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Tourism in Tamilnadu: Role of Cultural/Heritage Sites in Tourist Satisfaction and Tourism Development

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Abstract

Cultural/heritage tourism is the fastest growing segment of the tourism industry and hence there is a trend towards an increased specialization among tourists. The attraction over the adventure, culture, history and archaeological monuments etc. marks the increase of tourist in any region. Especially the interest of tourist from international destination and from India too, in traveling to cultural/ heritage destinations has increased recently and is expected to continue. For example, cultural/heritage sites are among the mostly preferred tourist attraction in Tamilnadu. The study on the Cultural/Heritage tourism leads to the result on the relationship between the cultural/heritage destination and the overall satisfaction of tourists. The difference in relation to tourist demographic characteristics like gender, age, education level, total income, travel behavior of tourists such as past experience, time taken to choose a destination, length of stay, distance of travel also should be considered in this aspect. The main objective of promoting tourism was to enhance economic activities, employment generation and community development. More facilities at spots will bring more revenue, more development and ultimately more rural employment and community development. Tourists will get an opportunity to interact with local people, understand their tradition, culture and lifestyle. They will participate in rural festivals, ride bullock cart, know about apiculture and farming, row boats, travel on coracles and buy their handicrafts. Such activities will ensure survival of art forms. Protection of sustainable use of bio diversity, sharing socio-economic benefits with local communities, minimizing impact of tourism development on ecology should be ensured. Eco-tourism needed area specific policies, strategies and strict enforcement of rules for sustainability.

Cultural/heritage tourism is the fastest growing segment of the tourism industry and hence there is a trend towards an increased specialization among tourists. The attraction over the adventure, culture, history and archaeological monuments etc marks the increase of tourist in any region. Especially the interest of tourist from international destination and from India too, in traveling to cultural/ heritage destinations has increased recently and is expected to continue. For example, cultural/heritage sites are among the mostly preferred tourist attraction in Tamilnadu. Human settlement here is said to have existed as early as civilizations in other parts of world. Because, the antiquity of ancient Tamil country was more glorious than any other community in the world. In this connection, it may also be called as 'largest living museum' in the world, as this ancient land encloses innumerable number of living monuments in the form of rock cut caves, structural temples, forts, palaces, etc. Apart from these monuments, various performing arts, festivals, dance, music, art, paintings and other related customs were also the important reason which initially drags the tourist towards this culturally rich landmass and satisfies their quest over nature.

The study on the Cultural/Heritage tourism leads to the result on the relationship between the cultural/heritage destination and the overall satisfaction of tourists. The difference in relation to tourist demographic characteristics like gender, age, education level, total income, travel behavior of tourists such as past experience, time taken to choose a destination, length of stay, distance of travel also should be considered in this aspect.

Because of people's inclination to seek out authenticity, including that of traditional cultures, heritage tourism has become a major "new" area of tourism demand, which almost all policy – makers are now aware of and anxious to develop. Heritage tourism as part of broader category of "cultural

tourism” is now a major pillar of the nascent tourism strategy of many countries. Cultural tourism is defined as visits by persons from outside the host community motivated wholly or in part by interest in the historical, artistic, and scientific or lifestyle/heritage offerings of a community, region, group or institution¹. Heritage tourism is a broad field of speciality travel, based on nostalgia for the past and the desire to experience diverse cultural landscapes and forms. It includes travel to festivals and other cultural events, visit to sites and monuments, travel to study nature, folklore or art or pilgrimages². Cultural/Heritage tourism offers several benefits to tourists and residents, as well as governments. This aspect of tourism involves economic benefits like creation of new jobs in travel industry at culturally attracted regions and in travel related establishments, etc. Cultural/Heritage tourism strategies in various countries have in common that they are a major growth area, that they can be used to boost local culture and that they can aid the seasonal and geographic spread of tourism³. The increase in the availability of global communication fuels the tourism market that leads to the gradual development in the domestic and international tourists. Tourist satisfaction is most important which is earned through successful marketing on the importance of destinations. This work involves choice of destinations, consumption of products and services and decision to return comfortably. In this context, Tamilnadu is one of the states which fulfill the tourist interest in all aspects.

