



Tourists' Expectations of Rameshwaram Island

Dr.P.Kasivairavan

Assistant Professor of Commerce, PG and Research Department of Commerce, Arumugam Pillai Seethai Ammal College, Thiruppattur, Sivagangai, Tamilnadu, India.

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Abstract

Tamil Nadu is a unique state from the tourism point of view. The immense tourist wealth of Tamil Nadu is one of the greatest assets of the State. Tourism's importance, as an instrument for economic development and employment generation, particularly in remote and backward areas, has been well recognized the world over. Tourism being a service industry has to develop its efficiency in hospitality service. Rameshwaram is known for temple tourism in the state, tourists are flocking the island, since the onset of summer, highlighting the potential of the town to encourage tourists of all interests. It contributes to the economic development of the areas, creates huge employment opportunities, provides equitable distribution of wealth, improves the standard of living of the local people, and boosts up the local and cottage industries. Hence, keeping in view of the expectation of tourists', with regard to the situation, proper guidance and support to the tourism industry can be of immense use in negotiating in the desired direction of development of tourism industry. Taking into account all these aspects analyzed in the study. The sample population used for this research comprises of 110. Both domestic and foreign tourists selected from the study area on the basis of convenient sampling technique. The data have been analyzed to verify the hypotheses framed in line with the objectives of the study applying the statistical data, namely percentage analysis, kendall's co-efficient of concordance thereby facilitating fast analysis and easy interpretation. The study has been aimed to alert the government of Tamil Nadu to identify the sources in this district to boost tourism and make it a biggest industry as a compensation for the lack of other industries in this study area.

Keywords: Tourism, Expectation, Domestic and Foreign Tourist and Hospitality Service.

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Introduction

Tourism industry in the 21st century is poised for enormous growth. Tourism being a service industry has to develop its efficiency in service. Tourism industries provide various types of services such as accommodation, hotel and railway booking, restaurant services, hospitality, recreational services, communication and transportation. It is the largest service industry globally in terms of gross revenue as well as foreign exchange earnings. The tourism industry employs more than 200 million people worldwide by providing new career opportunities to the people in the areas of hospitality, recreation and transport. Today, tourism related infrastructure in various parts of the country had improved the quality of life of the local people and helped to promote local arts and crafts.

Tamil Nadu is a unique state from the tourism point of view. The immense tourist wealth of Tamil Nadu is one of the greatest assets of the State. Tourism's importance, as an instrument for economic development and employment generation, particularly in remote and

backward areas, has been well recognized the world over. Rameshwaram is known for temple tourism in the state, tourists are flocking the island, since the onset of summer, highlighting the potential of the town to encourage tourists of all interests. Arrival of a large number of tourists on an auspicious day is no surprise as far as Rameshwaram is concerned, considering its religious importance. But of late, the arrival is increasing gradually even during non season. The town is flocked by tourists from different parts of the State as well as other States. On weekends and holidays, it is witnessing huge crowds.

Expectation

Generally, expectation can be defined as performance of an establishment, ideal performance or desired performance. In terms of the relationship between expectation and satisfaction, expectation can be defined as prior estimations made by customers while receiving service. In successful destination marketing, due to the effects on tourists' destination selections, consuming of goods and services and having the decision to revisit, expectations of tourists are important to understand (Stevens, 1992). It is generally accepted that tourists have expectations after selecting a destination for a holiday and that their satisfaction levels during and

Correspondence

Dr.P.Kasivairavan

E-mail: kasivairavan@gmail.com, Ph. +9194426 77672

after their holiday period are functions of their expectations. Understanding their expectations will give important clues in developing destination attractions and improving tourist goods and services. Ahmed Paud Mat Som, AzizanMarzuki and JamilJusoh(2011) in their article entitled, “A Critical Analysis of Tourist Satisfaction and Destination Loyalty” have pointed out that tourism destinations must ponder over the image factor as this will affect tourists satisfaction and their recommendation for future tourists to visit the place or skip it over. The findings propose that it will be important for destination managers to establish positive perceived images that can satisfy tourists in order to achieve loyalty.

