PILGRIMAGE TOURISM MANAGEMENT ISSUES AND CHALLENGES WITH REFERENCE TO TAMIL NADU

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ABSTRACT

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 centres 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 its cultural importance and socio-economic development through pilgrimage tourism and also it analysis the basic infrastructure issues in pilgrimage sites. Pilgrimage tourists were identified as a key factor in developing pilgrimage tourism. The data for this study were collected from local residents which engaged in pilgrimage tourism activities. Pilgrimage tourists were identified as a key factor in developing pilgrimage tourism in local communities. This research is mainly based on only secondary data. Secondary data required for this study was collected from different sources.

KEYWORDS: Pilgrimage tourism, Tourism, Socio-economic, Cultural, Infrastructures.

INTRODUCTION

OBJECTIVES OF STUDY

- To find out the potentials and prospects of pilgrimage tourism in Tamil Nadu.
- To study the Socio-Economic Impacts of pilgrimage Tourism.
- To find out the problems of basic infrastructure facilities in Tamil Nadu.

PILGRIMAGE TOURISM IN TAMILNADU

Tamil Nadu has been astonishingly impressive in pilgrimage tourism. It is blessed with plenty of well known religious destinations. Pilgrimages to these destinations bring enormous economic gains to local residents. The number of person visiting pilgrimage centres is almost equal to the population of Tamilnadu. Tamilnadu has lot of pilgrimage potentialities, some of the major places are, Kancheepuram, Karaikal, Mahabalipuram, Vellankani, Pondicherry,
Chidambaram, Tanjore,Tiruvanamalai, Madurai, Rameshwaram, Karaikal, Trichy and some of the most visited temples are, Meenakshi Temple,Brihadeeswara Temple,Ramanatha swamy temple,Palani Andavar temples Paratha Sarathi temple, Swami Malai,kapaleeswarar temple,Chayavaneashwara temple, Kumbeswara temple, Mailapur temple,Annamalai temple, Manakulavainayagar temple. These are some of the famous pilgrimage sites visited by all over the year. the Govt of Tamilnadu has taken recent messieurs to promote the various places of worship as a fine channel of pilgrimage tourism in Tamil Nadu .there have been some individual efforts too by few tour companies in promoting some pilgrimage festivals which un avoidably are the best times to experience Tamil culture and religious rituals. Infrastructures improving every year to accommodate the ever increasing number of devotees. Even the tourism dept run several busses to link the various sacred sites through the state. Tamil Nadu which over the pages of history has evolved as an ideal place for pilgrimage tourism. It takes place in the pilgrim centres of Tamilnadu, to see the architecture, the history, the legends, the festivals, the traditions, the rituals, the music this gives Tamilnadu a mystical charm and an edge over all other states. Pilgrimage tourism revels the high positive effects of pilgrimage season on income, employment and high standard of living of residents in Tamilnadu.

Tamil Nadu is the land of pilgrimages. And it has a history that dates back to several thousand years. It is a land where traditions and culture blend and continue to live in harmony. The state abounds in monuments and temples that are ancient and each has its own story of religious, artistic and cultural accomplishment and specialty waiting to be heard. With thousands of temples occupying the land scape of Tamilnadu. The state is also called the land of temples.Tamilnadu tourism was incorporated during july 1971 under the companies act 1956.the entire share capital of rs 678.63 lakhs has been subscribed by the state government. Tamilnadu tourism was formed with the objective of promoting pilgrimage tourism in Tamilnadu by providing infrastructure facilities of transport and accommodation and others. To fulfill this objective, Tamilnadu tourism has expanded its activities into 3 main operations namely hotels transport and fairs. Domestic and foreign tourist arrivals in Tamilnadu in the year 2007 are totally 278.38 in lakhs. In 2008 it was 305.24 in lakhs. Domestic tourist arrivals is 293.05.foreign tourist arrivals is 12.19.Tamilnadu tourism is currently engaged in promotion of 18 less known pilgrimage tourist spots. In the last three years, in case of pilgrimage centres it was Rs 45.41 crore provided by the central government. Rs 21.57 crore spent by the state government. The increase in tourist arrivals also enabled Tamilnadu tourism to double its net profit from 4.43 crore in 2007-2008. in 2008-2009 it was9.50 crore in pilgrimage centres, such a growth has been achieved through numbers of forms. based on the length of stay, and transport used, price paid and the pilgrimage tourism motivation leading to it. In India lot of pilgrimage potentials are there as well as in Tamilnadu. Pilgrimage tourism plays plays a majore role in economic generation in India and in Tamilnadu. Every year pilgrimage tourists are doubled in pilgrimage centres, it shows that pilgrimage potentials in Tamilnadu is versatile. This study is to analyse the problems faced by the pilgrims. Developments in pilgrimage centres.

