



A Study on the Expectation and the Satisfaction of Pilgrims in Pilgrim Centres (with special reference to Nine Nagarathar Temples of Sivagangai District, Tamil Nadu)

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Abstract

Tourism is a fast growing industry in India. It gives employment generation and revenue generation. It is an imperative not only for regional development but also for national development. Tamil Nadu is blessed with plenty of well-known religious destinations. Pilgrimages to these destinations bring enormous economic gains to local residents. It delivers travel experiences namely transportation, accommodation, eating and establishments, shops and other hospitality related services. Pilgrimage tourism is related to religion. A people have been going to religious centres from time immemorial. Visiting to religious places is a part of the culture and tradition of the pilgrimage tourism. The present study attempts to analyze the expectation and the satisfaction of pilgrims in pilgrim centres (with special reference to Nine Nagarathar kovil of Sivagangai District, Tamil Nadu).

Keywords: Pilgrim, Expectation, Satisfaction, Nagarathar Kovil.

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Introduction

Generally, expectation can be defined as performance of an establishment, ideal performance or desired performance.¹ In terms of the relationship between expectation and satisfaction, expectation can be defined as prior estimations made by customers while receiving service.² It is generally accepted that tourists have expectations after selecting a destination for a holiday and that their satisfaction levels during and after their holiday period are functions of their expectations.³ Understanding their expectations will give important clues in developing destination attractions and improving tourist goods and services. The conceptual studies related to customer satisfaction and service quality can be found in the marketing literature.⁴ The number of studies, investigating aspects of customer satisfaction in tourism, travel, hospitality and recreation is increasing.⁵ It is recognized that satisfaction affects destination selection decisions, consumption of goods and services at a destination and intention to revisit. Related research indicates that satisfaction is a function of expectations and overall performance. After comparing the expectations with perceived performance of the destination, destination satisfaction can be considered. In this context, satisfaction resulting from a destination can be better understood by evaluation and perception of tourists regarding a tourism destination.⁶ Pizam et al.

argued that in calculating satisfaction from tourism destinations, defining satisfaction levels for every attribute of destinations is required.

Today all countries of the world are developing tourism because tourism can develop any country. Tourism changes life styles of people. It breaks up the travel barriers. It changes in consumer behavior, economic strength of markets, new destinations, political realignments, etc. Mass tourism and package tourism have augmented the growth of tourism. In this study, an attempt is made to analyze the operation of tourism services and the expectation and the satisfaction of pilgrims in pilgrim centres with special reference to Nine Nagarathar Temples of Sivagangai District, Tamil Nadu. The data had been analyzed to verify the hypotheses framed in line with the objectives of the study. A tourist can be called a pilgrim if the purpose of travel to a destination or event to perform rituals driven by religion or spirituality and not any activity remunerative in nature. It is defined as "A journey resulting from religious causes, externally to a holy site and internally for spiritual purpose and interval understanding.

Pilgrimage tourism is one of the sub-classifications of tourism. Since time immemorial, people had to walk long distance with the help of vehicle for pilgrimage. In India, pilgrimage to religious places is considered an integral part of her culture and tradition. The modern means of travel, like the road transport, railways and air travel have increased tremendously. As a result, the number of tourists and pilgrims visiting the various pilgrim centres have also increased manifold in the country. It can be defined as the outcome of the

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pilgrims' subjective comparison of the expected and actual facilities and arrangements at the pilgrim centres.

Statement of the Problem

Sivagangai is the most backward district of other districts in Tamil Nadu. It is an important potential place for pilgrim centres. Number of pilgrims paying a visit to Nine Nagarathar of pilgrim centres such as Illaiyathangudi, Mathur, Vairavankoil, Nemamkoil, Illupaikudi, Surakuddi, Velangudi, Iranikoil and Pillaiyarpatti, are on increase every year. Water facilities, road facilities, hotel accommodation etc., are not up to the level of satisfaction of pilgrims. Hence the study is conducted to measure the satisfaction and find out the problems they confront while visiting the places for the religious purpose.

Objectives of the Study

The following are the specific objectives of the study,

1. To analyse the expectations of pilgrims in pilgrim centres of the study areas.
2. To identify problems affecting the satisfaction of pilgrims in pilgrim centres of the study areas.
3. To offer suggestions based on the findings of the study.