Research Gap

Most of the studies are focusing on tourism in a general way and a majority of them are dealing with the impacts and the developmental needs of tourism. Many authors have focused on growth of tourism industry, health tourism, tourism marketing in state, national and international level and the like. The studies focusing on specific kinds of tourism, especially tourists’ expectation of Rameswaram Island are limited and they mainly focus on the motives and experience. In this situation, the researcher decided to fill this research gap. In this study, an attempt is made to analyze the operation of tourism services and tourists’ expectation in Tamil Nadu with special reference to Rameshwaram Island.

Significance of the Study

Tourism as a service industry is highly labor-intensive and in a developing country like India it contributes to the economic development of the areas, creates huge employment opportunities, provides equitable distribution of wealth, improves the standard of living of the local people, and boosts up the local and cottage industries.

Statement of the Problem

The present study is aimed to assess the expectation of tourists’ in the study area. Hence, taking stock of the present state of the tourism locale and with the intention of developing the locale in the study areas is highly important to draw tourists to this area in large numbers. Proper records of the number of tourist arrivals are not available in the study area. Proper guidance and support to the tourism industry can be of immense use in negotiating in the desired direction of development of tourism industry. Tourism promotion brings economic and social benefits to the people living in and around the tourist places. The economic benefits gained from tourism can also be spent for preserving the resources of the tourist places. Taking into account all these aspects, in the study area is analyzed in the study.

Objectives of the Study

The main objective of this study is to discover what the expectations are of the tourists’ who visit

Rameshwaram Island and those expectations and perception that will lead to a satisfactory tour experience and offer suggestions for the recommendations in the study area.

Limitation of the Study

The study has been conducted only about the Rameshwaram Island.

Hypothesis

The following hypothesis is formulated in order to test the stated objectives of the study. There is no significant difference between each segment and tourists’ expectation towards various hospitality services in the study area.

Methodology

Justification for choosing the topic

The study is limited to Rameswaram Island in Ramanathapuram District of Tamil Nadu. Rameswaram has great potential for tourism resources. It is a haven for the tourists. The main attraction of Rameswaram is its beach and Gulf of Mannar at the very tip of the Indian peninsula. Together with Varanasi, it is considered as one of the holiest places in India to Hindus. Rameswaram is a peaceful and beautiful place which is different and separated from the rest of Tamil Nadu. It has plenty of beautiful beaches, one of the biggest temples in the country and the famous bridge called Pamban which connects the island to the mainland. Tourism in the district, for which the work has already been started, would help in improving the face of the entire district. Since Rameswaram is the gateways to Ramanathapuram, they have emerged as the hubs of tourism which are given in detail in the study areas. Therefore, the researcher has selected this topic, “Tourists’ Expectation of Rameshwaram Island”.

Collection of Data

For the purpose of this study and in order to achieve the objectives, the required primary and secondary data were gathered and put to use. The primary data had been collected through survey of a questionnaire, which was conducted with the tourists visiting the study areas. The secondary data contributed the background information collected from the books, journals, and websites.

Field Study

The sample population for this research was comprised of domestic and foreign tourists who visited the study area during the period of May 2016. Data were collected at different places, including pilgrimage centers, shopping centers, tourist information centers and other places in the study area.

Sampling Design

The sample respondents were chosen on the basis of convenient sampling. In order to assess 110

sample tourists were stratified into domestic and foreign tourists. Out of 110 sample tourists, 75 were domestic tourists and 35 belonged to foreign tourist groups. The sample respondents were chosen on the basis of stratified random sampling technique.

Framework of Analysis

The percentage technique had been used

throughout the report to express the opinion of the respondents. The data were analyzed to verify the hypothesis framed in line with the objectives of the study. In order to test the tourist's level of expectation in the study area and the situational conditions were examined using "kendall's co-efficient of concordance" test.

