

PILGRIMAGE TOURISM AND ITS ISSUES AND CHALLENGES WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO NAGAPATTINAM DISTRICT

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Pilgrimage tourism is that form that is exclusively or strongly motivated for religious reasons. One of the oldest types of tourism and a worldwide phenomenon of religious history, it can be differentiated into various forms. The short-term religious tourism is distinguished by excursions to nearby pilgrimage centers or religious conferences. The long-term describes visits of several days or weeks to national and international pilgrimage sites or conferences. This paper investigates pilgrimage tourism and its issues and challenges and also it analysis the basic infrastructure issues in pilgrimage sites. .Pilgrimage tourists were identified as a key factor in developing pilgrimage tourism. The primary data for this study were collected from pilgrimage tourists which engaged in pilgrimage tourism activities. Pilgrimage tourists were identified as a key factor in developing pilgrimage tourism. This research is mainly based on primary and secondary data. Secondary data required for this study was collected from different sources. This study aims to suggest measures to make pilgrimage tourism economically viable and suggest appropriate and effective promotional strategy for promoting pilgrimage tourism inVelankanni,Nagore,Thirunallar.the analysis part includes anova,chi square,t-test,cross- tabs, Friedman mean rank test. results were shown and interpretations had written in this article. this article explains the Infrastructural facilities and pilgrimage tourism avenues in nagapattinam district.

pilgrimage tourism, tourism, issues, challenges, cultural, infrastructures

INTRODUCTION

Pilgrim is different from being a tourist. For a tourist travel is an end in itself. For a pilgrim travel is a means to an end. Pilgrims with pilgrimage tourism is one of the fastest growing tourism in the world. Not only has it become an important component of the Indian life style (Cohen1972; MacCannell 1973). But it has had a profound impact on other peoples of the world and the environments in which they live. This course will explore the phenomenon of pilgrimage tourism. Pilgrimage tourism offers tremendous opportunities of generating revenues earning foreign exchange and providing employment. Today all countries of the world are striving to develop pilgrimage tourism in big way. (McKercher & Cros, 2003) Pilgrimage tourism earns over 3.5 trillion worldwide. For India, it is presently the third largest export industry but our share in world tourist inflow is only 0.37 percent. Besides economic, the social and environmental gains of tourism were also significant. (Mitroff & Denton, 1999), It is considered as an ambassador of peace and international brotherhood. McKercher & Cros, 2003) It brings better understanding between different nations and civilizations. Likewise it helps in protecting environment old monuments and cultural. The aim of this study was to determine, what pilgrimage tourism is, how it is different from other forms of tourism and the opportunities, issues and challenges in pilgrimage tourism. This paper investigates pilgrimage tourism and its issues and challenges and its cultural importance

*Pilgrimage Tourism and Its Issues and Challenges With Special Reference To
Nagapattinam District*

and socio economic development through pilgrimage tourism and also it analysis the basic infrastructure issues in pilgrimage sites and it covers emerging challenges in pilgrimage tourism and pilgrimage tourism promotion.

MAJOR HYPOTHESES

- H0: On the criterion of preferences of destinations selection and fulfillment of religious obligations, no significant of mean differences exit between the pilgrims/ tourists who visit ONCE and MORE THAN ONCE to the pilgrim tourism circuits in Tamil Nadu.
- H0: No significant differences of experience of sample tourist respondents across the duration of stay on the key destination selection determinants
- H0 No significant associations are established between the services across the category of accommodations, key communication network and key amenities and selection of hotel and frequency of visit.
- Ho;there is no association between ,accommodation, transport and restaurant during their stay
- Ho;there is significant association between, reception upon arrival was very smooth and comfortable in the hotel.
- Ho;there is significant association between, reservation procedure in the hotel does not take much time.
- Ho;there is significant association between staff in the front office was very prompt in settling bills
- Ho;there is no significant association between staff are well-groomed, well-behaved and helpful
- Ho;there is no significant association between the room and food services seem to be expensive
- Ho;there is no significant association between road condition is well-maintained, is this your first visit to Velankanni /Nagore /Thirunallar
- Ho;there is no significant association between road maintenance needs to be undertaken, is this your first visit to Velankanni /Nagore /Thirunallar
- Ho;there is no significant association between Banks and atm counters are located at the convenient places, is this your first visit to Velankanni/ Nagore/ Thirunallar
- Ho; there is no significant association between approach roads are laid to facilitate easy movement around the pilgrimage sites, is this your first visit to Velankanni /Nagore /Thirunallar.

- Ho; there is no significant association between parking space is adequate but needs to be expanded, is this your first visit to Velankanni /Nagore /Thirunallar
- Ho;there is no association between traffic arrangement is made to regulate vehicles very methodically, is this your first visit to Velankanni /Nagore /Thirunallar.
- Ho; there is no association between. health services, is this your first visit to Velankanni /nagore /thirunallar

OBJECTIVES OF STUDY

- To find out the potential and prospects of pilgrim tourism in nagapattinam district
- To study the problems of pilgrimage tourism in nagapattinam district
- To find out the problems of basic infrastructure facilities in nagapattinam district
- To find out solutions and alternatives to overcome the problems

