

A STUDY ON PROBLEMS FACED BY CRAFT TOURISM INDUSTRY IN THANJAVUR DISTRICT

Dr. B. BASKARAN¹, K. MANIKANDAN²

ABSTRACT

The tourism has played a most important role to transform the world into a globalised economy where all countries can exchange free do business and culture and share their interest of shared benefits based on tourism industry. India is one of the major place of the foreign tourists particularly the state of Tamil Nadu which has a good cultural heritage along with the Indian states. All over the world, the tourists are visiting it due to its climatic, scenic beauty and green resources. This study investigates the problem of tourism Industry in Thanjavur District. The scope of socio-economic conditions of the tourist and analysis of the issues pertaining to the location of Thanjavur is dealt through in this study. The data for this study was collected from crowd tourists occupied in Thanjavur District. This study is generally based on primary and secondary data. The paper gives some important role to support the tourism in the state of Tamil Nadu in Thanjavur District.

Keywords: Craft, Tourism, Craft Tourism, Craft Tourism Problems

INTRODUCTION

India is one of the leading suppliers of handicrafts in the world market. Among Indian states, Tamil Nadu is a place for its rich history of culture & tradition in the Handicrafts Industry and occupies an important place in this sector. In Tamil Nadu, Thanjavur handicrafts play a vital role in the Handicrafts industry. The informal handicraft industry is one of these sectors, a potential source of employment, leading to empowerment, economic development and rural development (Binns & Nel 2002; Follad 2006).

¹Associate Professor and Research Advisor, PG and Research Department of Commerce, Dharmapuram Adhinam Arts College, Dharmapuram, Mayiladuthurai, Nagapattinam District, Tamil Nadu. (Affiliated to Bharathidasan University, Tiruhirappalli, Tamil Nadu)

²Ph.D Research Scholar (Part-Time), PG and Research Department of Commerce, Dharmapuram Adhinam Arts College, Dharmapuram, Mayiladuthurai, Nagapattinam District (Affiliated to Bharathidasan University, Tiruhirappalli, Tamil Nadu)

To some extent the Tanzania government promotes the growth of the handicraft industry as a strategy for economic growth, empowerment of women, preservation of cultural heritage, and hence poverty alleviation (Athumani 2010). Tourism refreshes the mind, brings happiness,

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entertainment, enjoyment and gives new experience and so on, to the tourists. Tourism ensures an all-round growth through financial multiplier effect which percolates to different stake-holding sectors like the railways, airlines, surface transport, telecommunication, cruises, hotels, etc. Tourism involves the greatest flows of goods, services, and people to the overall the earth. Tourism industry occupies a main role in the world's economy. Tourism is of major economic and social importance in both developed and developing countries. It provides employment opportunities and increase the standard of living and quality of the local population. It also supports and helps to fine arts, festivals, folk traditions, and events and provides a market for local crafts and manufacturing. Tourism industry is thus a very composite one of many firms contributing various types of products and services to the tourists. Thus, the development of tourism industry produce market for different industries and thus it contributes towards the development of overall economy of a country. Tourism education has also been an area of large development in recent decades.

Tamil Nadu, the Southern-most State of India, nestles in the Indian Peninsula between the Bay of Bengal in the east, the Indian Ocean in the South and the Western Ghats and Arabian Sea on the west in the north and west. In the north and west, the state adjoins Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh and Kerala. Tamil Nadu, with an estimated area of 1,30,058 sq. km ranks eleventh among the states of India in size. The population of Tamil Nadu as per the 2001 census is 62.40 million, constituting 6.05 per cent of the total population of India. Chennai (Madras) is the capital city other important cities/ places and Coimbatore, Salem, Madurai etc. Tamil Nadu known for its ancient language and rich cultural tradition has numerous places of tourism interest for people belonging to other parts of the country and also other nations. Tourism in Tamil Nadu has flourished since ancient times. During the glorious days of Chera, Chola, and Pandiya, the three kingdoms of Tamil Nadu, people from different parts of the world had visited the land to take part in the religious-cultural celebrations like the „Indira Vizha.“ The widespread trade relations with many countries which date-back to 5000 years in history also contributed to the spread of the social cultural progress and economic prosperity of the people of the land. The celebrated Chinese tourist Yuwan Swang and Fahien have mentioned about the rich cultural and political diversity of the Tamil people. In the medieval times, Marco Polo and Ibn Bathutha were the famous travellers visiting Tamilnadu.

