

A Study on Satisfaction of Tourists in Pudukkottai District

Swetha .R

MBA, Department of Management Studies
Bharath Institute of Science and Technology,
Selaiyur, Chennai, Tamil Nadu 600 073
Bharath Institute of Higher Education and Research

ABSTRACT

Sittannaval is a small village in Pudukkottai district and is world famous for its fresco paintings in the rock-cut Jain cave temple. Sittannaval has an important place in the history of Tamilnadu. The megalithic monuments such as stone-circles, urn burials and cists spread in the plains of this village testify that this area was inhabited by pre-historic man. This paper is an attempt to assess the perception of tourists about standard of infrastructure available in Sittannaval in Pudukkottai District. The study has been done by using both the primary and secondary data. The investigation was undertaken among the tourists visited the spot during the research period. Data collection was done by using a structured interview schedule. To understand the current status of tourism in the destination, an in-depth analysis has been undertaken and as per the findings, required suggestions were enlisted. Based on the results a detailed conclusion has been given.

KEYWORDS: Tourism Infrastructure, Tourist Satisfaction, Sittannaval

INTRODUCTION

Tourism promotes National Integration and International understanding. It encourages preservation of monuments, heritage properties and eco-sanctuaries, helps survival of traditional art forms, crafts and culture. It has achieved rapid strides due to its capacity to earn foreign exchange, generate employment opportunities and inculcate a sense of fraternity in the minds of people. Tamil Nadu is a State with multifarious tourist attractions. It has mountains, verdant vegetation, sandy beaches, mammoth monuments, timeless temples, fabulous wildlife, scintillating 8 sculptures and reverberating rural life. It has picturesque spots, continuing heritage, cultural confluence and aesthetic magnificence.

Tall palms and taller gopurams, the towering, intricately carved temple towers amidst a land of oriental lushness greet the traveler to Tamil Nadu, a land that is truly the soul of the south itself, a land of sun and warmth, of temples and legends, and of silver lined beaches. Tamil Nadu, lush and colour drenched, sunburn and romantic, offering the essence of the eastern life style, is inexpensive with the best of accommodation available to suit every pocket and every taste. Tamil Nadu is a window to the modern south as much as it is a wider open archive of ancient legacies. Yet amazingly, for all its modernity, Tamil Nadu retains its old-world charm. The blend of the ancient and the new and the picturesque is truly remarkable. It is the land that has seen the rise and fall of many ancient kingdoms viz., the Cholas, the Pandyas, the Cheras, the Pallavas and many others each leaving behind incredible cultural treasures.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Heritage tourism is important for various reasons; it has a positive economic and social impact, it establishes and reinforces identity, it helps build image, it helps preserve the cultural and historical heritage, with culture as an instrument it facilitates harmony and understanding among people, it

supports culture and helps renew tourism. Hence, it is important to study the factors that support the growth of tourism in selected area.

NEED AND IMPORTANCE OF THE STUDY

Heritage and Cultural tourism means travel concerned with experiencing cultural environments, including landscapes, the visual and performing arts, and special lifestyles, values, traditions, events as well as other ways of creative and inter-cultural exchange processes. The Sittannavasal village is about 20 kilometers to the north of Pudukkottai, just before Annavasal village and about 58 kilometers from Trichy. Through this research article the researchers have analyzed the different criteria of tourist perception in Sittannavasal in Pudukkottai District to attain the objectives of the study enlisted below.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- To study the existence of heritage tourism in Sittannavasal
- To identify the standard of infrastructures in tourism spots of Sittannavasal
- To find out the perceptions of tourists about facilities available in Sittannavasal
- To offer valuable suggestions to promote tourism in study area

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

METHOD OF DATA COLLECTION

In dealing with any real life problem, it is obvious the data in hand are inadequate and hence it becomes necessary to collect the data that are appropriate. Depending on the sources of information available data can be classified as Primary data and Secondary data.

The research is done with the help of questionnaire that proved to be effective in collecting the relevant information. Some other relevant data has been retrieved from magazines and books. Informal discussions were also held with the tourism department officials, local people, shopkeepers, friends and relatives for getting some more information and ideas pertaining to this study.