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 (Adrian Ivakhiv, 2003 ). 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. (American Geographical Society) 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. (Bar, Doron and Cohen-Hattab, Kobi(2003) ). It is considered as an ambassador of peace and international brotherhood.( Claudia Liebelt , 2010 ) 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 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.

METHODOLOGY

The data for this study were collected from local residents which engaged in pilgrimage tourism activities. Pilgrimage tourists were identified as a key factor in developing pilgrimage tourism in local communities. This research is mainly based on secondary data.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Pilgrimage tourism seems to be a newer academic concept but it is certainly not a new phenomenon (Dallen J. Timothy and Daniel H. Olsen, eds 2006 ). Based on a review of the literature, (Inés Hernández-Ávila.1996 ), this research defines a pilgrimage tourist as someone who visits a specific place out of the usual environment, with the intention of pilgrimage meaning and/or growth, without any overt religious compulsion, which could be religious or non-religious in nature, but within the Divine context, regardless of the main reason for travelling. In tourism marketing, almost all authors agree that pilgrimage tourists play the most significant role; hence marketers always try to learn the attitude and behaviour of pilgrimage tourists to effectively design and offer their tourism packages( Ioana Josan, 2009). The researchers have identified several characteristics of pilgrimage tourists. Notably, the preference of travelling alone or in groups; and the influence of reference groups and opinion leaders in making travel decisions ( Jayashree B. Gokhale 1986 ) are the two vital ones that are most relevant to this paper and were frequently mentioned. It has also been observed by various authors that pilgrimage tourism in general has recently become an important subject of research in social and business areas (John Elsner 1992). The interest in pilgrimage tourism has affected a number of industries around the world (John Elsner 1992 ), including the tourism industry. Pilgrimage tourism seems to be a new concept but it is not a new phenomenon. Based on the literature review and interviews conducted with various stakeholders in various countries, this study defines a pilgrimage tourist as 'someone who visits a place out of his/her usual environment, with the intention of pilgrimage growth, without overt religious compulsion, which could be religious, non-religious, sacred or experiential in nature, but within the Divine context,
regardless of the main reason for travelling’. A predominant theory of marketing argues that every market consists of groups or ‘segments’ of customers with different needs and demands (Kamla-Raj 2010). It should be noted here that segments are unlikely to be mutually exclusive, and this would also apply to pilgrimage tourism. To further identify the pilgrimage tourist and analyse his/her purchasing behaviour, there is a need to build a typology of the pilgrimage tourist. Typology comes from the Greek work ‘typus’ and describes various types of person based on his/her behaviour and attitudes (Kathryn Rountree Goddess 2002). This typology would help to understand the characteristics and motives of different typology of a pilgrimage tourist.