Limitation of the Study

The study has been conducted only in and around of Nine Nagarathar temples of Sivagangai District. It may not represent the satisfaction of pilgrims in pilgrim centres in India. The sample size of 150 is relatively small for the study to be comprehensive.

Hypotheses of the Study

1. H_0 : There is no significant relationship between Age and satisfaction level of pilgrims.
2. H_0 : There is no significant relationship between Sex and satisfaction level of pilgrims.
3. H_0 : There is no significant relationship between Literacy level and satisfaction level of pilgrims.
4. H_0 : There is no significant relationship between Occupation and satisfaction level of pilgrims.
5. H_0 : There is no significant relationship between Income and satisfaction level of pilgrims.

Methodology

Study Area

Nattukottai Chettiars are a people of Indian origin, well known for their financial dealings and hospitality. They are followers of the Hindu religion and worship the Shiva and Muruga deities of the Hindu faith. They belong to a very prolific Business Community, who in olden days moved out of India to foreign lands

like Burma, Ceylon, Java, Sumatra, Malaysia, Singapore & Vietnam (Saigon) and spread their Culture in those lands. The Nattukottai Chettiars hail from a place called Chettinad, in South India, an area situated in the South-Eastern region of Tamil Nadu approximately 35 Kms to the west of the coastal line of Bay of Bengal in the district of Sivagangai. It during its initial stages consist of 96 villages but now due to the movement of people out of certain villages, has diminished to about 75 villages, in the near past. Chettinad has well planned towns provided with well defined roadways, reservoirs to store and supply water to the town, a planned market place, temples and everything, providing the basic needs of people. Chettinad happens to be a dry land with no proper rain which was a major setback for the area. As such due to non availability of any mode of living, people were forced to leave Chettinad to various parts of the State in search of their living.

The Nagarathar society is divided into Koil Vazhi Nagarathar consisting of Nine Koil (Temple). This division in the society is for the purpose of choosing their alliance and nothing else. Bride and the Bridegroom cannot be from the same Koil as they are considered to belong to the same family and treated as Annan-Thangai (Brother-Sister). The Nine Koil are as follows: Illaiyathangudi, Mathur, Vairavankoil, Nemamkoil, Illupaikudi, Surakuddi, Velangudi, Iranikoil, Pillaiyarpatti. The study is based on the survey method. In view of the above mentioned objectives, a survey was undertaken with the help of a well-structured questionnaire in Nine Nagarathar kovil, Sivagangai District so as to find out the factors influencing the expectation and affecting the satisfactions of pilgrims in pilgrim centres.

Sources of the Data

This empirical and exploratory study is based on both primary data and secondary data. Primary data has been used as the main source of the study and it was collected from 150 respondents. In the current study, it refers to the population of pilgrims who have visited the study area of Nine Nagarathar Temples, Sivagangai District. The primary data was collected through a pre-structured interview scheduled. The secondary data has been collected from books, journals, published and unpublished materials and also from websites.

Sampling Design

The survey was conducted on the basis of convenience sampling method. For developing a sample design, totally 150 respondents were selected for this study.

Table I. Sampling Design

SL.NO.	SAMPLE	RESPONDENTS		TOTAL
		MALE	FEMALE	
1	ILLAIYATHANGUDI	06	06	12
2	MATHUR	05	05	10
3	VAIRAVANKOIL	10	10	20
4	NEMAMKOIL	08	08	16
5	ILLUPAIKUDI	07	07	14
6	SURAKUDDI	08	08	16
7	VELANGUDI	06	06	12
8	IRANIKOIL	10	10	20
9	PILLAIYARPATTI	15	15	30
	TOTAL	75	75	150

Source :Primary Data

Statistical Tools Used in the Study

In the study to find out the degree of significant relationship between the independent and dependent variables, Chi – square test was applied. Percentage analyses and Garret Ranking technique have been used for the interpretation of the data.

Percentage analyses

The percentage technique has been used throughout the report to express the opinion of the respondents.

Garret Ranking Technique

The Garrett Ranking Technique is used to rank the expectation for the pilgrim in pilgrims centres by using Garrett ranking method.

$$\text{Per cent Position} = \frac{100 (R_{ij} - 0.5)}{N_j}$$

R_{ij} = Rank given for the i^{th} variable by the j^{th} respondent

N_j = Number of variables ranked by the j^{th} respondent.

With the help of Garrett’s Table, the percentage estimated is converted into scores. Then for each factor, the scores of each individual are added and then total value of scores and mean values of score are calculated.

