with permissible activities with tourist amenities, local people are trained to guide the visitors so that they get involved in tourism and share the benefits, interpretation centre to educate the tourists about the place and its ecological uniqueness etc.

Adavi: It is a picturesque forest area, where tourists can experience the virgin beauty of the nature. A stretch of approximately 5 km river front of Kallar and the wilderness of the forest provides an exciting experience to the visitors. Recently bowl boat rides have been introduced in Kallar. Adavi is 135 km away from Ernakulam.

Gavi: Alistair International, included this place as leading ecotourism places in the world and one of the must see sites. The tea plantations, lakes, forests provide a refreshing experience to visitors. It is 114 km from Kottayam.

##### **Waterfalls**

Athirappally and Vazhachal : This roaring falls were the location of many Indian movies. Athirappally and Vazhachal are just 5 km apart, the mist, rainbows and glittering light in the dews and the serenity of the area provide a memorable experience to visitors. It is located approximately 75 km away from Kochi.

Tusharagiri: The mist capped hills in the back drop, rubber plantations, and the milky stream of the Chalipuzha draws lot of tourists here.

Palaruvi: Literal meaning of the word is stream of milk. It is situated in Kollam district. A trekking through the forest, which takes the tourist to a magnificent view of a cascading waterfall from a height of 300 feet above.

### **Beaches**

Bekal Beach: A beautiful sandy beach located on the northern part of Kerala. Nearest airport is Mangalore 64 km and the nearest major railway station is Kasargod.

Kappad Beach: Vasco da Gama, the Portuguese explorer who reached Kappad in 1498. It is 18 km away from Kozhikode.

Muzhupilangad: It is a drive-in beach located at Kannur.

Marari Beach: Marari Beach is a very popular beach located in Alapuzha district.

### **Lakes**

Vembanadu Lake, Ashtamudi Lake and Punnamada are three major lakes that are connected through canals form the main backwater stretch of Kerala. Nehru Trophy snake boat race takes place in Punnamada Lake in the second Saturday of every August. These back waters contribute immensely to the tourism industry of Kerala and several thousands of people earn their livelihood through tourism.

Akkulam lake: It is a beautiful lake located near to Trivandrum. The lake side and adjacent areas have been planned as a tourist village.

Pookodu Lake: A scenic natural lake located in the high ranges of Western Ghats. It is situated in Wayanad.

### **Islands**

Valiyaparamba: It is a beautiful coastal island situated in Kasargod district. It is separated from Kavvayi backwaters. The surrounding scenic landscape provides a wonderful view to the visitors.

Kuruwa Island: It's a river island created from the streams of River Kabani, a major tributary of River Cauvery

#### **4.1.3 National Parks and Wild Life Sanctuaries**

Periyar Tiger Reserve: Periyar tiger reserve is one of the best known tiger reserves in India as a tourist attraction. Located at Thekkady, successfully implemented several conservation projects with the help of local people. Periyar Lake is the main source of Periyar River which is the main drinking water and irrigation support for people of Kerala and Tamil Nadu. Boat safari in the lake is another major attraction of the site.

Silent Valley National Park: Silent valley national park is an ever green forest reserve situated in Palakkad district. It rises to Nilgiri plateau in the Western Ghats. This national park is identified as the hot spot of biodiversity. The name silent valley is given because the clamour of Cicadas is absent here). Ornithologists, nature lovers and scientists find this national park as the rare example of bio-diversity.

Thattekkadu Bird Sanctuary: It is a bird sanctuary is a haven of migratory birds. It is located in the tributaries of River Periyar. Different species of birds like Sri Lankan Frogmouth, Racket tailed Drongo, Bronzed Drongo, White bellied Treepie, Shama, Yellow-browed Bulbul, Rufous Babbler, Malabar Parakeet, White bellied Blue Flycatcher, Malabar Grey Hornbill, are some of the birds that can be easily seen here

Patiramanal Island: It is a small island situated on the backwaters of Alappuzha. Hundreds of migratory birds flock to this island during the winters in India.