PILGRIMAGE AND TOURISM THEORY: CONTRASTS AND PROBLEMS

It seems that whenever pilgrimage tourism and touristic experience is talked about, the word and notion of pilgrimage is raised. The question of whether pilgrimage and tourism are discrete social phenomena, different types of the same phenomenon, or indeed the same thing under different names, is a contentious one. Both terms are attempts to account for forms of travel. (Lynn Huntsinger and María Fernández-Giménez 2000) Yet in common usage they seem to describe quite different activities. However, when scrutinised, it can often be found that there is a significant degree of overlap, sometimes resulting in one being indistinguishable from the other. (Maria Eva Subtelny 1989) It is thus prudent to look at the theories of each, side by side, in order to gain a perspective on the problem, and, for the purpose of this article, establish a foundation from which the works of pilgrimage travellers can be examined. However, it is important to realise that by no means are all pilgrims on pilgrimage for religious reasons. Reader, for example, has argued convincingly that the term ‘pilgrimage tourism ’ ought to be applied to a range of activities that need not be limited to the explicitly religious in motivation or type. In addition, it is also vitally important to consider the pilgrimage tourism place itself. One common denominator amongst these places is what we might think of as their ‘spiritual magnetism’. That is, the power of the place to attract devotees. (Mark MacWilliams. 1995) argues that this magnetism is developed through association with various combinations of miraculous cures, apparitions of supernatural beings, sacred geography, and difficulty of access arguably, the pilgrimage tourism itself will display some basic cosmological principles, specifically in regards to the meanings behind the geographical location of pilgrimages. Physical traces of the divine or saintly relics embody the ideal that pilgrims seek. The sacred geography and the traces of the saint are ‘sketches’ of the ideal incarnate. However, Reader, again looking to expand the field of pilgrimage tourism studies, argues that the pilgrimage site need not necessarily be religious. The ‘secular’ world, he argues has as much potential to create sacred places, and he cites examples of cultural and national shrines, war graves, and sporting venues as examples. Accepting this, the boundaries between pilgrimage tourism and what we might call ‘pilgrimage journeying’ cannot always be demarcated. However, one distinguishing factor may be the label that the traveller applies to themselves (Paulla A. Ebron 1999) argues that the key to understanding pilgrimage tourism is the flow of people, arguing that it is a “circulation of people, ideas, symbols, experiences, and cash” that we should trace the flow of in order to properly document. Indeed, he goes on to argue that the fundamental paradigms of a religion will emerge in the study of pilgrims and pilgrimage tourism.
However, as has been discussed, pilgrimages are not exclusively the domain of believers. Pilgrimage Tourists often tread the very same paths, and, as shall be argued, often for very similar reasons. Given this, pilgrimage, as a journey towards some aspect of the ideal, with diverse and not always specifically religious motivations on the part of the individual, looks less and less like a necessarily religious activity. This has led many to question whether modern pilgrimage tourism and pilgrimage are not the same behaviour in different guises. By looking at the relationship of pilgrimage to tourism the boundaries of both can be established. Given that pilgrimage tourism is one of the world’s largest industries, it is surprising that the sociological aspects of tourism have been largely unstudied. Nevertheless, the theories developed have generated much contention, and have divided academic thought, broadly speaking, into two camps over whether pilgrimage and tourism are convergent or divergent. Divergence theories were chronologically prior, emerging most notably from the work of (Paulla A. Ebron1999 Tourists as Pilgrims). He argued that modern pilgrimage tourism had moved away from the type of ‘spontaneous experience seeking’ of the past, and had become a tautology, merely a repetition of everyday mundane life. (Roger Friedland and Richard Hecht.1998) felt that the “prefabrication” of pilgrimage tourist experiences had resulted in a loss of “the art of travel”, and that “the more strenuously and self-consciously we work at enlarging our experience, the more pervasive the tautology becomes” However, Boorstin’s work was more a critique of culture than a serious attempt at meaningful sociological theory. Yet it did inspire (Sociology of Religion), who saw mass-tourists as “the barbarians of our Age of Leisure”. They viewed international pilgrimage tourism as politically, but also culturally unhealthy. At its worst, it was “like King Midas in reverse; a device for the systematic destruction of everything that is beautiful in the world”. Yet theirs too was more a cultural critique than a search for theoretical frameworks. Thus the framework consisted of ethnic, cultural, historical, environmental, socio economic and recreational pilgrimage tourism.

