

BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES IN CULTURAL TOURISM ENVIRONS - A CASE OF TEMPLE FESTIVAL IN DINDIGUL TAMIL NADU

C.Aruljothi

Research Scholar, Dept. of Economics, Gandhigram Rural Institute - Deemed University, Gandhigram

S.Ramaswamy

Professor, Department of Economics, Gandhigram Rural Institute - Deemed University, Gandhigram,

K.Manikandan

Asst. Professor, Dept. of Economics, Gandhigram Rural Institute - Deemed University, Gandhigram

Abstract

Cultural tourism protects historic, heritage and cultural resources in villages, towns and cities. It also provides an opportunity to educate the native residents and visitors' about local, regional traditions and customs. More so, cultural tourism aims essentially cultural motivations, which include travel for specific purpose, for example, to attend festivals, or to visit cultural sites or historical monuments. It may be more broadly motivated by the desire to experience and enjoy cultural diversity or to immerse oneself in the culture of specific region. Cultural tourists promote the hosts and guests relationship and local communities get benefits through cultural tourism in the form of strengthening the local economy, promote resources protection increase the visitors expenditures, generate employment, preserve the unique character of the locale, increase community pride and create awareness on community resources, increase tax revenues and stimulate economic development and growth. Temple festivals in rural India put money in the pockets of local vendors, generate both direct and indirect employment opportunities. It is right place to mention that Tamilnadu is considered as a land of religious and cultural celebrations and numerous fairs and festivals. Large number of fairs and festivals are related to religious ceremonies of the temples and generate benefits to rural areas in terms of rural employment, Improved distribution of wealth, conservation of rural environment and culture and local peoples' participation. Festivals along with fairs are generally held for a span of one week to one month that attract mostly visitors from the villages around. With this background the authors have made an attempt to analyse the business opportunities emanate in the cultural tourism environs embodied in the temple festival in Dindigul of Tamilnadu state based on first hand information collected and collated from the cultural tourists, service providers and the local community.

Key Words: Cultural Tourism, Festival, Business opportunities, local economy.

Introduction

The term 'Cultural Tourism' has been interchangeably used as 'Heritage Tourism'. Which refers to that segment of the tourism industry that places special emphasis on heritage and cultural attractions. In developed areas, heritage and cultural attractions include arts museums, plays and orchestral and other musical performances. In less developed areas, heritage and cultural attractions include traditional religious practice,

handicrafts and cultural performances. Cultural tourism resource assists the cultural heritage by augmenting the revenues in sustainable ways, for fortifying cultural heritage through a stronger base of cooperation, fostering recognition of the economic contribution on regional and community level and strengthening cultural resource base. Cultural tourism prevents ceasing of local - cultural values against globalization. Cultural tourism can attract a wide variety of tourists including: heritage tourists, arts tourists, creative tourists, urban cultural tourists, rural cultural tourists, indigenous cultural tourists, and popular cultural tourists (Table 1) (Melanie K. Smith 2003). The touristic attractiveness is determined by natural factors, climate, cultural, art and architecture, events and festivals, cultural traditions, recreational and shopping resources such as nightlife, museums, theatre, galleries, opera, and infrastructure, including adequate roads, utilities, health services and transportation. (Frank, Go, Marcel, 2008)

Definition of Cultural Tourism

World Bank Defines Culture as the whole complex of distinctive spiritual, material, intellectual and emotional features that characteristics a society of social group. It includes not only arts and letters, but also modes of life, the fundamental rights of the human being, value system, traditions and beliefs. One of the best known conceptual definitions of cultural tourism has been provided by **Richards (1996)**. He stated that “Cultural Tourism is the movement of person to cultural attractions away from their normal place of residence, with the intention to gather new information and experience to satisfy their cultural needs”. Further he says “all moments of persons to specific cultural attractions, such as heritage sites, artistic and cultural manifestations, arts and drama outside this normal place of residence”. **Silberberg**, defined Cultural tourism as “visits by persons from outside the host community motivated wholly on in part by interest in the historical, artistic, scientific or lifestyle/ heritage offerings of a community, region, group of institution. **Tighe** noted that the term ‘cultural tourism’ refers to historical and heritage sites, arts and crafts fairs and festivals, museums, the performing and visual arts; and interested in experiencing the culture of the destination. **Hall and Zeppel** opined that cultural tourism from an experimental approach, stating that cultural tourism is an experience’.. based on being involved in and stimulated by the performing arts, visual arts, and festivals’ and “purposeful travel that enables the travellers to learn about the history, heritage and lifestyle of others while contributing to the conservation and restoration of cultural resources and the economic well being of the community”. In other words cultural tourism is defined as the events and relations formed by the special interest travels for the purpose of knowing about historical places and events.