The factors having highest mean value are considered to be the most important factor.

Chi – square test

For testing the relationship between personal variables of the respondents and level of satisfaction, Chi-square Test has been used. For computing Chi-square test, the following formula has been used.

$$\text{Chi-square} = \sum \frac{(O - E)^2}{E}$$

Where

O = Observed frequency

E= Expected frequency

c = Number of columns in a contingency table

and

r = Number of rows in a contingency table

The calculated value of Chi-square is measured with the table value of Chi-square for given level of significance usually at five per cent level. If the calculated value (C.V) is less than the table value (T.V), the null hypothesis is accepted and otherwise it is rejected.

Period of the Study

The study was carried out in the month of April 2015 in Nine Nagarathar temples of Sivagangai District.

Analysis and Interpretation

Table II. Profile of the Respondents

Factors		(%) age	Factors		(%) age
Age			Monthly Income		
20 or below	22	14.67	Below Rs.5000	18	12.00
21 To 40	42	28.00	Rs.5,000 To 10,000	32	21.00
41 To 60	50	33.33	Rs.10,000 To 20,000	43	29.00
Above 60	36	24.00	Above Rs.20,000	57	38.00
Sex			Type of tour		
Male	75	50.00	Alone	30	20.00
Female	75	50.00	Family	77	51.00
Marital Status			Friends	43	29.00
Single	45	30.00	Frequency of your visit		
Double	105	70.00	First Time	15	10.00
Educational Qualification			Second Time	25	17.00
Below Degree	27	18.00	Third Time	32	21.00
Graduate	70	46.67	More than Four Time	78	52.00
Post Graduate	36	24.00	Purpose of visit		
Professional	17	11.33	To see the temple sculpture	25	17.00
Occupation			For worship	64	42.00
Govt. sector	25	16.67	Mind relaxation	61	41.00
Private sector	57	38.00	Transport you choose to visit		
Business	68	45.33	By Bus	30	20.00
			By Own Car	95	63.00
			By Taxi	25	17.00

Source : primary data

Table II reveals that 33.33 per cent of the respondents are in the age group of 41 to 60. For total respondents interviewed 50% of respondents are male and the remaining percentage female. The majority of the respondents are married. In terms of education level, 46.67 per cent of the respondents are the graduate followed by 24 per cent of post graduate. 45.33 per cent of the respondents are doing business followed by 38 per cent of private sectors. The 38 per cent of the respondents have an income of Rs. above 20000 per month, 51 per cent of the respondent visit the religious places with their family members. The majority of the respondents 52 per cent are visiting the religious places more than four times. 42 per cent of the respondents go to the religious places only for worship followed by 41 per cent mind relaxation. 63 per cent of the respondents choose own car to visit religious centres.

Ranking the Expectation Factors of Pilgrim in Pilgrims Centres

The percentage score for each rank from 1 to 10 are calculated. The percentage score thus obtained for all the ten ranks are converted into scale values using Scale Conversion Table given by Henry Garrett. The scale values for first rank to tenth rank are 81, 70, 63, 57, 52, 47, 42, 36, 29 and 18 respectively. The score value (fx) is calculated for each factor by multiplying the number of respondents (f) with respective scale values (x). The total scores are found by adding the score values (fx) of each rank for every factor. The mean score is then calculated to know the order of preference given by the respondents for the factors. Based on the mean score, the overall ranks are assigned for each. The ranking analysis of the Ranking of Reasons for the expectation of pilgrim through Garrett's Ranking Technique is shown in Table III.

Table III. Ranking of the Expectation of pilgrim in pilgrims centres

Source: Primary Data.