LITERATURE REVIEW

Balaji Rathod (1999) "The facilities in pilgrimage tourism center are to understand various facilities like accommodation, transportation, darshan facility, food and drinking water, shopping, behaviour of the local people with the pilgrims. The pilgrims' opinions about these facilities were essential. This is also true with pilgrimage phenomena for this a good knowledge of religious back ground, behavioral pattern of pilgrims and the language is necessary. Conclusion had given that facilities and basic infrastructures are essential for pilgrimage tourist".**Pauline (1966)** "The pilgrimage tourist travelling today, most of the many thousands of pilgrimage tourists go by car, but some ride horse back and quite a surprising number walk the entire way. Their active and enthusiastic participation in the medieval tradition serves to revitalize the sprit of the pilgrimage touring and accessibility and amenities are to give it meaning in the modern world".**Sonia sharma (1998)** "The determination of the pilgrimage tourism and tourist expectations, hospitality is one of the most important components of pilgrimage tourism industry. In many regions the hospitality industry thrives only due to the presence of pilgrimage tourism. The service providers add facilities and features so as to attract and retain customer base, to determine whether the hospitality industry really looks into the customer's satisfaction. In order to determine this to find the religious expectations of pilgrimage tourist from the hospitality and their satisfaction level by finding the extent to which the pilgrimage tourist expectations are met. The difference between male and female level of expectation and satisfaction is also measured in pilgrimage tourism".**Shinde (1999)** "Religious institutions may provide a good platform to propagate environmental awareness based on religious teachings, play a major role in the efficient waste management, which requires adequate technical, financial and human resource capacities as well as reasonable degree of democracy accountability role of religious institutions and the benefit that is occurred to them from the influx of pilgrims, the need for them to be accepted as enterprises or tourism units can be emphasized. Accordingly most of the pilgrimage measures such as extended liabilities and polluter pays principle

*Pilgrimage Tourism and Its Issues and Challenges With Special Reference To
Nagapattinam District*

applicable to the industry/ business enterprises can be also be applied to religious institutions".

METHODOLOGY

The primary data for this study were collected from pilgrimage tourists which engaged in pilgrimage tourism activities. Pilgrimage tourists were identified as a key factor in developing pilgrimage tourism in Nagapattinam district. This research is mainly based on primary and secondary data. Primary data collected from (500) samples (questionnaire) collected from Nagapattinam district (Velankanni, Nagore, Thirunallar). Secondary data required for this study was collected from different sources like net, traveling authorities, traveling guides, books, journals thesis, pamphlets etc. The analysis part includes anova, chi square, t-test, cross- tabs, friedman mean rank test. Results were shown and interpretations had written in this article.

RESULTS

- The mean differences on the accommodation services between the two groups of sample tourist respondents are significantly different in case of selection of accommodation and restaurant, whereas the hypothesis is not rejected in case of other elements of accommodation services such as reception upon arrival, reservation procedures, front office staff, personal hygiene and room and food services.
- The hypothesis titled “no mean differences exist between those pilgrims who visit once and more than once while transportation services are taken into consideration” is not rejected in case of the components of transport services, such as well-connected by road transport, operation of government/private bus services regularly, reasonable bus fare, improvement of rail connectivity, regular buses from major towns and cities of Tamil Nadu and over congestion of buses.
- The hypothesis that is “two groups of sample tourist respondents do not significantly differ while experiencing the basic Services as one of the preferences for destination selection” is rejected in respect of banks and ATM services with .004 and not rejected in case of other core parts of the basic services such as road condition, road maintenance, approach roads, parking space, traffic arrangement and health services.
- The hypothesis that is entitled as there are no significant mean differences between sample tourist respondents who visit once or more than once when they find the standard of key amenities is not rejected in case of all the key aspects of amenities determining the experience of the pilgrims at the religious sites. The elements which are rejected include purified drinking water facilities, provision of rest shed, toilet and wash rooms, cloak rooms, shopping centres, hygienic and clean, safety & security, police outpost, pleasant place and peaceful place
- The hypothesis is titled as religious duties as the major driving motivational forces stimulating the religious oriented people to undertake travel, the mean experience of sample respondents is not significantly difference on each element

representing the religious obligations. The significance of the test has rejected all the indicators signifying the fulfillment of religious obligations. These elements include hospitable and helpful people, rituals as per the tradition and custom, no obstruction of wearing any modern dress, colourful and eventful festivals, more enjoyment during festivals and delightful local cuisine or food.

- The hypothesis that is titled as there is no significant differences between the three groups of sample tourist respondents on experiencing the basic infrastructure is rejected with 0.05 per cent degree of significance. The elements which are rejected with .045, .001, .000, .012, .000 and .002 include road condition, maintenance, banks and ATM services, approach roads, parking areas and traffic management. One element health services are not rejected with the significance level of .663.
- The hypothesis is stated as there is no significant differences across the sample respondents on the amenities provided to the pilgrims for comfortable and this hypothesis is rejected in case of all the element of selected amenities at the three respective religious sites, excepting cloak room and shopping centre facilities.
- The hypothesis is stated as there is no significant differences across the sample respondents on the amenities provided to the pilgrims for comfortable and this hypothesis is rejected in case of the element of selected amenities such as purified drinking water, rest shed, toilet and wash rooms and hygienic and clean at the three respective religious sites, excepting cloak room and shopping centre facilities.
- The hypothesis is titled as “significant differences of the three groups of sample respondents do not exist on the criterion of law and order as the key destination selection determinants”. The hypothesis is rejected in case of all the related elements representing the law and order situations at the religious sites, whereas the hypothesis is rejected the statement “I do not face any difficulty in moving alone or with family members”
- Differences of experiences between the sample respondents are not significant while taking religious obligations as one of the criterion for the destination selection. The hypothesis is rejected with .000, .003, .002, .012 and .004 in case of rituals, no obstruction, festivals and coincidence with festivals, whereas the hypothesis is not rejected in case of hospitable and helpful people with .390 significance level.
- The experiences on the communication network that were derived by the pilgrims/ tourists while visiting the pilgrim tourism sites are not significantly different. This hypothesis is rejected with .000, .026, .000, .009 and .000 in case of operation of govt. and private bus services, reasonable bus fare, train connection, connectivity of bus services from the major towns of Tamil Nadu and over congestion and is not rejected in case of well-connectivity
- There are no significant associations between quality of services, reception of upon arrivals, prompt in settling the bills, personal hygiene and experience traffic and types of hotels selected by the sample tourist respondents. The results

*Pilgrimage Tourism and Its Issues and Challenges With Special Reference To
Nagapattinam District*

of Pearson Chi-Square test do reject the hypothesis in case of quality of services, reception, reservation procedures, prompt in settling bills, personal hygiene and expensive tariff and its association with the preferences of selecting types of accommodation.

