

Problems And Prospects Of Pilgrim Tourists In Sri Gokarneswara-Brahadambal, Thirugokarnam, Pudukkottai District

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ABSTRACT

Every holy temple has its own festivals to be celebrated on different days of each year. So the traffic of the pilgrim tourists is increasing every year, but the basic facilities, amenities are not increased as such the requirements demanded. Generally, the pilgrims are most admired about the holy place and its significance only and not the basic requirements. The inconveniences are not measured as problems but there are few prospects as it has to be progressed to find the right solution. This study is going to be focused on the opinion of pilgrim tourists for promoting tourism in Sri Gokarneswara-Brahadambal, Thirugokarnam, Pudukkottai District. The respondents are selected on the basis of convenient sampling method.

Keywords: Pilgrim Tourist, Problems, Prospects, Promoting Tourism

INTRODUCTION

Tourism is the temporary, short-term movement of people to destination outside the places where they normally live and work and their activities during the stay at each destination. It includes movements for all purposes (The Tourism Society of England, 1976). Pilgrimage is one of the well-known phenomena in religious culture and exists in all the main religions of the world. eg Buddhism, Hinduism, Islam, Judaism and Christianity. There is a strong

connection between pilgrimage and tourism that must be understood as a basis for research. Such superficial relationship between tourists and pilgrimage has been acknowledged for several decades by research scholars and tourism historians and has been a subject for further research in recent years. In its current usage, the term 'pilgrimage' connotes a religious journey. But, its Latin derivation is from 'peregrinus' allows broader interpretations, including foreigner, wanderer, exile and traveler, as well as new comer and stranger. The contemporary use of the terms, identifying the 'pilgrim' as a religious traveler and the 'tourist' as a vacationer, is a culturally constructed duality that veils the motives of the traveler. The nature of the tourist experience has received a lot of attention in tourism research. Mac Cannell was the first to claim that it is a quest for the authentic and that it presents the pilgrimage of modern man. The tourist is perceived as a pilgrim in the current modern secular world. Tourism is an activity dependent on three operative elements: discriminatory income, leisure time and social sanctions permissive of travel. Pilgrimage also requires these elements. Turner has claimed that a tourist is half a pilgrim, if a pilgrim is half a tourist. Smith identifies tourism and pilgrimage as opposite end points on a continuum of travel. The polarities on the pilgrimage tourism axis are labeled as sacred versus secular and between the extremities lay almost-infinite possible sacred-secular-combinations, with the central areas now generally termed 'religious tourism'. These positions reflect the multiple and changing motivations of the traveler whose interests and activities may switch from tourism to pilgrimage and vice versa, even without the individual being aware of the change. Contemporary researches deal with the complicated relationship between pilgrimage and tourism, including economic, political, social, psychological, emotional and other aspects. Pilgrimage is an economic phenomenon which has attracted the attention of economists who have long tried to define their object of study. Passage of time has transformed pilgrimage as a big tourism activity. When scholars consider economic impact of tourism,

they find that pilgrimage has a crucial role in shaping the local economy in several places.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Cohen (1992) maintains that the pilgrimage and tourism differ in terms of the direction of the journey undertaken. The “pilgrim” and the “pilgrim tourists” peregrinate toward their socio-cultural centre, while the “traveller” and the “traveller-tourists” travel from it toward the periphery. Tourists and pilgrims are similar, if not one and the same, for “even when the role[s] of tourist and pilgrim are combined, they are necessarily different but form a continuum of inseparable elements (Grabun, 1983)”. Pilgrimage Tourism is one the most important sector to be concentrate for the development of Tourism. Especially, Tamil Nadu is having abounded holy places where different religious people travels throughout the year for different occasions. If the pilgrimage tourists are satisfied on their basic needs, then there is a high potential growth for Tourism. Many culture and heritage lovers prefer to visit pilgrimages instead of visiting multi faceted cities. Sri Gokarneswara-Brahadambal at Thirugokarnam is a place of pilgrimage centre; to develop the basic needs for promoting tourism. This study analyses the problems faced by the pilgrim tourists in Thirugokarnam. The findings and suggestions based on this study will act as guidelines for improving the pilgrimage tourism in Thirugokarnam, Pudukkottai District.

