



The Influence of 'Adventure Tourism Activities' in promoting tourism business in mountain stations

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Abstract

Tourism has emerged as an instrument for employment generation, poverty alleviation and sustainable human development. Tourism promotes international understanding and gives support to local handicrafts and cultural activities. It is an important segment of the country's economy, especially in terms of its contribution towards foreign exchange earnings, generation of additional income and creation of employment opportunities. The foreign exchange earnings from tourism during the year 2000 were estimated at about Rs. 14,408 crores with an estimated direct employment of about 15 million, which is about 2.4% of the total labour force of the country as per the report of UNESCO. Tourism is the third largest foreign exchange earner for India. The International tourist traffic in the country is estimated to be 2.64 million during the year 2000. However, according to the World Tourism Organizations (WTO), India's share in world tourism arrivals is only 0.38%, accounting for 0.62% of the world tourist receipts. This indicates that much of the tourist potential is yet to be tapped.

Keywords: Adventure, poverty, lack, foreign exchange, mountain tourism

Introduction

Mankind is unique as the individuality of human beings is the outcome of their specific background related to the aspects of their social, economical, political and geographical backgrounds. Every individual likes to make use his or her leisure time usefully on gaining exposure into certain newer areas which are not yet known to him, through his or her background. In this respect, people take part in many activities to gain greater exposure. The prominent activity among them is tourism. Tourism is an activity where people not only get newer exposure to life on Earth but it is also a wonderful source of enjoyment and relaxation that helps them to rewind and be rejuvenated on their return to homes. With a huge background in areas such as the social, cultural, religious, political and geography, India is country which one 'must-visit'. Tourism in India is the largest service industry (Economic Review, 2010), with a contribution of 6.23% to the national GDP and 8.78% of the total employment in India.

India witnesses more than 5 million foreign tourist arrivals and 562 million domestic tourism visits annually. The tourism industry in India generated about US\$100 billion in 2009 and that is expected to increase to US\$275.5 billion by 2018 at a 9.4% annual growth rate. The states of India are also making a marvelous contribution towards tourism development (Economic Review, 2010). In 2009, the top five states in India were Tamil Nadu, Maharashtra, Delhi, Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal which amounted for 87 percent on receiving foreign tourists.



Similarly, for domestic tourism Andhra Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh and Tamil Nadu received the biggest share with 650 million visitors in the same year.

In this respect, this study attempts to study the role of mountain-stations in tourism development in Tamil Nadu in order to streamline it for more effective usage in the aspects of tourism as well as to enhance local development.

Objectives of the study

1. To increase the Tourist inflow to Tamilnadu to 10-12 % per annum from the present level of 7-9 %
2. To increase the period of stay of domestic tourists in Tamil Nadu from 7-9 to 10-12 days and in respect of foreign tourists from 4-7 days to 6-8 days; and restore the prime position Tamil Nadu had in the tourism sector in the past
3. To evolve a government led, private sector driven and community oriented framework at the organizational level, since tourism is essentially a private sector activity where government has to play only a catalytic role.
4. To fully exploit tourism potentials and convert these as employment generation and poverty alleviation programmes.
5. To recognise the deep-rooted innate relationship between tourism and culture and promote it as such.
6. To promote eco-tourism.
7. To tap the tourism potential in the coastal belt areas.
8. To expand the product base so as to have more effective coordination with other states in India in general and with its immediate neighbours in particular.
9. To make extensive use of information technology and other technological advancements

Tourism in Mountain Stations

Tourism is a service based industry and is the second largest industry of India. Nowadays tourism is making gradual growth only because of its better selection of products and services. Tourism has a wonderful opportunity in mountain stations. Anju and Bhatia (1999), revealed that a mountain environment presents ideal conditions for outdoor recreation, and especially for tourism, if scientifically exploited. Today, most of the tourists especially foreigners are highly interested on moving towards natural tourism destinations as many come from a busy world. They wish to enjoy their leisure time in the presence of a calm and beautiful atmosphere. For that, they select the mountain stations as their desired destination and also use eco-friendly hotels for their accommodation choices.

