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FACTORS INFLUENCING THE ATTITUDE OF TOURISTS TOWARDS INDIAN TOURISM INDUSTRY: A CASE STUDY OF NAGAPATTINAM DISTRICT IN TAMILNADU

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ABSTRACT

Across the globe, there is not even a single country which does not to grow socially and economically. The rate of their growth highly relies on their efficient economic planning and implementation of appropriate policies and programmes. In order to lubricate the wheels of the economy, the acceleration of industrialization becomes inevitable. Obviously, the performance of industrial sectors significantly contributes to the socio-economic development of nation. In the long run, it is a solution for a chronic problem of unemployment which ensures reasonable standard of living of the people. The industrial growth leads to gradual poverty alleviation and also enhances the rate of GDP. Amongst various industries, tourism industry substantially assists the socio-economic developmental process by creating new avenues for employment for the workforce. Needless to say, its performance has, therefore, been drawing the attention of the government, policy makers, and researchers worldwide, owing to its importance in boosting the economic growth and development. On account of its potential and scope, there have been researches on this front being undertaken globally for framing suitable policies in time. India, amongst the developing countries, is not an exception. Rather, such researches are constantly being carried out by the researchers and the policies are being framed and implemented in the country. As it is a never-ending process, such researches should go on to upkeep the health of Indian economy. Based on this back ground, the current study has been conducted in the Nagapattinam district of Tamil Nadu, which is one of the important districts attracting the tourists from the nook and corner of the world. Apart from many other tourist destinations in the district, it has innumerable temples, churches, mosques etc. of historical importance and thereby there have been frequent visits of tourists. Of them,

Swetharanyeswarar temple of Thiruvenkadu at the Nagapattinam district attracts several tourists from all parts of the country in general and also from the world as well.

The objectives of this study is (i) to briefly present the profile of the study area, (ii) to outline the factors influencing the tourists of Swetharanyeswarar temple in Thiruvenkadu, Nagapattinam district of Tamil Nadu, and to suggest suitable measures to attract more tourists to the Study Area.

Key words: Tourism Industry, Economic-Growth, Economic Development

Introduction

Tourism is a global industry. However, some locations are too remote to be tourist destinations. Areas virtually unexplored only a few decades ago, have turned out to be successful tourist destinations. The South Polar Region has been successfully promoted by one of the America's most prominent tour companies. Little-known areas such as New Guinea, Australia and the remote Islands of Maldives in the South Indian Ocean are being visited by the travellers every year. The expenditure incurred by the international travellers has also been steadily rising constantly. Thus, the tourism industry is playing a vital role even in international trade. From the societal point of view, tourism involves interaction amongst the people of different cultures. Such interactions have made about 700 million people to cross international borders for tourism purposes. Tourism has come a long way since the time of the Sumerians and other ancient people who first began to travel for trade purposes. Now, tourism is viewed as an economic and social force of major proportions.

Travel is an ancient phenomenon. At that time, it was a fascination and a simple affair for the people. It was not considered as pleasure as the people do think now. The people in ancient times travelled as a merchant, a pilgrim a scholar, and an adventurer. Trade and Commerce used to motivate them to undertake such travel to distant lands in order to seek fortunes. Gradually, opening up of new trade routes gave a big boost to travel. Travellers from distant lands started moving about in large numbers and made contacts with one another. It resulted in increased flow of trade and commerce. Thereafter, such trade relations started gaining cultural rapport and better understanding amongst the people of diverse cultures.

Tamil Nadu is state in the south- eastern part of the Indian Peninsula. Tamil Nadu is previously a part of the United Madras Province, which was later partitioned based on languages. Tamil Nadu has more than 4,000 years of continuous cultural history. Tamil Nadu has some of the most remarkable temple architecture in the country, and a living tradition of music, dance, folk arts and fine arts. Tamil Nadu is well renowned for its temple towns a heritage sites, hill stations, waterfalls, national parks, local cuisine and the natural environment and wildlife. The state has the largest tourism industry in India with an annual growth rate of 16% In 2015 the number of domestic arrivals was at 33.3.5 million marking the state the most popular tourist destination in the country, and foreign arrivals numbered 4.68 million, the highest in the country, making it the most popular state for tourism in the country.

