

Tipu Sultan Themed Heritage Trail: Circuit Tourism Prospects of South India

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Abstract: *Heritage trails create a continuous and meaningful travel experience by connecting historically significant sites through a common theme. The developed circuits enhance visitor experience, longer stays, community involvement and economic development. In this context, the Heritage Trail of Tipu Sultan provides a great opportunity to develop a tourism circuit by connecting many historical sites which are significantly related to Tipu Sultan's life, reign and power. He is known as the 'Tiger of Mysore'. This heritage circuit contains prominent destinations in Srirangapatna, Bengaluru, Madikeri and other important destinations that reflect Tipu Sultan's legacy such as military establishments, power, political vision, art and architecture. This study explores the tourism prospects of Tipu Sultan's heritage trails by highlighting cultural and historical significance that contributes to the regional growth. The study adopts Qualitative research methodology by collecting data through scholarly journals, websites, newspapers and archives. The finding of the study highlights the trail has potential to become an exclusive cultural tourism circuit that not only protects the history and culture of the heritage sites but also promotes local economic growth, community empowerment and enhances the visitor experience.*

Keywords: Heritage Trails, Tourism Circuit, Tipu Sultan, Community Empowerment, Culture Tourism

INTRODUCTION

Heritage trails protect and display a region's cultural and natural identity by connecting monuments, sites, and landscapes through a common theme (Timothy & Boyd, 2003). The trails provide tourists with a continuous and immersive travel experience that helps them to understand historical events, personalities, and cultural traditions (Garrod & Fyall, 2000) it not only enhances visitor experience, but also empower the community and heritage preservation (UNWTO, 2018).

Tourism Circuit connects various attractions along a well-defined route or a circuit. The circuit encourages tourists to travel across the region rather than a single destination which increases the length of stay, tourist spending and economic benefits of the region (Inskeep, 1991). Tourism Circuit also promotes balanced tourism development by distributing all kinds of tourism activities across the various destinations (Bhatia, 2006).

In recent years, the concept of heritage tourism circuits has observed a massive growth. Centrally protected monuments in India, are being witnessed with more tourist footfall from about 4.60 Crore (approx.) in 2019-20 to 5.49 Crore (approx.) in 2023-24 (Archaeological Survey of India, 2004). Heritage and Cultural tourism contribute approx. 5% towards GDP of India (Ministry of Tourism, Government of India, 2023). With 43 UNESCO World Heritage Sites and over 3,687 protected monuments, India has shown immense potential towards creating thematic heritage circuits to enhance authenticity and tourism experiences exclusively on historical sites. The Ministry of Tourism, Government of India, promotes Tourism Circuit during twelfth five-year plan (2013-17) (Dam, 2016). Under the scheme "Swadesh Dharsan" nearly 76 projects worth ₹ 5,292 crore were sanctioned across the nation in the year 2019, covering themes such as Buddhist, Coastal, Desert, and Heritage circuits and "PRASAD"

Therefore, the present study "Tipu Sultan Themed Heritage Trail" aims to document rich historical significance, present scenario of the destination and problem and prospects of curating the Tourism Circuit. Tipu Sultan, visionary ruler, fiercely administered the kingdom of Mysore during 18th C. Also known by the epithet as 'Tiger of Mysore' for his strong military base, administrative reforms, resistance against colonial powers, and admiration towards art and architecture (Hasan, 2005). Numerous heritage sites related to his life and reign are located in and around Karnataka are under- promotion (Tourism Department, Karnataka, 2020).

This paper further aims to offer a unique opportunity to create a thematic Tourism Circuit model that connects destinations like Srirangapatna, Bengaluru, Madikeri and other important destinations. The holistic model of Tipu Sultan themed heritage circuit exemplifies his legacy such as military establishments, power, political vision, art and architecture. These circuits can further improve the tourist experience, increase cultural experience, encourage community involvement and regional tourism development by proper channels of promotion and execution (UNWTO, 2018).