Table I. Demographic Profile of the Tourists

Profile of the Tourists		No. of Tourists	Percentage to Total
Age	Below 20 Years	9	8.18
	21 – 40 Years	28	25.45
	41 – 60 Years	62	56.37
	Above 61 Years	11	10.00
	Total	110	100.00
Gender	Male	65	59.09
	Female	45	40.91
	Total	110	100.00
Marital Status	Married	67	60.91
	Unmarried	43	39.09
	Total	110	100.00
Religion	Hindu	78	70.91
	Christians	20	18.18
	Muslims	9	8.18
	Others	3	2.73
	Total	110	100.00
Languages Known	Tamil	60	54.55
	English	28	25.45
	Hindi	13	11.82
	Others	9	8.18
	Total	110	100.00
Educational Qualification	Illiterate	8	7.27
	Below Degree	15	13.64
	Graduate	55	50.00
	Post-graduate	24	21.82
	Professional	8	7.27
	Total	110	100.00
Occupation	Private Sector	15	13.64
	Govt. Employee	46	41.82
	Self-employed	42	38.18
	Others	7	6.36
	Total	110	100.00
Monthly Income	Below ₹5,000	16	14.55
	₹5,001 – ₹10,000	28	25.45
	₹10,001 – ₹20,000	17	15.45
	Above ₹20,001	49	44.55
	Total	110	100.00
Purpose of Visit	Holidays	5	4.55
	proximity	21	19.09
	For worship	56	50.91
	Family interest	28	25.45
	Total	110	100.00
Mode of transport	By taxi	3	2.73
	By own car	14	12.72
	By bus	54	49.09

	By train	25	22.73
	Others	14	12.73
	Total	110	100.00
Accompany with Tour	Officer/Guide	18	16.36
	Family	57	51.82
	Friends	20	18.18
	None	15	13.64
	Total	110	100.00
Attraction of the Tourist Place	Scenic Beauty	19	17.27
	Sea	35	31.82
	Religious Spot	47	42.73
	All of the Above	9	8.18
	Total	110	100.00

Source: Computed Primary Data.

Table II. Tourists' expectation towards various hospitality services in the study area. – Kendall's Co-Efficient of Concordance

Sl. No.	Tourists' expectation towards various hospitality services in the study area.	Mean Rank	Test of Statistics				
			No. of Respondents	Kendall	Ch-square Test	d.f.	Asym. Sig.
1.	Telecom, Banking and other Services	3.25	110	0.134	295.106	20	0.000
2.	Quality of Accommodation	14.61	110				
3.	Parking Facilities	10.84	110				
4.	Water Supply and Sanitation	9.92	110				
5.	Power Supply	11.49	110				
6.	Tourists Guide	11.15	110				
7.	Shopping Facilities	10.50	110				
8.	Travel Facilities	12.18	110				
9.	Variety and Uniqueness of Food	12.09	110				
10.	Quality of Roads Journey	11.34	110				
11.	Attractiveness of the Sightseeing Facilities	11.13	110				
12.	Personal Security and Safety	11.53	110				
13.	Public Environment Attitude	11.59	110				
14.	Cultural Events/Festival	10.80	110				
15.	Availability of Medical Facilities	10.62	110				
16.	Govt. Attention to Improve the Infrastructure	11.19	110				
17.	Maintenance of Natural Beauty Architecture and so on.	11.67	110				
18.	Publicity	11.13	110				
19.	Quality of Automobile and other Services	11.60	110				
20.	Availability of Tourists Information Centres	11.13	110				
21.	Easy Access to the Area	11.25	110				

Source : Computed Primary Data.

Analysis and Interpretation

Table-1 reveals that 56.37% of the respondents are in the age group of 41 to 60. For total respondents interviewed 59.09% of respondents are male and the remaining percentage female. The majority 60.91% of the respondents are married, 70.91 of the respondents are Hindu, 54.55 % of the respondents known Tamil language. In terms of education level 50% of the

respondents are Graduate, 41.82% of the respondents are Government employee and followed by 38.18% of self-employed. The 44.55% of the respondents have an income of Rs. above 20 001 per month, 50.91% of the respondent visit for worship and followed by 25.45% are visiting the attraction. 49.09 % of the respondents choose by bus and followed by 22.73 % of the respondents chooses by train. 51.82 % of the respondents accompany

with Tour visit the family members. In order to attraction of the Tourist Place, 42.73 % of the respondents in Religious Spot and followed by 31.82 % of the respondents in sea.