The families of world community who visit Tamilnadu prefer mostly the historic sites with great cultural heritage which enclose various monuments that are architecturally rich. Tamilnadu is considered to be the second largest tourism industry in India with an annual growth rate of 16 percent. Among the monuments in Tamilnadu temples constructed in different periods by various rulers belonging to different dynasties constitute a major portion in tourist attraction as it consists of beautiful sculptures, paintings, and inscriptions. Apart from temples, forts, palaces, port cities also play a vital role in development of tourism in Tamilnadu. Rather than these structural monuments, religious and cultural festivals, social functions, dance, music and other related customs which are considered to be indigenous to Tamilnadu also were the reasons for the inflow of tourist in more number. In the later part of 18th century, in and around the areas of Chettinadu region individual houses which were like the palaces were the great attraction for the tourist and these houses even well portrayed by the film industry.

One who travel through the state right from Chennai to Kanyakumari is able to know almost all the districts of the state is composed of some sort of cultural importance. The districts like Kanchipuram, Madurai, and Thanjavur have innumerable number of ancient temples which was the main attraction of the tourists. These temples with their architectural marvel are unique and inspiring which initially exposes the engineering technology of the bygone era. The carvings in them are exquisite and extravagant. Every wall of the surface is carved and the carvings are delicate and distinct, but at the same time integrally linked with each other. This displays ingenuity and artistic skills of sculptors⁴. These temples come under the category heritage tourism and are preferred by the people of all ages.

The Tamilnadu tourism board is concentrating in the development of rural life, culture and heritage of rural locations in village which initially benefits the local community economically. This type of promoting work undertaken by the tourism industry normally satisfies the tourist needs and attracts them to visit the destination that leads to tourism development to a great extent. This is evident from the number of tourist visited in the year 2010. In 2010 approximately 28,04,687 foreign tourist (15.7% in total share in India) and 11,17,37,104 domestic tourists (15.1% in total share in India) visited the state⁵. In 2012, 35.62 lakhs foreign tourist and 18,41,37,000 domestic tourist visited the state⁶. In foreign tourist arrivals Tamilnadu stands second next to Maharashtra and in domestic tourist arrivals it stands third next to Andhra Pradesh. Ministry of Tourism in India had sanctioned Rs.66 crores for the year 2010-2011⁷ for the development of various projects pertaining to tourism industry. There is a increase of 30 crores when compared to the amount sanctioned in 2008-2009.

Though there are more than 30,000 temples in Tamilnadu which are under the control and maintenance of various government agencies and like State Department of Archaeology, Archaeological Survey of India, Hindu Religious and Charitable Board, Government of Tamilnadu and other private trust. Out of these, three of them were declared world heritage monuments. The great living Chola temples like Airavateswara Temple near Kumbakonam, Brahadeeswarar Temple (Big Temple) at Thanjavur, Gangaikonda Cholapuram Temple at Jayakondam were the declared World Heritage Monuments. These temples exhibits an important interchange of human values, over a span of time, or within a cultural area of the world, on developments in architecture or technology,

monumental arts, town-planning, or landscape design. To enjoy the architectural marvel and to know about the ancient Tamil culture tourist continuously through these monuments throughout the year. The tourists were attended with good hospitality i.e., accommodation, transport and locale were provided by government agencies. In the year 2010-2011 Ministry of Tourism in India has sanctioned 1475.00 lakhs for the development of Heritage sites in Thanjavur district⁸. The total revenue acquired by these Chola temples was 28,000,000 lakhs from tourists within India and 20,000,000 lakhs from the international tourists in the 2010⁹.

