

OPEN ACCESS

Volume: 13

Special Issue: 1

Month: February

Year: 2026

P-ISSN: 2321-4643

E-ISSN: 2581-9402

Citation:

Parkavi, R., et al.

“Tourism Dynamics at Meenakshi Amman Temple: Examining Implications for Micro-Enterprise Economic Performance.” *Shanlax International Journal of Management*, vol. 13, no. S1, 2026, pp. 66–72.

DOI:

<https://doi.org/10.34293/management.v13iS1-i2-Feb.10387>

Tourism Dynamics at Meenakshi Amman Temple: Examining Implications for Micro-Enterprise Economic Performance

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Abstract

Now a days Local economies are significantly boosted by religious tourism destination, especially for small business that depend significantly on visitor traffic. The constant stream of pilgrims in holy cities like Madurai has a direct impact on the prosperity of Local business and service providers. The study looks at how local microbusiness' performance is affected by tourism near the meenakshi Amman Temple. we concentrated on business operating close to the temple that were MSME –registered such as retail stores, food vendors, lodging facilities, and tour companies. we collected data from 120 business owners using structured questionnaires. Our analysis employed simple statistical methods percentages, Descriptive analysis and simple t-test, correlation. Findings indicates that there are definite advantages to tourism including higher sales, more clients and study revenue during busy time. However, these advantages change throughout the year. Businesses suffer major difficulties during low visitor seasons, particularly when infrastructure is poor or crowd control is ineffective. Temple tourism has a lot of room to grow, but doing so would require better infrastructure and encouraging laws.

Keywords: MSME Business Efficacy, Micro-Level Enterprises, Increased Visitor Flow, and Sacred Site Tourism

Introduction

The meenakshi Amman temple draws million of pilgrims and tourist annually, establishing it as one of Tamil Nadu key religious destination. Visitor numbers surge significantly during festivals and special events, leading to bustling business environment in the vicinity. This has spurred the development of Numerous small enterprises, including shops, restaurants, hotels, and tour operators, most of which are classified as MSME 's. These business generally operates with limited resources, small teams and basic facilities making them heavily reliant on the temple visitors. However,

the benefits of tourism are not evenly shared. Fluctuations in pilgrim numbers due to seasonal changes, inadequate infrastructure, festival crowds, and regularity challenges pose significant operational difficulties. While tourism offers opportunities for increased sales and wider customer base it also imposes constraints that hinder long-term business growth. Most studies on temple tourism concentrated on heritage preservation, visitor experience, or destination management, few actually examine the impact of tourism on the small business that are the economic backbone of temple area. This research gap particularly evident in temple towns where small traders rely almost entirely on pilgrim but receive little scholarly attention. Historically, temple tourism in India has bolstered traditional commerce by generating consistent demand for pilgrimage-related goods and services. Over time, this has facilitated the growth of small business around major religious centers. My study investigates how tourism at the Meenakshi Amman temple influences the performances of micro enterprises, assess current business conditions and identifies key enhancements, and support programs for micro enterprises in temple tourism regions.

Review of Literature

Cultural Tourism Economy Research In Tamil Nadu (2025)

Varsha examined how tourism strengthens Tamil Nadu's cultural economy, with emphasis on heritage and religious sites. The study found that tourism generates income, creates jobs, and helps micro and small business near cultural landmarks survive. It highlights the need to align tourism growth with small business support to achieve sustainable development.

Destination Appeal and MSME Revenue Pattern (2023)

Nur investigated how tourist destination attractiveness influence MSME income, with visitors' interest as mediating variables. The findings showed that more tourists lead to higher MSME revenues and sales but changes in visitors' preferences cause income instability for tourism-dependent small business.

Tourism Marketing And Physical Infrastructure (2022)

Abilash and Milton's analysis investigates tourism promotional activities and supporting infrastructure throughout Tamil Nadu. The research highlights that connectivity system, transportation facilities, accommodation availability, and tourist amenities represent critical enablers for tourism growth. Insufficient infrastructure prevents micro and small business from fully enjoying tourism-derived benefits.

Religious Tourism and MSME Development Trajectories (2020)

Kumarr and Singh investigates examines how tourism at pilgrimage destination influences MSME expansion and stability. The study demonstrates that steady devotee flows improve sales performance and customer access for retail and service-oriented micro enterprises, although heavy tourism reliance makes them vulnerable to seasonal downturns and revenue instability.

Tourism as Regional Economic Catalyst (2019)

This investigation examines tourism as a regional development driver, emphasizing small micro enterprises. Tourism encourages local business formation by increasing product and service demand. Nonetheless congestion issues, regulatory pressures and limitations create challenges in tourism-concentrated areas.

Global Evidence on Tourism and Small Business Outcomes

This studies international tourism location reveal positive relationship between tourism growth and small business performances. Research documents revenue improve, ments, customer volume increases, and employment expansion among enterprises near tourist sites. Nevertheless, heavy reliance on peak tourism seasons was recognized as arisk factor for business sustainability.