Kendall's Co-Efficient of Concordance

Kendall's Co-efficient of Concordance Test is a non-parametric test. This test can be used to measure the ranking which is in the top position. It can be applied when there are more than two rankings to be measured. The ranks are given to statements based on the total scores. Hence the test has been applied to know the level of expectation towards various hospitality services. It can be measured by using SPSS packages. Table 2 elucidates that the tourists expects various hospitality services in the study area. Here, Kendall's test is used to measure the tourists' expectation towards various hospitality services in the study area. Since P value is less than 0.01, the null hypothesis is rejected at one percent level of significance. Hence, it is concluded that there is significant difference between each segment and tourists' expectation towards various hospitality services in the study area. Based on the mean rank, the opinion of large number of tourists is the "Quality of Accommodation" followed by the 'Travel Facilities' which gets the second rank. The statement 'Telecom, Banking and other Services' get the last rank. Based on the mean rank 'Quality of Accommodation' is the primary factor inducing the tourists towards the study area.

Suggestions and Conclusion

The following are few suggestions that had emanated from the study worthy for the consideration of the authoritative concerned. It is expected that the few findings and suggestions that had arisen will be useful for both the Central as well as the State governments for formulating tourism policies, with a view to the growth and development of tourism in the Rameshwaram Island in Ramanathapuram District. Finally, safeguarding the high tourism potentiality in the study area will be an important resource for the constant growth and development of Tamil Nadu tourism. The following are the suggestions.

1. Hotels and other accommodation facilities have come up without taking into consideration the local conditions. It has also had a very injurious effect on the environment. There is congestion and overcrowding, at many places. To meet this deficiency, public, private sectors and local authorities should take efforts to provide more planned accommodation.
2. The study area is visited by thousands of tourists. In order to guide them and to maintain proper records of the number of tourist arrivals, the government should come forward with the essential steps to develop the tourism information centers.
3. Adequate and hygienic convenience facilities are required at heritage sites. Every tourist spot should

be equipped with a primary healthcare center to provide first aid and amenities.

4. At the present day, Dhanuskodi has emerged as a fine beach having a strip of land at about 1 km in length and as wide of 18 kms on the eastern end of Rameswaram. Large numbers of tourists congregate here to enjoy the beauty of tidal waves and birds. Development of these coastlines resources will give a new impetus to tourism and tremendous boost to the tourists.
5. The road bridge and the railway bridge connecting Rameswaram mainland to island of much attraction to tourists. Similarly, the government can establish and try to introduce an innovative transportation like helicopter service on a trial basis. It should be more attractive to domestic and foreign tourist because of adventurous nature of tourism.
6. Finally it is recommended that the Tamil Nadu tourism can think of upgrading the tourists' spots under study areas to the national standards as a long-term perspective. As a complementary to this elevation, accommodation and other environment can be boosted up.

Tourist's expectation about the tourist spots is the important factor for that success. The study has brought to light that there are hundreds of professions connected for the requirement of tourist related activities, starting from the travel industry, transport companies, road transport, rail transport, hotel and hospitality, tourist's guides, shopping and leisure activities existing in the study area. Thousands of people depend for their livelihood on the tourism promotion of the study area. Tourism has emerged as an instrument for employment generation, poverty alleviation and sustainable human development. To sum up, Tamil Nadu tourism has vast potential for generating employment and earning large sums of foreign exchange besides giving a fillip to the overall economic and social development. Tourism has undoubtedly brought great prosperity and wealth to the study area. The government is also encouraging development of tourism and hospitality industry by treating it as an industry and providing all types of concessions and incentives. Even the most economically slow-moving areas have greatly benefited from tourism.

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