- There are no significant associations between road condition, Road Maintenance , Banks and ATM, Approach Roads, Parking , Parking Arrangement, Health Services and frequency of visit. The test results of Pearson Chi-Square test have not rejected the association of frequency of visits with road condition, maintenance, banks and ATM, parking areas, parking arrangements and health services. The results further explained that pilgrims are obliged to travel to these religious sites irrespective of all this factors.
- There are no significant associations between drinking water, rest shed, toilet & wash rooms, cloak services, shopping centre, hygienic & clean and frequency of visit. The hypothesis is not rejected since the frequency of visits is independent of the amenities at the religious sites as Pearson Chi-square test results revealed.
- The test results of the Friedman mean rank revealed that the difference of the mean rank values is validated hypothetically and news paper article has become the highest mean rank factor with the mean rank 3.66. Thus, asymp. Sig. is less than 0.05, the Friedman test results support the differences of rank value of all the six sources of collecting information while making travel plan to these religious sites.
- The Friedman mean rank results showed that all the elements have influenced the preference for selection of accommodation. However, easy reservation with the mean rank value 3.36 becomes the highest rank that maximum influences the preference for the selection of accommodation. The significance of the results is further validated with the symp. Sig .000 that is less than 0.05.
- The Friedman mean rank results revealed that online transfer becomes the most convenient more for payment for travel services as it is supported with mean rank value 2.76 and the order of the rank is significant with Chi-square (.000.). Besides, all other modes of payment such as third person payment, debit/credit card and cash are also appeared to have become the preferred mode for payment of travel services.
- The Friedman mean rank results revealed that comfort becomes the most preferred criteria for selection for transport services since the mean rank (4.65) for the factor is highest and the order of the rank is significant with Chi-square (.000.). It is appeared to have indicated that all other factors like regularity, affordability, safety, behaviour of staff, easy payment and quick alternative are some the preferences for the selection of transport services apart from comfort, being the first preference.
- The Friedman mean rank results revealed that fulfillment of long-cherished desire is identified as the most preferred factor to select these religious sites to visit in the life time The mean rank is 4.48 and the Chi-square test is less than

0.05 (.000.). Apart from being influenced by the fulfillment of long-cherished desire, other preferences such as rituals and offering, festivals, strong religious belief and faith, enlightenment of life, giving alms to poor and enrichment of knowledge are also some of the preferences that mostly influence the selection of pilgrimage centre's.

Table 1. Category of Age Vs Gender

Category of Age	Count	Gender		Total
		Male	Female	
Below 25	% within Age Groups	116 (69.0%)	52 (31.0%)	168 (100.0%)
	% within Gender	116 (31.5%)	52 (39.4%)	168 (33.6%)
26-50	% within Age Groups	185 (73.7%)	66 (26.3%)	251 (100.0%)
	% within Gender	185 (50.3%)	66 (50.0%)	251 (50.2%)
51 & Above	% within Age Groups	67 (82.7%)	14 (17.3%)	81 (100.0%)
	% Within Gender	67 (18.2%)	14 (10.6%)	81 (16.2%)
Total		368 (73.6%)	132 (26.4%)	500 (100.0%)

As many as 368 male tourist respondents were interviewed for the study as against 132 female respondents. Across the three groups of respondents on the basis of age consisted of 168 (33.6 %) of below 25 year, 251 (50.2 %) of 26-50 years and 81 (16.2 %) . Out of the sample respondents, majority of the respondents 341 (68.2 %) were married, followed by 111 (22.2%) were unmarried and 48 (9.6%) were bachelor and spinster respectively.

Table 2. Category of Age Vs Marital Status

Category of Age	Count	Marital Status			Total
		Married	Unmarried	Bachelor	
Below 25	% Within Age Groups	59 (35.1%)	83 (49.4%)	26 (15.5%)	168 (100.0%)
	% Within Marital Status	59 (17.3%)	83 (74.8%)	26 (54.2%)	168 (33.6%)
26-50	% Within Age Groups	208 (82.9%)	26 (10.4%)	17 (6.8%)	251 (100.0%)
	% Within Marital Status	208 (61.0%)	26 (23.4%)	17 (35.4%)	251 (50.2%)
51 & Above	% Within Age Groups	74 (91.4%)	2(2.5%)	5 (6.2%)	81 (100.0%)
	% Within Marital	74 (21.7%)	2(1.8%)	5 (10.4%)	81 (16.2%)

*Pilgrimage Tourism and Its Issues and Challenges With Special Reference To
Nagapattinam District*

	Status				
Total		341 (68.2%)	111 (22.2%)	48 (9.6%)	500 (100.0%)

Monthly income of the three categories of respondents clearly reflected that 223 (44.6%) had sum of rupees 10,000 as monthly income, followed by 166 (33.2%) with a range between Rs. 10,001 and Rs. 20,000 monthly income and 111 (22.2 %) with a monthly income of Rs.20,001 and above.

Table 3. Category of Age Vs Monthly Income

Category of Age	Count	Monthly Income			Total
		Below 10,000	10,001-20,000	20,001 and above	
Below 25	% Within Age groups	108 (64.3%)	43 (25.6%)	17 (10.1%)	168 (100.0%)
	% within Monthly Income	108 (48.4%)	43 (25.9%)	17 (15.3%)	168 (33.6%)
26-50	% within Age Groups	95 (37.8%)	99 (39.4%)	57 (22.7%)	251 (100.0%)
	% within Monthly Income	95 (42.6%)	99 (59.6%)	57 (51.4%)	251 (50.2%)
51 & Above	% within Age groups	20 (24.7%)	24 (29.6%)	37 (45.7%)	81 (100.0%)
	% within Monthly Income	20 (9.0%)	24 (14.5%)	37 (33.3%)	81 (16.2%)
Total		223 (44.6%)	166 (33.2%)	111 (22.2%)	500 (100.0%)

