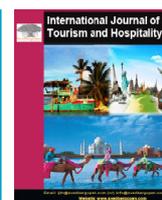




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## Cultural Tourism Centers - A Geographical Presentation of Cultural Tourism Products in Kerala

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### Abstract

Kerala is well-known for its unique cultural and geological characteristics. The practices and ethnicity handed down from generation to generation; the natural wonders, prehistoric healthcare system of Ayurveda, hill stations and sundry wildlife. These are the specialties of God's Own – Kerala. Tourism segment is significantly contributing to the sustainable development of Kerala. The state offers a world-class, local visitor experience. The tourism sector attracts investment, which makes it more sensitive to the natural environment. Kerala is a global brand in the field of tourism and increased our market share inside and outside India. Cultural tourism is gradually gaining wide acceptance as a real tourism product and becoming one of the most promising areas of economic development of our country. Cultural tourism products in Kerala are yet not marketed properly. Cultural tourism is gaining more and more tourists these days. This study explores the cultural tourism products offered in Kerala, and the specialties of cultural tourism products in Kerala. Cultural tourism products in Kerala are generally associated with religious beliefs, customs, traditions, languages, rituals, arts, and the way of life of people living in a particular geographical area. This study highlights the analysis of the growth rate of Kerala tourism and analyzes the cultural tourism potential of Kerala.

**Keywords:** *Cultural tourism, Cultural tourism products*

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### 1. Introduction

Tourism is a global economic activity. It is a temporary movement of people from one place to another, mainly for pleasure. It is a fast-growing industry employs millions of people, creates foreign exchange, promotes balanced local development and revives art and culture. It is one of the largest industries in the world. Tourism is not a single industry but a group of industries that work together and complement each other. The World Travel and Tourism Council calculated that tourism generated Rs. 16.91 lakh cr (\$240 bn) or 9.2% of India's GDP in 2018 and supported 42.673 million jobs, 8.1% of its total employment. According to the ranking of states and Union Territories (UTs) done on the basis of Domestic Tourist Visits (DTV) and Foreign Tourist Visits (FTV) in the country based on all India growth rate, the state ranks only 17 on the domestic front and eighth in the foreign segment. So it is clear that we need more intensive researches to promote our tourism potential. When we consider the case of other prominent tourism destinations states of India like, Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh, Rajasthan, Delhi, Uttar Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, etc., we can see that they are

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moving steps towards the promotion of “Cultural Tourism” to enhance their competitiveness and attractiveness. Therefore a study on “The Role of Cultural Tourism in the Tourism Development of Kerala” is highly required for tapping the neglected and hidden potential of our Cultural Tourism Products in order to improve the efficiency of the tourism of the state.

## 2. Statement of the Problem

India is a country blessed with 5000 years old civilization, rich in natural resources, and coupled with geographical and cultural diversity. Visiting India is an exciting and timeless experience for all. It is a tourist paradise that showcases all the features of traditional hospitality and modernity. The rich cultural heritage of the country attracts the attention of thousands of tourists. Kerala is known as ‘God’s own country’. The state is rich in natural resources for tourism development such as beautiful hill stations, dense forests, lakes, waterfalls, backwaters, lakes, rivers and beaches. Climate, friendly, friendly and literate people, exotic wildlife, monuments, colorful fairs and festivals, hundreds of years of cultural heritage, exquisite art, handicrafts and architecture attract the attention of tourists. Tourism in Kerala has been identified as an important industry and hence the Government is promoting it with high interest rates due to its greater efficiency in job creation. Kerala tourism is growing faster than Indian tourism and world tourism. Cultural tourism is gaining more and more tourists these days. . It is a usual practice that tourists may have shown more interest than the hosts in the culture of the native place they visited. Culture is associated with religions, beliefs, customs, traditions, languages, rituals, arts, and the way of life of people living in a particular geographical area. Therefore, cultural tourism is a subdivision of tourism that deals with products such as art forms, fairs, festivals, historical sites, monuments, museums, cultural centers, religious buildings, painting, music, literature, poetry, drama, sculptures and handicrafts. , Folklore, architecture, archeological sites, etc. Cultural tourism products offered in Kerala, and the specialties of cultural tourism products in Kerala and growth rate of Kerala tourism and cultural tourism potential of Kerala reveals outsized scope for tourism developments in the state of Kerala.

