

A STUDY ON PILGRIMAGE TOURISTS SATISFACTION AND DESTINATION LOYALTY WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO SRI RANGANATHA SWAMY TEMPLE, SRIRANGAM, TAMIL NADU.

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Abstract : Tourism industry is considered to be one of the top priorities for the developing countries because of its role in the economy by means of generating foreign exchange earnings, employment generation and for the promotion of international understanding. Pilgrimage tourism is a form of tourism taking place in the heritage sites such as temple, shrine or any other place which are important to the tourists' faith and belief. Understanding tourists' preference and expectations are important for tourism department, tour operators and any tourism destination promoter. This paper investigates the attitude and opinion about the pilgrimage tourists visiting Srirangam/Tiruchirappalli in Tamil Nadu state of India. 250 tourists visiting Srirangam/Tiruchirappalli were included for this study. Structured questionnaire which comprises of questions pertaining to infrastructure and amenities at Sri Ranganatha Swamy Temple, Srirangam, Tamil Nadu tourism was used. It was found that tourists are satisfied with the Swami darshan and quality of the prasadam inside the temple. It is suggested to enhance the service of the basic facilities and service of the tourist guide in the Srirangam Temple.

IndexTerms – Pilgrimage Tourism, Tourist satisfaction, Facilities, Tourism promotion.

I. INTRODUCTION

Today, Tourism is considered to be one of the important industries throughout the world. Development in international travel means the more people travel further, more frequently than ever before. Pilgrimage Tourism is a ritual journey to a non-substitutable site personifying the values of the traveler to attain peace. It is an individual's journey for holy place and territory; the visitors seek to experience the sense of identity with sites of historic and artistic meaning. This includes the activities taking place before choosing the pilgrimage site, activities taking place during the time of pilgrimage, and the level of satisfaction after visiting the pilgrimage site. According to the present-day use, the term 'pilgrim' refers to religious traveler and the 'tourist' refers to a visitor and it is a culturally built process that covers the purpose of the visitor.

1.1 Tourism in India

Tourism is considered to be important industry in India for a number of years. Tourism industry has a key role in improving the economic development of a country. As per the World Travel and Tourism Council estimation, tourism sector generated ₹15.24 lakh crores (US\$210 billion) in 2017 and created 41.622 million jobs. Tourism industry in India contributes almost 8% of the country's GDP, which stands at fifth place from the top contributors in the economy. As per the 2017 Travel and Tourism Competitiveness Report, India ranked 40th among 136 countries in the world. In 2017, India registered a growth of 15.6 % in the foreign tourist's arrival rate where one crore foreign tourists visited India compared to 88.9 lakhs foreign visitors in 2016 (Indian Tourism Statistics, 2017). The Indian tourism market has a share of 1.18 % in the world tourism market (Financial Express, Dated Dec 18, 2018). For the year 2017, the states like Tamil Nadu, Maharashtra, Uttar Pradesh of India attracted lot of inbound and domestic tourists and contributed almost 50 Percent of the foreign exchange earnings (Business Today, Dated: April 5, 2018)

1.2 Tourism in Tamil Nadu

Tamil Nadu state in India, has managed to retain its first position in the list of destinations having the maximum number of domestic and international tourists visited India for the past 3 years. The major sites which bring lot of tourists are the UNESCO recognized World Heritage sites. Tamil Nadu has 5 such sites such as "Great Living Chola Temples – Brihadesvara Temple (Gangaikonda Cholapuram), Airavateshwarar Temple (Darasuram) and Brihadeeswarar Temple (Thanjavur), Group of Monuments at Mamallapuram and Nilgiri Mountain Railway at Ooty". The state has about 33,000 ancient temples, some even 1400 years old, located all over. In 2017, nearly 34.50 crore domestic tourists and 0.48 crore foreign tourists visited Tamil Nadu (Times of India Newspaper Dated: July 11, 2018). The annual growth rate of Tamil Nadu tourism industry is 16% and it attracted 20.1

percent of total domestic tourists visited India in 2017 (IBEF Report June 2018 Issue)). Out of the 2.4 crore foreigners visited India in 2017, Tamil Nadu accounted for 19%. (Business Today Newspaper Dated: Apr 5,2018)

1.3 About Srirangam

Srirangam is situated in the Tiruchirappalli district of Tamil Nadu state in India. Tiruchirappalli is the 4th major city in Tamil Nadu and it is situated in the central Tamil Nadu across the banks of River Kaveri. Sri Ranganatha Swamy Temple in Srirangam is one of the major pilgrimages centers in the district and it is 7 km away from Tiruchirappalli. The Temple area extends about 155 acres which has 81 shrines, 21 towers combined into a single complex making it as the world's largest functioning Hindu temple. Sri Ranganatha Swamy Temple in Srirangam is the foremost of the 8 self-manifested shrines of Lord Vishnu. There are 21 magnificent towers in all prakaras providing a unique experience to any visitor.

2. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY:

- To ascertain the demographic profile of the tourists' visiting pilgrimage tourism destination- Sri Ranganatha Swamy Temple Srirangam, Tiruchirappalli, Tamil Nadu.
- To find out the purpose of tourists visiting Srirangam.
- To find out the tourists' opinion about the various facilities available in Srirangam.

To ascertain the opinion of tourists with regard to various characteristics pertaining to amenities available in the tourism destination of Srirangam, Tiruchirappalli

3. LITERATURE REVIEW:

Gill and Reed (1999), stated that pilgrimage tourism is a long journey in search of enlightenment and sacred knowledge. Richard Sharpley & Priya Sundaram (2005), concluded that there are two major set of visitors, that is those who pay a visit regularly for spiritual purpose and others visit occasionally. The temporary visitors are further divided into sub-groups based on spiritual and non-spiritual aspects. According to Oppermann (2000), loyalty of tourists can be expressed by way of revisiting and recommending the destinations to others and also study about tourism can be useful for the policy makers, tourism destination promoters, and other stakeholders. According to Cerviño and Cubillo (2005), the amenities and facilities offered by a tourism destination are the important features of services that lead the tourists to choose that service over others.

According to Boo, Soyoung et al., (2006), "Destination image is defined as an attitudinal concept comprising of the sum of beliefs, notions, and impersonations that a tourist holds about a destination". The destination image plays a predominant role for choosing the destination, experiences during the visit of the destination and for the intentions to recommend and revisit in the near future (Bigné et al., 2001; Chen and Tsai, 2007). C B Venkata Krishna Prasad; M R Jhansi Rani (2015) asserted that in pilgrimage tourism, the tourist seeks a pleasant peace of mind and a sense of spiritual satisfaction. The pilgrimage satisfaction mainly depends on factors like transportation, accommodation, boarding facilities and facilities available in the temples. Hence, better understanding of the tourist is required while designing the market strategies.

Poria et al., (2003) observed that religion plays a significant role on tourists' spending behaviour and their inclination to prefer any site. According to Alexandra-Maria Drule (2014), World Tourism Organization (UNWTO, 2008, 2014), concerned about the role of religion in enhancing the demand for tourism and also to diffuse about best practices to develop sustainable religious tourism destinations.

According to Jauhari, Vinnie; Sanjeev, Gunjan M.(2010), the pilgrimage tourism has the components that have deep veneration, as well as ritual, the tourist satisfaction, and hygienic issues, need to be better planned and executed. The dynamic approach has to be implemented across different stakeholders to enable return visits to the pilgrimage sites. Unlike other forms of tourism, the spiritual sites are often revisited again and again. According to Vijayanand (2012), merging of pilgrimage with cultural tourism & nature-based tourism can enhance the pilgrimage tourism and also ensure the regional growth. According to Madhavi Chockalingam & A. Aurubindo Ganesh (2010), various factors influence the environment in the problem in the problem intensity faced by tourists.

4. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY:

Questionnaire Design

This study utilized a questionnaire as a survey instrument. This study included both Primary and secondary data. Primary data was collected using a well-developed/structured questionnaire from the respondents. The opinion expressed by the tourists visiting Srirangam/Tiruchirappalli was included for this study. Convenience sampling is adopted for the collection of information. 250 tourists visiting Srirangam/Tiruchirappalli were administered with the questionnaire of which 205 tourists' data were found to be valid for this study. Pilot study was done with 25 tourists. The collected data were analyzed using the SPSS software package. Percentage analysis, chi-square and factor analysis were used for this study.

5. ANALYSIS:

5.1 Demographic profiles of the tourists

Table 5.1 Tourists Demographic profile

Gender	Frequency	Percent	Age	Frequency	Percent
Male	139	67.80	17-27 years	47	22.93
Female	66	32.20	28-37 years	75	36.59
Total	205	100.00	38-47 years	53	25.85
			49 and above	30	14.63
			Total	205	100.00
Education	Frequency	Percent	Employment	Frequency	Percent
Below undergraduate	52	25.37	Government employed	29	14.15
Under graduate	101	49.27	Business	75	36.59
Post graduate	39	19.02	Unemployed	59	28.78
Others	13	6.34	Others	42	20.49
Total	205	100.00	Total	205	100.00
Income Per Annum In Lakhs	Frequency	Percent	Purpose	Frequency	Percent
<1.5 Lakhs	40	19.51	Pilgrimage/ Spiritual tour	154	75.12
1.5 Lakhs to 3 Lakhs	81	39.52	Education/ Research	8	3.90
3 Lakhs to 5 Lakhs	48	23.41	Cultural activities	4	1.95
>5 Lakhs	36	17.56	Leisure/Pleasure/ Recreation	23	11.22
Total	205	100.00	Visiting friends & Relatives	5	2.44
			Package Tour	11	5.37
			Total	205	100.00

Inference:

From the Table 5.1, it is clear that 68% of the pilgrims are male and 32% of the pilgrims are female.