The attractive atmosphere, mind blowing climatic conditions, the quiet surroundings will attract not only the foreigners but also local travelers. The Government of Tamil Nadu has listed 47 places as places of tourism importance within the state. The most famous tourism locations of Tamil Nadu are Madurai, Rameswaram, Mahabalipuram, Ooty, Kodaikanal, Kancheepuram, Kanyakumari, Tanjavur and Chidambaram. (Anon, 2005). In spite of several tourist destinations, foreigners and domestic tourist throng to the mountain stations. This flow is mainly driven by the change in climatic conditions, and a chance to get closer to nature, and also at times for opportunities with alternative tourism namely adventure, eco and resort-oriented tourism types.



Table 1. Foreign Tourist Arrival 2008-2013 Source: India tourism magazine annual report, 2013.

S. No	States	No of foreign tourists arrival (in lakhs)
1	Tamilnadu	22.3
2	Maharashtra	20.0
3	Delhi	19.6
4	Uttarpradesh	16.3
5	West Bengal	13.8
TOTAL		107.0

Table 2 Domestic Tourist Arrival 2008-2013

S.No	States	Number of Domestic tourists arrival (in lakhs)
1	Andhra Pradesh	15.75
2	Uttar Pradesh	13.48
3	TamilNadu	14.58
4	Karnataka	3.27
5	Rajasthan	2.56
TOTAL		50.64

Source: India tourism magazine annual report, 2013.

Table 3. Districts Wise Tourist Arrivals 2012

S.No	Places	Domestic (in Lakhs)	Foreign (in Lakhs)	Total (in Lakhs)
1	Chennai	23	30	53
2	Madurai	20	22	42
3	Kodaikanal	16	17	33
4	Ooty	12	11	23
5	Kanyakumari	8	5	13
TOTAL		79	85	164

Source: Tourist Arrival Statistics, Tamil Nadu Tourism Development Corporation, 2012

It is evident from the tables that the flows of tourists to the mountain stations is good. In addition to this the tables shows a steady increase in the total inflows of tourists to the state. Hence, a study on the role of mountain stations in tourism development of the state will be of great use.



Table 4. Tourist Statistics of Tamil Nadu 2008-2013*

S. No	Year	Domestic (in lakhs)	Foreign (in lakhs)	Total (in lakhs)	Growth rate (percent)
1	2008	323.39	11.79	335.18	7.7
2	2009	392.15	13.36	405.51	21.0
3	2010	506.47	17.53	524.00	29.2
4	2011	626.18	20.40	646.58	23.4
5	2012	780.38	23.69	804.07	24.4
6	2013	1030.10	28.05	1058.15	31.6
TOTAL		3658.67	114.82	3773.49	137.3

Source: Tourist Arrival Statistics, TamilNadu Tourism Development Corporation, 2013. * (Jan –Dec)

Methodology

The method involved in this study was a basic literature review of limited scope in which there was also effective evaluation of selected documents on the research topic and analysis of data from inter alia the Tamil Nadu Tourism Development Corporation, 2012, India tourism magazine annual report, some academic journal articles as well as relevant websites. The researchers searched for literature and sorting and prioritised the retrieved literature followed by an analytical reading of papers and also evaluative reading of papers.

Scope of the Study

This research is intended to support tourism development. The study was conducted via an analysis of tourism policy towards mountain stations from 2008-2013. This was done for the three A's of tourism namely, attraction, accessibilities, and amenities. It is also serves to study the progress of tourism development in selected mountain stations in Tamil Nadu through the policies of the Government of Tamil Nadu. The private sector aims at better service in all its dealings which is encouraging. The competition among the service providers help towards achievement of the best service. However, some unhealthy competition persists. In light of these situations, the researcher aims to study the progress made on tourism development in the period 2008 to 2013 and this was in order to learn about the level of implementation of the projects which are proposed. It was also anticipated to make an assessment of the tourist needs at the mountain stations and propose the ways and means of providing for this from both government and private factors.

In view of the approach, the following sub-sectors will also be very useful:

Promotion of cultural activities

It is known that nature is related strongly to the local community; therefore, the promotion of mountain stations automatically influences the local culture as well. For example, the growth of mountain stations promotes the cultural activities such as flower shows, boat races, folk dances and also folk music and so on. Hence, a study like this is important.