## 3. Objectives of the Study

- To create a theoretical base in the conceptual ideology of cultural tourism milieu based on cultural tourism products in Kerala.
- To develop a cultural tourism destination map based on identified cultural tourism spots in Kerala.

## 4. Methodology

This study is an exploratory study based on identified facts and Secondary data source collected from the published records of Ministry of Tourism, Government of India; Publications of Department of Tourism, Government of Kerala; publications of World Tourism Organization and other published records related to tourism for the period from 2008 to 2019. Kerala’s principal tourism products fall into six categories: (1) heritage/cultural/religious sites and events, (2) backwaters, (3) beaches, (4) hill stations, (5) wild life sanctuaries and (6) ayurveda, and the general environment. They combine to form a green symphony.

### 4.1. Kerala’s Cultural Tourism Assets Categorization

The various tourist attractions in Kerala can be identified as cultural attractions consist of Historical Monuments, Cultural Architecture and Archeological importance. Kerala tourists can experience diversity in the culture of the state. The art forms, handicrafts, folklore, architecture, historical sites, monuments, archeological sites, paintings, music, literature, poetry, drama, sculptures, museums, cultural centers, religious places such as temples, mosques, and churches, festivals like Onam, Vishu, Trissur Pooram, boat races etc. reflect the cultural heritage of the state, which attracts thousands of tourists. Pilgrimage centers/places of worship have received substantial representation in the listings. Although many of them may not have wide ecumenical appeal, they nevertheless attract a large number of devotees/pilgrims from far and near. A major portion of our Tourism Products is Cultural Tourism Products. Most Popular Cultural Tourism products of Kerala. Fairs and Festivals. The fairs and festivals are unique in Kerala. The major festival in Kerala is Onam. Kerala has a number of religious festivals. Thrissur Pooram and Chettikulangara Bharani are the major temple festivals in Kerala. The Thrissur Pooram is conducted at the Vadakumnathan temple, Thrissur. The Chettikulangara Bharani is another major attraction. The festival is conducted at the Chettikulangara temple near Mavelikkara. The Sivarathri is also an important festival in Kerala. This festival is mainly celebrated in Aluva Temple and Padanilam Parabhrahma Temple. Padanilam Temple is situated in Alappuzha district of Kerala, about 16 km (9.9 mi) from Mavelikkara town. Parumala Perunnal, Manarkatu Perunnal are the major festivals of Christians. Muslims also have many important festivals. Tourists are coming from all over the world during the festival season to enjoy the fairs and festivals of Kerala.

1. **Pilgrim centers:** Pilgrim centers are another important cultural tourism attraction of Kerala. Pilgrim centers of the state are world famous. Lakhs of tourists from Kerala and outside Kerala is visiting in the pilgrim centers of the state. The famous pilgrim centers of Kerala are Sabarimala, Guruvayoor Sri Krishna temple, Sri Padmanabha Swami temple, Potta Divine Retreat Center, Malayattor Church, Parasurama Temple, Parassinikkadavu Muthappa temple, and Jewish Synagogue at Mattanchery.
2. **Arts:** Kerala's culture is mainly Dravidian in origin, deriving from a greater Tamil Heritage region known as Tamilakam. Later, Kerala's culture was elaborated on through centuries of contact with overseas cultures. Native Performing Arts include koodiyattam kathakali– from katha (“story”) and kali (“play”) – and its offshoot Kerala Natanam, koothu (akin to stand-up comedy), mohiniyattam (“dance of the enchantress”), thullal, padayani, and theyyam. Other arts are more religion- and tribal-themed. These include chavittu natakam, oppana (originally from Malabar), which combines dance, rhythmic hand clapping, and ishal vocalizations. However, many of these art forms largely play to tourists or at youth festivals, and are not as popular among most ordinary Keralites. These people look to more contemporary art and performance styles, including those employing mimicry and parody. Several ancient ritualized arts are Keralite in origin; these include kalaripayattu (kalar “place”, “threshing floor”, or “battlefield”) and payattu (“exercise” or “practice”).

