

GENESIS OF TOURISM MANAGEMENT IN KANYAKUMARI DISTRICT - A STUDY

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Abstract

Management is the control and organizing of a business or other organization. Management in all business and organizational activities is the act of getting people together to accomplish desired goals and objectives using available resources efficiently and effectively. Tourism management comprises planning, organizing, staffing, leading or directing and controlling an organization (a group of one or more people or entities) or effected for the purpose of accomplishing a goal. The international tourism organizations emerged with the objective of developing and promoting the subject of tourism. There are numerous international organizations existing today. Some of these organizations are specifically concerned with development and promotions of tourism at the international level while others deal with development and promotion of tourism in a particular region. Ministry of Tourism, Government of India. I.T.D.C. Ministry of Tourism, Government of Tamil Nadu and T.T.D.C. jointly played an important role for promoting tourism in Kanyakumari district.

Keywords : Sargent committee – Tourism festivals – Natyanjali – Rejhla Race – Tourist Gnarl – Tourism Vehicles – Tourist friendly an to Rickshaws.

Introduction

The first conscious and organized efforts to promote tourism in India was made in the year 1945 C.E., when a committee was setup by the Government of India under the chairmanship of Sir John Sargent, the then educational advisor to the Government of India⁶³. The main objective of the committee was survey the potentialities of developing tourist traffic in the country. Tourism in India developed properly only after a Central Tourist Organisation was setup as a result of the recommendation of the Sargent Committee. It was only after the creation of a separate tourist traffic branch in the year 1947 C.E. that whole time attention was paid to the development of tourist traffic in India and a separate tourist organization should be at a centre with regional offices in metropolitan cities of Mumbai, Delhi, Kolkata and Chennai.¹ Next to an Adhoc Tourist Committee was appointed in the year 1948 C.E. This committee was entrusted with the job of suggesting ways and means of promoting tourist traffic to India.

One of the major recommendations of the Sargent Committee was that the work of development of tourist traffic in India should be undertaken on a methodical basis by a separate organization. As a result of this recommendation, a separate tourist traffic branch was setup in the Ministry of Transport in the year 1949 C.E. with the main objective of development of tourist traffic in India. It was on 1 March 1958 that a separate tourism department was created in the Ministry of Transport to deal with all matters concerning tourism.² The Department of Tourism now became an attached non-participating office of the Ministry of Tourism and Civil Aviation head by the Director General of Tourism. Another important step during this period (1955-56) was the opening of a chain of tourist offices both in India and abroad.⁶⁶

Following the report of the Ad-hoc Committee on tourism also known as the Jha committee (1963), which recommended that the public sector should assume a more active and positive role in promoting tourism, the Government of India setup in 1965 in the department of tourism.³ In 1960 C.E. the Government setup the India Tourism Development Corporation Ltd. in Delhi. The I.T.D.C. has established a marketing divisions at its head quarters in New Delhi to assist the travel industry through the co-ordinated sales promotions of its range of tourist services. The I.T.D.C. played a major role to develop tourism throughout India. The tourism Development corporations in all the state are jointly functioning under I.T.D.C., which is under the control of the Ministry of Tourism, Government of India.⁴

Tamil Nadu is the only state in India, where we could travel all the twenty four comfortably and confidently because of its rich communications facilities. Till the year 1968, there was no separate department in Tamil Nadu for the development of tourism. In 1971. C.E. the T.T.D.C. was setup with the main objective of promoting tourism in Tamil Nadu⁵. At present, its main functions are concentrated in providing accommodation and restaurant facilities in important tourist places and on the operation of coach tours for the tourists both from inland and abroad. For the convenience of the tourists, the Tamil Nadu Tourism Department established Tourist Centres at important places in Tamil Nadu, Delhi and Kolkatta. It also established Tourist offices at Chennai, Chidambaram, Mamallapuram, Vailankanni, Ooty, Madurai< Kanyakumari, Tirunelveli and Thiruchirappalli⁶.

Ministry of Tourism in Tamil Nadu

Tamil Nadu has a separate Ministry of Tourism. The Government of Tamil Nadu has constituted a state level Tourism Advisory Committee to advice the Government in formulating tourism promotion policies. The tourism promotion schemes should be carefully prepared to project the state in the proper perspective in the National and International tourism market. T.T.D.C. plans

have been drawn up to provide the required infrastructural facilities apart from creating new tourist attractions and picnic spots.⁷

Role of T.T.D.C in the Development of Tourism in Tamilnadu

T.T.D.C has become a household name among the travelling public and tourist alike. The service offered by the T.T.D.C. are much sought after by somestic as well as foreign tourists. T.T.D.C. offers a number of coach tours with less expenditure and it is extremely popular among visitors to Tamil Nadu from abroad. It operates twenty seven types of coach tours from Chennai. The corporation has 24 luxury coaches which also include A/C coaches. It also offers vans and cars to tourists on hire basis. Apart from T.T.D.C. coaches theTamil Nadu Government is also running bus services to all the important tourist spots and cities in Tamil Nadu. During tourist seasons the transport corporations operate special bus services to the tourist places. The T.T.D.C. is operating the largest chain of hotels in Tamil Nadu. It established Hotel Tamil Nadu in important cities like Chennai, Coimbatore, Madurai, Tiruchirappalli, Vailakanni, Rameswaram and Kanyakumari etc.,⁸