- The age group of 28 to 37 years represent 36% of the tourists visited Srirangam temple, the age group of 38 to 47 years represent 26% of the total tourists, while 23% of the tourists represent the age group 17 to 27 years and the above 49 years age group represent the remaining 15% of the tourists visited Sri Ranganatha Swamy Temple, Srirangam.
- When it comes to educational qualification of the tourists, tourists with under graduation qualification represent 49% of the total tourists, while 26% of the tourists have not completed their under graduation, the tourists with postgraduate qualification represent 19% of the total share and the balance 6% of the tourists have education qualification above post-graduation.
- The business people represent 37% of the total tourists visited the Sri Ranganatha Swamy Temple while 29% of the people are unemployed. The other category has a share of 20% of the tourist visited the temple and the balance 14% of the tourists are employed in the government sector.
- About annual income of the tourists, 39% of the tourists have an annual income of 1.5 lakhs to 3 lakhs, 23% of the tourists fall under 3 to 5 lakhs category while 20% of the tourists have annual income less than 1.5 lakhs. Around 18% of the tourists represent the 5 lakhs and above income per annum category.

5.2 Reliability analysis

Reliability analysis for the attitude and opinion about the pilgrimage tourist with regard to the Srirangam, Tiruchirappalli, is given below.

Table 5.2 Reliability scores

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.854	60

Inference:

The table 5.2 shows that the component and total reliability scores. The findings show that reliability coefficient for all dimensions were above 0.70, which indicates high level of internal consistency for the scale.

5.3 Tourist satisfaction about the facilities available in Sri Ranganatha Swamy Temple, Srirangam.**Table 5.3 Tourist satisfaction about the facilities**

Item	Mean	Std. Deviation
Parking facilities	3.85	1.066
Bus Stand	4.23	0.782
Drinking water	4.29	0.787
Water to wash	3.79	0.97
Washroom facility	3.96	0.997
Cloakroom facility	3.79	0.869
Swami dharshan timings display	3.85	0.938
Information about the temple	3.98	0.77
Battery operated car	4.51	0.745
Carpet for walking	3.65	0.997
Thatched roof	3.7	1.003
Lighting	4.52	0.623
Ventilation	4.44	0.681
Accommodation	3.63	0.928
Hair offering place	2.99	0.955
Fan facilities	4.29	0.748
Audio Systems	3.73	0.882
Online reservation	3.38	0.985
Transport Facilities	4.55	0.696
Restaurant availability	4.08	0.801
Prasadham hygienic	4.18	0.787
Prasadham is fresh	4.13	0.807
Quality of prasadam	3.98	0.863
People serving prasadam are neat	4.01	0.843
Price of prasadam	4	0.921
Information and history of Temple is available	3.9	0.825
Prepaid guides are available	3.62	0.721
Guides are neat	3.71	0.748
Priest providing information about temple	3.93	0.814
Money spent for darshan is normal	3.92	0.801
Queuing system	4.22	0.758
Staff non-forcing for money	4.43	0.728
Crowd control by police personal	4.1	0.817
First aid availability	3.54	0.789
Healthcare facilities availability	3.45	0.842

Security and safety	3.77	0.703
Banking facilities	3.72	0.912
Enforcement of dress code inside the temple	4.15	0.951
Allowing only Hindus to enter the temple	4.05	0.963
Enforcing banning the Mobile phones inside the temple	4.05	0.862
Provision of surveillance camera	4.44	0.716
Security checkup is required	4.54	0.645
Atmosphere of temple is sacred	4.39	0.882
Temple reachability	4.52	0.599
Positive word of mouth about the temple	4.39	0.66
Local people are friendly	4.21	0.693

Inference:

Opinion given by the tourists about various facilities of Srirangam Temple/Tiruchirappalli is given in Table 5.3. Maximum value of 4.55 is given to the item- “Transport facilities during festivals were sufficient” and minimum value of “2.99 is given to availability of place to offer hair nearer to the temple”.