Note: (f)=Number of Respondents, (x)=Scale Values, (fx)=Score Value

Scale Factors	Ranks											Total	Total Score	Mean Score	Rank
	I 81	II 70	III 63	IV 57	V 52	VI 47	VII 42	VIII 36	IX 29	X 18					
Road and Transport Facilities	f	18	25	21	19	17	13	12	18	4	2	150	8439	56.26	I
	fx	1446	1754	1292	1104	908	625	510	648	116	36				
Way-side Restaurant	f	8	14	14	10	13	16	17	12	21	25	150	6711	44.74	IX
	fx	646	984	861	584	671	750	734	424	606	451				
Accommodation	f	32	16	16	14	16	13	9	12	11	11	150	8306	55.37	II
	fx	2584	1143	1029	823	810	589	399	424	308	198				
Toilet and other basic Facilities	f	14	19	14	15	30	17	15	10	6	10	150	7894	52.63	III
	fx	1138	1329	861	866	1540	803	622	369	187	178				
Vehicle parking	f	10	9	20	11	11	19	17	14	17	20	150	6967	46.45	VIII
	fx	831	665	1268	649	592	910	702	492	496	362				
Peaceful atmosphere	f	14	13	10	24	10	24	18	9	16	11	150	7538	50.26	V
	fx	1169	930	646	1385	533	1142	766	324	452	191				
Behaviour of People	f	14	16	17	15	25	17	15	10	11	10	150	7768	51.79	IV
	fx	1134	1120	1071	855	1300	799	630	360	319	180				
Cleanliness and Hygiene	f	12	17	23	17	10	11	11	20	10	19	150	7431	49.54	VI
	fx	972	1190	1449	969	520	517	462	720	290	342				
Communication facilities	f	10	9	5	9	6	8	13	23	34	33	150	5910	39.40	X
	fx	810	630	315	513	312	376	546	828	986	594				
Peaceful worship in temples	f	18	11	10	14	12	11	22	23	20	9	150	7291	48.61	VII
	fx	1458	770	630	798	624	517	924	828	580	162				
Total $\sum f$		150	150	150	150	150	150	150	150	150	150				

It is observed from Table 3, that ‘Road and Transport Facilities’ has been the foremost reason for people expecting the services. The reason ‘Accommodation’ has been ranked as the second important consideration, and the reason ‘Toilet and other basic Facilities; has been ranked in third position, which is followed by ‘Behaviour of People ’ as fourth rank, ‘Peaceful atmosphere’ ranked as the fifth rank, ‘Cleanliness and Hygiene’ has been adjudged as having the sixth rank, the ‘Peaceful worship in temples’ has been ranked as seven. The reason ‘Vehicle parking’ has been ranked as eight and ‘Way-side Restaurant’ has taken the ninth position and ‘Communication facilities’ has

come in the tenth position. The result of Garrett’s Ranking test shows that the respondents give more importance to the factors that satisfy them. In the pilgrim satisfactions, the factor “Road and Transport Facilities” has been ranked as the first.

Level of satisfaction towards pilgrim in pilgrims centres

In order to study the pilgrim satisfaction on the basis of services rendered in and around the pilgrims centers of nine Nagarathar kovil in Sivangai District, the researcher has identified the following Satisfaction factors like;

1	Transport Facilities
2	Road condition
3	Accommodation
4	Availability of food and drinking Water
5	Attitude of Tourist guides
6	Safety in General
7	Reasonableness of Prices at Pilgrimage Centres
8	Availability of Money Changer Facilities
9	Availability of Shopping Facilities
10	Other Basic amenities

The level of opinion has been determined by the score values calculated for 10 statements which are associated with the personal factors by adopting a five

point scaling technique. The responses observed for each statement in the schedule have been scored. To secure the total opinion score for the respondents, five points

are given for “strongly agree”, four points for “agree”, three points for “neutral”, two points for “disagree” and one point for “strongly disagree” responses. Thus, the total opinion score of the respondents is obtained by adding up scores of all the 10 statements and the level of opinion has been classified into three categories, namely low, medium and high level opinion for analytical purposes. For the hundred and fifty respondents the total score value for each respondent has been calculated. The arithmetic mean (X) and the standard deviation (σ) were calculated from 150 observations of score values of the Pilgrim.

The calculated arithmetic mean (X) was 46.28 and the standard deviation (σ) was 8.71. While the score values greater than or equal to (x + σ) and the score values less than or equal to (x - σ) have been classified as high level of satisfaction and low level of satisfaction respectively. The score values in between (x + σ) and (x - σ) have been classified as medium level of satisfaction. Calculations of arithmetic mean and standard deviation

were made regarding the level of opinion of the respondents about the service rendered by in and around the pilgrims centers of Nine Nagarathar Kovil in Sivagangai District. The opinions scores were computed and given below:

- (a) $(x + \sigma) = (46.28 + 8.71) = 54.99 = 55$ and above high level opinion
- (b) $(x - \sigma) = (46.28 - 8.71) = 37.57 = 38$ and below low level opinion
- (c) between $(x - \sigma)$ and $(x + \sigma)$ 38 to 55 Medium level opinion

Respondents whose opinion scores 55 and above were considered as having high level opinion.