Table 4. Category of Age Vs Tentative Expenditures

Category of Age	Count	Expenditure				Total
		Less than 5,000	5,001-10,000	10,001-15,000	15,001 & Above	
Below 25	% Within Age Groups	125 (74.4%)	28 (16.7%)	7 (4.2%)	8 (4.8%)	168 (100.0%)
	% Within Expenditure	125 (47.0%)	28 (19.7%)	7 (12.3%)	8 (22.9%)	168 (33.6%)
26-50	% Within Age groups	119 (47.4%)	86 (34.3%)	32 (12.7%)	14 (5.6%)	251 (100.0%)
	% Within Expenditure	119 (44.7%)	86 (60.6%)	32 (56.1%)	14 (40.0%)	251 (50.2%)
51 and Above	% within Age groups	22 (27.2%)	28 (34.6%)	18 (22.2%)	13 (16.0%)	81 (100.0%)
	% Within Expenditure	22 (8.3%)	28 (19.7%)	18 (31.6%)	13 (37.1%)	81 (16.2%)

Total		266 (53.2%)	142 (28.4%)	57 (11.4%)	35 (7.0%)	500 (100.0%)
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Across the three categories of sample respondents, majority of them 266 (53.2%) made an expenditure of Rs. 5,000 and less during their visit to their respective pilgrim site, that is followed by 142 (28.4%) with an expenditure of Rs.5001-Rs.10,000 and 35 (7 %) with an expenditure of Rs.15,001 and above.

Table 5. Category of Age Vs Accompanying Members

Category of Age	Count	Accompanying Members			Total
		Alone	With family and Friends	With affinity Groups	
Below 25	% within Age groups	51 (30.4%)	93 (55.4%)	24 (14.3%)	168 (100.0%)
	% within Accompanying Members	51 (35.9%)	93 (35.8%)	24 (24.5%)	168 (33.6%)
26-50	% within Age groups	73 (29.1%)	125 (49.8%)	53 (21.1%)	251 (100.0%)
	% within Accompanying Members	73 (51.4%)	125 (48.1%)	53 (54.1%)	251 (50.2%)
51 & above	% within Age groups	18 (22.2%)	42 (51.9%)	21 (25.9%)	81 (100.0%)
	% within Accompanying Members	18 (12.7%)	42 (16.2%)	21 (21.4%)	81 (16.2%)
Total		142 (28.4%)	260 (52.0%)	98 (19.6%)	500 (100.0%)

Majority of the respondents 260 (52.0%) visited their respective holy sites with family and friends, that is followed by 142 (28.4%) and 98 (19.6%) number of respondents paid their visit with their affinity groups.

A little more than forty per cent of the respondents 216 (43.2%) stayed in the lodges and guesthouses as against a little more than one fourth of the respondents 144 (28.8%) preferred to stay in the hotel. On the other hand, one fourth of the respondents 126 (25.2%) sojourned at the paying guest place and an insignificant number of respondents 14 (2.8%) could stay with their friends and relatives during their visit.

Table 6 Category of Age Vs Category of Accommodation

Age	Count	Category of Accommodation				Total
		Hotel	Lodge & Guesthouse	Paying Guest	Friends and Relatives	
	% Within Age	51	79	35	3	168

*Pilgrimage Tourism and Its Issues and Challenges With Special Reference To
Nagapattinam District*

Below 25	groups	(30.4%)	(47.0%)	(20.8%)	(1.8%)	(100.0%)
	% Within Category of Accommodation	51 (35.4%)	79 (36.6%)	35 (27.8%)	3 (21.4%)	168 (33.6%)
26-50	% within Age Groups	70 (27.9%)	109 (43.4%)	63 (25.1%)	9 (3.6%)	251 (100.0%)
	% Within Category of Accommodation	70(48.6%)	109 (50.5%)	63 (50.0%)	9 (64.3%)	251 (50.2%)
51 & above	% Within Age Groups	23 (28.4%)	28 (34.6%)	28 (34.6%)	2 (2.5%)	81 (100.0%)
	% Within Category of Accommodation	23 (16.0%)	28 (13.0%)	28 (22.2%)	2 (14.3%)	81 (16.2%)
Total		144 (28.8%)	216 (43.2%)	126 (25.2%)	14 (2.8%)	500 (100.0%)

Across the three groups on the basis of duration of stay, a little less than half of the sample respondents 241 (48.2 %) could stay at the religious sites about 1-3 days as compared to other two groups. A little more than one fourth 141 (28.2%) and a little less than one fourth of them could stay 1-6 days and one week and more respectively.

Table 7. Category of Age Vs Duration of Stay

Category of Age	Count	Duration of Stay			Total
		1-3 days	1-6 Days	One Week & More	
Below 25	% Within Age Groups	92 (54.8%)	48 (28.6%)	28 (16.7%)	168 (100.0%)
	% within Duration of Stay	92 (38.2%)	48 (34.0%)	28 (23.7%)	168 (33.6%)
26-50	% within Age Groups	118 (47.0%)	70 (27.9%)	63 (25.1%)	251 (100.0%)
	% within Duration of Stay	118 (49.0%)	70 (49.6%)	63 (53.4%)	251 (50.2%)
51 & Above	% within Age Groups	31 (38.3%)	23 (28.4%)	27 (33.3%)	81 (100.0%)
	% within Duration of Stay	31 (12.9%)	23 (16.3%)	27 (22.9%)	81 (16.2%)
Total		241 (48.2%)	141 (28.2%)	118 (23.6%)	500 (100.0%)

A little more than half of the sample respondents 266 (53/2 %) visited their respective religious sites once as against 234 (46.8%) of them visited more than once. Respondents belonging to the age group between 26 and 50 are 130 or 55.6 per cent and similarly, 59.5 per cent belonging to the age group of 25 and less visited for the first time.

Table 8. Frequency of Visit Vs Age

Frequency of Visit	Cross Tabulation within Row and Column	Category of Age			Total
		Below 25	26-50	51 & Above	
Once	Within Tourism Circuit	100 (37.6%)	121 (45.5%)	45 (16.9%)	266 (100%)
	Within Duration	100 (59.5%)	121 (48.2%)	51 (56.3%)	266 (53.2%)
More Than Once	Within Tourism Circuit	68 (29.1%)	130 (55.6%)	35 (15.0%)	234 (100.0%)
	Within Duration	68 (40.5%)	130 (51.8%)	35 (43.8%)	234 (46.8%)
Total		168 (33.6%)	251 (50.2%)	80 (16.0%)	500 (100.0%)

Out of the 73.6% or 368 male sample respondents, 53.5 per cent or 197 visited for the first time and 52.3 per cent of the female respondents also visited first time.