HISTORY OF CRAFT

Patronage of the craft was fairly prominent in the western areas by the kings and rich merchants (seths). Jaisalmer and Bikanerhad historical importance as they were located on the famous silk route. Thus apart from the patronage from the then elite, the products were famous in the cities and the marts of Persia, Afghanistan, Multan and Sind. Tourist arrivals in the last twenty years have revived the lost glory to these artifacts; however, these craft items are just the reminiscent of the exquisite crafts of the past This sector has its genesis in the migration of Hindu families as refugees to Rajasthan during the Indo-Pak war of 1971. They are known as 'Sharnarthis' and the local people are called 'Rahiyas '. These were the Hindu community people who during the partition went to Pakistan as their land area came under the jurisdiction of Pakistan and then in 1971 came back with the retreating Indian army and took refuge in relief camps at the border areas of Barmer, till they got Indian citizenship. Having lived in Sindh they imbibed these arts that have evolved through centuries.

CRAFT TOURISM IN THANJAVUR DISTRICT

The home of Carnatic music, musical instruments dance and traditional handicrafts, Thanjavur is famous for the Brahadeswarar Temple which is a world heritage site. The Temple constructed more than thousand years ago by the Chola King Raja, Raja, is an architectural marvel. The town of Thanjavur is also head quarters of the district of the same name. The home of Carnatic music, musical instruments dance and traditional handicrafts, Thanjavur is famous for the Brahadeswarar Temple which is a world heritage site. The Temple constructed more than thousand years ago by the Chola King Raja, Raja, is an architectural marvel. The town of Thanjavur is also head quarters of the district of the same name. Thanjavur District is one of the 32 districts of the state of Tamil Nadu, in southeastern India. Its headquarters is Thanjavur. As of 2011, Thanjavur district had a population of 2,405,890 with a sex-ratio of 1,035 females for every 1,000 males. Thanjavur is an important center of South Indian religion, art, and architecture. Most of the Great Living Chola Temples, which are UNESCO World Heritage Monuments, are located in and around Thanjavur. The foremost among these, the Brihadeeswarar Temple, is located in the center of the city. Thanjavur is also home to Tanjore painting, a painting style unique to the region.

THE INFORMAL ECONOMY: ART AND CRAFT ENTERPRISES

The inability of the formal economic system to meet the needs of the community makes it necessary to find informal solutions. The informal sector not only provides opportunities for the unemployed, but it also attracts the entrepreneur who sees opportunities to generate more revenue in the informal sector. Although different authors (Skinner, 2005; Cohen, 2010) define the informal economy differently, they share a common understanding that it tends to be small and avoids government requirements. The majority of art and craft enterprises fall within the informal sector. For many researchers, the activities of rural handicraft producers represent a special category of tourism-linked small, medium and micro enterprises or, more particularly, a form of informal tourism enterprise.

DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

Particulars	No.of Respondents	Percentage
Age		
Below 30yrs	11	22
31 to 40yrs	18	36
41 to 50yrs	16	32
Above 50yrs	05	10
Marital status		
Single	12	24
Married	38	76
Size of family		
1 to 3members	16	32
4 to 6members	19	38
More than 6members	15	30
Educational Qualification		
Illiterate	19	38
School level	14	28

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Diploma	08	16
Graduate	09	18
Year of experience		
<5years	16	32
6 to 10years	23	46
Above 11years	11	22
Problems		
Infrastructure facilities	19	28
Tourism Policy	09	18
Proper Co-ordination	03	06
Marketing	04	08
Publicity	02	04
Finance to entrepreneurs	03	06
Financial Institution	02	04
Tourist guide	02	04
Quality Manpower	02	04
Tax	03	06
Other Problems	01	02

PROBLEMS FACED BY CRAFTORS

Both illiteracy and unawareness of the artisans become the major hurdles in their development. They do not get the market value for their products because of their incompetence to reach the markets themselves. The artisans depend upon the mediators for their products to reach the market and thus are paid less than the market price of the products. There is usually a very wide differential between the manufacturer's price, export price and retail price for all handmade products. Thus the key problem of the artisans is the asymmetric information of the new potential markets of their products.

- The approach of the artisans to those policies also becomes a hazardous task. While interviewing 89% of the respondents said they faced the problem of financial assistance for their unit to be operational throughout the year. They are not aware of the various credit facilities provided by the Government for their benefits.
- The social structure of the artisan community's civic, professional and social 269 infrastructure support is lacking or is of poor quality for almost all artisan population. Artisan skills do not command the recognition and respect they deserve. This is partially due to the traditionally low social status of artisan communities (most of which are caste based), as well as low levels of education and high levels of poverty in this sector.
- Lack of proper infrastructure facilities: Lack of proper infrastructure facilities are the major impediment of tourism sector in the state. These facilities are mainly related with transport and communication, power, star category hotel, clean accommodation, availability of water sports equipment and other logistics of tourism. Most of tourist destinations in the State are not easily accessible. The maintenance of existing infrastructure is another problem of state tourism.
- Absence of a Tourism Policy: The Government of India recognized tourism as an industry and tourism become the third largest foreign exchange earner in the country. The National Tourism policy was formulated in 2002 to bring tourism in a systematic manner,

position it as a major engine of economic growth, to harness its direct and multiplier effect for employment and poverty eradication in an environmentally sustainable manner.