The world Tourism Organisation (WTO) states that ‘cultural tourism includes movements of persons for essentially cultural motivations such as study tours, performing arts and other cultural tours, travel to festivals and other cultural events, visit to sites and monuments, travel to study nature, folklore or art or pilgrimages’ Cultural tourism often takes many different forms as each region has its own specific goals, offerings, and resources. Culture is an identity of individual people on local and national social organisations, such a local governments, education institutions, religious communities, work and leisure. Cultural tourism describes tourists who take part in the cultural activities and away from their home. Cultural tourism is that form of tourism whose purpose is to discover heritage sites and cultural monuments on their travels.

Table 1 Taxonomy of Cultural Tourists Cultural Tourism and Local Development

S. No	Tourists	Nature of tourists
1	Heritage Tourist	Visits to castles, palaces, country houses Archaeological sites Monuments Architecture Museums Religious sites
2	Arts Tourist	Visits to the theater Concerts Galleries Festivals, carnivals, and events Literary sites
3	Creative Tourist	Photography Painting Pottery Cookery Crafts Language learning
4	Urban Cultural Tourist	Historic Sites Regenerated industrial sites Waterfront developments Arts and heritage attractions Shopping Nightlife
5	Rural Cultural Tourist	Village, farm or agro-tourism Eco museums Cultural landscapes National parks Wine trails
6	Indigenous Cultural Tourist	Hill tribe, desert or mountain trekking Visits to cultural centers Arts and crafts Cultural performances Festivals
7	Popular Cultural Tourist	Theme parks and themed attractions Shopping malls Pop concerts Sporting events Media and film sets Industrial heritage sites Fashion and design museums

It is important to recognise the cultural contributions of three sectors within the development of the cultural tourism relationship- the tourists, the resident cultures and the cultural entrepreneurs involved in the promotion. Lohmann and Mundt (2002) have identified the reasons for attending the cultural tourism they are;

Language learning, computer education and painting, design and photography courses or such other education aimed travels; Classical learning travels; Festivals, theaters, recitals, art exhibitions or such other cultural activity participation aimed journeys;

The travels for the purpose of cultural experience gaining; The travels of the holiday tourists who are interested in culture, or who visit cultural regions or activities; and travels for the purpose of improving some cultural activities.

Festivals play an important role in attracting cultural tourists. Festivals provide cultural tourists with the “quintessence of a region and its people”. Festivals have major impact on the development of cultural tourism to the host communities. The desire for festivals and events is not specifically designed to address the needs for any one particular group.

Source: Smith (2003)

The events are often developed because of the tourism and economic opportunities besides social and cultural benefits. According to Stiernstrand, the economic impact of tourism arises principally from the consumption of tourism products in a geographical area. Tourism related services such as travel accommodation, restaurants, shopping are the major beneficiaries of the festival. Festivals make an impact on the host population and stakeholders in a number of ways. These factors are primarily concerned with social and cultural, physical and environmental, political and economic impacts, which can be both positive and negative. Festivals have been stimulated through commercial aspect to meet the changing demand of the local community and increasing business opportunities for the local business (Iswhar Das Gupta 2008). Festivals are attractive to host communities because it helps to develop local pride and identity for the local people. In addition festival have an important role in the national and host community in context of destination planning, enhancing and linking tourism and commerce and thus it includes: events as