Table 9. Frequency of Visit Vs Gender

Frequency of Visit	Cross Tabulation within Row and Column	Gender		Total
		Male	Female	
Once	Within Tourism Circuit	197 (74.1%)	69 (25.9%)	266 (100.0%)
	Within Duration	197 (53.5%)	69 (52.3%)	266 (53.2%)
More Than Once	Within Tourism Circuit	171 (73.1%)	63 (26.9%)	234 (100.0%)
	Within Duration	171 (46.5%)	63 (47.7%)	234 (46.8%)
Total		368 (73.6%)	132 (26.4%)	500 (100.0%)

Out of 68.2 per cent or 341 sample respondents who are married, half of them visited more than once and once, whereas out of 22.2 per cent of the unmarried sample respondents, 58.6 per cent (65) visited once.

Table 10. Frequency of Visit Vs Marital Status

Frequency of Visit	Cross Tabulation within Row and Column	Marital Status			Total
		Married	Unmarried	Bachelor	
Once	Within Tourism Circuit	168 (63.2%)	65 (24.4%)	33 (12.4%)	266 (100.0%)

*Pilgrimage Tourism and Its Issues and Challenges With Special Reference To
Nagapattinam District*

	Within Duration	168 (49.3%)	65 (58.6%)	33 (68.8%)	266 (53.2%)
More Than Once	Within Tourism Circuit	173 (73.9%)	46 (19.7%)	15 (6.4%)	234 (100.0%)
	Within Duration	173 (50.7%)	46 (41.4%)	15 (31.3%)	234 (46.8%)
Total		341 (68.2%)	111 (22.2%)	48 (9.6%)	500 (100.0%)

As many as 341 (68.2 per cent) were the Hindu devotees, followed by 111(22.2 %) were the Christians and the remaining 48 (9.6 %) were Muslims. Out of 341(68.2 %) Hindu pilgrims visited Velankanni 195 (57.2%) are first time visitors. Similarly, it is reported that the number of first time pilgrims has outstripped the number of repeat visits in case of pilgrims belonging to other two religions.

Table 11. Frequency of Visit Vs Religion

Frequency of Visit	Cross Tabulation within Row and Column	Religion			Total
		Hindu	Christian	Islam	
Once		195 (73.3%)	51 (19.2%)	20 (7.5%)	266 (100.0%)
	Within Religion	195 (57.2%)	51 (45.9%)	20 (41.7%)	266 (53.2%)
	Within Duration	146 (62.4%)	60 (25.6%)	28 (12.0%)	234 (100.0%)
More Than Once	Within Religion	146 (42.8%)	60 (54.1%)	28 (58.3%)	234 (46.8%)
	Within Duration	341 (68.2%)	111 (22.2%)	48 (9.6%)	500 (100.0%)
Total		341 (68.2%)	111 (22.2%)	48 (9.6%)	500 (100.0%)

Majority of the sample respondents 223 (44.6 %) with having income Rs.10,000 and less could visit their religious sites. Out which, more than half of them (129 (57.8%) had the income of Rs. 10,0000 and less.

Table 12. Frequency of Visit Vs Monthly Income

Frequency of Visit	Cross Tabulation within Row and Column	Monthly income			Total
		Below 10,000	10,001-20,000	20,001 and Above	
Once		129 (48.5%)	74 (27.8%)	63 (23.7%)	266 (100.0%)
	Within Frequency	129 (57.8%)	74 (44.6%)	63 (56.8%)	266 (53.2%)
	Within Income	94	92	48	234
More Than	Within	94	92	48	234

Once	Frequency	(40.2%)	(39.3%)	(20.5%)	(100.0%)
	Within Income	94 (42.2%)	92 (55.4%)	48 (43.2%)	234 (46.8%)
Total		223 (44.6%)	166 (33.2%)	111 (22.2%)	500 (100.0%)

Out of 266 (53.2 %) of the sample tourist respondents who visited once and more than once , 151 (56.8%) of them could spend Rs. 5000 or less. Similarly, a little more than half 266 (53.2 %) of the first time visitors who spent from Rs.5000 or less to Rs. 15,001 or more during their sojourn.

Table 13. Frequency of Visit Vs Tentative Expenditure

Frequency of Visit	Cross Tabulation within Row and Column	Tentative Expenditure				Total
		Less than 5,000	5,001-10,000	10,001-15,000	15,001& above	
Once		151 (56.8%)	70 (26.3%)	25 (9.4%)	20 (7.5%)	266 (100.0%)
	% Within Duration	151 (56.8%)	70 (49.3%)	25 (43.9%)	20 (57.1%)	266 (53.2%)
	% Within Expenditures	115 (49.1%)	72 (30.8%)	32 (13.7%)	15 (6.4%)	234 (100.0%)
More Than Once	% Within Duration	115 (43.2%)	72 (50.7%)	32 (56.1%)	15 (42.9%)	234 (46.8%)
	% Within Expenditures	266 (53.2%)	142 (28.4%)	57 (11.4%)	35 (7.0%)	500 (100.0%)
Total		266 (53.2%)	142 (28.4%)	57 (11.4%)	35 (7.0%)	500 (100.0%)

A little half of the respondents extended their halt about 1-3 days and the remaining was shared by 141 (28.2%) respondents with a 1-6 days duration and 118 (23.6%) with one week and more duration at the religious sites.