OBJECTIVES

1. To study the historical and cultural significance of the heritage sites for development of Tipu Sultan Heritage circuit.
2. To analyse the prospects and problems of developing Tipu Sultan Heritage circuit as the potential Tourism Circuit model.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Tourism Circuit

According to the Ministry of Tourism (MOT) the tourism circuit is considered as 'route tourism', 'corridor tourism', 'cluster tourism' and 'tourist circuit' is a route covering three minimum tourist attractions away from their town/village/city. Tourism Circuit is typified by the short length of stay at each destination on the circuit, pre-planned itinerary and regional and local clustering of attractions. It is usually aligned with archaeological/heritage, pilgrimage or eco-tourism destinations (Dam, 2016). The concept of Tourism Circuit has evolved with the framework and strategic connection of cultural landmarks, tribal ethnicities, industrial/religious/historical relics, ecological zones, archaeological sites, vernacular art and craft zones and spiritual locations multi-site thematic route of Tourism Circuit increases visitor experiences and maximises conservation and livelihood generation. Tourism Circuit offers the opportunity to transform the Heritage legacy into appealing tourist destinations and support to address economic, cultural and environmental dimensions. Augmenting Tourism Circuit is more practical, verifiable for policy making and sustainable regional brand building (Saha, 2025). It provides opportunities for locals to be involved in the tourism development process. Successful examples of tourism circuits contribute to profitability of the destination through optimal exploitation of natural and cultural resources. These circuits identify spiritual ambiance, cultural heritage, and infrastructure emotions and narratives. Creates meaning, comfort and shapes satisfaction. Managerial issues regarding interpretation materials, monument conservation measure, sanitation and transportation facilities are found as constraints to develop circuit tourism (Mapjabil, 2022).

Heritage Trail

The provenance of the Heritage trail traced back to ancient pilgrim and trade routes. The leisure visitor with artistic sensibility. These leisure visitors were engaging their mind and their artistic sensibilities recreates their time through walking, identifying and understanding. In recent times varied stakeholders are engaged in organising heritage

trails. Their shared goals are to benefit the social, cultural and physical environment and to improve visitor management. These trails empower the community, provide economic benefits and improve deeper understanding about the place. Heritage trails augment the urban landscape. In 1960–70s UK started with nature-based trails and quickly encountered trails based on architecture, famous people, local industries, cinema, historic events and wildlife (Hayes & Macleod, 2007). Governmental policies of developed countries such as European Cultural Routes Programme (ECRP), the National Trails Systems (NTS) in the United States (US), and the Canadian Heritage River (CHR) encourage creative trails and routes and comments that developing countries lack in such planning. Even Swadesh darshan initiatives are not much analysed in scholarly journals (Sivanandham, et al., 2025). The scope of Heritage trails is grounded with developing circuits and sentiments of the nation by allowing tourists to immerse themselves in the past to understand the artistic expression (Preethi & Ramasamy, 2025).

Tipu Sultan legacy

Tipu Sultan the powerful Muslim ruler established his military and legacy, cherished the support of both the Muslims and the Hindus. He observed the country going into the hands of the British in the 1760s when he was too young. With his fearless action, bravery he opposed and defeated them. The French provided him with military support, advisors, and initial technology support including the famous Mysorean rockets. He then encouraged advancement of missile technology, sericulture in his land. He confiscated the property of upper castes and distributed it among the Shudras. In the Second Anglo-Mysore War (1780-1784) he joined with Marathas and the Nizam of Hyderabad. In the third Anglo-Mysore War (1790-1792) he signed the Treaty of Seringapatam (1792) to prevent peace and settle conflict between Hyderabad and Marathas. During the Fourth Anglo-Mysore War (1798-1799) Tipu Sultan. Tipu Sultan was one of the most innovative rulers belonging to the pre-colonial period. Tipu Sultan has paid annual grants to 156 temples. He has mentioned religious tolerance as the fundamental tenet of the Holy Quran. Even though he faced a huge problem his desire is to avoid antagonism subjected to religion (Palati, 2023 Rani, 2018).