Profile of the Study Area

District of Nagapattinam has emerged due to bifurcation of Thanjavur district. According to its division, six taluks namely Sirkazhi, Tharangapadi, Mayiladuthurai, Valangaiman, Nagapattinam and Vedaranniyam were detached from their parent district i.e. Thanjavur. The earlier history of this district is more or less the same as of its parent district i.e. Thanjavur. Mayiladuthurai has also been made as a 38th district of Tamil Nadu recently. Tamil and Telugu are the main languages spoken in the district. Important fairs and festivals celebrated/organized in the district are Navarathri, Adi Pooram, Avani Moolam, Karthigai, Skandha Sashti, Thula Uthsava, Chithrai and the floating festival

Mahashivaratri, Panguni, Uthiram, 18 days Theerthavari festival, Wedding of the Lord and His consort on the Sukla Saphani day, Karthigai Deepam, Dhanur Pooja (Thiruvankadu), Pooam and Pongal.

The Nagapattinam district lies on the south of Cuddalore district and another part of the Nagapattinam district lies the south to the south of Karaikkal and Thiruvarur districts. Its northern boundary is about 75Km southwards from the Head Quarters of the Cuddalore district. Thanjavur district and Thiruvarur district flank it on the west and on the south and east it is bordered by the Bay of Bengal. The district lies between 10.25 and 11.40 North Longitude and 76.9 and 81.01 East longitude. The general geological formation of the district is Coreg Mountains, this river bifurcates about nine miles at the west of Thiruchirappalli into two branches, of which the northern one takes name of Colerain and the southern one retains that of the Cauvery. All along the course of Cauvery and its distributaries, on both the banks numerous narrow strips of river.

The population of the Nagapattinam district has grown from 4,25,127 in 1951 to 14,88,839 in 2001. The growth rate indicates that there has been a significant increase during the 1951-61 decade with the average growth rate being 3.48% per annum during this decade. The growth rate has however stabilized over the past three decades at about 1.65% per annum. According to the 2001 census, Mayiladuthurai taluk is the highly populated and Kilvelur taluk is the least populated in the district. There was a reduction of population of Nagapattinam taluk between 1971 and 1981 comprising bifurcated Thiruvarur.

The literacy level of the Nagapattinam district according to figures available for the year 1996 is 59.87% with male literacy level being more than the female literacy level. It is also observed that while the male literacy level has grown gradually from 62.70% in 1981 to 65.89% in 1996, there has been a steady increase in female literacy from 37.92% in 1981 to 49.03% in 1996.

Significance of the Study

Tourism is one of the main sources of revenue for a nation. It not only generates revenue for a country but also it creates employment opportunities through its allied sectors. Owing to its tremendous potential in revenue and employment generation, the tourism industry has a positive impact on economic growth and development of a country. This phenomenon has a universal applicability. Over and above, it leads to changes in dissemination of information on diverse customs and traditions of the people. Thus, unity in diversity is undoubtedly becomes the invaluable gift to the people throughout the world.

It results in numerous benefits and advantages it brings to and host country but real importance of Tourism comes from its nature and how it is defined, structured. Tourism contributes towards complete growth and development of a country: one by bringing numerous economic value and benefits; and, second, helping in build country's brand values, image and identity. Tourism industry goes beyond attractive destinations, to being an important economic growth contributor. It has several benefits and advantages which include the following;

- Growth the boost in economic activities.
- Boost wide scale industry revenues.
- Infrastructure development.
- Country's improved brand image.
- Source of foreign exchange earnings.
- Sources of employment generation.
- Connectivity and growth to local, regional and even the remotest area.
- Global connectivity.
- Improvement infrastructure and living standards.
- Cultural growth.

- Betterment of society.
- Introduction of new technologies.

