10.0 OBJECTIVES

After reading this Unit you will be able to:

- know the importance of dance and music as elements of our culture,
- learn the ways of marketing dance and music as tourism products, and
- know in detail about the various features of the Khajuraho Festival.

10.1 INTRODUCTION

Culture is an important element in tourist programmes. It is generally divided into two categories—material and non-material culture. The former includes art and crafts, architecture and monuments while dance, music, religion, general lifestyle, ideologies and customs fall under non-material culture.

Dance and music form an essential component of Cultural Tourism in India. In 1969, a UNESCO expert, Dr. E. R. Allchin conducted a survey and found that dance and music figure fifth in the list of those important aspects of culture which attract tourists. Despite their not being the sole attraction for a large number of foreign tourists their potential as secondary attraction, it was recognized, could be exploited to a considerable extent. In India, in fact a quick beginning was made in this direction and in 1975 Khajuraho Dance Festival was conceived and organised by the M.P. Tourism Department. Soon other State Tourism Departments followed suit. Today festivals like Navratri Festival of Vadodara, Ellora Festival and Pattadakal Dance and Bijapur Music Festival have gained tremendous popularity. This Unit is an attempt to make you familiar with the concept of dance and music as means for tourist attraction. The Unit takes into account the Khajuraho Festival as a case study to demonstrate the concept in practical forms.

10.2 DANCE AND MUSIC: MARKETING A TOURISM PRODUCT

Dance and music have been marketed in different parts of the world for tourism purposes. There are two ways in which they can be marketed:
i) Local people perform and portray their culture. We can cite here the examples of Maori Poi dances in New Zealand, Hula dance in Honolulu and Alarde festival in Spain. However, in such performances sometimes the tourists also participate.

ii) Tourist destinations stage attractions giving information and knowledge about the host culture i.e. culture of the place being visited. The staging is generally done at places which do not have any extant cultural experiences. Such staging is called “contrived tourist product”. Instances of such products are mock wedding ceremonies in Tunisia, hourly concerts of native dances in Hawaii, and fire-walking display every evening in Fiji.

Both these marketing strategies have been severely criticized for treating culture as a commodity. In the first case, cultural meanings of traditional ceremonies are lost when they are performed only as entertainment rituals, while in the second, tourism developers and promoters are accused of displaying arrogance for manipulating the traditions and customs of people merely to satisfy the tourists. Despite criticism, however, both the above strategies have become acceptable practice in contemporary mass tourism. Today, in practically all the states of India the Tourism Department's not only organise such festivals but aggressively market them also. The most recent examples in this regard are the Qutab Festival in Delhi and the Beach Festival at Puri. The Pune and Elephanta festivals are other examples which have been in existence for some time now. However, one of the most prominent festivals organised in this regard is the Khajuraho Festival which attracts a large number of foreign as well as domestic tourists. It is a contrived tourist product. We will discuss it here in greater detail so as to learn the methods of marketing dance and music as tourist products in India.
Khajuraho is identified as a group of temples located in the Chhatarpur tehsil of district Chhattarpur in Bundelkhand-Baghelkhand region of Madhya Pradesh. It has been an ancient pilgrimage centre though its tourist potential was discovered only lately i.e. in 1950s. The interest of the Government of India in Khajuraho as a place of tourist attraction was kindled by a group of twenty-four temples, dating back to the period 950 A.D.-1050 A.D. These temples, attributed to the Chandela rulers, represent Hindu, Buddhist and Jain religious traditions. They contain one of the most exquisite specimens of architecture and sculpture from ancient India. In fact the architecture and the sculpture of these temples are the primary tourist attraction. The temples, according to their location, are grouped into three major complexes—the Western, Eastern and the Southern. But from the tourist point of view Western constitutes the most important complex. Matangesvara Temple here also has a religious significance for the local people and pilgrims from surrounding regions.

Khajuraho is a tourist attraction for both, the domestic and the foreign tourists. It is, however, to be noted that the duration of their stay is very short. Only about 40-50 per cent tourists make an overnight stay. A large number of domestic excursionists visit the Khajuraho for a day only, especially on holidays and Sundays.

The climatic geography of the place is such that the tourist season spans only from October to about the beginning of March. The summer months are unbearably hot and the tourist traffic becomes almost negligible then.

The host or local community consists primarily of people engaged in agricultural activities. Most of them are illiterate and do not relate much to the artistic excellence of the temples. For them the temples, like the Matangeshwara temple, have only religious significance. The local community, however, celebrates several cultural festivals on occasions like Basant Panchami and Shivratri. These festivals are attended by a large number of pilgrims from surrounding villages.