Increase in transportation

It is mostly in mountain stations, where basic surface transport is used for transportation. In surface transportation there are roads as well as rail travel. But in mountain stations travelers



mostly prefer the roadways because of the structure of the magnificent landforms. Nevertheless, the surface transport vehicles such as cars and busses create huge pollution. Therefore, the appropriate development of the transport without impacting nature negatively needs to be studied.

The influence of ‘Promotion of mountain stations’ on local community

The high inflow of tourists in peak season time alters the demand and supply of the basic needs of the public. This causes high-rises in price. Hence, an insight into the aspects of balancing the economy of mountain stations is an important area of study.

Accommodation facilities

Every mountain station provides all types of accommodation, from dormitory to star category, but still there is a clamor for space. Hence a proper demand and supply assessment is needed.

Influence of ‘Adventure tourism activities.’ in mountain stations

Commonly mountain stations are the natural places with mountains lakes, forest, grasslands, etc., There is a great chance to run various adventure activities. These may include inter alia hiking, trekking, boat racing, cycle riding and hunting. It may also a source of income for the tourism sector and generate jobs in local villages. The methods of provision of these services must be assessed carefully. The period of this study for this particular research was 2008-2013.

Review of the Literature

Kaul (1985) in his book *Transport and Tourism – A dynamic relationship*, says that in characterizing the relationship between transport and tourism, it can be stated assuredly that the movement of the people is a common denominator and the very basis of tourism. It would be impossible to undertake a tour without suitable transport, which clearly shows the interdependence of tourism and transport. People need transport in connection with work, recreation, social life, tourism, and pilgrimages. The dynamic relation between transport and tourism will not only flourish manifestly in the future but would also act as a determining factor in the mutual advancement and progress of both. Maninder Pal Singh in his book, *Promotion of tourism in Leh and Ladakh*, says that, Ladakh, the most remote region of India, to the north of Himalays, is labelled as ‘moon-land’ as the sensory experience conjures up images of resembles the moon in its many phases. Ladakh is one of the last surviving places where Tibetan Buddhism is also practiced. Since Ladakh is totally different from rest of the country, it has now become an attraction for tourists. Tourism in Ladakh deserves immediate attention in terms of economic, development, road and communication, transportation facilities, and so on, so as to attract more tourists and there is a need for an integrated development of tourism (Maneet, 1994).

Murthy in his book *Tourism Planning and Concepts* points out that British Lieutenant, Ward, first spotted Kodaikanal in 1821. In 1845, the first two bungalows - Sunny Side and Shelton were built by American missionaries with the help of an Englishman, Mr. Fane. Later many American families and the British started settling in this mountain station.

Beer (2012), in his book *Mountains* says that Yercaud got its name from the Tamil words, *yeri* and *kaadu*, meaning lake and forest respectively. The British discovered it in the early 19th



century. There are accounts of coffee plantations being introduced by a British officer in the area in the second decade of the 19th century. Though the first known house was built in 1840, the first metalled roads were laid only in the early 20th century. The cool climate attracted Christian missionaries and they established the Sacred Heart Convent for girls and Montfort School for boys. Schools like the Holy Cross Novitiate House, started by the Brothers of Don Bosco, followed these.

Taneja (2010), in her book *Tourism Planning* says that the key towns in the Yelagiri mountains are Athnavur and Nilavur. Athnavur is the best place to stay and plan a local trip. Some good quality cottages and hotels are available here. Also, this is the last stop with traces of modernisation. The next town is Nilavur. Here, the place is full of agricultural land and vegetable and rose farms. It will be an interesting detour to visit these farms.

Each of these mentioned studies refer to the use of mountain stations for tourism, however there is a lack of research on the development of tourism in the mountain stations of Tamil Nadu. Hence, this study aims to conduct research on the appropriate promotion for tourism in the mountain stations of Tamil Nadu so as to make the developments useful for all sections of the society and also to foreign and local tourists.