Among the world's oldest martial arts, oral tradition attributes kalaripayattu's emergence to Parasurama. Other ritual arts include theyyam, poorakkali and Kuthiyattam. Kuthiyottam is a ritualistic symbolic representation of human bali (homicide). Folklore exponents see this art form, with enchanting well structured choreography and songs, as one among the rare Adi Dravida folklore traditions still preserved and practiced in Central Kerala in accordance to the true tradition and environment. Typical to the Adi Dravida folk dances and songs, the movements and formations of dancers (clad in white thorthu and banyan) choreographed in Kuthiyottam are quick, peaks at a particular point and ends abruptly. The traditional songs also start in a stylish slow pace, then gain momentum and ends abruptly. Kuthiyotta Kalaris', run by Kuthiyotta Ashans (teachers or leaders), train the group to perform the dances and songs. Normally, the training starts about one to two months before the season. Young boys between 8 to 14 years are taught Kuthiyottam, a ritual dance in the house amidst a big social gathering before the portrait of the deity. Early in the morning on Bharani, after the feast and other rituals, the boys whose bodies are coiled with silver wires, one end of which is tied around his neck and an arecanut fixed on the tip of a knife held high over his head are taken in procession to the temple with the accompaniment of beating of drums, music, ornamental umbrellas, and other classical folk art forms, and richly caparisoned elephants. All through the way to the temple tender coconut water will be continually poured on his body. After the circumambulation the boys stands at a position facing the Sreekovil (Sanctum Sanctorum) and begins to dance. This ceremony ends with dragging the coil pierced to the skin whereby a few drops of blood comes out.

