

**A STUDY ON PILGRIMAGE TOURISM WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO
BIG TEMPLE, TANJORE**

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this paper is designed to search for the subjective and objective aspects of tourism services as a part of an overall pilgrimage experience. The aim of this paper is to determine and review the respondents' opinion regarding the general image of the temple and overall satisfaction towards each factors of big temple which has historic and cultural significance for some and is a venue of shrine pilgrimage for others. This paper will add to better understanding of the factors contributing to the enhancement of the tourist experience and thereby attract more tourists.

KEYWORDS: Attractions, Pilgrimage, Satisfaction level, Temple, Tourism, Tourist.

INTRODUCTION:

Religious tourism is considered as the oldest form of tourism. It has great potential as a growing phenomenon that would benefit from academic advances and applied improvements. About 240 million people travel every year to several major pilgrimage destinations, particularly Christians, Muslims and Hindus. Despite the high number of individuals interested in religious tourism, it remains among the least explored tourist activities in the world of modern tourism. There are two distinct aspects in religious tourism in India: The faith of the domestic tourist, who has a spiritual attachment to the religious places, the other is the 'foreign' tourist, who belong to different religion, region or country, for whom the religious place is the dimension of 'novelty', a sprtitual experience different from their own.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE:

Mario Katic (2014) explores that this paper describes and considers the nature of travel behaviour, its emic meaning to pilgrims and its connection to religious tourism and it reveals the significant influence on how we define the participants as pilgrims, tourist or pilgrimage and tourist.

Brohman (1996) opined that the third world countries must adopt proper tourism planning after consulting local people and tourism related investment and revenue should be used for the benefit of local community.

Md. Iqbal Sultan (2015) evaluate tourism infrastructure (i.e. transport, hotel etc.), economic significance of Religious Tourism and focus on environmental problems due to tourism development. Besides this, some suggestions have also been given to promote better tourism.

Xintong, Jü; Yuhui, Yang (2014), suggested that the government should change ideas, understand and plan Chongqing religious cultural tourism from the perspective of macro-tourism, integrate various resources and plan management as a whole. At the same time, the religious circles should also play an important role in religious cultural tourism

Noga Collins-Kreiner (2010) explores that Pilgrimage is one of the basic and oldest population mobility in the human world, and it has wide implications: political, social, cultural and economic. In this paper, geographical research on pilgrimage is reviewed, with attention to relevant findings from neighbouring disciplines.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

India the land of heritage is a world renowned land for sacred tours, temples and culture. Tamilnadu is having a lot of scope for the development of tourism industry in the country. The state is filled with many pilgrimage sites, heritage sites and sacred rivers. These locations are important part of religious tourism. This study focus on the perspective of tourists and their attitude and opinion towards

- Improving the tourist inflow
- Enhancing the image of Tamilnadu tourism
- Improving the service quality of the pilgrimage destination

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM:

Tourism has grown 25 percent in the past 10 years with the forecast of 1,500 million international arrivals by 2020, more than double the level at the moment. Service quality attained many new dimensions in its long journey, but the literature related to religious service quality is very little. The lack of information about pilgrims visiting big temple in erstwhile Tanjore district of

Tamilnadu in terms of their expectations and perceptions of services delivered in temple and during their journey. This research attempt to make an attempt to find tools to investigate the problems faced by pilgrims, and to evaluate the religious service quality in Big Temple, Tanjore.

OBJECTIVES OF THE RESEARCH:

- To analyse the various purpose of tourist visiting big temple.
- To analyse the facilities offered at the premises to the tourist.
- To analyse the satisfaction level of the tourist visiting the temple.

SCOPE OF THE STUDY:

The study measures the attitude and behaviour of tourists visiting big temple, Thanjavur. From this study, we can analyse the cultural heritage, Potential usage of big Temple by tourism department. Attitude, Perception & Satisfaction of tourists visiting the temple. This survey was conducted from March 16 to April 16, 2016.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY:

- The study is confined only in perspective of big temple and it may not be applicable to other tourist spots
- The preferences of the tourist may vary with the time and economic conditions of the tourists.
- The data was collected within one-month time period.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY:

This research follows the survey research methodology. Primary data was collected through survey method by distributing questionnaires to tourists visiting big temple. The questionnaire was carefully designed by taking into the account the parameters of this study. Convenient methods of sampling were used for this study. 251 tourists visited big temple were included for the study. 15 tourists' opinion were used for pilot study.

DATA ANALYSIS & INTERPRETATION:

In the present scenario preferences among tourist varies from one person to another person. So, some dimensions have been used to find those preferences such as frequency analysis of demographic variables.