image makers, economic impact generators, tourists attractions, overcoming seasonality, contributing to the development of local communities and businesses, and supporting key industrial sectors. The festival organisers are using the historical and cultural themes to develop the annual events to attract visitors and creating cultural image in the host cities by holding festivals in the community settings. Festivals provide an opportunity for the local communities to develop and share their culture, which creates a sense of values and pride held by the individual in a local community and provide opportunity for members of the local community to exchanges experiences and information. The festivals also provide support to those who pursue economic opportunity related to sharing community culture. Local festivals are said to be celebrations of community and effectively to serve as a public demonstration of 'what a community is all about' it is also argued that although few rural festivals are about 'money making'. It raises funds for service organisations, put money in the pockets of local vendors, provide a showcase for local talent, and create a positive image of the host community. Thus UNEP suggested that the culture tourism is boosted through the development of festivals and events.

Review of Literature

Villages, Towns and Cities are increasingly using cultural events to improve their image, stimulate regional development and attract visitors and investment. The study of Richards, 2004 was made with the aim to attract visitors and to stimulate cultural consumption among residents, while positioning Rotterdam as cultural destination. Cultural tourism constitutes an alternative strategy of sustainable local development for improving quality of life. Sdrali and Chazapi (2007) have examined the residents perceptions of cultural tourism in Greek island, and Andros, found that the majority of respondents were aware of the importance of cultural tourism which contributed to the island's local development. Yating Liang et.al (2008) examined the behavioral pattern of visitors to rural festival as well as the relationship between behavioral intentions of festival visitors and benefits gained from festival visit. The visitors' benefits like history appreciation, socialization and enjoyment benefits, most of the respondents. But the respondents rated enjoyment benefit is the highest followed by the socialization benefit and history appreciation benefit.

SWOT of Cultural Tourism

An attempt is made here to provide SWOT analysis of cultural tourism so as to help different stakeholders involved in it.

SWOT analysis of cultural Tourism

Strengths	Opportunities
<p>Historic temples and monuments created by erstwhile queens and kings;</p> <p>Outstanding archeological sites and ancient town scapes with birth of civilization people with diversified culture and languages Community involvement in safeguarding the guests, particularly tourists Visitor friendly with zero terrorism;</p> <p>Affordable quality, and wide range of cultural tourism services for all classes of tourists with different income groups</p>	<p>Encourages inter and intra cultural relations and makes the tribals' and aboriginal as representative of home land tradition and culture;</p> <p>Opens and widens the door of tourism economy;</p> <p>Being a ambassador of tourism the destination exhibits the tourism potential to the rest of the world</p> <p>Provide more opportunities to earn more personnell income</p>

Wide varieties of hotels that meet the different budget of cultural tourists; Provide employment opportunities Attract tourists throughout the year due to different agro-climatic zones Faith in local god and conduct of festivals regularly	Wealth generated by tourism could provide space for improving the PQLI and HDI Improves the scenario and promotes business opportunities Inter-Intra- regional travel brings connectivity (transport, communication, e- connectivity) in different facets of tourism; Scope for understanding in trade, commerce, education agreement
Threats	Weakness
Cultural and behavioural differences, restrict the free tourists' movement; Excessive consumption of environmental resources by outsiders is opposed by the locale; Terrorist target on public places like cultural tourism spots; Dumping of solid and liquid wastes generated by stakeholders or tourists Inter connection between tourism destinations Cultural and behavioural change of local people Extensive use of local resources by outsiders Dumping of wastes Crime trafficking	Poor transport facilities in certain States of India; Lack of infrastructure Changes in life style of locale due to "demonstration effect"; Poor co-ordination among stakeholders (tourist, service providers and local community); Inadequate information channels like poor publicity and lack of data on vital tourism facts Increase in price of goods and services seasonal unemployment and disguised unemployment Misguiding the tourist by providing asymmetric information on product, place, price, and people (locale) over crowding Water shortages during seasons Exploits the valuable natural resources

The Objectives

To elucidate the demographic and travel characteristics and expenditure pattern of visitors of Masi festival;

To identify the small business opportunities in the festival; and

To obtain suggestions from visitors about festival.