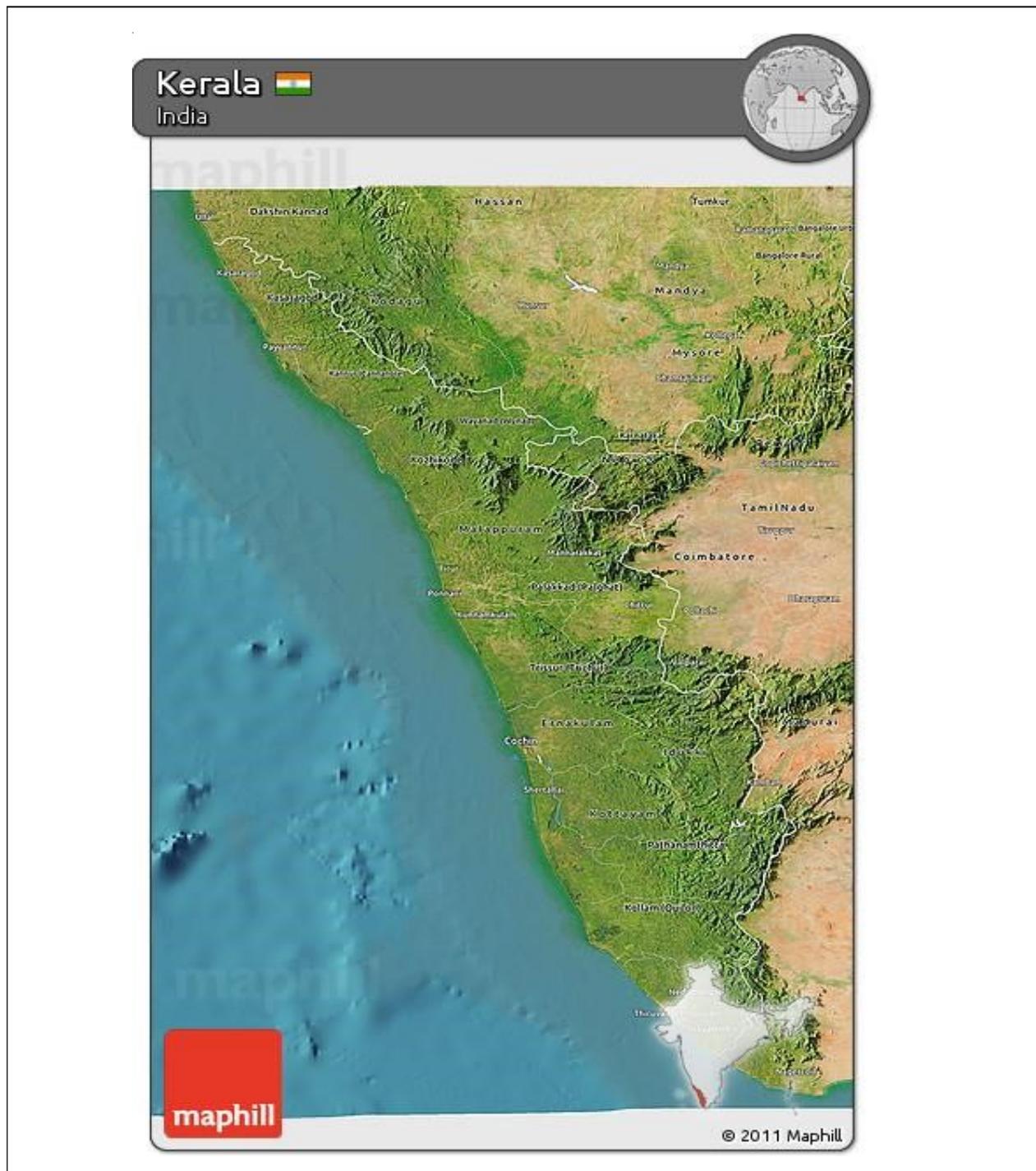
3. **Cuisine Tourism:** Kerala is the land enriched with spices, fruits, vegetables, coconut and sea foods. The different varieties of vegetarian and non vegetarian cuisine are very much attractive to tourists. Kerala. has a cuisine as distinctive as its cultural life, influenced by its long coastline and flavored by the all-pervasive coconut, it is enriched by exotic fruits, vegetables and seafood, and garnished to perfection with the distinctive aroma of spices.
4. **Events:** Kerala is also known for the many events conducted by the Ministry of Tourism for tourist attractions. Kochi, Muziris s Biennale, the first Biennale in India was conducted in Kochi from December 12, 2012 till 13 March 2013. The government contributed about 12-150 million on the event. An International Coir Fest is conducted annually that is aimed at developing the coir industry of Kerala and tourism.
5. **Palaces, Museums, Monuments, Architecture, Historical and Cultural Centers:** Department of tourism of the state highlight our historical, archeological, artistic palace and places as a strong tourism product and many tourists are attracted in it. The most important cultural centers, museums, palaces, monuments, historical centers and other cultural institutions and places in which the tourists attracted are.
6. **Pallakad Fort:** Built by Haider Ali of Mysore who captured the northern part of Kerala in 18<sup>th</sup> century. This fort is also known as Tipu Sultan's fort named after the son of Hyder Ali. It was later annexed by British dominion after the fall of Tipu Sultan. Pallakad fort is situated at the heart of Palghat region.
7. **Napier Museum:** Without this unique museum of historical artifacts no discussion regarding **most popular heritage sites of Kerala** can begin. A very beautiful example of natural air-conditioning system, Napier museum was built in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. It is a place where the history of Kerala comes alive by the artifacts preserved for all to see-the bronze idols, the chariots, exquisitely carved ancient ornaments, ivory carvings makes this place a memorable visit. Visitors of Kerala must always try to visit this place once.