#### **4.1.4 Religious /Spiritual**

Ambalapuzha Sri Krishna Temple: Located at Alappuzha, this temple is a well known Sri Krishna Temple in Kerala after Guruvayur. The kheer (sweet dish prepared with milk, which is offered to God) given as prasad at this temple is treated with great reverence and devotion.

*Guruvayur Sri Krishna Temple:* It is one of the most popular temple in Kerala. Situated at Thrissur, this temple is also known as the busiest wedding venue in Kerala. People believe that getting married at guruvayur Temple is very auspicious.

*Sabarimala Sastha Temple:* The annual pilgrimage to this temple during November to January attracts thousands of visitors. Devotees from various states of India, especially from Karnataka, Tamil Nadu and Andhra Pradesh take up the vow and reach here, trek through the forest for almost 12 kilo meters.

*Kootal Manikyam:* the presiding deity of this temple is Bharata, the brother of Lord Ram. It is situated in Thrissur district.

*Mannarashala Sri Nagaraja Temple:* It is dedicated to the Serpent Gods. The temple was under the Travancore Kings, who used to visit the temple during the annual festival.

*Parassinikadavu Sri Muthappan Temple:* The presiding deity of the temple is Sri Mutthappan, and the temple is located in a very scenic place. Everyday morning Theyyam performance take place at this temple.

*Attukal Bagavathy Temple, Trivandrum:* This temple is a very popular temple in Kerala. The presiding deity is 'Bhagavati' form of Goddess Parvati. During the annual festival 'Pongala' women devotees from various places throng to this place and prepare pongala in traditional way using firewood. The belief is that Bagavathy will fulfill the prayers and requests of the devotees.

*Aranmula Parthasarathy Temple:* This temple is dedicated to Lord Krishna. The annual festival of this temple is marking Onam Celebration in Kerala as the holy jewels of the Lord is taken as a procession. Snake boat race is also held during this period.

*Kalady:* The birth place of Shankaracharya.

*Mata Amritandamayi Math, Kollam:* Popularly called as Amma, Mata Amritanandamayi is a spiritual guru of Sanathan Dharma, great philanthropist and proponent of peace among different sections of society. Born in an ordinary fisherman family, Mata had the inherent qualities of a spiritual leader. Devotees flock from different countries and the ashram in Kollam is a well-known spiritual rejuvenation centre. The trust run by the ashram helps poor and needy in various areas such as free education, health facilities, rehabilitation of people affected by natural disasters etc.

*Maramon convention:* It is the largest convention of Christians (Mar Thoma or Marthoma) held on the banks of River Pampa. The first convention was organised in 1895 and still the tradition continues. It is held for eight days during the beginning of Lent every year.

*Sivagiri Pilgrimage:* It is a pilgrimage centre in Varkala, which was known for the social reformer and spiritual leader Sri Narayana Guru. The pilgrimage is aimed for self-purification and adherence of body, food, mind, word and deed, which takes place every year in January. The devotees wear yellow robes, follow disciplined life and chant the teachings of the Guru during the pilgrimage.

#### **4.1.5 Heritage**

*Cheraman Juma Masjid:* It was the first mosque built in India in AD 629. The mosque appears to be a temple from outside. According to the legends, Cheraman adopted Islam and then proceeded to Mecca for pilgrimage. This mosque is one of the heritage monuments under Islamic traditions.

*Jewish Synagogue:* The Jewish Synagogue is one of the main attractions of Fort Kochin. At present there are very few Jewish families stay here.

*Hill Palace, Triptunitara:* It is the first heritage museum in Kerala. The museum and nearby buildings represent architectural style of Kerala. The museum displays the properties of the Cochin Kings.

*Horse Palace, Padbanabhapuram palace:* These heritage properties were once owned by the Travancore Kings. Built in traditional architectural style of Kerala.

*Bekal Fort:* Bekal Fort is one of the few forts of Kerala, which is built on the coast of Arabian Sea. It is situated on the northern part of Kerala. This Fort once stood as the first line defence to check the enemies approaching from sea side.

St. Angelos Fort: A massive Fort in triangular shape situated close to Arabian Sea, once defended the Portuguese in this region. It was constructed by the first Portuguese Viceroy Francisco de Almeida in 1505. In 1663, the Dutch captured it and sold it to Ali Raja of Kannur. In 1790, British captured the same and started using for their military purposes.