The Mosaic of study area

Tamilnadu is a state with several distinguished tourism genre, leisure, pilgrimage, heritage, adventure, cruise, rural, responsible, business, medical, eco, culture, education and sports and so on, Tourists visit various tourism destinations in Tamilnadu locations from or within Tamilnadu (or) other state in India (or) other countries, irrespective of their colour, age, gender, creed, caste, religion, and language. Tamilnadu possesses the huge tourism potentialities to satisfy their aspirants. It becomes the number one state in India by properly exploiting the full potential of tourism in general and cultural tourism in particular. Tamilnadu tourism has bagged the cultural tourism Award on the occasion of 10th anniversary of today's traveller. Festival tourism as cultural tourism has boosted the

image of Tamilnadu- a violence free state with peace loving people, which attract the domestic and foreign tourists. Dindigul District of Tamil Nadu has a beautiful blend of places encompassing ancient architecture and aesthetic excellence which mostly turn out to be famous shrines and exotic locations that attract tourists with a panoramic display of the mysteries of nature. It has excellent hill station such as Kodaikanal, Sirumalai, Thadiyankudisai- GOI- UNDP Spice Tourism Circuit and the temples like Kurinji Andavar Temple(Kodaikanal), Dhandayuthapani Swami Temple (palani), Thiru Avinankudi temple(Palani), Gopinathasamy temple, Soundararaja Perumal Temple, Vadamadurai, Thadikombu Soundararaja Perumal Temple, Senrayaperumal temple, (Batlagundu), Veera Anjaneyar Temple (Anapatti), Sri Kottai Mariamman Temple(Dindigul) Thirumalaikeni, St Joseph Church, Big Mossque- Begambur, It is also famous for handicrafts, locks, leather products, sarees. (Chinnalapatti). With this background, the authors have made an attempt to study "Business Opportunities in Cultural Tourism Environs- A Case of Temple festival in Dindigul Tamilnadu".

Methodology

The study is descriptive in nature, based on the first hand information collected from the visitors and business stall owners and the local community in Dindigul where Sri Kottai Mariamman Temple festival is held once in year. A well structured interview schedule was used separately for tourists and service providers in March 2009. As such 50 cultural tourists was selected by using Simple Random Sampling. Disproportionate stratified random sampling method was used to select respondents out of stall owners. As such 55 respondents were selected who were drawn from five major strata (Types of stall i) Entertainment ii) Eatables iii) Fancy iv) Home appliances and v) Pooja items. The authors have also used convenience sampling method to collect data from the visitors who visited and participated in the temple festival. The collected information were collated, analysed and interpreted by using simple statistical tools such as average and percentage. The study did not consider the permanent shop situated near the festival location.

Findings of the study

Socio Economic Profile of the visitors

The data show that majority of the respondents (78 per cent) are female; most of them (86 per cent) Hindus, Christians (12 per cent) and Muslims(12 per cent); 66 per cent belong to the age group of 21-40 years followed by 41-60 of years of age (24 per cent) and rest of (6 per cent) them fall in the age category of 20 and below and 4 per cent are above 60; 42 per cent of the respondents are housewives, followed by business people (16 per cent), farmers (16 per cent), salaried employees (14 per cent) and students (12 per cent); 84 per cent of them are literate; regarding monthly income, respondents with a monthly income of is Rs. 5000 and above constitute major proportion 72 per cent. As rural festival it attracts more number of visitors from rural areas. The average distance travelled by the visitors is 9 km. More so the respondents (64 per cent) used bus to reach the festival destination followed by, two- wheelers (16 per cent), and auto - rickshaw (8 per cent). Only few of them used taxi (6 per cent) and rest by walk(6 per cent). Average number of persons accompanied with respondents is 3.18. All of them are repeat visitors, Purpose of the visit differs, which again based on the religion Hindu people are generally coming for worship, and offerings followed by shopping, recreation and enjoyment. But in case of non- Hindus, their main purpose of visiting temple is to enjoy recreation and entertainment services available at the temple premises. The average expenditure made by a visitor works out to be Rs 329.