Table 14. Frequency of Visit Vs Duration of Stay

Frequency of Visit	Cross Tabulation within Row and Column	Duration of Stay			Total
		1-3 days	1-6 days	One Week & More	
Once		132 (49.6%)	79 (29.7%)	55 (20.7%)	266 (100.0%)
	Within Frequency	132 (54.8%)	79 (56.0%)	55 (46.6%)	266 (53.2%)
	Within Duration	109 (46.6%)	62 (26.5%)	63 (26.9%)	234 (100.0%)
More Than	Within Frequency	109 (46.6%)	62 (26.5%)	63 (26.9%)	234 (100.0%)

*Pilgrimage Tourism and Its Issues and Challenges With Special Reference To
Nagapattinam District*

Once	Within Duration	109 (45.2%)	62 (44.0%)	63 (53.4%)	234 (46.8%)
Total		241 (48.2%)	141 (28.2%)	118 (23.6%)	500 (100.0%)

Table 15. Frequency of Visit Vs Expensive Tariff

Frequency of Visit	Cross Tabulation within Row and Column	Expensive Tariff				Total
		Room Tariff	Transport Tariff	Food Tariff	Souvenir	
Once	Within Tourism Circuit	101 (38.0%)	87 (32.7%)	57 (21.4%)	21 (7.9%)	266 (100.0%)
	Within Duration	101 (61.2%)	87 (55.4%)	57 (41.3%)	21 (52.5%)	266 (53.2%)
More Than Once	Within Tourism Circuit	64 (27.4%)	70 (29.9%)	81 (34.6%)	19 (8.1%)	234 (100.0%)
	Within Duration	64 (38.8%)	70 (44.6%)	81 (58.7%)	19 (47.5%)	234 (46.8%)
Total		165 (33.0%)	157 (31.4%)	138 (27.6%)	40 (8.0%)	500 (100.0%)

As much as 33 per cent (165) found room tariff expensive as compared to 31.4 per cent (157) as transport tariff and 27.6 per cent (138) as food tariff.

Table 16. Frequency of Visit Vs Primary Motivation

Frequency of Visit	Cross Tabulation within Row and Column	Primary Motivation					Heritage Buildings	Total
		Temples	Mosque	Churches	Monuments	Beaches		
Once	Within Tourism Circuit	93 (35.0%)	44 (16.5%)	44 (16.5%)	13 (4.9%)	58 (21.8%)	14 (5.3%)	266 (100.0%)
	Within Duration	93 (59.6%)	44 (50.6%)	44 (42.7%)	13 (50.0%)	58 (55.8%)	14 (58.3%)	266 (53.2%)
More Than Once	Within Tourism Circuit	63 (26.9%)	43 (18.4%)	59 (25.2%)	13 (5.6%)	46 (19.7%)	10 (4.3%)	234 (100.0%)
	Within Duration	63 (40.4%)	43 (49.4%)	59 (57.3%)	13 (50.0%)	46 (44.2%)	10 (41.7%)	234 (46.8%)
Total		156 (31.2%)	87 (17.4%)	103 (20.6%)	26 (5.2%)	104 (20.8%)	24 (4.8%)	500 (100.0%)

Across six major motivational factors that generally drive the tourists to visit the pilgrim sites, 31.2 per cent (156) visited for temple, followed by 20.8 per cent for beaches, 20.6 per cent churches, 17.4 per cent for mosque.

Table 17. Frequency of Visit Vs Accompanying Members

Frequency of Visit	Cross Tabulation within Row and Column	Accompanying Members			Total
		Alone	With Family and friends	With Affinity Groups	
Once					
	Within Tourism Circuit	81(30.5 %)	132 (49.6%)	53 (19.9%)	266 (100.0%)
	Within Duration	81 (57.0%)	132 (50.8%)	53 (54.1%)	266 (53.2%)
More Than Once	Within Tourism Circuit	61(26.1 %)	128 (54.7%)	45 (19.2%)	234 (100.0%)
	Within Duration	61 (43.0%)	128 (49.2%)	45 (45.9%)	234 (46.8%)
Total		142 (28.4%)	260 (52.0%)	98 (19.6%)	500 (100.0%)

A little more than half of the sample respondents 260 (52.0%) were accompanied by the family and friends when they visited their respective religious sites as against 142 (28.4 %) visited independently or alone and 98 (19.6%) visited with the affinity groups.

Almost half of the sample respondents (251 (50.2 %) belonged to the age group between 26 and 50, whereas almost one third of them belonged to the age group below 25, that is followed by 16 per cent (80) of them belonged to the age group of 51 and above.

FINDINGS

- As many as 368 male tourist respondents were interviewed for the study as against 132 female respondents. Across the three groups of respondents on the basis of age consisted of 168 (33.6 %) of below 25 year, 251 (50.2 %) of 26-50 years and 81 (16.2 %) .
- Out of the sample respondents, majority of the respondents 341 (68.2 %) were married, followed by 111 (22.2%) were unmarried and 48 (9.6%) were bachelor and spinster respectively.
- Monthly income of the three categories of respondents clearly reflected that 223 (44.6%) had sum of rupees 10,000 as monthly income, followed by 166 (33.2%) with a range between Rs. 10,001 and Rs. 20,000 monthly income and 111 (22.2 %) with a monthly income of Rs.20,001 and above.
- Across the three categories of sample respondents, majority of them 266 (53.2%) made an expenditure of Rs. 5,000 and less during their visit to their respective pilgrim site, that is followed by 142 (28.4%) with an expenditure of Rs.5001-Rs.10,000 and 35 (7 %) with an expenditure of Rs.15,001 and above.

*Pilgrimage Tourism and Its Issues and Challenges With Special Reference To
Nagapattinam District*