Pilgrimage Tourism And Enterprise Viability

Sharma `s work Analyses how devotional tourism supports business sustainability near major temples. Pilgrimage - oriented tourism creates consistent demand for goods and services, maintaining employment and income for micro enterprises performance, challenges and growth Growth in Religious Tourism context. Our study fills this gap by focusing on micro enterprises around Meenakshi Amman temple.

Objective

1. To study tourism-oriented commercial activities within the Meenakshi Amman Temple area and describe characteristics of adjacent MSME units.
2. To analysis relationships between tourism development trends and performance outcomes for MSMEs participating in temple-based tourism.
3. To examine operational obstacles and growth possibilities that MSMEs experience due to tourism activities surrounding

Hypothesis

- H0-Mean score of Tourism-oriented commercial activities around the Meenakshi Amman Temple are equal to neutral.(3)
- H1-Mean Score of Tourism-oriented commercial activities around the temple area are significantly different from neutral.(3)
- H0 -There is no significant relationship between tourism development trends and MSME performance outcomes.
- H1- There is a significant relationship between tourism development trends and MSME performance outcomes.

Scope of the Study

The scope of the study focus on MSME registered traders the vicinity of the temple who are involved in the tourism industry in terms of hotel services, restaurants, retail shops, and travel agencies. The research will also consider the business performance criteria, tourism conditions, and general challenges that are faced by the MSME traders. The research will not consider the unregistered traders in the tourism industry.

Therotical Frame Work

The main aim of this research is to investigate the effects of tourism on the performance of MSMEs in a temple tourism area. The steady flow of tourists to the Meenakshi Amman Temple creates a steady market demand, which has a significant effect on the operations of the traders who are registered as MSMEs.

Variables such as the number of tourists, pilgrim mobility, infrastructure quality, accessibility, and the availability of necessary tourist facilities are identified as important indicators of tourism development, which is perceived as the most important factor.

These variables increase the number of customers and provide opportunities for income generation for the traders. The performance of MSMEs is measured by factors such as sales turnover, employment generation, income sustainability, and business viability.

Research Methodology

Research Design And Area, Sample

The study focuses on the prevailing behaviors of tourists and their relationship with the attributes, achievements, and challenges of microenterprises. The study area includes the region around the temple where business activities are performed. The sample population includes microenterprises registered under MSME in the specified region. We initially proposed a survey of 150 MSME-registered vendors, but we obtained full responses from 120 vendors in the region around the famous Meenakshi Amman Temple. I used 120 sample size in this study, because social science studies involving likert scale, sample size of more than 100 is enough and consistent to test correlation for easy interpretation.

Data Source, Instrument and Analytical Approach

This study used primary data, the data was gathered through the questionnaire, the data addressed characteristics, activity based on tourism challenges faced but the operational activities, policy relevant details and additionally add government secondary reports came from scholarly publication reports related to tourism and more. Data were captured through using office scale likert scale, techniques include percentage one sample t- test correlation for ease interpretation.

Results and Interpretation

Tourism Activities and Micro Enterprise Characteristics

Table 1.1

Tourism Activity	Agree (%)	Neutral (%)	Disagree (%)
High tourist inflow around temple	72	18	10
Regular pilgrimage visits	75	15	10
Festival seasons increase tourist visits	80	12	8
Visitor facilities support tourism	65	20	15
Temple area accessibility is convenient	70	17	13

Source: primary data

Table 1.1: Percentage Distribution of Tourism Activities around the Temple

Interpretation: Results show that most micro enterprises experience regular tourist and pilgrim traffic, especially during festivals. This suggests that tourism activity is closely tied to how these businesses operate.

Statistical tool used- Descriptive statistics (Mean, SD, Minimum, maximum),

One- sample t-test

Hypothesis

H_0 -Mean score of Tourism-oriented commercial activities around the Meenakshi Amman Temple are equal to neutral.(3)

H_1 -Mean Score of Tourism-oriented commercial activities around the temple area are significantly different from neutral.(3)

Descriptive Statistics Tourism Activities**Table 1.2**

Tourism-Oriented Activities around Meenakshi Amman Temple	Descriptive Statistics				
	N	Mean	S.D	Min	Max
Tourist inflow is high around Meenakshi Amman Temple	120	3.98	1.14	1	5
Pilgrimage visits occur regularly	120	3.95	1.04	1	5
Festival seasons increase tourist visits	120	3.86	1.09	1	5
Visitor facilities support tourism	120	3.67	1.26	1	5
Accessibility to the temple area is convenient	120	3.87	1.12	1	5

Source: Primary Data

Interpretation

The descriptive analysis, as shown in Table 1.2; reveals that MSME operators have a moderate to high level of perception regarding tourism-related business activities around the Meenakshi Amman Temple. The highest mean score was recorded in the inflow of tourists (Mean = 3.98), followed by the number of pilgrimages (Mean = 3.95) and accessibility (Mean = 3.87). It was also found that the number of tourist visits had increased substantially during festivals (Mean = 3.86). However, the mean score recorded for visitor facilities was substantially lower (Mean = 3.67), indicating areas for improvement.