THE ROLES OF PILGRIMAGE TOURISM

The final question arising from this study revolves around conceptions of motivation for pilgrimage tourists; why do some people travel in this mode? From my research it is clear that there is no single reason that can be attributed to all pilgrimage tourists. (Terry R. Slater 2004). This is demonstrated well when Cohen’s typology is applied to pilgrimage tourists. However, pilgrimage tourists do share the common trait of travelling within religious contexts. The questions concerning what draws them to these contexts revolve around issues of motivation, expectation, and the cultural ideals associated with the notion of ‘pilgrimage travel’. All three author’s works examined in this concept express an explicit desire to place themselves in religious contexts. There is no indication of accident or coercion (Shinde Shinde, Kira n). The same is true for the editorial articles. Further, the study of guide-books indicate that these sorts of contexts and activities are ‘the things to do’ when travelling. Yet, this question can only be answered fully in individual contexts. Some tourists will approach pilgrimage aspects from a recreational or diversionary point of view, whilst some will come with ideas of experimentation or will be seeking alternatives. In this sense, the religions of other cultures, by virtue of their relative uniqueness, can be seen to be facilitating explorations of the self at a variety of levels. In addition, issues of secularisation and modernity/post modernity are very much a part of this picture.
The removal of religious institutional authority and the subsequent questioning of religious belief have left a gulf in conceptions of fundamental personal identity that postmodern currents see as repairable with any ‘truth’ applicable. (Cynthia T. (1996), This article posits that pilgrimage tourism is a manifestation of the increasing acceptance of individuated formations of personal identity, and a way to explore concepts of truth, morality, and belief that are typically either ignored or not accepted within Western societies. Some further insights can be gained by looking at the places visited by pilgrimage tourists. In the same sense that (Elana.C. (2001) argued that pilgrimage tourist destinations were “an unplanned typology of structure” that allowed a view of modern consciousness, (Harishrai. M. (2007) the types of destinations visited by pilgrimage tourists can yield information relevant to ascertaining its role. Importantly, none of the tourists examined here undertook any formal doctrinal training. Whether this is an indication that pilgrimage tourists are not interested in such ‘institutional’ aspects, or simply a restriction of limited time and money (or both) is unclear, though it seems more likely to be the former given the influences of modernity/post modernity and secularisation. However, all of the tourists examined here visited places of active worship. It is suggested that their object was to immerse themselves in the everyday practical aspect of the religions they visited. (Libson.K.B. Muraleedharan.K.P (2002) this betrays certain ideals concerning religion; that it should be done at a personal level or in small-scale ‘organic’ groups. Indeed, the tendency towards individual consumerist religion, a hallmark of secularisation, is well demonstrated in these ideals. Pilgrimage tourists, as ‘consumers’ of religious novelty (and potential re-makers of themselves therein) are easily observable indicators of the trends of contemporary Western religiosity.

SOCIO-ECONOMIC IMPACTS OF PILGRIMAGE TOURISM

Most studies that measured specifically the impacts of pilgrimage tourism agree that sacred destinations are strongly affected by the stream of pilgrimage tourists visiting them (. Monisha C. (2000) proposes a model of the dynamics of pilgrimage tourism, which allows us to further understand the interaction between pilgrimage tourists and host community and the associated impacts. As depicted there is both an immediate impact on the hosts’ environment due to the direct contact of the visitors with the religious institutions, and also an indirect impact on the local economy and the society. First and most obvious impact of pilgrimage tourism is through the visits to the religious site and the visitor’s contact with the religious institutions. However, apart from the religious institutions, holy sites are often surrounded by religiously orientated businesses and facilities, such as souvenir shops, travel agencies, hotels and even hospitals, providing employment for the host community (Murray. G. (2002). In particular, the sale of religious souvenir items, for example sacred water (Peter, P.D. (2005) icons and candles (Priya. S. (2001) or other religious things (Rajendra.K. (2002 ) brings in considerable revenue, as is the case in Assisi in Italy and Lourdes in France (Sagar S. (2004).

According to Shinde kiran A. (1999), this material perspective of interest brought about by pilgrimages has always been present in human history. As such, religious tourism can have similar economic impact as we see in other forms of tourism such as job creation, population growth and infrastructure development. The Catholic pilgrimage site Lourdes is a good example of how pilgrimage tourism can affect a destination’s population growth. Lourdes, which currently receives some 6 million pilgrims per year from 140 different countries, (Büssing. A. (2006) has been experiencing a constant population growth since its beginning as a pilgrimage
site in 1858. This is in contrast to other cities at the edge of the Pyrenees and is attributable to the arrival of people from the surrounding area for job opportunities provided by the pilgrimage (Collins-Kreiner, N./Kliot, N./Mansfeld, Y./Sagi, K. (2006). Czestochowa in Poland, a town with a population of 250,000 attracts some 4.5 million pilgrims per year (Johnston, A.M. (2006) saw improving its infrastructure as a result of being a pilgrimage site (Osterrmann, T./Büssing, A. (2007).Some religious sites have been visited for centuries and there the impacts develop over a long period of time but sometimes holy sites are “discovered” suddenly, bringing dramatic and sudden changes to the local residents. Medjugorje in Bosnia-Herzegovina is one such example.(Poensgen, H. (2006) explains how the discovery of a holy shrine in 1981 resulted in a sudden growth of private accommodation and in land price inflation.In the Islamic world, income generated from the pilgrims to Mecca is the second major pillar of Saudi Arabian economy after oil (Raj, R./Morpeth, N. D. (2007) Pilgrimage generates annual revenues of approximately $8 billion and over the past 30 years Saudi Arabia has invested $35 billion in improving facilities for pilgrims (Sommer/A., Saviano/M. (2007).