Keeping in view, the researcher has made an attempt to study the satisfaction of tourists of Swetharanyeswarar temple in Thiruvankadu, Nagapattinam district of Tamil Nadu.

Literature Review

There have been several research studies being undertaken on Tourism from time to time. It is a continuous process for ensuring the industry healthy as it contributes significantly towards the economic growth and development. Literature Review made by the researcher has been given as under;

(Kumar N. T., 2009) had discussed the emerging trends in tourism marketing and focused on some of the initiatives taken by India and Thailand to promote tourism and found that every product has its own life similar to tourism product. It emphasized the need to think of destination life cycle of a product of tourism.

Internet is one of the important media accepted by today's generation. Information about holiday packages, easy navigability, attractive website design, interactivity, and customization enhance the service attributes of the websites. Increasing service components affect positively on customer satisfaction. Lack of confidence in financial aspects of transaction may affect tourism (Ansuman, 2010). The study found that while determining marketing strategies, only usage of new technologies is not sufficient to promote the product, but the reliability of the source, design, customization, interactivity.

Stakeholders' promotional efforts play important role in tourism promotion and development. Thus, need to study efforts of stakeholders in tourism development rises. As far as the advertisement media is concerned most of the hotelier and travel agent promote their product and so the destination in books, internet, signboards, newspaper and magazines. Radio, television, and brochures are rarely used for advertising media. As far as sale promotion techniques are concerned, discount and gift packages are used by most of the tourism industry and regarded as effective technique (Tarannum, 2007). However, it is insufficient as marketing is a continuous process. Tourists are ready to spend for their enjoyment, pleasure, and quality. While developing the product one must concentrate on dimensions of tourism's service quality. It is possible to model dimensions of the service quality by using SERVEQUAL. However, there are various issues plaguing the industry. One of them is the lack of professional marketing and co-ordination amongst nodal ministries. Proper facilitation, cleanliness, and hygiene at tourist spots are other.

Dr. Rajashri Ramesh Chavar" Dr. Sarang Shankar Bhola (2014) conducted a study on Indian Tourism whose findings revealed that physical and socio-cultural factors are responsible for growth of Indian tourism industry.

Objectives of the Study

Apart from presenting the profile of the study area and respondents, the primary objectives of the study are;

- To outline the factors influencing the tourists of Swetharanyeswarar temple in Thiruvankadu, Nagapattinam district of Tamil Nadu.
- To suggest suitable measures to attract more tourists to the Study Area.

Research Methodology

The study is predominantly descriptive in nature. Research methodology of the researcher comprises the following features;

Sampling Design:

- The Swetharanyeswarar temple of Thiruvenkadu, Nagapattinam district was selected as area of the study.
- 50 tourists were chosen as respondents by using convenience sampling technique.
- Preferably the tourists from outside the area of the study were selected.
- Equal number of males and females constituted the sample size.

Collection of Data:

- Both the primary and secondary data were used.
- Primary data was collected by the research through an interview schedule.
- Secondary data was collected from the secondary sources including the newspapers, magazines, journals, published documents, internet etc.

Analysis of Data

The collected data was then tabulated, edited and analyzed with the help of simple statistical tools such as mean, percentages etc.

Factors Influencing Tourism in the Study Area

Tourism has multi-activities. It touches nearly all the sectors of life. Rapid and continuous growth has been the key-note of tourism. The present day, a traveller comes from a wider social background and his tastes and desires are much more varied and his leisure time is much more restricted. Now- a-days people have started moving for much more restricted. Now a days people have started moving for exciting and exotic activities of mountaineering, water skiing, under water swimming, pony tracking etc. To utilize their leisure time, they like riding, shooting, etc. organized by large private group, constructing their own specially designed low priced accommodation and very often providing their own entertainment and other services. Tourism is, in fact, a composite phenomenon which embraces the incidence of a mobile population of travellers who are strangers to the places they visit.

During the study, the following factors have been identified as influencing factors of tourism in the study area;

Factors Influencing the Visit of Tourists

There are numerous factors influencing the visit of a particular destination. The following factors are influencing the visit of respondents as tabulated in Table 1.