Respondents whose opinion scores 38 and below were considered as having low level opinion.

Respondents whose opinion scores were between 38 and 55 were classified as having medium level opinion.

On the basis of the opinion scores respondents were classified and the details are presented in Table IV.

Table IV. Classification of Respondents on the basis of Opinion Scores

S.No	Level of opinion	Number of Respondents	Percentage to Total
1.	High	34	22.67
2.	Medium	77	51.33
3	Low	39	26.00
	Total	150	100.00

Source: Primary data

It is inferred from Table IV that 51.33 per cent of the respondents have medium level opinion, 26 per cent of the respondents have low-level opinion and 22.67 per

cent have high level opinion.

Table V. Association between – Personal Factors and Satisfaction Factors

Personal factors	X ²	Result	Inference
Age	8.87	H ₀ = Rejected	Significant
sex	4.58	H ₀ = Accepted	Not Significant
Literacy level	13.88	H ₀ = Rejected	Significant
Occupation	16.39	H ₀ = Rejected	Significant
Income	26.3	H ₀ = Rejected	Significant

S= Significant NS = Not Significant

There is no significant association between selected personal factors and satisfaction factors by the respondents. The hypothesis is tested with x² test.

1. Calculated value of x² (28.87) is greater than the table value (12.6). The null hypothesis is rejected. Hence age level and influencing satisfaction factors are dependent. There is a relationship between age and satisfaction factors.

2. Calculated value of x² (4.58) is less than the table value (5.99). The null hypothesis is accepted. Hence there is no relationship between sex and satisfaction factors.
3. Calculated value of x² (13.88) is greater than the table value (12.6). The null hypothesis is rejected. Hence there is relationship between Literacy level and satisfaction factors.

4. Since the calculated value of χ^2 (16.39) is greater than the table value (9.49). The null hypothesis is rejected. Hence there is relationship between occupational and level of satisfaction factors.
5. Calculated value of χ^2 (26.3) is greater than the table value (12.6). The null hypothesis is rejected. Hence there is relationship between income and level of satisfaction factors.

The results are given in the Table V; It is clear that, the hypothesis is accepted (NS) in one case and in other cases the hypothesis is rejected. Hence it is concluded that Age, Literacy level, Occupation and Income are significant in level of satisfaction factors.

Suggestions and Conclusion

It is found that the result of this study gives several recommendations to increase tourists' expectation in the study area. To improve the tourist infrastructure facilities like improving roads, construction of hotels, etc.,

The restaurants should be able to provide a variety of global and local traditional food cuisines to suit the tastes of all tourists. Restaurants should be able to supply mineral water to take care of the health of the tourists.

Adequate and hygienic toilet, bathroom and urinal facilities are required at heritage sites. These facilities also need maintenance and cleanliness.

Every tourist spot should be equipped with a primary healthcare centres to provide first aid and amenities.

There is an urgent need and planned infrastructure and tourism development without disturbing the ecological balance of study area is to be given top priority. Improvement of management is necessary for the development the temple premises and proper spiritual atmosphere in the temples should be maintained properly. It has been suggested that in order to attract more and more pilgrims.

Tourism has undoubtedly brought great prosperity and wealth to the study areas. It is unfortunate that despite being a leading IT state and known for IT

hubs, the website of Tamil Nadu fails to advertise the tourism resource in the study areas. The government and private sectors should pay attention to tourism resources of the study areas and take necessary measures to popularize it to invite more tourists to the study areas. The data presented in this paper indicate the potential for pilgrims' satisfactions. It is useful to consider the suggestions so as to develop pilgrim tourism as a heavenly destination. The overall aim of the study is to enhance the benefits of pilgrimage tourism and its people in terms of foreign exchange, employment generation, income and government revenue in the study area as well as Tamil Nadu. Tourist expectation and satisfaction is the important factors for that success. The present study measure the expectation and satisfaction level of pilgrim who arrived at pilgrims centres in Nine Nagarathar kovil, sivagangai District, Tamil Nadu. It derives the ultimate satisfaction of tourists was more than fifty percent with some constraints like infrastructure, and basic facilities, etc. Finally, safety and health and environmental preservation will continue to remain key concerns while satisfying the tourists of the future.

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