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study adopts a descriptive research design to explore the heritage trail of Tipu Sultan and its prospects for the potential development of the Tourism Circuit. The research is generally review-based in nature, focusing on purely secondary data sources, analysing the existing literature, historical accounts and other relevant tourism studies on heritage trails and Tourism Circuit. These data were collected from academic journals and books, government tourism reports, official websites, newspapers, research articles, and archive sources. The Methodology also includes evaluation of alternative strategies for developing the circuit (Yan et al., 2017) that includes Improving Accommodation Quality, Tourist Safety, Transportation and prospects of Developing Tourist Sites and Promotional Campaigns. (Sivanandham, et al., 2025)

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Image 1: Map of Tipu Sultan Heritage Icons



Source – Author generated using ChatGPT

Table 1: Result and Discussion

Sl. No	Site/Location	District	Year	Purpose of the Site	Present Scenario	Prospects of Tourism Development	Problems in Tourism Development
1	Srirangapatna Fort	Mandya	Originally 1454, modified in 18 th Century	Capital of Mysore Kingdom, military defense and administration	ASI protected monument	High heritage tourism potential, guided tours	Overcrowding and poor maintenance
2	Dariya Daulat Bagh (Summer Palace)	Mandya	Commenced in 1778, completed in 1784	Summer residence of Tipu Sultan	Preserved Palace Museum	Cultural and architectural tourism	Limited interpretation and crowd pressure
3	Masjid-I-Ala (Jama Masjid)	Mandya	1786-1787	Royal Mosque for prayers	Active Mosque	Religious cultural tourism	Restricted access and limited awareness
4	Gumbaz (Tomb of Tipu Sultan)	Mandya	1782-1784	Mausoleum of Tipu Sultan and Family	Most visited, well-preserved monument	Memorial and educational tourism	Maintenance issue, weak promotion
5	Tipu Sultan's Death Place	Mandya	May 4, 1799	Site of final battle with British	Underdeveloped memorial site	Battlefield and heritage tourism	Poor signage, neglected area
6	Colonel Bailey's Dungeon	Mandya	Late 18 th Century	Prison for the British Officers	Niche tourism attraction	Dark tourism and historical evidence	Safety concerns, poor waste management
7	Garrison Cemetery	Mandya	1799	Burial ground of the British soldiers	Well preserved, low visibility	Commemorative tourism site	Neglected, low visibility
8	Ranganathaswamy Temple	Mandya	9 th Century	Preferred place of worship by Tipu Sultan	Pilgrimage tourism temple	Pilgrimage tourism hub	Pilgrim congestion and traffic issues
9	Bangalore Fort	Bengaluru Urban	Originally 1537, completed in 1791	Military fortification rebuilt by Tipu Sultan	Partially preserved, urban heritage landmark	Urban heritage tourism	Urban encroachment and limited archeological remains
10	Tipu Sultan's Palace (Bengaluru)	Bengaluru Urban	1791	Administrative and Royal Palace	Museum, city attraction	Cultural city tourism	Space constraints
11	Nandi hills fort (Nandidurga)	Chikkballapur	Late 18 th Century	Strategic military outpost	High footfall, popular viewpoint	Leisure heritage tourism	Over tourism and environmental stress
12	Savandurga Fort	Ramnagara	Late 18 th Century	Strategic defensive, route control and prison fort	Ruins, trekking spot	Adventure heritage tourism	Safety risks and accessibility issues
13	Chitradurga Fort	Chitradurga	Captured in 1779	Northern border military and supply base	Well preserved, major tourist spot	Fort based tourism hub	Managerial constrain due to vast area
14	Manjarabad Fort	Hassan	1792	Star-shaped fort for trade route control and British defense	Preserved ruins, emerging heritage site	Unique architectural tourism	Poor connectivity and low visibility
15	Madikeri Fort	Kodagu	Late 18 th Century	Strategic fort securing Tipu Sultan's authority over Coorg	Museum and offices	Heritage and hill fort tourism	Poor heritage administration and religious conflict