Pilgrimage tourism is of course not free from negative impacts. (Timothy, D./Olsen, D. (Eds.) (2006):) notes that the high cost of an umra or hajj trip for Muslim people plus the increase in the number of people performing umra, gave rise to a black market for the exchange rate of the Saudi riyal. More precisely, the Saudi riyal increased 16% between November. Impacts of pilgrimage tourism. Source: Shinde, 2003, p. 93. Residents’ Perceptions of pilgrimage Tourism. Against the Central Bank of Egypt’s rate. In addition, the flow of riyal to the black market caused a cash deficiency forcing local banks to refuse grants even for small amounts to travellers. In fact, according to operations and contracts are now set up to ensure that any element of speculation, uncertainty and gambling are eliminated or minimized. Changes in the local economy and society due to the large number of pilgrimage tourists may contribute to a process of cultural commoditization and acculturation. For example, the authentic pilgrimages have given way in Sri Lanka to large-scale tourism which combines both recreation and pilgrimage. In Vrindavan, a popular Hindu pilgrimage centre in India, the improvements in accessibility and availability of transportation have long replaced the traditional pure form of “pilgrimage on foot” for the majority of visitors to the particular site. In accordance with changes in visitor patterns and the expansion of pilgrimage travel, many tourist enterprises (hotels and tour operators) have emerged in the vicinity of the most popular temples, indicating growing tourism activity (Shinde, 2007) and diminishing the sacred atmosphere. Similarly, in El Camino, Spain, the process of secularization has been accelerated by the Council of Europe’s designation of the pilgrimage route to Santiago as the first European Cultural Itinerary. In fact, the transformation from local religious rituals to national festivals, as is also the case in Anda-lusian pilgrimage, raised conflicts and problems for the local population.

On the other hand, the positive impacts caused by the pilgrimage tourists often motivate residents to seek preservation of their religious sites and festivals not necessarily for purely religious reasons but also in order to safeguard the stream of pilgrimage tourists (Cohen, 1992). For instance, in Lisbon each year on June 13 on the day of the feast of St Anthony, the Town Hall sponsors the weddings of poor couples. In the year 2000, approximately 2,000 couples were married at the Town Hall and thousands more came to enjoy parades and other events citywide, making it an important event in the city’s tourist calendar. In summary, a pilgrimage site is
connected to the non-sacred world and pilgrimage tourism impacts both positively and negatively on the local community.

**SCHEME FOR DEVELOPMENT OF INFRASTRUCTURE FACILITIES IN PILGRIM CENTRES IN TAMILNADU**

The department of tourism has formulated a scheme for development of infrastructure facilities in certain selected pilgrim centres in cooperation with charitable, institutions, trusts or local bodies responsible for maintenance of the pilgrim centres, shrines and creation of facilities for the pilgrims. The facilities to be provided under the scheme include toilets, drinking water, food outlets, dormitory accommodation, bathing facilities etc. under the scheme central assistance up to 25% of the project cost is extended for creation of addition facilities in the selected pilgrim centres, the 75% being met by the bodies administering the pilgrim places. Assistance under the scheme is extended to the following guidelines apart from the relevant item in the general guidelines applicable for all projects the scheme will cover pilgrim centres of all religions communities and which are frequented regularly by pilgrim tourists. The trusts/charitable institutions concerned should be registered under the income tax act and eligible for tax deduction under section 80g or other applicable sections of the act. Proposal for financial assistance should be accompanied by audited statements of accounts of the trust/charitable institution/local body for the previous three years. Assistance will be available only for new projects or additional facilities in the existing projects. Responsibility for provision of basic infrastructure like roads, water supply, sanitation, sewerage, drainage, parking facilities etc. will rest with the religious trusts/charitable institutions/local bodies/ state Govt. Detailed cost estimates and blue prints of the projects should be certified by a qualified engineer. Grants given by the Govt., shall be kept in a separate account by the trust/charitable/institution/local body and it will be operated solely for the purpose for which it has been sanctioned no diversion of funds for any other purpose is permissible.