SCOPE OF THE STUDY

The present study has been undertaken from the point of view of tourists. The study concentrates on the various pilgrim tourism places and attitude of pilgrim tourists regarding problems of pilgrimage tourism in Sri Gokarneswara-Brahadambal, Thirugokarnam. This study focuses on the opinion of pilgrim tourists for promoting pilgrimage tourism in Pudukkottai district.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- o To study the socio-economic background of pilgrim Tourists in Thirugokarnam, Pudukkottai district.
- o To find out the problems of pilgrim tourists regarding pilgrimage tourism.
- o To provide suggestions for the problems faced by pilgrim tourists.

METHODS AND MATERIALS

The researcher collected primary data through interview schedule and secondary data through some reliable sources such as journals, annual ministry reports and the like. For this study convenient sampling method is adopted. The survey was conducted among 50 respondents in the tourism spots of Sri Gokarneswara-Brahadambal, Thirugokarnam, Pudukkottai district. The data are going to be analyzed by using appropriate statistical techniques such as percentage and chi-square test.

DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

Variables	No.of respondents	Percentage
Gender		
Male	13	26
Female	37	74
Age		
Below 25yrs	09	18
26 to 35yrs	11	22
36 to 45yrs	06	12
46 to 55yrs	16	32
56yrs & above	08	16
Marital Status		
Married	39	78

Unmarried	11	22
Educational Qualification		
Illiterate	16	32
Below Hsc	22	44
Graduate	12	24
Monthly Income		
Below Rs.10000	21	42
Rs.10001 to 20000	12	24
Rs.20001 to 30000	09	18
Above Rs.30001	08	16

From the percentage analysis table indicates that majority (74per cent) of pilgrim tourists were female and remaining 26per cent were male. One third (32per cent) of pilgrim tourists age group between 46 to 55yrs, 22per cent were 26 to 35yrs, 18per cent were below 25yrs, 16per cent were 56yrs & above and remaining 12per cent were 36 to 45yrs. Majority (78per cent) of pilgrim tourists were married and remaining 22 per cent were unmarried. More than one third (44per cent) of pilgrim tourist were below higher secondary level qualification, 32per cent were illiterates and remaining 24 per cent were graduates. More than one third (42per cent) of pilgrim tourists monthly income below Rs.10000, 24per cent were Rs.10001 to 20000, 18per cent were Rs.20001 to 30000 and remaining 16per cent were above Rs.30001.

Association between socio-economic factors and their opinion level on promotion measures

	Level of opinion			Statistical inference
	Low	High	Total	
Gender				
Male	08	05	13	$X^2=3.916$ Df=1 P>0.05 Not Significant
Female	33	04	37	

Age				
Below 25yrs	05	04	09	$X^2=0.879$ Df=4 P>0.05 Not Significant
26 to 35yrs	07	04	11	
36 to 45yrs	04	02	06	
46 to 55yrs	13	03	16	
56yrs & above	05	03	08	
Marital Status				
Married	32	07	39	$X^2=3.642$ Df=1 P>0.05 Not Significant
Unmarried	04	07	11	
Educational Qualification				
Illiterate	10	06	16	$X^2=3.231$ Df=2 P>0.05 Not Significant
Below Hsc	19	03	22	
Graduate	08	04	12	
Monthly Income				
Below Rs.10000	19	02	21	$X^2=3.194$ Df=3 P>0.05 Not Significant
Rs.10001 to 20000	08	04	12	
Rs.20001 to 30000	05	04	09	
Above Rs.30001	05	03	08	

From the chi-square test reveals that the calculated values of socio-economic factors such as Gender, Age, Marital status, Education and Monthly income are less than table value, at 5% level of significance, it is determined that null hypotheses framed are accepted. Hence, there is no significant association between socio-economic factors and their opinion level on promotion measures.

Conclusion and suggestions

The authorities are not able to cope with their requirement for supports service which is a necessary factor in determining the overall satisfaction of the tourist. Hence the local authorities and service providers can work towards the variables under the support services to provide better transport facilities. It can

be inferred that the tourist want service which are value for money and don't make them feel cheated and make them feel disappointed with the services which the hotels provide. Hence it is important that the service providers understand the requirement of the customers and provide service according to them. In the end it can be concluded that Sri Gokarneswara-Brahadambal, Thirugokarnam a very famous temple town in Tamil Nadu which is very famous for its pilgrimage tourism require a lot of attention from the local authorities and government to improve the facilities such as infrastructure, transportation, hotels etc. Tourism can be a very good source of income for the local population; hence it is necessary especially for the local authorities to give importance to these factors.

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