Muziris Project: This project is part of the Silk Road project of government. Once up on a time Muziris was a very important port in India, which had sea trade relations with countries in Asia and Europe. Ptolemy (Greek astronomer and Mathematician) mentioned in his book 'Periplus of the Eruthraean Sea about this port of India. The heritage project aims to identify and conserve the cultural assets of the region, promote sustainable development of the resource etc. This is the largest heritage conservation project in India and the first green project of Government of Kerala. It was awarded PATA Gold awarded in the category of heritage preservation. The Kochi Muziris biennale brought international fame to this place.

Kalpathy Street, Palakkad: The Kalpathy street is an example of typical Brahmin Agraharam. Kalpathy rathotsavam (Chariot Festival) is famous. People live here are mainly Brahmins, who migrated from Tanjavur of Tamil Nadu during the attack of Tipu Sultan in 1790's. The Raja of Palakkad sheltered them and resettled them near the river Kalpathy. The street is also known for Carnatic Music and traditional life style.

Fort Kochi: The place marks several historical monuments such as Dutch cemetery, the Vasco de Gama Church and the Jewish Synagogue. This area overlooks the harbour and the Vypin Island. This place was also used as the store houses of spices, which were brought from hill areas.

Aranmula: Aranmula is a unique temple town in Pathanamthitta district. Situated on the banks of River Pampa, Aranmula Parthasarathy Temple (Sri Krishna Temple), this place is having a great cultural importance. The river, temple, traditions and the aranmula mirror brought international fame to this place. Aranmula Snake Boat race is held during the Onam Celebrations, the Vallasadya- a traditional feast organised at the temple,

#### 4.1.6 Unexplored/Adventure

Idukki: the high ranges of Idukki are known for various adventure activities. Trekking, Mountain biking, off road driving, water sports, paragliding can be done at the following identified places.

Vagamon: Paragliding

Wayanad and Munnar: Offroad driving

Agastya koodam, Paital Mala, Parambikulam, Ranipuram: Trekking

Kovalam: Surfing, Alleppey: Kayaking, Bhutathankettu: Rafting

Bird watching in Coastal islands, National Parks and Wild life sanctuaries

Chembra Peak: Wayanad, suitable for trekking

#### 4.2 Festivals/Events

Onam: Onam is the biggest festival of Kerala. It is celebrated in according to the Malayalam New Year and to welcome the King Mahabali (associated with the legends). Every household celebrate Onam with great enthusiasm. It is an occasion for many people to have a get together at families as many of the Keralites are working in different places.

The celebrations are now conducted week long at state level. Snake boat races, folk performances etc. are taken up at different places. The day of its conclusion, Trivandrum, the capital city is decorated with flowers and colourful lights. The procession attracts large number of people, as various tableaux, live performances fancy dress etc. draw large number of tourists as well as local people.

Vishu: The festival follows the solar cycle of the lunisolar Hindu calendar. In other part of India, this day coincides with Baishakhi or New Year according to Hindu Calendar. All family members gather at their homes, and the day starts with getting darshan of Lord Sri Krishna in the decorated Pooja Room. The eldest member of the family gifts new dress or gifts (kaineetam) to the family members. A special meal is prepared during lunch hours and

every member of the family cherishes the time they spend together. In the evening fire crackers are burnt to celebrate the joy.

Other festivals include Christmas, Eid, Ramzan, Easter etc.

#### 4.3 Arts/Dance/Music

Kathakali : We can also say that the world knows Kerala through Kathakali, the dance drama.

Mohiniattam: A very attractive dance form developed in Kerala

Thullal : A performance used to take place at temples Koodiyattam: A performance used to take place at temples

Theyyam: A ritual celebrated in temples of Kannur and Kasaragod.