Source – Author Compilation

Srirangapatna Fort is a heritage site that served as the capital of the Mysore Kingdom under Tipu Sultan, and is one of the main tourist attractions. This fortress was once considered as the strongest fortress in India, with two walls and four grand gates, it has a fascinating architecture and a high historical significance. It was first built in 1454 and since then it has undergone many changes of ownership, being established as a major defensive centre for many decades, including Tipu Sultan's last stand in the Fourth Anglo-Mysore War in 1799. The fort is now protected by the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI, 2023) and attracts a number of visitors. Due to its architectural strength and historical value, the fortress has a high capacity for heritage tourism. However, overcrowding and lack of maintenance and conservation brings challenges for sustainable tourism development.

Dariya Daulat Bagh was built by Tipu Sultan as his teakwood summer residence in 1791. The palace walls feature the beautiful hand painted floral designs that are unique to its era. It has beautiful gardens replica of Tipu Sultan's tiger which symbolize power and defiance. The small museum inside the premises showcases Tipu Sultan's attire and weaponry. It holds intricate motifs, historic artifacts and its role in the Mysore Kingdom (Karnataka tourism, 2026). The site has strong prospects of cultural and architectural tourism and attracts both domestic and international tourists. In spite, the tourist experiences and long-term conservation create impacts through the lacking interpretive facilities and overcrowding pressure.

Jama masjid or Masjid-I-Aala is not only a religiously significant mosque but also a prominent historical site that is located near the Bangalore Gate of the Srirangapatna Fort constructed by Tipu Sultan in 1784. It has two large octagonal minarets making it a grand structure. On the walls of the prayer hall, there are 99 names of Allah inscribed as being one of the favourite places of Tipu Sultan. The mosque continues to function as a place of worship while also drawing heritage visitors. Because of its connection with Tipu Sultan and Islamic religion, this site has opportunities for religious and cultural tourism. Yet, its tourism development is limited by poor public awareness and restricted access for the tourist (Mysore Tourism, 2005).

Gumbaz is the tomb for Hyder Ali and Tipu Sultan, constructed in 1784 by Tipu Sultan for his parents and he was also buried here in 1799. It is built in Persian style of architecture and is surrounded by beautiful gardens called Lalbagh. Recognized as a Monument of National Importance under the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI, 2023), it is the major tourist attraction and is often decorated during special occasions like Eid-E-Milad and one of the most popular and well-maintained sites in Srirangapatna. The site has a lot of potential for memorial and educational tourism, but there remain problems with maintenance and minimal marketing.

Tipu Sultan's Death Place is the site inside Srirangapatna Fort's northern walls where he was fatally wounded on May 4, 1799 during the British force's last attack which put an end to the fourth Anglo-Mysore war. This historically significant landmark, which is located near the fort's ruptured water gate region and is accessible to the tourists as a part of larger Srirangapatna cultural zone, is

currently marked by the stone tablet that Colonel Wellesley placed. This location is positioned as the tragic heritage tourism hub for wartime interpretation and remembrance due to fortified context and its direct association with the decisive moment of Tipu Sultan's fall. The small size of the Obelisk and lack of proper signage boards, clear directions, and engaging historic narratives makes it difficult for the tourist to properly understand the importance of the site (Sunilkumar, 2017).

The Ranganathaswamy temple, built before Tipu Sultan, was included in the socio-cultural scene of Srirangapatna during his reign, this shows that religious tradition could live side by side in the city. Today, the temple is an active pilgrimage site known for its historical architecture and spiritual significance, drawing huge crowds of devotees. The fact that mixing both cultural and pilgrimage tourism provides its unique character as a religious and historical site that enhances its tourism potential. But the experience of the non-pilgrims can be limited by pilgrim congestion, bad visitor management, and a lack of coordinated heritage interpretation, showing the need for careful planning that finds a balance between sacred use and tourism development (Karnataka tourism, 2026; Sunilkumar, 2017).