Apart from these three temples monuments of Mamallapuram was also declared as the world heritage monument. This 7th century A.D town belonging to Pallava dynasty located 60 kms south of Chennai consists of archaeological remains which correspond to some of the most primitive known examples of Dravidian architecture in India. Under the Pallava kingdom several enthusiastic monuments were carved out of the granitic boulders. The monuments which were declared World Heritage Monuments in Mamallapuram were the Shore temple, Five Rathas (Monolithic Rathas), Stone elephant in the five rathas, Cave temple, Arjuna Penance etc. In the year 2002-2003 Ministry of Tourism, Government of India has allotted Rs. 1039.00 lakhs¹⁰ for the welfare of tourist monuments in the town, which initially was utilized for the maintenance of the monuments, to build infrastructure activity around the monuments, to create a healthy atmosphere around the monuments and to improve hospitality facility for the tourists. These steps taken by the government for the development of tourism activity leads to the increase in the revenue of the local tourist agents and the shop keepers, whose business rely on the expenditure of the tourists. The total revenue of the monuments from the domestic and international tourists was 16,000,000 lakhs and 20,000,000 lakhs in the year 2010¹¹.

To preserve the regional history of Tamilnadu, State Department of Archaeology, Government of Tamilnadu is protecting more than 85 monuments which are seen all over the state. These monuments range from temples, palaces, forts, tombs, rock beds, sculptures, etc.

The attraction for tourists over Tamilnadu is also because of the festivals celebrated in the state. Umpteen festivals are celebrated throughout the year and no fortnight ever passes without a festival. People celebrate these festivals with great enthusiasm. Tradition and heritage of the festivals celebrated in the state was of great interest for the tourists. Most of the foreign tourists visit Tamilnadu at the time festivals for the purpose of both recreation and to study the cultural heritage of the state. Major festivals celebrated in Tamilnadu where Pongal (Tamizhar Thirunavali), Sivarathiri festival, Chithirai festival, Adi perukku, Mahamaham, Natyanjali, Thrivavur music festival, Thai poosam, Karhigai Deepam, etc.

For the Thiruvavur music festival the tourist arrivals is increasing every year. From 2001 (2,60,000) – 2004 (3,21,400) the increase in the tourist arrivals was nearly 61 lakhs¹². Likewise the Chithiruvizha festival in Madurai is also being visited by lakhs of people every year. The proper arrangements for accommodation, transport, food, guide facility etc paved the way for tourists to visit these functions. Mahamaham was an important Hindu festival celebrated in Kumbakonam of Thanjavur district. As it is considered sacred in having a holy dip at the Mahamaham tank lakhs of devotees gather in the month of March. Even the foreign tourists visit during this season. There were nearly 1 million devotees participated in this function in 1992.

Thai poosam is the festival celebrated in the months of January and February. It is celebrated in the six abodes of Lord Murugan. This famous festival celebrated in the Palani, Thiruchendur, Thiruvavankuram, Azhagar Koil, Thiruthani. Lakhs of tourists through these places at the time of this festival which initially increases the revenue of the state. The elaborate arrangements made for the tourists gradually increases the number of tourists every year.

The Pilgrimage Heritage Circuit namely (Madurai, Rameshwaram, Kanyakumari) has been allotted Rs. 3647 lakhs for the improvement of the infrastructure in the areas. The tourism project sanctioned by the Government of India in the eleventh five year plan (2007-2008, 2008-2009, 2009-2010, 2010-2011).¹³ Apart from these centres Madurai Meenakshi Amman temple, Srirangam Ranganathar temple were the other pilgrim centres in Tamilnadu, which also earns more revenue from the devotees. Due to their popularity, even the international tourists visit these places each and every day.