Kalaripayattu: A martial art form originated and developed in Kerala

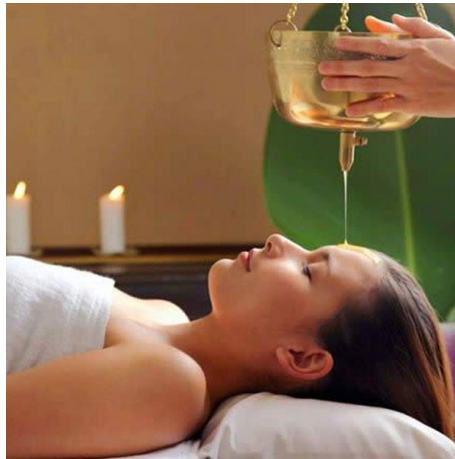
Tholpavakoothu (Puppet Show): This is again used to take place in temples and the stories were mainly from Ramayan.



Kathakali, Mohiniattam images (Source: [www.keralatourism.org](http://www.keralatourism.org))

#### 4.4 Ayurveda:

Kerala marketed its potentials as an Ayurvedic destination and it yielded good results. The traditional treatment methods still attract lot of people from various countries. Ayurveda is considered as a major tourism product of Kerala. This serve in different dimensions such as Medical Tourism, Health and Wellness Tourism. Establishments known for traditional treatment methods with trained and experienced doctors and staff are supported by Kerala tourism. It classified ayurvedic centres into Two categories green leaf and olive leaf according to quality, standards and services. There are several hundred ayurvedic centres in Kerala, but it is worth to mention the following centres. (Kottakkal Arya Vaidya Shala: Established by physician and philanthropist Vaidyaratnam PS Varier in Kottakkal (48 km from Koshikode). At present it has branches in major Cities as well as a herbal medicine manufacturing unit. Shantigiri: Shantigiri Ashram is famous spiritual centre and Ayurvedic research centre in Kerala. It has Panchkarma centres and research centres.)



Shirodhara-An ayurvedic wellness Treatment (Source:Google)

#### 4.5 Other events

Shopping Festival: A month long festival take place in Trivandrum

Biennale: Takes place once in two years at Kochi

Kochin Travel Mart:

Film festival-Takes place at Trivandrum

#### 4.6 Cuisine

Kerala Cuisine is mainly rice based, but a variety of sweet dishes are being prepared on different occasions. Kerala has three major communities, which also define the cuisines. Vegetarian, Non vegetarian dishes are accepted at almost all occasions. Seafood is also widely used by the people. Some renowned food items are : Appam and stew, Puttu, Noolputtu, Malabar Biryani, Karimeen Fry etc. There are regional influences in the local cuisine.

#### 4.7 Souvenirs/Handicrafts/Shopping

The following handicrafts are found in almost all places in shops of Kerala. Toys, Coconut shell based products, Brass and Bell metal, Coir based products, Ivory works, Kathakali masks and herbal products. The handicraft (Balramapuram, Kannu) textile products are also very popular among the visitors. A variety of herbal products can also be found in the markets of Kerala.

The list of spices found in Kerala are found as mentioned below.

Shopping/ Souvenir options	Design/Material name and District	Description
Spices products	Idukki, Wayanad	Black pepper, white pepper, lemon grass oil, dry ginger, cardamom, clove, nutmeg, star anise, turmeric, cinnamon,

		vanilla, tamarind, Cambodge, Kokum
Tea	Idukki, Wayanad	Different types of tea
Coffee	Wayanad	Coffee bean processed or Coffee powder

## 5.0 Summary

The five southern states of India offers vibrant and exciting experience to visitors. However, the experience can be customized to the requirement of visitors. A close observation on the description of the tourist attractions, product offerings and marketing campaigns of the authorities of various states attract tourists from various states of India and across the globe. Tourist circuits connecting these southern states can offer a basket of attractive packages to the tourists which satisfy the visitors. Diversity of India, can be found in every regions, but the overwhelming part is the hospitality of local people, irrespective of the state a tourist visit. Another interesting point to note is, though India is a large country with diverse ethnic, linguistic and cultural subgroups, the unity of people come for front, which is a very strange experience for a new visitor is concerned. We can summarise that a trip to India is not just a trip, but an immersion to experiment the true experiences of enlightenment to a great civilization that pondered ‘Vasudaiva Kutumbakam’.