Bangalore fort also known as Bengaluru Kote locally is located in modern day Kalasipalyam, was an important military base in south India and also a component of the northern defence system of Mysore Kingdom. The fort's early origins are debated; it was either built by Kempegowda I in the 16th C. or by Chikkadevaraya Wodeyar in the 17th C. In the mid-18th C, this fort was greatly strengthened by Hyder Ali and Tipu Sultan, later fortified as a strategic measure against the East India Company's growing power. The original mud fort was rebuilt with granite stones, which included advanced defensive features, such as wide ramparts with bastions, a faussebraye, cavaliers, a glacis, a deep moat and covered pathways, reflecting both French and military design. Today, only a small part of the fort's walls and gateways remain as separate pieces of Bengaluru's urban heritage but due to rapid urban development, the majority of the fort has been destroyed. While the site offers opportunities for urban heritage tourism by showcasing 18th C's military architecture and the city's historical development, its efficacy as a cohesive tourism destination is limited by frequent urban expansion, fragmented preservation and inadequate interpretation, emphasising the need of integrated conservation and tourism planning (Chowdhury, 2024).

Built in 1791, as an administrative and a royal palace, Tipu Sultan's palace in Bengaluru is now a museum and a city heritage site that features architecture and heritage artifacts from the era. The place is significant as it showcases Tipu Sultan's urban presence and administrative practices within the context of Bengaluru's changing landscape as a colonial city. With its beautiful wooden pillars, arches and balconies, it has a lot of potential for cultural and urban heritage tourism because of its accessibility and attractive architecture (Incredible India, n.d). However, its ability to offer more enhanced visitor interaction experiences and detailed historical interpretation is constrained by geographical limitations, growing urban pressure and a lack of interpretative improvements.

Nandi Hills served as one of Tipu Sultan's seasonal and strategic mountain retreats and are the remains of a historical fortress now replaced by a beautiful landscape of nature. Today it's one of the popular weekend destinations for nature lovers, cyclists and history enthusiasts, combining nature with cultural heritage. The presence of sites like Tipu's drop further reinforces its historical significance within the circuit. These attributes give it a strong potential to combine leisure and heritage tourism (Karnataka tourism, 2026). Yet overcrowding, environmental pressure during the peak seasons and limited heritage interpretation may compromise its historical value and highlight the need for visitor management systems that preserve both the natural and cultural heritage.

Savandurga Fort is one of the largest monoliths in Asia, and played a regional role in defence and route control during the period of Tipu Sultan's reign, although the direct documentary evidence is scarce. The rugged granite terrain and extensive hiking trails attract adventure tourists and nature enthusiasts and also offer a credible potential for adventure-heritage tourism (Tripadvisor, 2026). But challenges like safety risks for unregulated trekking, poor visitor facilities, and lack of narration that links the natural landscapes with the historical significance hinder its further development as a part of the Tipu Sultan's heritage circuit, which requires comprehensive planning for safety, risk management and expositions.

Chitradurga Fort, also known as Kallina Kote, is a historical hill fort in central Karnataka, reflecting centuries of military and cultural development, which was later reinforced by Hyder Ali and Tipu Sultan in the 18th C as a part of Mysore Kingdom's defence network. Built on massive granite boulders, it has seven conservative walls, multiple gates, secret passage, water systems, and important temples reflecting the architectural influences of Chalukyan, Hoysalas and Vijaynagara (Karnataka tourism, 2026). Today a protected heritage site, and the fort has a potential for fortress tourism, but its vast size, rugged terrain and limited interpretative infrastructure pose problems for the management and accessibility of visitors, and highlight the need for structured protection and tourism planning (Nalini & Rajani, 2012).

Built by Tipu Sultan in 1792, Manjarabad fort is a remarkable hill fort in the star-shaped fort influenced by the European military style of architecture. It was placed in an ideal spot to control trade routes and defend from the British attack. Its geometric design integrates mathematical accuracy and functional protection, reflecting developments in artillery-based fortresses. Due to its unique style of architecture and vast surroundings, the fort now has a great potential for heritage tourism. But structural degradation, weather related problems, and lack of information pose challenges to visitor safety, accessibility and conservation, urging for proactive preservation and sustainable tourism practices (Patel, N., 2025).