**PROBLEMS FACED BY PILGRIMAGE TOURISTS IN TAMILNADU**

There are lots of problems faced by the pilgrimage tourists, the problems start from the railway/bus station itself. (Jackowski and Smith, 1992 the pilgrims had to wait a long time after reaching the bus station to get a bus. the special busses run by the Govt. of India will start only after being filled up by the pilgrims. When the pilgrims reach the place they had to face heavy traffic problems for food, drinking water, parking, facilities, accommodation, language, communication facilities, toilet facilities and the problem of security. Problem of food; most of the restaurants are in open air, so that they cant keep the edible items away from the dust and files. The profit-motivated shop owners do not attach much importance to hospitality and cleanliness. The price list has not been exhibited, so they can charge whatever price they like (Pönsgen, 2006).many tourists are of the opinion that they are ready to pay anything, provided quality and neatness are maintained.

Drinking water is an important problem faced by the pilgrims. There is no sufficient drinking water to the pilgrims. Adequate pipe connections are yet to be implemented. The present supply of water from water pockets which a joint venture is undertaken by water authorities in nearby pilgrimage centres. This water is not pure enough to drink Sternberg, E. (1999).The pilgrims are
forced to drink it for want of alternative drinking water facility. They use the same water for
bathing and drinking. The parking facilities are not in commensurate with the increase in number
of vehicles. The existing parking grounds are not systematically and orderly arranged. So they
face much difficulty while returning to some of the pilgrimage centres (Vukonic, 1996). The
accommodation facilities available to pilgrims are in sufficient when compared to the number of
 pilgrims. Above 70% of the total pilgrims are from other states. Their language differs from
person to person. So in the absence of a common medium of communication the problem of
language remains as a serious one (Coleman, 2002). The heavy rush and terrible traffic fill the
place with noises, dust and dirt. The authorities do not give much importance to clean
this waste left by the pilgrims during the season. The ultimate impact is on the shoulders of the local people
as a result it affects their health and they become ill after every season. We are living in a
technologically advanced scientific era. Day by day the distance between places is shortened as a
result of tremendous development in science and technology. Proper communication facilities
are not available during the season in and around India. Lack of the toilet facility is another
problem for the pilgrims. (Robb, 2002, pilgrims have to come across during the season in
pilgrimage centres, the available toilets and sanitation facilities are not sufficient. so the pilgrims
are forced to open defecation. these un healthy atmosphere affect public health to a great extend
as a result they are often caught by the dark hands of epidemics. the town river and its
surroundings become dirty and nasty due to lack of sanitation facilities. During pilgrimage
season 0.29% pilgrim’s uses Govt. rest houses as the place of accommodation, 10.42% resort to
private hotels. 20.83% hired open place, 0.42% paying guests. 0.83% accommodation with
friends and relatives, 58.33% in free-open place 8.75% in nearby schools. But facilities available
for accommodation the pilgrims are not at all adequate. Hutchison, 2003)The inadequacy of
facilities for the pilgrims especially those especially those hailing from outside the state has to
fully depend on the public toilets for their sanitation purposes and this is fouling up the water of
rivers that flow by the side. Urry (1990) this results in environmental degradation at pilgrimage
centres. Facilities provided by the Indian Govt. for accommodation the pilgrims during the
festival season are not adequate. Most of the pilgrims use the private land for accommodation
and for meeting their sanitation needs. The temporary sheds up at pilgrim centres. Every year is
for short of requirement. At present the raw water pumped the public tap is being supplied after
chlorination. There is no full-fledged treatment facility for the water supplied. (Scates, 2007) The
water intake from the ponds is very near the bathing ghat and there is chance of coliform bacteria
as well as pathogens entering the intake water. Facilities provided at pilgrimage centres, for the
collection, conveyance, treatment and disposal are grossly in adequate. At pilgrimage centres
most of the toilets are of on-site trench type (temporvary) and are being constructed near the
temple and hence the leachate from the latrines reaches the rivers. Unscientific disposal of
sewage is causing severe water polluting problem. Due to inadequate in number of latrines
provided at pilgrim centres. Open defecation is common this is causing unhygienic and un rightly
condition and water and air pollution. The problem becomes all the worse when coupled with
waste water from hotels and other commercials establishments. Solid waste consisting of mainly
the food waste generated at pilgrim centres is being discharged in a hap hazard manner. Solid
waste generated at pilgrim centres is being disposed near the temple. The decayed garbage is
washed off during the rains in to the drainage. The solid waste management at pilgrimage centres
is also not satisfactory. Cranitch, 2008, Lloyd, 1998) During the recent years, solid waste
collection at pilgrimage centres has improved significantly due to pilgrimage workers but on site
storage facility of solid waste transport, segregation, processing and safe disposal facilities are
lacking. Till recently the solid wastes collected are dumped in to the forest land haphazardly creating environmental pollution. But due to the establishment of an inclinator facility costing rs.30 lakhs. Coleman (2002) the Govt. was partially successfully in the waste disposal now a day.Existing network of roads in pilgrimage centres is quite in adequate to meet the ever increasing need of the pilgrims. Especially during the festival season due to traffic blocks the pilgrims have to wait long hours at pilgrim centres for their vehicles to reach their boarding point. In addition to road network, the public transport is also inadequate. Parking facilities provided for private vehicles at pilgrimage centres is not adequate. Traffic area blocks of vehicles entering and leaving the parking area and is frequent causing hard ships to the people and giving rise to air pollution. Sufficient parking space with fuelling facilities and basic amenities to the drivers and passengers are not available at pilgrimage centres.