FREQUENCY ANALYSIS OF DEMOGRAPHIC VARIABLES:

Variables	Category	Frequency	% frequency
Gender	Male	153	61
	Female	98	39
Age	11-20 years	18	7.2
	21-30 years	182	72.5
	31-40 years	37	14.7
	Above 40 years	14	5.6
Marital status	Single	212	84.5
	Married	39	15.5
Family Members	Up to 2	7	2.8
	3-4	187	74.5
	5-6	41	16.3
	Above 6	16	6.4
Location	Tamilnadu	220	87.6
	Andhra Pradesh	20	8
	Kerala	9	3.6
	Madhya Pradesh	2	0.8
Salary	10000-25000	60	23.9
	26000-40000	23	9.2
	41000-50000	122	48.6
	Above 50000	20	8
Purpose of the visit	Leisure	183	72.9
	Recreation	7	75.7

	Research	13	5.2
	Pilgrimage	48	19.1
Stay	Home stay	133	53
	Hotel/Resort	118	47
Arrival	Car	120	47.8
	Bus	79	31.5
	Train	31	12.4
	Van	21	8.4
Mode for dharshan	Special tickets	73	29.1
	Pass	6	2.4
	influenced person	17	6.8
	General queue	155	61.8
Holidays lasting	Every few years	38	15.1
	Once a year	55	21.9
	Several times a year	158	62.9
Accompanying the current visit	No one	4	1.6
	Partner	4	1.6
	Family	94	37.5
	Friends	144	57.4
	Co-Workers	5	2

Source: Primary data

Above data shows that 61% are male and 39% are female. It has been inferred that many tourists preferred general queue for Swamidharshan. Many tourists opined that their purpose of tour is for leisure. Large number of People from Tamilnadu visited big temple when comparing other states. Many tourists preferred home stay. It has been inferred that many visitors tour several times a year.

SATISFACTION LEVEL OF THE RESPONDENTS REGARDING VARIOUS FACILITIES AT BIG TEMPLE

Variables	Category	Frequency	% frequency
Swamidharshan in temple	Highly satisfied	168	66.9
	Satisfied	82	32.7
	Neutral	1	0.4
Quality of prasadam	Highly satisfied	154	61.4
	Satisfied	62	24.7
	Neutral	29	11.6
	Dissatisfied	6	2.4
Basic facility	Highly satisfied	114	45.4
	Satisfied	106	42.2
	Neutral	31	12.4
Service of the guide	Highly satisfied	13	5.2
	Satisfied	141	56.2
	Neutral	83	33.1
	Dissatisfied	12	4.8
	Highly Dissatisfied	2	.8
Service of the priest	Highly satisfied	15	6.0
	Satisfied	176	70.1
	Neutral	58	23.1
	Dissatisfied	2	.8

Source: primary data

Above data shows that many respondents are highly satisfied with Swamidharshan and quality of prasadam and many respondents were dissatisfied with the service of the guide.

FINDINGS:

- It was found that 61% of the respondents were male and 39% of the pilgrims were female.
- It was found that 72.5% of the respondents were in the age group of 21-30 years and 5.6% of the respondents are above 40 years.
- It was found that 85.5% of the unmarried respondents were taken for this study and 15.5% of the married respondents.
- It was found that 74.5% of the respondents consist of 3-4 family members and 6.4% of the respondents consist of above 6 members in their family.
- It was found that 87.6% of the respondents are from Tamilnadu and 0.8% of the respondents are from Madhya Pradesh.
- It was found that, 48.6% of the respondent's salary in the range of 41000-50000 and 8% of the respondent's salary in the range of 50000.
- It was found that 72.9% of the respondents opined leisure tour and 2.8% of the respondents opined recreation with regard to purpose of tour.
- It was found that 53% of the respondents prefer homestay and 47% of the respondents prefer hotel/resort.
- It was found that 47.8% of the respondents prefer car and 8.4% of the respondents prefer van to reach the big temple.
- It was found that 62.9% of the respondent's tour for several times a year and 15.1% of the respondent's tour for every few years.
- It was found that 61.8% of the respondents prefer general queue and 2.4% of the respondents prefer pass.
- It was found that 57.4% of the respondents accompanied with their friends and 1.6% of the respondents accompanied with their partner.
- It was found that 66.9% of the respondents are highly satisfied and 0.4% of the respondents are neutral with regard to swamidarshan.
- It was found that 61.4% of the respondents are highly satisfied and 2.4% of the respondents are dissatisfied with regard to quality of prasadam.

- It was found that 45.4% of the respondents are highly satisfied and 12.4% of the respondents are neutral with regard to basic facility.
- It was found that 56.2% of the respondents are satisfied and 0.8% of the respondents are highly dissatisfied with regard to service of the guide.
- It was found that 70.1% of the respondents are satisfied and 0.8% of the respondents are highly dissatisfied with regard to service of priest

SUGGESTIONS:

- It is suggested to the respective officials of Big Temple to improve the basic facilities like accommodation, restaurants, health care centres and ATM facilities near the temple.
- It is suggested to the respective officials of Big Temple to improve the genuineness and decency of the tourist guides in order to provide proper services to pilgrims.
- It is suggested to the respective officials of Big Temple to improve the knowledge of the tourist guide to provide proper information to the pilgrims.
- It is suggested to the respective officials of Big Temple to provide fan facilities in the required places inside the temple to make the pilgrims feel comfortable.
- It is suggested to the respective officials of Big Temple to improve the safety towards path of restrooms.
- It is suggested to the respective officials of Big Temple to provide online reservation system for swami dharshan.
- It is suggested to the respective officials of Big Temple to install the Wi-Fi facilities provided by the government.

CONCLUSION:

Tourism industry is important for the economic development of any country. Among the pilgrimage tourists, most of them are giving preference to Big Temple, in terms of tour at southern states. In order to provide the tourists with better experience, the government is trying to sophisticate them with more facilities. The findings of this study will be definitely helpful to the officials to identify the area which needs attention. It is also important to safeguard the interests of both locals and the tourists.

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