- Lack of Proper Co-ordination: The tourism resources in Assam are properly taken care of by the concerned departments and agencies. The State forest department has identified conservation of existing bio-diversities as thrust area. Though the forest resources are the prime attractions of both domestic and foreign tourists, but the state forest department is not interested to develop tourism in the State.
- Marketing: Marketing is a critical aspect of tourism sector which is linked with the supply of tourism products to meet the demand of visitors. Tourism market includes identification of the target markets, creating awareness of destinations and tourist sites, disseminating information to the target customers and promoting tourism demand through various means so that tourism marketing is not only concerned with reaching out to the customers but also with information content and its dissemination in an effective, efficient and timely manner.
- Publicity: Publicity is an effort to make available certain information of State tourism to the public. The information about Assam tourism are not available in the major Indian cities. The official website of Assam tourism is not up to required level so as to give detail information of state tourism. The financial assistance received from the Ministry of tourism for promotional activities of selected fairs and festivals has not been utilized properly.
- Lack of proper finance to entrepreneurs: Local entrepreneurs in major tourist destinations in the state are not getting proper financial assistance from the government, bank and other financial institutions. Even government has not introduced any tourism related financial scheme for the entrepreneurs. The micro entrepreneur activities in tourism products and cultural activities are in unorganised form. The micro entrepreneurs have been engaged in selling of tourism products to tourist in different tourist destinations i.e. cultural activities, handloom products, handicraft items etc. Micro entrepreneurs are still in the grassroots level.
- Role of financial Institution: Bank and financial institution in the State are interested to provide financial assistance mainly to the industrial undertaking. Financial institutions have their common notion that state tourism sector is not in a viable position to earn profit.
- Absence of tourist guide: The state tourism is facing the acute problem of trained tourist guides in the important places of tourist attraction. It is difficult to satisfy the inquisitiveness of the tourists in main tourist spots. The department of tourism initiated a programme to train tourist guides.
- Absence of quality Manpower: The quality of tourism attraction depends largely on the quality of services provided. The state is in short supply of trained manpower in hospitality sector. The tourism industry needs manpower at different skill levels, but it is difficult to find right type of people. To meet the demand, the industry absorbs people from different institutions.
- Heavy Tax Burden: The state tourism sector exist multiplicity of taxes introduced by different department i.e. value added tax, Luxury Tax, forest entry fees etc. The forest department has introduced dual prices as entry fees for domestic and foreign tourists. The foreign tourist has to pay higher amount of fee to the state forest department to visit the national parks in the state.

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- Other Problems -Effects on Environment, Effects on local economy and Effects on local cultures

SUGGESTIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

On the basis of the analysis of the finding of the study, there are some suggestions which require immediate attention to reduce the problems in the study area. It is suggested that both state and central government of India has to take the remedial actions to improve the infrastructural facilities in order to increase the rate of foreign tourists in the study area.

- It is confirmed that the majority of the respondents prefer private buses for visiting the destinations because of its convenience, comfort, speed, etc. So, the transport sector, the bus and tourist cab services need improvement both in qualitative and quantitative terms.
- Cleanliness and hygiene and public utility services at every tourist complex are much important from tourist point of view. These have been widely quoted as a major shortcoming by the tourists. Trade center may regulate the price of the products. Lack of supervision by the local authorities in the pay and use public toilet which dismays the tourists with foul odour. Suitable steps need to be taken to alleviate these problems.
- Tourism should be declared an industry by the Government of Tamil Nadu without any delay to attract the private entrepreneurs to invest in construction of hotels and other resorts in the state and the study area in particular.

CONCLUSION

The study mainly identified the problem of tourism Industry in Thanjavur district, the factors responsible for promoting and developing tourism industry and the problems faced by the tourists in the study area. The government has taken all the steps to develop the tourism. The government also provides helpful schemes for setting up and developing the tourism related activities such as infrastructure facilities, hygiene, boarding and lodging, vicinity and transport facilities in order to improve the tourism activities in the study area. The role of central, state government and local city corporation are promoting and to introduce modern schemes for developing tourism industry. It makes Thanjavur a prime centre in the tourism map in India.

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