The T.T.D.C. is a pioneer in providing clean and comfortable accommodation for the tourist at affordable rataes. Besides providing accommodation and transport facilities,T.T.D.C. offers boating facilities at Ooty, Yercaud, Kodaikanal, Pichavaran and Muthukadu. Wind surfriding have also been introduced at Muttukadu back water. Telescope houses have been established at Ooty, Natyanjali at Chidambarm, Tea& Tourism festival at Ooty and Pongal festival⁹. Tourism week celebrations and All India Tourist and Industrial fair at Chennai. These festivals attract lakhs of people.The T.T.D.C published tourist materials like brochures, posters, picture-posters, picture-post cards, pamphlets, magazines and films of outstanding quality and effectiveness. The T.T.D.C. had certain objectives.¹⁰ They are:

- ❖ Area development approach, keeping foreign tourists in ming.
- ❖ Encouraging private sector investment in Tourism.
- ❖ Promotion of local and domestic tourism.
- ❖ Man power development in the hotel and tourism industry.
- ❖ Adequate publicity for tourism promotion in India and abroad.
- ❖ Promotion of cultural tourism, fairs and festivals.
- ❖ Developing facilities for adventure tourism and beach tourism.
- ❖ Provision of shopping facilities.
- ❖ Provision of transport facilities to tourists.
- ❖ Selection and marking of land both government and private for construction of hotels and allied projects.

Development Activities in Kanyakumari District

The Tamil Nadu Government declared tourism an Industry. In order to promote tourism, in Kanyakumari district. The government gave concession and subsidy to tourism projects. These concessions will contribute to the cause of tourism promotion and consequent uplift of the economic conditions of the people, especially the weaker section who can benefit from the promotion of tourism in their areas.

Firstly the local Tourist Advisory Committee at Kanyakumari functioned in grand manner. In the year 1958, the additional member of L.T.T.A.C. were nominated¹¹. To improve tourist facilities, some important changes have taken place and the new constitution formed to the State Tourist Traffic Advisory Committee. A tourist office had been opened at Nagercoil and a Gazetted officer under the designation of 'Tourist Officer' was appointed to promote tourism in the district¹². The tourist office at Nagercoil continues to render useful assistance to the tourists. The number of tourists both foreign and domestic visiting the state increased considerably during the year. To provide suitable accommodation to the tourist, one Tourist Bungalow at Nagercoil constructed under the Tourist, development plan during the year 1961 C.E⁷⁷. The tourist Information Bureau continued to function satisfactory, attached to this centre are a library, a reading room, a film library and a sales counter. Government catering was done in the Tourist Bungalow and it was run on no profit and no loss basis. The exhibition wing of the Tourism Department participated in seven major exhibitions in the year 1966 C.E¹³.

Pongal tourist festival and summer festival were organized on a grand scale. To portray the best of Tamil Culture heritage, the Pongal festival in 1973 C.E. was organized on a grand scale and the venture earned appreciation of tourist and travel agents¹⁴. At district levels, important tourists were received by the Tourist officer at Kanyakumari and Nagercoil etc. and celebrated Pongal festival, Classical dances and Folk dances of Tamil Nadu, Rekla race, Dance – Drama, Organized as part of this festival in those places, were very much appreciated by the foreign tourists. They also appreciated the conduct of the Tourist festival in Tamil Nadu. The department of tourism participated in the All India Tourist Trade Fair 1977 organized by the T.T.D.C. at Madras by putting up a huge pavilion in the shape of Nandi with a mini Sound and Light spectacle inside which attracted the people in large numbers. The Department of Tourism continued to take active measure for the promotion of tourism in Kanyakumari district¹⁵.

Government of Tamil Nadu has separate Department for Tourism, which is functioning under the control of Tourism Ministry. The Department of Tourism will appoint the tourist officers in District Headquarters or important tourist office has one Tourist officer and a few assistants. The

tourist officers were advised to identify place of tourist interest that require development and prepare master plans for them so as to enable the department to take into consideration the needs of such places while preparing annual plan schemes. The tourist officers have sent master plans for important centres in their jurisdictions.

The tourist officers were also requested to identify centres which can be developed as District Excursion Centres for have identified certain places and have prepared project report for their development. The tourist officers inspected hotel projects, sentimited the financial requests and sent their recommendations to the department. They have also assisted the Central and State Hotel Classification Committees whenever they visit their region for star classification of hotels. In addition to that, the tourist officer in Kanyakumari been render a remarkable service to the tourists¹⁶. The Tourist Officer also manager Tour operators, Travel agents, Tourist guides and conducted fairs and festivals.