Apart from the culturally important sites, destinations with heritage importance also help in the development of tourism activity in Tamilnadu. In this connection it is proper to mention the houses which are also considered to be like that of palaces belonging to 18th century in Chettinad region of Sivaganga district. The houses were noteworthy for their marvellous architectural features, as they

had wide courtyards and spacious rooms which are embellished with marble and teak. The uniqueness, style of architecture and size of the houses normally makes us to visit this region for enjoying its architectural beauty. One of the important unique heritage elements of Chettinad region was the Art Deco Style houses (also called as French art Deco) largely built in 1940-1950's. These buildings display architectural elements of different influences taken from both East and West. Karaikudi was one of the main town which has important Art-Deco quarter, which includes the Thousand Windows House making it ideal for heritage walk. The living heritage skills of the Chettinad region could be known from the Chariot making, Metal working, wood working, jewellery making, cotton weaving etc.

As far as cultural tourism is concerned Chettinad region is practically unknown to the tourist guides. It is because of the fact that it has been excluded from tourist itineraries as the temple architecture attains a important status in the tourist attractions. So in order to drive away this condition, Tamilnadu government is taking necessary steps to improve tourism activity by identifying, safeguarding, enriching and managing the heritage resources. One day – 6 day tours have been arranged by various tour agencies. This tour covers an area of about 1500 km² which helps us in exploring the unique and varied heritage of the medieval Tamilnadu. Economic pressures and land speculation in the big cities of Tamilnadu have eliminated almost all of the state's traditional houses. Chettinad is the only region remaining which stands as an example to the Tamil architecture and urban planning. It is also important to bear in mind is that the development of historic buildings and sites into heritage tourism destination could help in generation of enough revenue for the building to pay for its own conservation and maintenance.

Other important attractions on the Chettinad region are the cuisine. Chettinad is known for its culinary delicacies, which is also one of the main reasons why the people visit the area. The meal is essentially spicy and contains all the elements of the Tamilnadu cooking tradition.

Chennai the capital city of the state consists of numerous number of buildings which was unique cultural value. These building bears a great testimony to the British and multicultural architectural style. Some of the heritage monuments in Chennai were Chennai Central Railway station (1873), Southern Indian Railway headquarters (1921), General post office (1884), Madras High Court (1892), Bharath Insurance Building (1897), Chepauk Palace (1764), Senate House (1879, University of Madras), Government Museum Building (1879), Egmore Railway Station (1908), Victoria Public hall 1888-1890), Royapuram Railway Station (1856), Fort St George (1640), Amir Mahal (1798), etc. Most of the heritage buildings in Chennai were constructed out of Indo – Saracenic style architecture. State Bank of India building (1897) in George town was constructed in Victorian architecture, Kirk-St. Andrews Church (1821), Egmore was constructed in Georgian Church architecture. The historic and architectural importance of Chennai hidden by the ocean of hoardings and the chaos of the overflowing streets, the fascinating past of Madras lives in its many buildings, public, institutional and private. Proper guidance to the heritage monuments would be helpful for the tourist to enjoy the architectural beauty of the city to a great extent. Museum, which itself a heritage monuments hosts innumerable number of materials pertaining to various cultural periods was a source for the ancient history of Tamilnadu.

Apart from the structural monuments other related material evidences also were the major source for the development of tourism activity in the state. Thanjavur painting which is also called as Classic art painting. Thanjavur Painting is a special, very old, minute type of painting. These paintings are made by the 'cover with golden and gem-set technique' a method where gold colored leaves & sparkling stones are used to emphasize certain aspects of the paintings like ornaments, dresses etc. Tanjore Paintings are known for their art richness, vibrant colours and condensed composition. Basically serving as devotional symbols, the subject matters of most of these paintings are Hindu Gods and Goddesses, Saints and Kings as well. Tanjore paintings will go down in the history of art as one of the most innovative and historical art form. Thanjavur painting is a significant form of classical as well as ethnic Tamil Nadu painting that is native to the town of Thanjavur in Tamilnadu. This painting is known as 'Thanjai Oviyam' in the city of Tanjore. The history of these art is no less renowned than the painting itself. The history of this art of paintings dates back to the early 9th Century. The powerful Chola rulers, who exhilarated art and literature as well, subjugated the era when this painting style was in its blossoming stage. But this particular type art form was grown with the support of the Maratha rulers in the 18th century. These paintings are well-known for their

stylishness, gorgeous color, and attention to detail. The subjects for most of these paintings are the scenes from Hindu mythology. These paintings have become extremely popular in modern times and are much wanted after memento during festive seasons.