Table 1: Factors Influencing the Visit

N=50

Factors	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Sculpture	17	34
Environment	03	6
Facilities	-	-
Communication	-	-
Others (social, cultural, personal)	30	60
Total	50	100

Source: Primary Data

As the Table 1 shows, the respondents reported that sculpture in the temple has been the significant influencing factor. However, as responded, 60 per cent of the factors include social, cultural

and personal factors. All other factors include the factors largely related to the sculpture of the temple and the conducive environment surrounding it such as boarding, lodging, cleanliness, water and sanitation, communication, transportation facilities and so on.

The factor-wise data is depicted in Chart 1 as under;

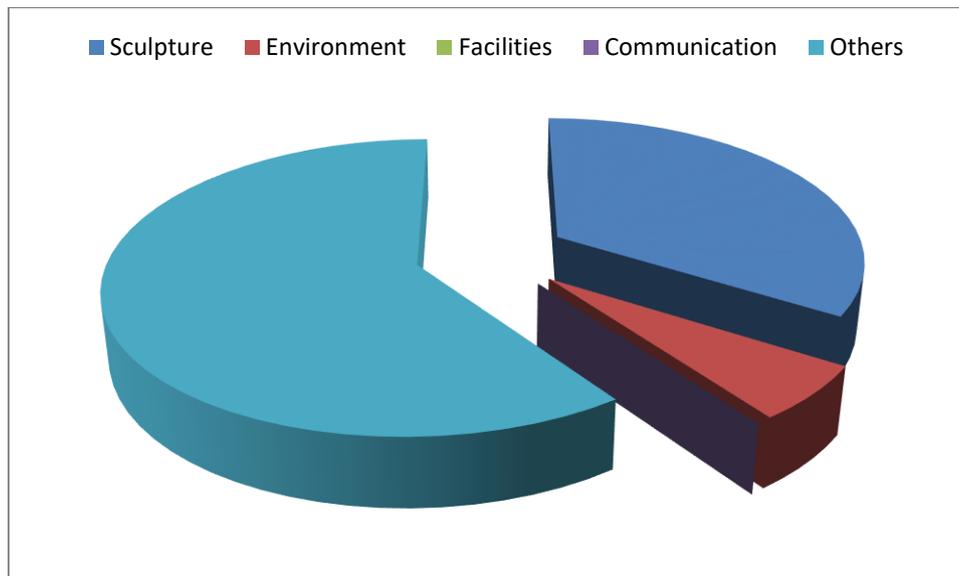


Chart 1: Factors Influencing the Visit

(Source: Primary Data)

Findings and Suggestions of the study

The respondents reported that sculpture in the temple has been the significant influencing factor. Further, as responded, 60 per cent of the factors constitute social, cultural and personal factors, in addition to its environment.

Based on the present study, the following suggestions are made;

- Adequate advertisement about the tourist destination (study area) can be made.
- Infrastructure may be developed to attract more tourists towards the temple.
- Transportation and communication may be improved to facilitate the travel of tourists.
- Suitable Tourism policies may be framed for attracting the domestic and foreign tourists to visit the temple.
- Local community and governmental coordination may be ensured for further development of Tourism in the study area.
- More attention on other influencing factors including communication, transportation, cleanliness, water facilities, etc. may be drawn for attracting more tourists towards the study area.

Limitations and Directions for the Future Research

The current study has the following limitations;

- Only one tourist destination and temple have been selected for the study. Other temples in Thiruvankadu are kept outside the purview of the study.
- Limited primary and secondary data have been used.
- May be considered as a micro-level study only to stimulate interest amongst the budding researchers.

Conclusion

Tourism industry has a positive impact on Economic Growth and Development. The tourism in the study area contributes considerably to the economic growth and development of the State of Tamil Nadu in particular and India in general. The area attracts more domestic tourists from the nearest places as compared with foreign tourists. Appropriate measures, if taken by the community and government, to attract more tourists to the study area, it will certainly enhance the income level, employment and standard of living of the people in the days to come.

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