**INFRASTRUCTURE AND PROMOTION IN PILGRIMAGE CENTRES IN TAMILNADU**

States have to realize hidden potential that pilgrimage tourism has. There are innumerable temples and there are specific devotees for each temple for a variety of reasons. States have to recognize, built infrastructure around the temples (roads, hotels, power etc) and promotions around the temple festivals and specific significant dates. Büssing, A. (2006) pilgrimage centres can be divided into major very significant, locally important categories and then promotions can be targeted accordingly. State has to make sure that surroundings are kept free of any toots, garbage and seek to preserve the pilgrim experience. e.g. a river based pilgrimage experience, state has to make sure that the ghats are kept clean and free of all encroachments. (Sternberg, 1999). Coleman (2002) there must be atleast more than 1000 pilgrimage centres in India that fall under major every significant, locally important category. The general apathy that the state Govt.. follow is appalling. There is a general tendency to everybody to look at marquee destinations and shrines but not realize the tourism potential that pilgrimage has. It is no point talking about overseas tourist arrival numbers when the most frequented tourism segment remains the one that is most neglected

**AROUND THE SHRINE**

First thing that makes or mars a pilgrimage destination is not the shrine itself but what around it. In 1980 it used to be in a pretty bad shape. Since then the temple trust has done well to infrastructure. meenakshi temple madurai and guruvayoor etc. still one has to wade through narrow lanes, shops and before one reaches the shrine. Lot of times these shops are unauthorized and actually have encroached upon spaces reserved for public amenities.

**TEMPLE SERVICES AND ITS ACCESSIBILITY**

It is always tough to reserve a specific pooja in a temple. Temple trust websites should do well to allow on line donations. Online reservation of pooja and other temple services and also allows some sort of access to the priests for the devotees to keep in touch and take guidance.
LENGTH OF THE STAY

Temple trusts could do well to plant some trees around the area, control/eliminate touts around the area bothering pilgrims and create other amenities so that guests stay longer than the customary few hours. the idea should be not just have a shrine but a pilgrimage gate way destination where families can visit. pilgrimage centre shrine board has done well to create an experience for pilgrims to reach a top the shrine and given permission for a variety of outlets and other innovations to make it into an experience which pilgrims keep coming back again and again .most pilgrims stay at pilgrimage centres for at least a night and some even stay for two 

THE SOCIO-ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT THROUGH PILGRIMAGE TOURISM