This unique feature of the Thanjavur painting leads a person or tourist to visit the area for the purpose of buying the materials that leads to the spread of cultural history and artistic talent of ancient Tamil country. This process initially leads to the improvement of regional tourism.

Tamil folk music and songs are highly appreciated by people all along South India for its unique pattern and style. Tamil Folk Music and Songs are in its evolutions since centuries until to date. Notably, Music and dance performances are a crucial part in the Village life of Tamil Nadu. In comparative importance of folk music, with other parts of India, Tamil Folk Music has grown and it possesses a part in the educational stream. Tamil Nadu possesses an attributed taste of Music history for a few thousand years. Tamil Villages have been distinguished as passionate lovers of folk music and songs. Tamil cinemas are regularly using folk music in their film production. Some of these folk songs were popular and fabulous hits. The amusement given by the Tamil Folk Music is hard to overlook.

Odhuvans or Kattalaiyars or Kattalaiyars provided divine musical programmers in the house of prayer by singing Thevaram lyrics and worshipping the God. The Thevara Nayakams, temple care takers were front runners of the world of music who regulated the "only glorify of ruler" and chorus chanting. Kappalpattu or Padagupattu is boat-songs, carol collectively by voyagers to overcome the fear of tides and avoid the dullness of travel on water bodies like seas, lakes and rivers. Pura Pattu has sympathized in Tamil Nadu from the eleventh century. Love is its primary meaning. A love sick young girl talk to animals and birds and natural things like the passing cloud and the breeze to advocate her lover and her love sick.

Dr. Vijaya Lakshmi, Navaneetha Krishnan, Pushpavanam Kuppaswamy, Anitha Kuppasamy, popular cinema singers Chinna Ponnu, and Paravai Muniammal are all well-known folk singers of Tamil Nadu. These singers are renowned supporters and committed to universalizing and revitalizing acclaimed fervency of Folk Music of Tamil Nadu. Several local and traditional musical apparatuses are employed in the Tamil folk music. For the elegant part, all the ruling governments of Tamil Nadu had given their full support to folk music and folk arts. The original music lives here.

There are three art classes which presents to its unparalleled expertise from the dazzling, ancient days of Tamil Nadu. The literary sequences (Iyal), Music (Isai), and Drama (Nadagam) are those three prominent art forms. These kinds of music have firsthand display values. It is also admitted as well-liked entertaining performances of the state. This is also observed as most widely acknowledged geneses of music. The countryside musical thoughts are cheered as one of the highest popular songs styles in Tamil Nadu. The film music has involved in the most country music history and presented some super hit songs in this form. The popular, fundamental Tala implementation is represented in the outcome of this style. The mainstream ragas such as Thodi, Kavadi Chindhu, and Kalyani, Karaharapriya, widely applied within this style. In villages and countryside has various street plays like Therukoothu. This charming folkloric music is typically used in dances like solo and group dances. Through its music, it is progressing organized with long-established customs of masses of South India. These music and songs are a pulling power and attracting numerous tourists to Tamil Nadu.

The Therukoothu (Street Play), Thappattam, Karagattam and Kavadi attam, Dummy Horse dance and Peacock Dance, Kolattam, Kummi and Oyilattam are all rural courses of dance forms with folk music, mostly older but still in operation also cheered by Tamils with passion and ardency.

These performing arts by various communities of were widespread all over the state. These programmes have their own unique and cultural identity. This uniqueness is main reason for the tourist to get attracted to the areas were these arts were performed. More particularly the international tourist are interested and show passion over the ancient arts of Tamilnadu as they were practised with arts and music with western influence.