The various steps of the operational methodology are given below:-

- This study was conducted in all the destinations of tourist interest in Sittannavasal
- Selection of samples has been done with random sampling method
- Survey Period: The field survey was conducted for a period of 6 months from May 2017 to October 2017 in study area

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Culture has always been a major object of travel, as the development of the Grand Tour from the 16th century onwards. In the 20th century, some people have claimed, culture ceased to be the objective of tourism: tourism is now culture. Cultural attractions play an important role in tourism at all levels, from the global highlights of world culture to attractions that underpin local identities. (Richards, 1996). According to the Weiler and Hall, culture, heritage and the arts have long contributed to appeal of tourist destination. However, in recent years 'culture' has been rediscovered as an important marketing tool to attract those travellers with special interests in heritage and arts. According to the Hollinshead, cultural heritage tourism defines as cultural heritage tourism is the fastest growing segment of the tourism industry because there is a trend toward an increase specialization among tourists. This trend is evident in the rise in the volume of tourists who seek adventure, culture, history, archaeology and interaction with local people.

Cultural heritage tourism is important for various reasons; it has a positive economic and social impact, it establishes and reinforces identity, it helps preserve the cultural heritage, with culture as an instrument it facilitates harmony and understanding among people, it supports culture and helps renew tourism (Richards, 1996). As Benjamin Porter and Noel B. Salazar have ethnographically documented, however, cultural heritage tourism can also create tensions and even conflict between the different stakeholders involved (Porter and Salazar 2005). Cultural heritage tourism has a number of objectives that must be met within the context of sustainable development such as; the conservation of cultural resources, accurate interpretation of resources, authentic visitors experience, and the stimulation of the earned revenues of cultural resources. Therefore, that cultural heritage tourism is not only concerned with identification, management and protection of the heritage values but it must also be involved in understanding the impact of tourism on communities and regions, achieving economic and social benefits, providing financial resources for protection, as well as marketing and promotion. (J. M. Fladmark, 1994)

TOURISM IN SITTANNAVASAL

Sittannaval is a small village in Pudukkottai district and is world famous for its fresco paintings in the rock-cut Jaina cave temple. Sittannaval has an important place in the history of Tamilnadu. The megalithic monuments such as stone-circles, urn burials and cists spread in the plains of this village testify that this area was inhabited by pre-historic man.

Sittannaval is known primarily for its mural paintings in the Jaina rock-cut cave temple called Arivar koil. These paintings are second only in importance after Ajanta paintings in the art history of India. There is a natural cavern, called Ezhadippattam, with polished rock beds of Jaina ascetics. These rock beds contain Tamil inscriptions. The oldest is a Tamil Brahmi inscription, the oldest in the district, and was being considered till recently as belonging to the 3rd century BC. According to the recent study by Iravatham Mahadevan, it is dated to the 1st century BC. Sittannaval is perhaps the only place where we can find inscriptions in Tamil from the 1st century BC to the 10th century AD. The Navachchunai, with its submerged cave temple, would interest those who are adventurous.

Sittannaval monuments, particularly the Jain cave temple, are well known. The cave temple is of great importance because of its paintings. The glory of Sittannaval is not in its extent, but the exquisite style that can be seen even in whatever that remains. Perhaps Sittannaval reminds us of the past glory and of our present insensitivity to our heritage.

THE MONUMENTS

The archaeological monuments found in the area surrounding Sittannaval village are the architectural features of the Arivar Kovil, on the western side of the hill towards the north and the painting and sculptures found within its precincts, the Jaina beds, also known as Ekadipattam or Ezhadippattam in a natural cavern on the eastern side of the hill, the Samavasarana, an a place of assembly of a Tirthankara in the form of mural paintings on the roof of the cave temple, megalithic burial urns, stone circles, cairns, dolmens, cists from the Iron Age called mudu-makkal-thaazhi, and a submerged tarn called the Navach-Chunai to the north of the natural cavern in the hill. The Archaeological Survey of India is responsible for the maintenance of the Arivar Kovil and the Jaina beds. Sittannaval is a world famous site in the district. In the village is a large rocky hillock which is about 200 feet in height and run north to south. There are four interesting monuments on and around this rocky hill.