The economic impact of pilgrimage tourism can be seen its contribution to a country, the largest contributions to pilgrimage tourism is seen in the many pilgrimage places in India. Many small places economies are highly depend on pilgrimage tourism as evidenced by the significant share of pilgrimage tourism in their total earnings. in 2009, pilgrimage tourism alone contributed 44.5 percent of the total export earnings of Indian tourism. Tourism in India has also provided a substantial contribution to Indian tourism, amounting to 13.7 percent in 2009, taking full advantage of the potential of their natural, pilgrimage tourism resources, countries like India and foreign countries are benefiting from the pilgrimage tourism. Bruner 1994; Daniel 1996).in 2009, pilgrimage tourism in India and neighbouring countries accounted respectively for 23.3 and 22.5% of their total foreign exchange earnings. In the other countries of the region, the contribution of pilgrimage tourism and is averaged between 50 to 60% mainly because of their potentialities and wealth. However in the light of the excreted continuing growth of the pilgrimage tourism in the foreseeable future, it can be assumed that the share of pilgrimage tourism in the Indian economy will be more significant. (Silberberg 1995, while there are various definitions of them converge around the concepts of improving the well being of country citizens, promoting higher standards of living, employment and conditions of economic and social progress. therefore in the absence of better indications to measure the impacts of pilgrimage tourism, its importance for employment has been used in the present document. The pilgrimage tourism contributes significantly to the creation of employment, both directly and indirectly in 2009, the industry in Indian region provided jobs for about 21% people. Representing an average of 8.9% of total employment. Taylor 2001), pilgrimage tourism employment in North-East-Asia is estimated at 9 million jobs or 6.1% of total employment. This situation is attributed mainly to china where 1 out of 10 people works in a pilgrimage tourism related industry. The importance of pilgrimage tourism becomes more significant. When the structure of the work force in Indian economy is analysed. A comparison with countries in other sub regions indicated that the share of total employment in pilgrimage tourism sector in 2009 varied from 2.4 percent in India to 5% in other countries. Fueled by sustained growth, the pilgrimage tourism industry has managed to become a significant provider of employment in India. thereby improving the economic situation at the people in India. In addition, revenue generated from pilgrimage tourism has enabled Govt. to allocate pilgrimage resources, for improving pilgrimage tourism
PROBLEMS AND ISSUES IN PILGRIMAGE TOURISM

Pilgrimage tourism based on religious sites or artefacts faces difficulties and raises controversial issues. These include competition between faiths for a location and heritage, and conflicts between pilgrimage and secular, commercial tourism, the building of a shrine or artefact may have great spiritual value but a commercial value too as such and often in any openly accessible situation, it is vulnerable to theft and to vandalism. Wang’s (1999) Furthermore, as with other specialist or low-key tourism assets, financial benefits associated with say, church visiting do not pay for the resource and its management. The church may be the attraction but the money is spent in the local café, pub or gift shop and with little reinvestment in presentation or conservation of the site, building or artifact the situation is not sustainable. There are aspects of sacred site visiting and management already noted that vender some problems particularly important. There can be serious conflicts between a desire to keep facilities freely open to religious visitors need to raise money to maintain the fabric and the vulnerability of often remote sites to vandalism theft and desecration., according to the pilgrimage tourist board survey more than half of the pilgrimage sites assessed had suffered from theft and almost as many from vandalism with up to 80% of sites affected. There were problems of wear and tear, damage to buildings, noise disturbance and litter a more recent study considered the problems of pilgrimage tourists.

FINDINGS & SUGGESTION

1. Provision of infrastructure facilities/basic amenities at tourist destination (viz. drinking, toilet facilities, restaurant, illumination, cloak room, signages etc)
2. Provision for dress changing room, rest shed bathrooms, pathway and protective ring around ponds, hand railings and etc
3. Children’s park and power supply, street lights.
4. Provision for roads, pathways, parking lot, partition board.
5. Lodges, hotels, lighting facilities.
6. Immediate replacement of old and worn out coaches/tempo travels.
7. Up gradation of the restaurants of TTDC with first class furniture and interiors.
8. Introduction of cost reduction measures in hotels like the energy saver, etc.

RECOMMENDATION

The present given 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. 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 satisfied with existing facilities provided at pilgrimage sites. And opinion about the state, food and drinking water facilities. Shopping facilities and about the personal safety the pilgrims seem to be satisfactory.

THE OTHER STRATEGIES ARE AS FOLLOWS

1. Advertisement in dailies, magazines, etc. (both domestic and foreign).
2. Telecast of short films and advertisements in TV channels.
3. Publicity in close circuit televisions at railway stations, airports, bus terminals etc.
4. Touch screen information at important places.
5. Interactive website.
6. Printing and distribution of high quality literature in multiple languages.
7. E-marketing.
8. Sponsoring of live and recorded programmers in radio and TV.

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 proactive 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. 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 in Tamil Nadu.
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