- Majority of the respondents 260 (52.0%) visited their respective holy sites with family and friends, that is followed by 142 (28.4%) and 98 (19.6%) number of respondents paid their visit with their affinity groups.
- A little more than forty per cent of the respondents 216 (43.2%) stayed in the lodges and guesthouses as against a little more than one fourth of the respondents 144 (28.8%) preferred to stay in the hotel. On the other hand, one fourth of the respondents 126 (25.2%) sojourned at the paying guest place and an insignificant number of respondents 14 (2.8%) could stay with their friends and relatives during their visit.
- Across the three groups on the basis of duration of stay, a little less than half of the sample respondents 241 (48.2%) could stay at the religious sites about 1-3 days as compared to other two groups. A little more than one fourth 141 (28.2%) and a little less than one fourth of them could stay 1-6 days and one week and more respectively.
- A little more than half of the sample respondents 266 (53.2%) visited their respective religious sites once as against 234 (46.8%) of them visited more than once. Respondents belonging to the age group between 26 and 50 are 130 or 55.6 per cent and similarly, 59.5 per cent belonging to the age group of 25 and less visited for the first time.
- Out of the 73.6% or 368 male sample respondents, 53.5 per cent or 197 visited for the first time and 52.3 per cent of the female respondents also visited first time.
- Out of 68.2 per cent or 341 sample respondents who are married, half of them visited more than once and once, whereas out of 22.2 per cent of the unmarried sample respondents, 58.6 per cent (65) visited once.
- As many as 341 (68.2 per cent) were the Hindu devotees, followed by 111 (22.2%) were the Christians and the remaining 48 (9.6%) were Muslims. Out of 341 (68.2%) Hindu pilgrims visited Velankanni, 195 (57.2%) are first time visitors. Similarly, it is reported that the number of first time pilgrims has outstripped the number of repeat visits in case of pilgrims belonging to other two religions.
- Majority of the sample respondents 223 (44.6%) with having income Rs.10,000 and less could visit their religious sites. Out of which, more than half of them (129 (57.8%)) had the income of Rs. 10,000 and less.
- Out of 266 (53.2%) of the sample tourist respondents who visited once and more than once, 151 (56.8%) of them could spend Rs. 5000 or less. Similarly, a little more than half 266 (53.2%) of the first time visitors who spent from Rs.5000 or less to Rs. 15,001 or more during their sojourn.

- A little half of the respondents extended their halt about 1-3 days and the remaining was shared by 141 (28.2%) respondents with a 1-6 days duration and 118 (23.6%) with one week and more duration at the religious sites.
- As much as 33 per cent (165) found room tariff expensive as compared to 31.4 per cent (157) as transport tariff and 27.6 per cent (138) as food tariff.
- Across six major motivational factors that generally drive the tourists to visit the pilgrim sites, 31.2 per cent (156) visited for temple, followed by 20.8 per cent for beaches, 20.6 per cent churches, 17.4 per cent for mosque.
- little more than half of the sample respondents 260 (52.0%) were accompanied by the family and friends when they visited their respective religious sites as against 142 (28.4%) visited independently or alone and 98 (19.6%) visited with the affinity groups.
- Almost half of the sample respondents (251 (50.2%)) belonged to the age group between 26 and 50, whereas almost one third of them belonged to the age group below 25, that is followed by 16 per cent (80) of them belonged to the age group of 51 and above

SUGGESTION & RECOMMENEDATION

- Provision of infrastructure facilities/ basic amenities at pilgrimage tourist destination (viz.drinking, toilet facilities, restaurant, cloak room, signages etc)
- Provision for dress changing room, rest shed bathrooms, pathway and protective ring around ponds, hand railings and etc
- Children's park and power supply, street lights.
- Provision for roads, pathways, parking.
- Lodges, hotels, lighting facilities.
- Immediate replacement of old and worn out coaches/tempo travels.
- Up gradation of the restaurants of TTDC with first class furniture and interiors.
- Introduction of cost reduction measures in hotels like the energy saver, etc.
- The present study suggest that different types of the facilities to the pilgrims are so important. Though Tamil Nadu has become the main transport religious state .. The TTDC buses are not available as per timetable in the festival duration. And it is necessary to build the railway route at Velankanni.
- To lodge in Tamil Nadu pilgrimage site we have only few Dharmashala that is why the lodging problem is increasing per pilgrims. As per my knowledge, the following lodging facilities should be given to the pilgrims. To increase the numbers of Dharmashala by the side of pilgrimage sites.

*Pilgrimage Tourism and Its Issues and Challenges With Special Reference To
Nagapattinam District*

- The hotels, Lodges should be available in large number but room rate is very high. The temporary living facilities should be available at around pilgrimage sites. The local religious trust should be paid the attention on the market of the devotional goods and daily needs items that whether the shopkeepers sell the goods in proper prices or not.
- The pilgrims are not satisfied with existing facilities provided at pilgrimage sites, food and drinking water facilities also. Shopping facilities and about the personal safety the pilgrims seem to be satisfactory.

SUGGESTIVE MEASURES AND INTERVENTIONS

- It is suggested that reception upon arrival, reservation procedures, front office staff, personal hygiene and room and food services are some of the critical elements of improving the quality of accommodation services. Both the government and private tourism service providers should seriously look into the shortcomings that may impede the growth of pilgrimage tourism in the tourism circuit.
- It is strongly suggested that the transport network highlighting on the connectivity, operation, regularity and reasonable fare should be improved round the year and more specifically, during the festive occasions. It is also suggested that transport tariff should be reasonable to the pilgrims as majority of them are budget category of tourists. The study has also recommended that government should evolve some mechanisms to subsidize the cost of visiting these holy pilgrim sites in Tamil Nadu. More particularly, domestic tourists with the proof of Below Poverty Line (BPL) should be provided with transport subsidy as there is no difference of experience of the first time and repeat visitors with regard to the improvement of transport network and other ancillary benefits.
- The findings of the study have suggested for the improvement of basic facilities such as road, parking areas, traffic and health services. Since there is a strong relationship between preferences for destination selection and improvement in basic services, efforts should be made at the higher level of the government administration to help build the infrastructure at all three sites. When these three religious sites have gained visibility worldwide, the Government of Tamil Nadu can take increase the domestic tourist arrivals by showcasing the pilgrim tourism circuits.
- The study has also found insufficient provisions for purified drinking water facilities, rest shed, toilet and wash rooms, cloak rooms, shopping centre's, hygienic and clean, safety & security and police and it is suggested to the Government to gear up with adequate budgetary outlays to make the amenities of the three places more visitor friendly, thereby making the place more pleasant and peaceful as the symbol of spiritualism. As such, most of the holy shrines and pilgrimage sites are facing the problem of unhygienic, litter, crime, contaminated water. Thus, approaches should be made to help the religious sites overcome the problem of maintaining the amenities with the direct intervention of the PWD, Heath Department, Home Department, etc and the Ministry of

Tourism should take the lead role in bringing all them into one umbrella resolve the chronic problem.