Important tourism attractions of Sittannaval

- The Arivar Koil

- The Ezhadippattam
- Megalithic Burial Sites
- Navachunai

And there are some newly constructed recreational facilities available for visitors like boating, children's park and garden.

DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

Interview schedule and questionnaire used for the purpose of this study. A sample survey was held among the tourists who visited the tourism spots of Sittannaval about 200 in number irrespective of their caste and creed.

GENDER CLASSIFICATION OF THE VISITORS

Researcher believes that tourism in Tamil Nadu state is popular among both the genders. There is no any gender preference. But, some points to be considered like safety, security, peace and pleasure for journey. Male or female can enjoy their visit if they succeed in visiting the places of heritage importance with getting the above mentioned all together.

TABLE NO 1

Gender	No. of Tourists	Percentage
Male	120	60%
Female	80	40%
Total	200	100%

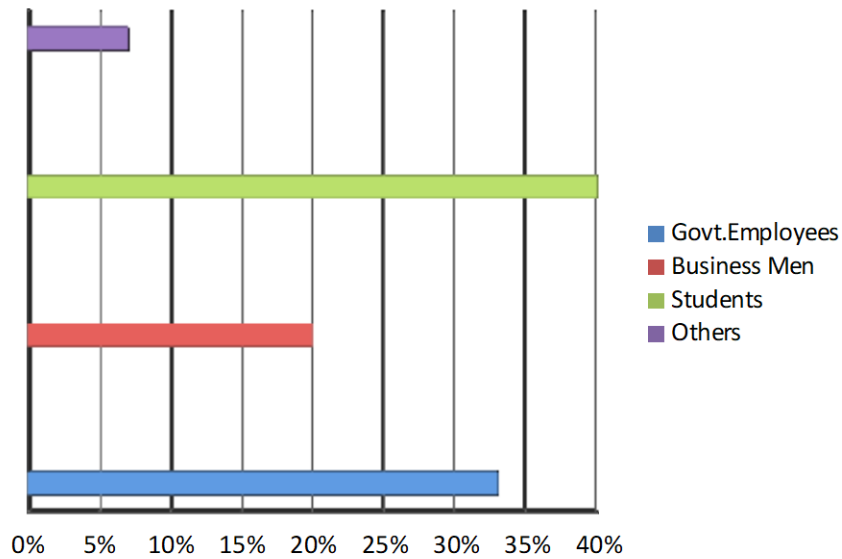
Above table shows that out of 200 Tourists, 120 were males and 80 were females. It indicates that tourism in Sittannaval is slightly more popular with the males than females.

Profile of the clientele

TABLE NO 2

No.	Profession	Percentage
1.	Govt. employees	33%
2.	Business men	20%
3.	Students	40%
4.	others	7%

33% of the tourists were govt. employees and 20% of them were business men while 40% of them were students and 7% belongs to others.



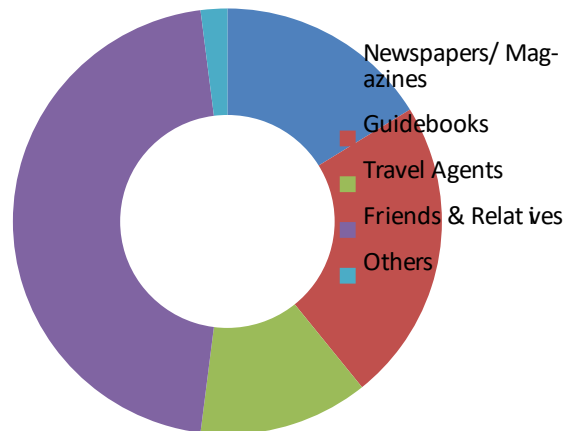
SOURCES OF INFORMATION REGARDING SITTANNAVASAL

For the visitors the major source of information about Sittannavasal was through friends and relatives that constitute 46.16%. 21% of them got information through guidebooks. 18.8% of the visitors through news papers/magazines. Only 12.24% got information through travel agents. Only 1.8 % of them got through other sources.