### Check Your Progress 1

1) **What is the importance of dance and music for tourism promotion in India?**

2) **Why is the "product-oriented" marketing strategy of culture criticized?**

3) **What is a contrived tourist product?**
10.4 THE KHAJURAHO FESTIVAL: CREATING A SECONDARY ATTRACTION

The Khajuraho Festival may be considered as an attempt to create secondary tourist attraction by using the temples. The Festival is an annual feature of dance and music held in the month of March. Artists of national eminence are invited to perform. Originally conceived by the Madhya Pradesh Tourism Development Corporation, the Festival was first organised in 1975 to coincide with the India Tourism Year. It marked the beginning of an experiment in organised planning and integrated development of Khajuraho as a tourist resort.

Since Khajuraho Festival is a contrived tourist product, it is organised to overcome the twin limitations of Khajuraho. As mentioned earlier, the tourists’ duration of stay is very short and so also is the tourist season. The tourist traffic begins to take a downward trend by mid-March. It was, therefore, thought that a cultural extravaganza in March might help improve tourist arrivals in the lean period, prolong their duration of stay and, in general, provide a boost to tourism development here. Secondly, Khajuraho does not have any extant culture of performing arts with which the temples as primary tourist attraction can be associated for tourism purposes. Thus, the staging of a festival of dance and music is aimed at improving the value of temples as a place of tourist attraction.

10.4.1 Relevance of Dance and Music

The idea of using the temples as a backdrop to a dance and music festival has been very well taken up. It may be mentioned that the origin of all classical dances and music in India have been the temples. It was in the temples that dance styles were conceived, practiced and perfected. This has been going on for a long time.

In the case of Khajuraho temples, the sculptures themselves seem to invoke, beckon and inspire the artists. The temple walls are ornamentally decorated with horizontal bands of intricately carved figures. There exists an astonishing by large number of individual figures of gods, goddesses, voluptuous women, mythical beasts, and couples in erotic postures and elaborate friezes. The most numerous and beautiful among them are the Apsaras and Surasundaris—heavenly beauties, who dance and attend on the gods; twisting, turning and posing. Their boldness, vigour and plasticity provide proof of highest order of artistic excellence. Those sculptures which are not in the actual dancing pose are generally shown as playing one or the other musical instrument, thus enlivening the feet of the dancers.

10.4.2 Method of Organising

The Khajuraho Festival was originally planned as a festival of local Bundelkhandi dance and music forms to be held every year during the month of December. The venue was the imposing Kandariya Mahadeo temple in the Western group of temples. The Festival was open to all and no tickets were imposed on the visitors. The primary responsibility of organising the festival rested with the Department of Culture. The Festival was not a success initially. Due to improper coordination of activities with the Department of Tourism there was poor publicity of the event and not many tourists could be attracted to Khajuraho.

An early review of the Festival in 1979-80 led to several improvements. It still is an annual event of dance and music. However, the timing has been changed from December to March in order to suit the planning proposals of the Tourism Department. The venues at present are the temple-lawns of the Western complex.
The artists who perform in the festival are all eminent and well known performers in India. So grandiose and imposing is the temple setting, and so inspiring the natural scenic beauty that most artists consider their participation in the festival, a full culmination of their artistic brilliance. No attempt, however, is made to involve the local talent. The organisational responsibility rests with the Tourist Department. An entry fee has been imposed since 1979 and this has the further effect of excluding the local populace.

The festival is publicised in local and national newspapers and documentaries are shown on the television. However, not all tourist brochures published by the Tourist Department mention the Khajuraho Festival as a prominent tourist attraction.

10.4.3 Perception of the Local Populace

For a majority of the locals, the dance and music items of the Festival are as alien to their culture as the mysterious art embodied on the temple walls. The
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Performing artists, too, are not familiar faces to them. Aspects of the Great Tradition (Elite Tradition) represented in the Khajuraho Festival have no continuity with the Little Tradition (Folk Tradition). This discontinuity generates not merely a feeling of indifference but also a negative perception of the Festival in the minds of the local people. In their opinion, the Festival is merely an occasion for top government officials in the Department of Tourism and in other government offices at the district and state level to exchange pleasantries and seek favour through a gift of tickets. The tickets, it is true, are exhorbitantly priced so as to purposefully exclude the local populace. Finally, the system of reciprocities prevents any generation of government funds through the sale of tickets.

However, there is a small section of the local populace which keenly awaits the arrival of the Festival for its income generating potential. An increased tourist traffic helps those who are employed in tourism oriented enterprises like hotels, restaurants, souvenir shops, etc.