Srivilliputhur is one of the important cultural centres in Tamilnadu. It is one of the 108 Divya Desams, the most important abodes of Lord Vishnu. The history of Srivilliputhur centres around the Srivilliputhur temple is dedicated to Andal (8th century or earlier)¹⁴ the only female Alvar of the 12 Alvar saints of South India. Thousands of people from the state participate in the "Aadi Pooram"

festival celebrated in the Andal Temple. It is also important to mention that the Tamilnadu Government emblem is the Gopuram of Srivilliputhur Andal temple.

Other major tourist attraction in Tamilnadu is Nilgiri Mountain Railway. It was built by British in 1908. This train was operated through steam locomotive engines in the past but now it is operated through deisel engines. It was declared as world heritage site in addition to the Darjeeling Himalayan Railyway in 2005. This train connects Mettupalayam and Udhagamandalam or Ooty and the travel through this train in the valley gives us a fascinating tirp with a breathtaking view. It passes through 16 tunnels and 250 girder bridges. In a year approximately 5 lakh people travel in this train for enjoying its enchanting experience

Development Strategies of Tourism in Tamilnadu: The importance of tourism as a creator of job opportunities can be understood from the fact that in India every one million invested in tourism creates 47.5 jobs directly and around 85-90 jobs indirectly. In comparison, agriculture creates only 44.6 jobs and manufacturing a mere 12.6 jobs. Moreover tourism is the third largest foreign exchange earner after gems and jewellery and ready made garments¹⁵.

Tamilnadu is peaceful place to stay and many visitors would appreciate the oppurtunity to discover some of the important sites as their area of tourist interest. As this state is well connected with almost all the major roads and railways of India, it is well reached by the tourist. Tamilnadu is connected with all the domestic and international airports in India and other countries. The hospitality for the tourist was an important aspect to be kept in mind. Proper accomodation, tranport facility, hygienic food, proper guidance to the sites, fair within the budget of the tourist were the other important thing to be taken into account in the process of development of tourism.

Creation of centres throughout the state in the heritage sites for raising awareness of the value of the regional heritage and providing relevant advice to the local authorities and the local inhabitants. Opening of information centre for the tourists and an office to provide technical assistance to the district authorities for the development of legal tools for heritage protection. Proper advisement through electronic media and good marketing about the heritage/cultural sites would normally attracts the tourist towards the site. Development of heritage – based itinerary like regional identity brand, architectural, temple and handicraft trail etc.

Creation of a regional plan and a master plan which includes local protection and development plan. Development of cultural activities such as an interpretation centre and site museums which highlights the living heritages of Tamilnadu. In order to develop the tourism activity all over state it is necessary to consider and respect the local population and invite their participation in the development and implementation of tourism projects which creates jobs for local population under fair working conditions with improved health and social security. Another important work to be carried out is to create a resource centre for monitoring and mitigating the impact of tourism on the environment and humans in this fragile context. The awareness and importance of the state should be spread throughout India and abroad, to organize visits, conferences and any other programmes to promote the region. Community participation, adequate facilities including basic infrastructure without affecting ecology of tourists spot and regularising tourists' flow are essential for sustainable development of tourism in Tamilnadu.

The main objective of promoting tourism was to enhance economic activities, employment generation and community development. More facilities at spots will bring more revenue, more development and ultimately more rural employment and community development. Tourists will get an opportunity to interact with local people, understand their tradition, culture and lifestyle. They will participate in rural festivals, ride bullock cart, know about apiculture and farming, row boats, travel on coracles and buy their handicrafts. Such activities will ensure survival of art forms. Protection of sustainable use of bio diversity, sharing socio-economic benefits with local communities, minimising impact of tourism development on ecology should be ensured. Eco-tourism needed area specific policies, strategies and strict enforcement of rules for sustainability.

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