5.4 Overall satisfaction level of tourists in Sri Ranganatha Swamy Temple, Srirangam**Table 5.4 Overall satisfaction level of tourists**

Particulars	Mean	S. D
Facilities available for Swami darshan	4.20	0.72
Quality of Prasadham stall	3.94	0.73
Basic facilities inside the temple	3.83	0.74
Service of the guide	3.36	0.65
Service of the priest	3.86	0.71
Annadhanam Scheme	3.85	0.803

Inference:

Overall satisfaction level of tourists visiting Sri Ranganatha Swamy Temple, Srirangam Temple/Tiruchirappalli is given in Table 5.4. Maximum value of 4.20 is given to “Facilities available for Swami darshan” and minimum value of 3.36 is given to “Service of the guide” in the temple.

5.5 Tourists purpose of visit to Sri Ranganathaswamy Temple, Srirangam**Table 5.5 Purpose of the visit to the temple**

Particulars	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Pilgrimage/ spiritual tour	75.1	75.1
Education/ research	3.9	79.0
Cultural activities	2.0	81.0
Leisure/ pleasure/ recreation	11.2	92.2
For Visiting friends & relatives	2.4	94.6
Package tour	5.4	100.0
Total	100.0	

Inference:

From the table 5.5 it is clear that 75.1% of the tourists opined purpose of visit to Srirangam as “Pilgrimage/spiritual tour”, 11.2% of the tourists opined about purpose as “leisure/ pleasure/ recreation”, 5.4% of the tourists opined about purpose as “package tour”, 3.9% of the tourists opined about purpose as “education/ research”, 2.4% of the tourists opined about purpose as “visiting friends & relatives” and 2% of the tourists opined about purpose as part of cultural activities.

5.6 Chi-square test for the demography of the pilgrims’ vs recommending the temple by the pilgrims to others**Table 5.6 Chi-square test for the demography of the pilgrims’ vs recommending the temple**

Demographic Variable	CHI-SQUARE	DF	ASYMP Sig
Gender	5.289a	2	0.071
Education	13.156a	6	0.041
Age	20.791a	6	0.020
Occupation	8.861a	6	0.182
Income	9.418a	8	0.308

Null Hypothesis – Ho – There is no significant relationship between the demography of the pilgrims and the pilgrims recommending the temple to others.

Inference:

From the table 5.6, the P values of Education and Age of the pilgrims are 0.041, 0.020 respectively, which are lower than the commonly accepted level of 0.05. So, we have to reject the null hypothesis. That means there is a significant relationship between the Education and Age of the pilgrims and their opinion towards recommending the temple to others. P values of Gender, Occupation, and Income of the pilgrims are 0.071, 0.182, 0.308 respectively which are higher than the commonly accepted level of 0.05. So, we have to accept the null hypothesis. That means there is no significant relationship between the Gender, Occupation, and Income of the pilgrims and their opinion towards recommending the temple to others.

5.7 Chi-square test for the demography of the pilgrim’s vs opinion towards willingness to come to the temple again**Table 5.7 Chi-square test for the demography vs willingness to come to the temple again**

DEMOGRAPHIC VARIABLE	CHI-SQUARE	DF	ASYMP Sig
Gender	1.422a	3	0.070
Education	12.343a	9	0.195
Age	16.186a	9	0.043
Occupation	29.837a	9	0.001
Income	33.897a	12	0.001

Null Hypothesis – Ho – There is no significant relationship between the gender of pilgrims and opinion towards willingness to come to the temple again.

Inference:

From the table 5.7, the P values of Age, Occupation, and Income of the pilgrims are 0.043, 0.001 and 0.001 respectively which are lower than the commonly accepted level of 0.05. So, we have to reject the null hypothesis. That means there is a significant relationship between Age, Occupation, and Income of the pilgrims and opinion towards willingness to come to the temple again. P values of Gender and Education of the pilgrims are 0.070, 0.195 respectively which are higher than the commonly accepted

level of 0.05. So, we have to accept the null hypothesis. That means there is no significant relationship between the Gender and Education of the pilgrims and opinion towards willingness to come to the temple again.

6. LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY:

- The opinion expressed by tourists visited Srirangam, Tiruchirappalli may not be applicable to other pilgrimage tourism destinations.
- The sample size is confined within the region of Srirangam, Tiruchirappalli destination.
- The sample size may not be very large to generalize the outcome and opinion expressed by tourists about particular place at a particular point of time may not be applicable to all the places and all times.

7. CONCLUSION:

For the economic growth of any nation, tourism sector is very vital. Tourists are giving utmost importance to the places like Srirangam, first among 108 Vaishnavite Divya desham. In order to provide a better experience to tourists visiting Srirangam and to make new tourists to visit Srirangam, concerned officials have to concentrate more on the requirements of the tourists. Findings of this study will be definitely useful to the concerned officials of Srirangam Temple to understand about the expectations of the tourists visiting Srirangam Temple. The twin roles of safeguarding the interests of the tourist and the host people (residents of Srirangam) convenience have to be considered appropriately.

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