10.4.4 Perception of the Tourists

The perception of the tourists towards the Khajuraho Festival varies according to their nationality. For the foreign tourists, the Festival is a spectacular event which helps them to know more about the host culture. In their mental perception, no difference is made between the Great and the Little Tradition. Therefore, the non-inclusion of local cultural elements (representing Bundelkhand customs) does not bother them. For a majority of the domestic tourists, on the other hand, the Khajuraho Festival is not an event of any exceptional significance for which changes in itinerary need to be made to coincide with the Festive season. However, a large number of government officials do participate in the event and Khajuraho receives more guests than it can accommodate in its existing hotels.

10.5 ACHIEVEMENTS AND FAILURES OF THE FESTIVAL

Despite government efforts, the Khajuraho Festival has not emerged as a very popular tourist attraction. The major reason for this is the isolation and remoteness of Khajuraho. Accessibility is still quite poor and few tourists wish to change their itinerary merely to watch the Festival. The publicity, too, is quite weak, especially for foreign tourists who complain lack of information during the planning of itinerary at their home countries. However, efforts are on.

The major success of Khajuraho Festival, lies in its ability to create a secondary tourist attraction without disturbing local ideologies and customs. The non-involvement of the local populace constitutes a strength rather than a weakness of tourism marketing strategy. Despite the fact that local cultural ceremonies like Basant Panchami and Shivratri fall in the months of February-March, they have not been publicised by the India Tourism Development Corporation as tourist attractions, thereby, enabling local culture to successfully escape the commercialising effects of mass tourism. In other words, the major achievement of Khajuraho Festival lies in its ability to divert the attention of tourists from the local culture. However, since the Festival has only a short duration, an imaginative effort is needed to evolve, on a more permanent basis, an ancillary tourist product of interest in Khajuraho.

Check Your Progress 2

1) What are the reasons for organising the Khajuraho Festival?
2) The Khajuraho Festival has undergone certain changes in the organisational style. What are these?

3) Why do local people nurture negative feelings towards the Festival?

4) Read the following statements and mark right (✓) or wrong (✗):
   i) Khajuraho is only a pilgrim centre.
   ii) Folk dance and music shows are organised in the Khajuraho Festival.
   iii) Not all members of the local community dislike the Festival.
   iv) Accessibility to Khajuraho has to be improved to make the Khajuraho Festival more popular.
   v) Local culture is reduced to a commodity in Khajuraho.

10.6 LET US SUM UP

Dance and music form important components of non-material culture which attract tourists to particular destinations. Different ways of marketing non-material culture are followed, one of which is the staging of special cultural events to compensate for real experiences. The Khajuraho Festival provides an example of this strategy.

The Khajuraho Festival is an annual dance and music festival organised in Khajuraho during the month of March. This festival uses the beautiful temples of Khajuraho as a background setting to create a secondary attraction for tourists. Artists of national eminence are invited to perform.

The Festival does not, in any way, involve the local populace. This constitutes a strength rather than a weakness of the organisational style because it saves the local culture from the negative impact of tourism. However, publicity and accessibility to Khajuraho have to be improved to make the Khajuraho Festival more popular.

Now that you know many things about Khajuraho Festival. We expect you to work out a plan for organising a festival of dance/music in your own area. You can, with the help of local histories and other relevant information about the cultural heritage in your area, draw up a list of the following:

a) Main cultural events involving group or solo dance/music performances specific to your locality,
b) Important artists, if any, involved in such performances and their availability,
c) Main season of tourist inflow in your locality,
d) The volume of foreign/domestic tourists visiting your area,
e) Tourist facilities e.g. accommodation, eating places, transport.

Based on the information gathered, you can prepare a note on organising a one/
two day festival of dance/music specific to your locality. You will have to keep in mind the volume of foreign/domestic tourist inflow in your area, and prepare the plan for such festival accordingly.

10.7 KEYWORDS

Contrived Tourist Attraction : Cultural attractions which are especially animated for tourists.
Great and Little Tradition : Cultural elements of the elite and common people respectively.
Non-material Culture : Aspects of culture which include dance and music, ceremonies, religion, general lifestyles, ideologies and customs of the people.

10.8 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS EXERCISES

Check Your Progress 1

1) You should refer to Dr. Allchin’s survey. See Sec. 10.1
2) You should mention how culture is reduced to a commodity. See Sec. 10.2
3) In your answer, you should refer to the following points: remote rural resort, primary tourist attraction, nature of tourists, the duration of stay, and length of tourist season. See Sec. 10.3

Check Your Progress 2

1) You have to mention the short tourist season and duration of their stay. See Sec. 10.4
2) You have to mention the following: Change in time, venue, entrance fee, organising body and content of the Festival.
3) You have to mention the exclusion of the local people and their culture in the Festival, the entrance fee and non-generation of government funds. See Sub-Sec. 10.4.3
4) i) × ii) × iii) √ iv) √ v) ×