As part of the T.T.D.C. effort to launch “Tourist friendly auto rickshaws” here a pre-launch tourism awareness training programme for 39 auto rickshaw drivers was organized. The training programme covered etiquette, behavioural aspects and languages skills development. The tourist - friendly autos introduced in Chennai as part of a T.T.D.C. initiative had evoked excellent response from domestic and foreign tourists¹⁷. The T.T.D.C. is all set to launch mobile tourism by converting one of its 18- seater coaches into a pavilion. It will play to the rural areas to promote tourism and create awareness among the public about ongoing festivals

The increased air connectivity has helped to boost tourism. The Tamil Nadu government is also taking steps in promoting historically important sites and heritage monuments in Kanyakumari district as tourist spot. Improvements, beautification, flood lighting, restoration and other amenities of important temples and churches and other monuments in Tamil Nadu is under proposal. To provide a tourist friendly environment, the Department of Tourism and the Government of Tamil Nadu together has recently deployed “Tourist Guards” in Tamil Nadu. The unemployed educated youths were trained and deployed through a private organization on contract basis. This scheme will be further developed as advised by the Ministry of Tourism as per the guidelines for Tourist security organization.

Taxi and auto rickshaw drivers should act as ‘tourist ambassadors’ to promote the image of the state. The Tourism Department was promoting the concept of ‘tourism vehicle’ that were tastefully painted, with drivers wearing neat and clean uniform. Tourism promotion would trigger economic development and therefore the drivers had a vital role to play in this regard. The T.T.D.C. on Monday added another 40 tourist - friendly auto rickshaws in Chennai. Such auto rickshaws

would also be introduced in Kanyakumari district¹⁸. The auto rickshaws have been painted in a different color with photographs of tourist attractions painted on them along with the T.T.D.C. logo.

A tourist guide is more than an ambassador. He or she ‘makes or breaks’ a tourist. The unsung personalities help overseas visitors carry home pleasant memories about the destination¹⁹. The Union Home Ministry, along with the India International Trade Mart, would conduct a one-and-half-year course to instill professionalism in tourist guides and enhance their knowledge.²⁰

A DVD on ‘Thousand Digital Images on Tamil Nadu’ made as per part of the measures to position and to promote the State as the cultural capital of the country was launched by the former Tourism Minister N. Suresh Rajan. The DVD contains images of the long coastlines scenic views, temple architecture, wild life, heritage sites and art forms intrinsic of Tamil Nadu.²¹ Apart from the pictures of well-knowns tourist spots in Kodaikanal, Kanyakumari, Coimbatore, Nagapattinam, Madurai, Tiruchirappalli, Salem and Tirunelveli, the DVD features a special segment on 33 lesser known places, including places. The release of the DVD comes along with the recent release of a promotional song for Tamil Nadu tourism. Considering that the inflow of tourist to the State was growing over 20 percent annually in the last four years, the Tourism Department, with the song, pictures and a series of other campaigns, is working towards making the state the preferred destination for tourists.²²

The T.T.D.C. AHD earned the distinction of being the first State Tourism Corporation to introduce on-line booking of its towns and hotels²³. The earnings from booking had increased from Rs.14.97 lakhs in 2004-05 to Rs 37.5 lakhs in 2008-09. The occasion was also used to publicise the ‘Platinum’ and ‘gold’ card schemes offered by the T.T.D.C. for discounts at its hotels. The former Tourism and Culture Secretary V.Irai Anbu launched a website in Telugu, Hindi and in other language in the coming months. “Presently 70,000 people are visiting T.T.D.C. website every month and we hope it would double with the introduction of website of Tamil version. The website is meant for Tamilians living abroad²⁴”. T.T.D.C. will grant access to visitors for uploading their best pictures on our website. Visitors can also have a glimpse of our properties and do room booking online. The revamped T.T.D.C. website in English will provide additional features such as classical dances, yoga, music, etc., shortly he said. The card holders would get 20 per cent discount at T.T.D.C. hotels²⁵.

The help desk, an online customer care centre for tourists, receives 250 mails every day. The mails would usually be questions about various locations, accommodations facilities there and the distance between one tourist spot and another. The eight-day Tamil Nadu tour of the T.T.D.C. tops the list of favorites among the tourists and enjoys the highest patronage among all the packages.²⁶

Since 2004, Tourists from 70 countries, including Spain, US.A., Australia, Singapore, China and the U.A.E. have accessed the website and booked tours online²⁷. The online management system which was launched and monitors the status of patronage for various schemes and occupancy of T.T.D.C. properties across the State. Another reason that is cited for the popularity of online booking is the hassle-free cancellation of the bookings too. The Tamil version of another website of the T.T.D.C. www. Tamil Nadu Tourism.org was recently launched. Occupancy level in all the 54 T.T.D.C. hotels and other T.T.D.C outlets through online booking has reached 65 per cent. Cashing in on the growing popularity, the T.T.D.C. will begin issuing gold and platinum membership cards online²⁸.

From a small beginning in the year 1949 C.E., the tourist organization as it stands now has passed through various facets. The recognition given to tourism as an industry paved the way for its standing as an independent discipline. In between the years 1949. C.E. and today there has been a tremendous amount of work which has helped in strengthening the organization. The appointment of various expert committees, advisory committees, councils and boards from time to time has also helped the organization grow tremendously.

END NOTES

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