Development of Mountain Stations and Natural Falls

- ✓ The Yercaud Mountains:
 - The Boating Centre and other Tourist spots will be renovated. The lake will be cleaned up for a better boat ride.
- ✓ Hogenakkal Falls:
 - Boating will be developed.
- ✓ Javaddu Mountains:
 - During the Plan better boarding/ lodging facilities will be provided.
- ✓ The Elagiri mountains:
 - It is proposed to develop a bird sanctuary and improve all tourist attractions in particular, the lake.
- ✓ Arapalleeswarar Falls at Kolli Mountains:
 - It is proposed to improve the Hotel and Transport facilities.
- ✓ Surli Falls at Kambam Valley:
 - Basic amenities like road, restaurants, hotels (with boarding & lodging) and public toilets, park etc. will be provided during the Tenth Five Year Plan. An amount of Rs. 5 crores would be earmarked for this purpose

Role of Tamil Nadu Tourism Development Corporation (TTDC)

Tamil Nadu Tourism Development Corporation (TTDC) was started in the year 1971 on a modest note with 2 coaches and 5 hotels. It has made rapid strides since then, and has earned the distinction of owning the largest chain of hotels in South India numbering 54. The hotels are spread throughout Tamil Nadu. TTDC offers the following facilities to tourists:

1) Hotels and Youth Hostels	34
2) Boat Houses	10
3) Restaurants	3
4) Canteens	4
5) Telescope Houses	4



6) Parks	3
7) Tourist Service Centre	1

Out of the 54 hotels, 12 Hotels at Tirunelveli, Mettupalayam, Mandapam, Sriperumpudur, Coonoor, Ranipet, Kotagiri, Namakkal, Mettur Dam, Sathanur Dam, Virudhunagar and Vaigai Dam have been franchised to private sector. Action is being taken to franchise the remaining hotels to the private sector. Youth Hostels have been constructed to cater to the budget tourists at all the major tourist destinations, wherein dormitory type of accommodation is provided at economically reasonable tariffs. Package Tours ranging from half-day to 14 days covering several States like Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, and Maharashtra besides covering all Southern States like Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Goa, Pondicherry and Kerala are being conducted. New package tours would need to also be evolved. Necessary steps will be taken to organize new Air Package Tours as well. In the changing scenario as above, TTDC would be required to act mainly as an institutionalized vehicle of the State to attract, organise, lead, support, direct and facilitate private investment in the field of destination and other product developments. It would also provide technical support and assistance in the areas of human resources development, project preparation, evaluation, market survey, research and related subjects and would serve mainly as a facilitator

Strategy for promotion of tourism

Tourism plays an important role in the socio-economic development of India. It is also one of the major sources of foreign exchange. Tourism also generates employment in rural and urban areas, which may arrest large-scale migration of rural masses to urban centres, and in turn help avoid formation of more slums. Tamil Nadu, with its picturesque mountains, beaches, waterfalls, wildlife sanctuaries, temples, ancient monuments, places of worship for all faiths and centres of art and culture, has a lot to offer to domestic and international tourists alike.

Ecotourism in Tamil Nadu

Ecotourism is considered one of the most viable tools to enable economic growth and ecological security. Ecotourism is considered to be 'inclusive' since local considerations and demands are woven into the programme. One of the key points of eco-tourism is that smaller players like local residents; tribal groups etc get to participate and benefit from the programme. Ecotourism is a sustainable form of natural resource-based tourism which focuses on experiencing and learning about nature (Sunil, 1995). It is ethically managed so that minimal impact is caused on the immediate environment. Ecotourism should be able to contribute to the conservation of natural areas and maintain species and their habitats by either directly contributing to conservation and/or indirectly, by providing revenue to the local community (Pran Nath Seth 1991). The provisions should be sufficient for local people to value and therefore protect the wild life heritage as a source of income. Ecotourism should also be planned and managed to improve the quality of life of residents and should strive to preserve natural and cultural resource capital.