- 8. Koyikkal Palace:** This palace is situated 18<sup>th</sup> km from Thiruvananthapuram, near Ponmudi hill station. This grand building was built in 15<sup>th</sup> century and an excellent example of royal grandeur. Tourists going to Kuttalam waterfall must stop here to experience the prosperity that was inherent in the past of Kerala. Koder House: Kerala among other lineages of traditions and heritage boasts off a great Jewish lineage also and among many of the **most popular heritage sites of Kerala** that bear the witness of this rich tradition Koder House is the most important place to visit. It was built by the Jewish patriarch Samuel Koder in 1808. Koder was related to the famous Cochin Electric factory. It is a fine specimen of Indo-European style that was typical of the architecture of Cochin. The sophistication of the Jewish life style is reflected in the furniture and decorations of the house.
- 9. Jewish Synagogue:** This is a formidable structure, impressive and artistic, full of exquisite decoration built in 1568 by the Jewish settlers from Mattancherry. They had been expelled from Rahabi. The tiles were brought from special Chinese designers depicting hand painted willow patterns. The clock tower is a reminder of Jewish architecture.
- 10. Krishna Menon Museum:** Named after the world famous intellectual, this museum is 5 km from Kozhikode and situated in the East Hill. It is the place which is considered the treasure trove of knowledge. Many rare books are found in this museum. The heritage of the sub continent, especially the history of Kerala is best represented and retained in the ideas reflected in this museum.
- 11. Kirtads Museum:** If we are drawn here to go into the depth of Kerala's history through historical artifacts, sculptures and architectural heritages then aboriginal and indigenous people of the state and their live traditions that date back to thousands of years must find a special place in our consideration and this museum is the most important witness of indigenous traditions and art among the **most popular heritage sites of Kerala**.
- 12. Tribal Folk:** Development of scheduled tribes and Caste is dedicated to the indigenous population of the state. The tribal culture has their root in the pre-Aryan background that flourished from the pre-historic time and still has their flag bearers in the form of prevalent tribes still thriving in the state. This ethnological museum of Kerala reflects the history of the tribal people. The material as well as the spiritual heritage of the indigenous population is well documented in these museums. One finds the bow and arrows of many sizes, the tribal ornaments, the potteries, the utensils, the craftsmanship and the artistic aspirations of the tribal people. The indigenous artifacts never fail to enchant one who has some curiosity about this other way of life.
- 13. St Angelo Fort:** This massive fort is also known as Kannur fort. A formidable triangular lateritic structure is an imposing sight in the background of clear endless sky. Many moats and bastions adorns the building and is an exposure of the might of the rulers.
- 14. Pazhassiraja Museum:** Found in the midst of Kozikode, this museum has a very rich collection of artifacts. The mural paintings are worth seeing. The coins found here dates back to beginning of Christian era. Miniatures are fine specimen of craftsmanship.
- 15. Thallassery Fort:** This fort is 20 km away Kannur. It was a stronghold of the British people, a military centre of respectable size and built in 1708. Each stone of the fort bespeaks of the might of the erstwhile rulers and the British architecture and design is observed.
- 16. Ambalavayal Museum:** The evidence of advanced civilizations that developed in Kerala during the 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD is well documented in this museum. It is a heritage museum reflecting the sources of the complex cultural structure of Kerala. The artifacts preserved are one of the largest collections in the state. It is amazing to observe the richness of the history of the region. Situated in Wayanad, it is easily reachable by road.
- 17. Archeological Museum:** This building is often cherished as an archeological delight; the architecture is unique. This is comparatively recently built and accommodated in the Trissur town hall. Archeological museum has a commendable collection of items representing the history of this richly adorned state. Bastion Bungalow: It was built in a hybrid indo-European style in 1667 AD by the Dutch architects. This place is replete with Dutch items and artifacts - the Dutch culture that has left its mark in the history of the place. It was an Old Dutch fort and anyone interested in Dutch culture how it influenced the synthesis that made this assimilation possible. It got its name from Stromberg Bastion.
- 18. Bekal Fort:** This fort and its adjoining sea beach is one of the tourist attractions and hugely popular in respect of regular tourist turnouts. This is also the largest fort under the care of the Archeological survey and it has been transformed into a tourist complex. The old meets the new where the spectacular sights of history can be relived while enjoying all the modern amenities of the modern era.
- 19. Bolgatty Palace:** Kerala among many historical heritage sites belonging to different western or European traditions can boast off its rich Dutch heritage that dates back to era of spice trade long ago and this beautiful palace is truly