- Religious duties as the major driving motivational forces stimulating the religious oriented people to undertake travel, the mean experience of sample respondents is not significantly difference on each element representing the religious obligations. Thus, the study is very unique in finding the linkage between the religious obligations of the pilgrims and sanctified atmosphere of the religious sites. Fortunately, all these three places have preserved the sanctity and purity of the places from the religious perspectives for which a steady stream of visitors are arriving into these holy places irrespective of several personal and destination related constraints.
- Since the duration- of -stay is a critical independent factor influencing the experience of the visitors at the religious sites; the study has found the differences of experiences of the sojourners on basic infrastructure. Moreover, religious tourists are generally long-haul visitors and their length- of- stay is relatively more due to their attachment to the religious places. With this backdrop, the study has suggested to ensure the improvement of infrastructure to help the pilgrims stay comfortably.
- The study has found the differences of experiences of pilgrims on the amenities at the three religious sites, it is suggested that the existing provisions of amenities are extremely inadequate and more provisions should be made to improve the condition of the amenities, thereby making tourists feel at home and their stay comfortable and memorable.
- Law and order is one of the socio-political risk factors that mostly hamper the tourism business whether it is special interest or common interest tourism. The study has found out sharp differences of experience of the pilgrims about the law and order situation at these three religious sites. Thus, it is suggested that the government should be more vigilant in enforcing the law and order when these three places receive huge number of tourist traffic during the festivals and other auspicious occasions. More police outpost and the concept of community police should be introduced to help maintain the law and order in a sustainable way.
- There are differences of experience of the sample tourist respondents on many of the elements signifying the religious obligations. Therefore, it is suggested that the ultimate purpose of visiting these three sites should be respected since the performing rituals and offering prayers are some of the activities that most of the pilgrims do at the sites. Efforts should be made to inspire the people and respect the emotional sentiments and attachment to the places.
- While rejecting the most of the elements in the hypothesis, the study has strongly suggested for an effective communication network so as to ensure the operation of the transport more regular, affordable, reliable and adoptable.
- The lack of association between the service attributes of the accommodation and selection of the types of hotel has led to providing a critical thought of bring about a radical change in the operation of the accommodation units at these

*Pilgrimage Tourism and Its Issues and Challenges With Special Reference To
Nagapattinam District*

three religious sites. It is suggested that government should enhance the capacity of the frontline staff in the hotel by conducting regular training programme. More particularly, soft skills and personal grooming and etiquette should be the agenda of the training programme, thereby imbibing the professional culture in the hospitality sector.

- When the results showed no association between the frequency of visit and primary facilities, it is quite pertinent to suggest that government should take note of this finding and be proactive in making adequate provisions of primary facilities for the comfort and safety of the pilgrims visiting the religious sites.
- The Department of Tourism, Govt. of Puducherry and Tamil Nadu should promote the pilgrim tourism circuit with the aid of travel magazines, brochures/ newspaper. As it seems from the mean rank results that preference of the visitors to collect travel related information is high.
- Since it is revealed that timely services is the first rank preference factor with the test of significance, thus, all the service providers should seriously ponder over and find the ways to make efficient and effective time services at the hotel, restaurant, bus stand, etc.
- As the sample respondents preferred the easy reservation procedures to reserve the room, perhaps the present reservation methods are not as effective as it is desired for the industry. Thus, all accommodation operators should take cognizance of it and imbibe professionalism along with technology –driven into the reservation procedures.
- It is expected that online transfer would be the highest preference for making the payment for travel services as majority of the visitors are tech-savvy or they get it done through some body. The process of online transfer services should be encouraged and clients should be given discount when they make the payment through online.
- Since comfort has become the highest preference for the visitors while visiting these religious sites, transport service providers should pay attentions to improve the comfort of the passengers along with other factors such regularity, affordability, safety, behavior of staff, easy payment and quick alternative .
- The results of Friedman mean rank has made the fulfillment of long-cherished desire as the highest preferred mean rank factor, it is in the line of the common understanding of selecting the pilgrimage center. However, other six factors have also been preferred while selecting these three religious places. Thus, it is suggested that government administration and private tourism establishment should be serious concerned for the long-cherished desire that is quite sensitive, emotional and personal.

CONCLUSION

Pilgrimage tourism is now recognized as a source of diversifying the countries economy. It would how ever be folly to pretend that the sector will continue to stimulate the

economy without pro active measures aimed at managing the forces confronting this sector. The study has revealed various problems that confront the sustained development of pilgrimage tourism. The data presented in this paper indicate the potential for pilgrimage tourism development. Although development to date has been limited to few major sites, the analysis shows that it should be possible to spread the development of pilgrimage tourism to more parts of the region. Particularly taking into account the potential for combining pilgrimage tourism with cultural and nature based tourism and the potential for developing new age or pilgrimage tourism it should be possible to use the major anchor sites identified to stimulated regional development

These problems had been analyzed in detail and suitable recommendation had been given. As a basis for proposed policy directions and strategies, statistics, it is useful to consider these various recommendations and suggestions abundantly show that by the paper effective implementation of these suggestions, pilgrimage sites can be developed as a heavenly destination for pilgrimage tourism. The overall aim will obviously be to enhance the benefits of pilgrimage tourism and its people in terms of foreign exchange, employment generation, income and government revenue etc. Realizing this potential will clearly require a high level of inter municipal co-operation given the extent of the pilgrimage tourism religions identified. In addition the importance of pilgrimage tourism supply factors identified in the research shows the need for extensive collaboration between the public sector, which is responsible for policy and promotion of the pilgrimage site which manages most of the tourism sector which provides the supporting facilities this underlines the importance of net working in the future development of pilgrimage tourism.

In developing new products and new markets therefore the pilgrimage tourism attractions of the region should think more seriously about the pilgrimage tourism elements of current demand and in particular the development of new products of emerging niches such as pilgrimage tourism.

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*Pilgrimage Tourism and Its Issues and Challenges With Special Reference To
Nagapattinam District*

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