The state of Tamil Nadu has a great potential for the development of eco-tourism initiatives, especially in view of its cultural and natural diversity. It is also recognized that ecotourism requires that certain issues be strictly enforced (Murthy, 2008). For instance, dumping wastes should be banned and safe management of waste and toxic material should be planned and implemented. Further, sale of products made from endangered species like plants or animals should not be allowed. Care should be taken to ensure that animals and plants are not disturbed. Environmentally sound transportation should be encouraged (Anurag, 2005), and



vehicular movement should be strictly regulated. Energy and environmental conservation should be patronized. Pollution of water bodies should be prevented. Use of synthetic materials like plastics, which are not bio-degradable, should not be allowed in the tourism spots. The Nilgiris district, Hogenakkal, Kodaikannal, Rameswaram, Valparai, Yelagiri, Yercaud and Thirumoorthy falls are have been declared as throw-away plastic free zone

Economic Consequence on Tourism industry

Tamil Nadu 2nd largest Tourism economy, one of the most advanced states in India. Its worth of economic effort, (the GSDP) stands at INR 4.28 lakhs crore, as of 2012 Tamil Nadu a. As an investor-friendly state with the government expressing policies for the development of the Tourism activities, Tamil Nadu will continue to stay in the top level of the country's annual growth points. Tamil Nadu Tourism offers good medical care in Vellore Chennai, Madurai and Coimbatore areas. The Tamil Nadu government is adopting a tagline to promote its tourism and it has a strong banking system and thus huge potential for a growing tourism economy. It is basically the best industrialized and urbanized state and its tourism potential is huge.

Environment consequences of the tourism industry

The environment is gradually gaining ground as there are eco-friendly tours which are growing in popularity and Tamil Nadu Tourism has several perfect locations to attract the tourists. The eco-friendly areas of Tamil Nadu are for unique sightseeing of the pristine environment. Tamil Nadu tourism introduced the use of recycled paper and polythene bags to assist in eco-enhancement. Tamil Nadu encourage the planting of trees and greening of the local environment by the tourism industry. The Tamil Nadu government on revealed an ecotourism plan to safeguard the rich natural and cultural heritage of the State. The active involvement of especially the local communities for their enablement was emphasised in the policy, which was released by Chief Minister Edappadi K Palaniswami. It was stated that:

The objectives of the policy include identification and development of natural areas as ecotourism destinations, promotion of eco-friendly infrastructure in conformity with the guiding principles, facilitation of partnerships between all stakeholders to develop, promote and maintain ecotourism sites and creation of livelihood opportunities and share benefits with the local communities for their support to conservation, among others. Ecotourism is not limited to the biodiversity and landscape values, but also to the customs, cultures and traditions native to respective eco-sites. Ecotourism sites in Tamil Nadu can be used as important means to conserve the unique cultural traditions associated with the biodiversity of an area. (Business Line, June 28, 2018)

Conclusion

Tamil Nadu has coastal areas which are unique and a priceless treasure of India with tourism in view. The rich and vast nature, wealth like flora, fauna and water resources available in the lakes and beaches from the region must be carefully protected and preserved so that the true tourism potential of the region may be harnessed, and tapped into properly. This is associated with a range of activities which may also be developed on a large scale in order to provide ta needed livelihood security for local people residing in the relevant areas and also to boost the local economy. With regard to tourism development, the state has assumed a high status in order to attract the maximum number of tourists and thus a large number of tourism



development activities is rapidly taking place based upon the strategic location of the state's tourist destinations. Opportunities for eco-tourism development exist beyond the protected areas and tiger reserves, and community-based eco-tourism sites outside the protected areas need to be reinforced. The State Eco Tourism Board is currently guiding initiatives in ecotourism in the State.

Eco-tourism management societies at the district-level must strive to endorse, manage and control eco-tourism sites while existing eco-tourism management committees should also be integrated into eco-tourism federation and even at the district-level. Community based eco-tourism is being promoted in 25 sites outside protected areas. Micro plans are prepared for all sites in the state. T Muruganandham

The study region has been significantly successful in its tourism efforts in creating a key platform for both domestic and international traffic. The entire region has vast untapped potential in tourism and its allied sectors, and there is a lot of scope for its future development and promotion. If all the existing tourism resources of the study region are fully explored and tapped carefully with active community participation, then the problems which the country is facing presently may be solved up to some extent, for instance, poverty, unemployment, regional imbalances followed by the horrors of economic recession.

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