a witness to that history and is a very special one among the **most popular heritage sites of Kerala**. This is a relic of Dutch heritage, built in 1744 on an island in the Arabian Sea offshore Cochin. You can reach this place via Ernakulum. The Governors of the Dutch East India Company used to live in this palace which was later taken over by the English residents. Both Dutch and English artifacts are well preserved in this palace anyone interested in the European contribution to the culture of the state should visit this place.

20. **Bishop's House:** Bishop's house is the home of the oldest Catholic Dioceses in India. Located near the Parade ground, Fort Kochi is one of the most visited and **most popular heritage sites of Kerala**. The Portuguese built it in 1506 AD. The Portuguese history in Kerala is well documented in this place.
21. **Anchunthengu Fort:** Situated near the capital city, Thiruvananthapuram, it is a relic of pure British architecture. This form is the oldest and major trading centre of the British in the Malabar Coast. The adjoining cemetery reminds one of the grandeur and desolation of death. The fort is strongly built.
22. **Bay Island Driftwood museum:** If you have knack for wood carving and other exquisite artistic marvels from historical eras this one is the best among the **most popular heritage sites of Kerala**. A dynamic lady teacher used to collect the driftwoods while she was working at Andaman and Nicobar Island. She was fascinated by the intriguing shapes the small and resilient pieces of roots and stems that had drifted across the seas and became tough and durable by withstanding erosion and attrition. She started giving shapes to the woods and that collection is preserved at the Bay Island driftwood museum. Located amidst the quiet and green Kumarakom village the collections at the Bay Island Driftwood museum is truly an artist's paradise. The art connoisseurs and dilantants often visit here to observe the pieces of wood transformed by deft hand into pieces of modern art. The oods were crafted with fierce dedication and great artistic sense that is reflected in each and every piece of artworks exhibited in the Bay Island driftwood museum.
23. **Tea museum:** The exquisite and rich heritage of tea making and delicacies and aroma of diverse range of leaves are something that make tea lovers from all over the world turn to this museum and unquestionably for many people, especially for the tea lovers it is truly an exquisite place and one simply cannot leave this place from the enumeration of **most popular heritage sites of Kerala**. Built by Tata tea in the Nallathanni tea estate in Munnar, this heritage site showcases the history of the tea cultivation and the technologies of the tea industries that have developed over time. There are displays of rare photographs and samples of machineries used at different times. From the rollers used in the earlier times to the fully automated tea processing machines are displayed in the museums. The tea lovers and curious visitor would revel at the sight and sophistications by which this world conquering leaf is taken care of before they are served to us in cups. Anyone visiting Munnar should visit this museum to cherish this experience and sight.
24. **Thakur House:** It was earlier called Kunal house or Hill bungalow, Thakur house bespeaks of the ambience of the bygone colonial era. The heavy furniture, the big and airy rooms, the natural breeze from the sea making it a cool place to relax your nerves really can make you grateful to this place for a great vacation. It faces the sea and one of the seven bastions built by the Dutch. The sand and the sea and the memories of the centuries left behind gives one a feeling of nostalgia over the romanticisms of the British era.
25. **Sree Chitra Art Gallery:** Situated inside the Napier Museum, Shree Chitra Art Gallery can boast of a fine collection of the greatest painters of Kerala, Raja Ravi Varma. He was a painter realistic style and his portrait of the members of the royal families, important personages of his times are so plastic and life like that one gets into the past itself simply by gazing at the paintings. There are paintings of Svetlova and Reorich among other notable painters. The traditional art schools of north and south India, the Rajasthan art school, Tanjore art school, and the Bengali school that has emerged in the earlier part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century—all are well displayed at this museum.
26. **Vasco House:** Believed to have been the residence the first European to set foot on Kerala, this is one of the oldest specimens of Portuguese architecture. It is quite probable that Vasco da Gama himself built this house and one gets an idea of the life style of the first European settlers by visiting this place. It was most probably built in the 16<sup>th</sup> century and near to Fort Cochin.
27. **Maritime Museum:** The naval forces of the rulers of Kerala had always been strong as the long coastline offered a formidable challenge to the security of the erstwhile kingdoms. The history of this evolution of Navy is well preserved in this museum from Marakers to the present days. Situated in Kochi this maritime museum offers a fair glimpse of the naval strength of the country at this present moment. It is located in INS Dronacharya in Kochi; Maritime museum should be visited by one and all.