TABLE NO 3

S. No.	Source	Percentage
1.	Newspaper / Magazines	16.8%
2.	Guide books	23 %
3.	Travel agents	12.8 %
4.	Friends relatives	46%
5.	Others	2 %

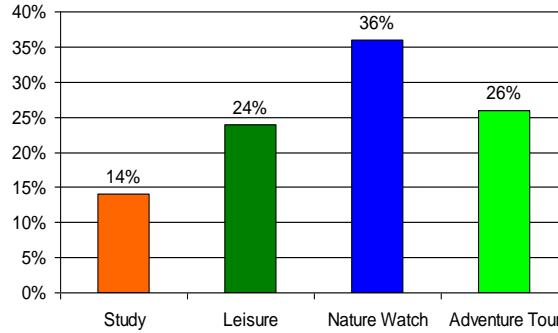
Source of Information



PURPOSE OF VISIT

TABLE NO 4

S. No.	Purpose of visit	Percentage
1.	Study	14 %
2.	Leisure	24 %
3.	Heritage Tour	36 %
4.	Adventure tour	26 %



The study about the purpose of visit shows 36 % of the visitors visit Sittannaval for leisure. 26% of them are interested in visiting heritage tourism destinations. 24 % of them are interested in adventure tour. 14 % are interested in studying about the historical tourism destinations like Sittannaval.

TYPE OF ENTERTAINMENT

TABLE NO 5

S. No.	Entertainment	Percentage
1	Trekking	31 %
2	Playing in park	40 %
3	Roaming by walk	22 %
4	Boating	11 %

It shows that 31% of the visitors are interested in trekking in the rocks of Sittannaval. 40 % of them are interested in playing with their family members in parks. 22% of them are interested in roaming by walk and only 11% are interested in boating.

OPINION OF RESPONDENTS ABOUT THE STANDARD OF FACILITIES AVAILABLE IN SITTANNAVAL

TABLE NO 6

S. No.	Type of facility	No .of Responses				
		Very Good	Good	Not bad	Poor	Very poor
1	Transport Connectivity	12	30	50	60	48
2	Drinking water	2	10	30	70	88
3	Food	3	12	50	60	75
4	Rest room facilities	20	20	80	38	42

It shows that majority of tourists felt the facilities of transport available in Sittannavasal not up to the requirement of tourist. And also majority of tourists revealed that they expect lots of improvement in standard drinking water, food and rest room facilities.

OPINION OF RESPONDENTS ABOUT THE SAFETY AND COMFORT AVAILABLE IN SITTANNAVASAL

TABLE NO 7

S. No.	Safety/ Comfort	No .of Responses				
		Very Good	Good	Not bad	Poor	Very poor
1	Safety of tourists	30	50	50	28	42
2	Comfort	42	60	30	50	18

From the study it has been found that tourists are just satisfied about the safety standards of Sittannavasal. Their responses expressed that comfort of tourists has to be developed with immediate attention.

FINDINGS AND SUGGESTIONS

Through this research study, the researcher would like insist the following recommendations for the development of tourism in Sittannavasal.

- The government has to appoint guides who are trained to communicate in major foreign languages with the tourists explaining about the heritage of Sittannavasal.
- More accommodations facilities have to be constructed in Pudukkottai to cater to the foreigners with international standards
- Tourism authorities may implement an efficient marketing strategy to promote tourism in Sittannavasal
- Sign boards showing way and other information should be kept on appropriate languages.
- Necessary action should be taken to avoid scribbling on the walls of monuments and other places.
- Public should be educated more about the positive impacts of historical tourism.
- The official has to ensure the safety and comfort of tourists visiting Sittannavasal
- The standard of basic amenities required by visitors of Sittannavasal has to be improved with utmost care.

CONCLUSION

Heritage has always been an attracting force in Tamil Nadu. Its countless temples, dance forms, cuisine, festivals have been unique and mesmerizing. The role of monuments in promoting tourism is significant. The flow of foreign tourists to India was negligible when compared to other countries. Efforts should be made to increase the foreign exchange earnings through tourism. The State shall involve the private sector and the local community to promote environmentally and culturally sustainable and socially inclusive tourism development in the State. If more such visitors are encouraged to visit historic monuments and landscapes of cultural heritage, income from them will help preservation of the monuments economically viable. Heritage tourism program also improves the quality of life for residents in and around the monuments.

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