Stall Owners

Table 2 Categories of Stalls in the Temple Premises

S. No	Category of stalls	No. of stalls	Sample selected
I Pooja Related			
1	Pooja Items	6	3
2	Flowers	10	-
Total		16	3
II Home Appliances			
1	Home Appliances	8	6
2	Key chain	14	3
3	Glasses	1	1
Total		23	10
III Eatables			
1	Juice	15	4
2	Ice-Cream	4	1
3	Petty shop	2	2
4	Chocolates	1	1
5	Vada	15	1
6	Fried pappad	5	3
7	Muruku	3	1
8	Petty restaurant	2	2
9	Pori	4	3
10	Water	4	1
Total		58	19
IV Fancy Stall			
1	Bag and fancy	14	9
2	Foot wears shop	3	2
3	Glass	1	1
4	Toys	5	5
5	Leather Goods	6	1
6	Fish Aquarium	1	-
7	Balls	2	-
8	Watches	8	1
9	Small book stall (children)	2	-
Total		42	15
V Entertainment and Other services			
1	Vehicle stand	1	-
2	Giant Wheel	2	1
3	Other thriller entertainment services	16	6
4	Advertisement	1	1
Total		20	8
All Stall		158	55
Source: Computed from Primary data			

Generally festivals generate revenue for governments, and have positive impacts on the local economy' by generating income, supporting existing business and encouraging new start-ups. Altogether there are 158 temporary stalls established in the temple and its surrounding area. Eatables stalls (58) lead other stalls followed by fancy items (42), home appliances (23), entertainment and other services (20), and pooja items stall (16). From the 158 stalls, 55 stall owners were selected, from the universe of which (35 per cent) are eatable stall owners, 27 per cent fancy items, 18 per cent home appliances, 15 per cent entertainment and other services and 5 per cent of pooja item stalls owners.

Stalls in the temple premises and the surrounding area are allotted on contract base for a month Majority (84 per cent) of the stall owners paid above Rs 30,000, and for entertainment contractual rent ranges between Rs. 40,000 to Rs 1,40,000. The average contractual rent is Rs 41,245; 18 per cent of the stalls operate for less than 30 days; 16 per cent of the stalls operate for 30-35 days and 66 per cent of the stalls operate for above 35 days. All stalls are closed by 1am except pooja stall. One third of the stalls owners migrate more than 10 times in a year; half of the owners migrate 8 times with in Tamilnadu. The average number of workers employed per stall is 4.2 and 70 people get livelihood opportunities as mobile vendors/ head loaders, in the festivals most of them

are local people. The average wage per worker is Rs 2910 per month. The average sales and profit per day is Rs. 4792 Rs.1583 respectively.

Suggestions

Numbers of preferences are given by the visitors for establishing new business opportunities in the festivals. It is found that 23 per cent of the visitors needs book stalls, followed by 15 per cent require traditional food item like puttu, paniyaram, aapam, and (15 per cent) need snacks stalls with more varieties (North Indian, South Indian, Chettinadu, Bengali item, etc) 13 per cent prefer more stalls for entertainment, more shopping stalls and educational co stalls and 8 per cent suggest that mini restaurants are to be established in the temple premises.

Further basic facilities which need to be promote during festivals are: proper and clean toilet, potable drinking water, provision for daily cultural events and availability of first aid, safety and more security, sufficient police to control crowd and traffic police to regulate vehicle, efforts to reduce dust and noise pollution and provision of rest room for stall owners.

Conclusion

This study has estimated the employment potential, sales and profits of the stalls during the festival under study. This festival provide, an opportunity for the people in and around Dindigul to visit the temple on the one hand and on the other generate short- term employment opportunities. More over this kind of cultural tourism generate ideas to locale so as to establish stalls with less investment. Majority of the respondents felt that cultural tourism do not contribute much to the local development, partly due to lack of interest shown by the local authority and partly due to poor participation of the people. Stall owners opined that the number of stalls have reduced as compared to last year because of high contractual rent charged by the temple authority. There is an urgent need to involve the local, tourism operators and property owners nearby the temple environs in planning for temple festivals before and after festival season.

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