Originally built in 1681 by King Mudduraja using laterite blocks, Madikeri fort is located on a hill in Kodagu district. Tipu Sultan later renovated and partially rebuilt the fort in granite and migmatite, making it an important military and administrative centre in the Coorg region. The Veerabhadra temple, which was formerly a part of the fort

complex, was transformed into the Gothic-style Anglican Church in 1855. Today, it serves as a museum with artifacts related to Kodava history and culture. With its massive fortification and prime hilltop location, the fort is now a heritage site that offers insights into the local architecture giving out the panoramic views of Madikeri town. The Omkareshwara temple and its surrounding water reservoirs are the examples of nearby laterite era structures that beautify the medieval urban setting. Although the fort has a lot to offer for hill-fort tourism, particularly when paired with other Kodagu attractions, it requires better visitor facilities and targeted marketing to maintain its distinct historical identity in the tourism circuit amid declining visitor numbers and competition from the district's natural landscapes (Wadhawan, S. K., 2022).

SUGGESTIONS

1. Develop policies and schemes to introduce Tipu Sultan Themed Heritage Trail as a government recognized Circuit Tourism Route.
2. Improve connectivity and basic infrastructure facilities to all the potential Tipu sultan themed destinations.
3. Instal sign boards, infographic maps for disseminating information to the tourist regarding the destinations.
4. Create tourist information centres at the major places like Srirangapatna, Madikeri and Bengaluru.
5. Provide Tour facilitation training to existing guides and youths about the destination, history and legacy of Tipu Sultan.
6. Installation of digitalized tools such as QR codes, AR, VR, Audio Books etc., to enhance the storytelling experience on the sites.
7. Include the circuit under Swadesh Darshan Scheme for funds and infrastructure development.
8. Improve Crowd management in places like Nandi Hills as it's a destination for weekend gateway for tourists in and around Bengaluru.
9. Introduction to Sound and Light Show can be launched in Srirangapatna as the destination can support large crowds and it has potential for promoting its legacy.
10. To promote Colonel Bailey's Dungeon (Prison) as a Niche Tourism destination for Dark and Disaster tourism.
11. Introducing exclusive heritage walks within Bengaluru.
12. Develop Maddur as a transit tourism destination to experience *Maddur Vada* as a prominent local dish.
13. Restoration activity on Manjarabad Fort to repair damages caused in the structure and to maintain star-shape design from aerial view.
14. Upgrade Madikeri Fort's Museum with an interpretation center to display significant artefacts
15. Casting movies about Tipu Sultan legacy in these interpretation centres.
16. Empower local community for tourism activity when incorporating Tipu sultan themed heritage trail as a new product development.
17. Incorporate digital marketing in multilingual language to attract visitors across the world.

18. Ensure proper maintenance, cleanliness, waste management facility, help desk and accessibility for elderly and differently-abled visitors.

19. Promote trails through tourism campaigns, influencers and through documentaries that can be posted in Karnataka State Tourism website, Instapage and other social media platforms.

20. Incorporate responsible tourism initiatives and eco-friendly practices in the potential Tipu sultan heritage destinations.

CONCLUSION

“Monuments are the grappling-irons that bind one generation to another.”-Joseph Joubert. Understanding and managing heritage monuments plays a constructive role to solve socio-political problems. Tourism supports preservation of heritage buildings along with the motive of keeping the past alive for the future. In this paper the study attempts to trace the possibility of preservation and promotion of Tipu sultan heritage monuments through developing exclusive circuits. The novelty of the study focus on developing Tipu sultan circuits; the study provides an insightful perspective on how the Tourism Circuit can transform these monuments as an attractive destination fostering more economic opportunities. This approach aims to bring more activities and engagement to the destination, creating a sense of purpose, awareness to the next generation to thrive in a sustainable heritage management and resilient future. The suggestions provided further serve as action policy for developing the circuit as productive, beneficial, innovative and sustainable.

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