**28. Mannadi:** It is 13 km from Adoor, this place reminds one of the great Veluthampi Dalawa, and once a Diwan of the erstwhile Travancore who lived his last days and faced his sad demise in this house. He led a small uprising against the British and said to have committed suicide instead of surrendering before the opponents. A memorial has been erected in his memory as this old freedom fighter is greatly revered by the local people. Kirshenbaum Palace: This is another place with great artistic traditions in full display among the most popular heritage sites of Kerala It was built in the 18<sup>th</sup> century by Muthanda Verma; this palace is a repository of architectural details and unique designs of Kerala. It is about 50 km from Alapazhu and the visitors often stop en route to Kollam. The palace was surrounded by beautiful garden and it has recently been adorned by Buddha Mandapam. Antique bronze collections are an important attraction of this lace along with rare sculptures and exclusive paintings.



**Figure 1: The Architectural Pattern Cultural Tourism Spot Map in Kerala**

Source: <http://www.maphill.com/india/kerala/idukki/3d-maps/physical-map>

## 5. Findings and Conclusion

It is only in recent that the culture has begun to be appreciated and acknowledged for its true tourism potential. In Kerala we have varieties of Cultural Tourism Products like art forms, fairs and festivals, handicrafts, folklores, architecture, historical sites, monuments, archeological sites, paintings, music, literature, poetry, drama, sculptures, museums, pilgrim centers, etc., but still the products are not capable of attracting attention of as much tourists as our expectation. Heritage & cultural tourism constitutes a dominant component among both domestic and foreign tourists visiting the State. Among the available assets, it is imperative to identify and focus upon those that are outstanding enough to attract and satisfy varied interests. Apart from developing Kochi as a heritage destination, there is perhaps scope for promoting a heritage circuit covering Kochi, Thrippunithura, Kodungalloor and Chennamangalam. Important museums may be developed to international standards with up-to-date interpretation systems and interactive audio visual facilities. Museum retailing is also a component that needs upgradation. Possible models for tourism development that would draw strength from the local culture, arts and lifestyle of Kerala include rural tourism, development of a heritage village, and business tourism packages incorporating cultural performances, local cuisine, etc. Suitable elements of these models could be incorporated into various projects, or separate projects along these lines could also be considered at appropriate locations in the State. Kerala has stricter entry regulations and dress codes for Hindu temples compared to other states in India. An issue that merits consideration of temple authorities is to relax the restrictions, at least selectively. Specified areas of important temples with exquisite sculpture, wood work, murals, temple museums, etc., can be considered to be thrown open to lay tourists during certain hours, with relaxed dress code, that does not compromise on basic decorum. Both Christianity and Islam came to Kerala long before they were introduced in other parts of India. Some of the churches associated with St. Thomas and others that are in close proximity to each other and also heritage mosques could form part of travel circuits appealing to tourists with special interests.

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