One – Sample T-Test**Table 1.3**

Variables	Mean	t-value	df	p-value
Tourist inflow is high around Meenakshi Amman Temple	3.98	9.36	119	<0.001
Pilgrimage visits occur regularly	3.95	9.97	119	<0.001
Festival seasons increase tourist visits	3.86	8.59	119	<0.001
Visitor facilities support tourism	3.67	5.80	119	<0.001
Accessibility to the temple area is convenient	3.87	8.46	119	<0.001

Source: Primary Data

Interpretation

The table 1.3; show all the indicators associated with tourism-related commercial activities have mean values that are significantly higher than the neutral value of 3, as indicated by the results of the one-sample t-test. The most significant value was found in the number of pilgrimages (Mean = 3.95, $t = 9.97$, $p < 0.001$) and the number of tourists arriving (Mean = 3.98, $t = 9.36$, $p < 0.001$). Moreover, there was a significant improvement in the accessibility to the temple area (Mean = 3.87, $t = 8.46$, $p < 0.001$) and the number of visits (Mean = 3.86, $t = 8.59$, $p < 0.001$) associated with the festival. Although the mean value for the visitor facilities was slightly lower (Mean = 3.67), it was still significant ($t = 5.80$, $p < 0.001$). Thus, the null hypothesis was rejected.

H1-Mean Score of Tourism-oriented commercial activities around the temple area are significantly different from neutral.(3)- Accepted

Hypothesis

- H_0 - There is no significant relationship between tourism development trends and MSME performance outcomes.
- H_1 -There is a significant relationship between tourism development trends and MSME performance outcomes.

Statistical Tool Use: Correlation

Table 1.4

		Seasonal tourism	Infrastructure facilities	Space limitation	Regulatory procedures	Tourist crowd	sales turnover	Income stability	Employment growth	Customer footfall	Growth opportunities
Seasonal tourism	Pearson's	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	r	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	p-value	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Infrastructure facilities	Pearson's	-0.025	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	df	118	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	p-value	.785	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Space limitations	Pearson's	0.118	0.064	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	df	118	118	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	p-value	.200	0.490	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Regulatory procedures	Pearson's	-0.121	0.054	-0.065	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	df	118	118	118	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	p-value	.190	.562	.480	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Tourist crowd	Pearson's	0.009	0.082	-0.032	-0.067	-	-	-	-	-	-
	df	118	118	118	118	-	-	-	-	-	-
	p-value	.921	.373	.728	.465	-	-	-	-	-	-
sales turnover	Pearson's	-0.040	-0.042	0.150	0.016	-0.019	-	-	-	-	-
	df	118	118	118	118	118	-	-	-	-	-
	p-value	.664	.645	.103	.861	.841	-	-	-	-	-
Income stability	Pearson's	0.144	-0.137	-0.189	0.056	-0.255	-0.186	-	-	-	-
	df	118	118	118	118	118	118	-	-	-	-
	p-value	.116	.134	0.38	.545	.005	.042	-	-	-	-
Employment growth	Pearson's	-0.140	-0.143	-0.063	0.059	-0.023	-0.038	0.012	-	-	-
	df	118	118	118	118	118	118	118	-	-	-
	p-value	.128	.119	.497	.563	.807	.681	.900	-	-	-
Customer footfall	Pearson's	-0.117	0.160	-0.001	0.073	-0.003	0.009	0.132	0.054	-	-
	df	118	118	118	118	118	118	118	118	-	-
	p-value	.201	0.81	.989	.427	.977	.922	.151	.561	-	-
Growth opportunities	Pearson's	-0.069	-0.034	0.078	-0.087	0.101	0.001	-0.055	-0.046	0.004	-
	df	118	118	118	118	118	118	118	118	118	-
		.453	.711	.397	.347	.270	.993	.552	.620	.963	-

Source: Primary Data

Interpretation

The table 1.4, shows the correlation coefficients, ranging from -1 to +1, represent the relationship and degree of association between the trends of tourism development and the performance of MSMEs in and around the Meenakshi Amman Temple, as depicted in Table X. The results reveal that there is a weak association between the performance indicators of MSMEs and most of the factors related to tourism, such as seasonal tourism, infrastructure facilities, space constraints, and government procedures, as they all have statistically insignificant p-values. However, it is observed that there is a significant negative correlation ($r = -0.255$, $p < 0.05$) between the number of tourists and income stability, which indicates that as the number of tourists increases, the income stability

of MSMEs gets affected.

H1-There is no significant relationship between tourism development trends and MSME performance outcomes. Null Hypothesis Was Accepted.

Conclusion of the Study

The study focused on the performance of MSMEs in the vicinity of the Meenakshi Amman Temple with respect to tourism-related business activities. The alternative hypothesis (H_{11}) is accepted since the outcome of the descriptive analysis shows that the average score of tourism-oriented commercial activities is significantly different from the neutral point. This shows the great impact of tourism in the region under study and the fact that MSME entrepreneurs perceived tourism-related activities around the temple moderately to highly.

Limitations of the Study

Our study has several limitations. First, we focused only on micro enterprises around one temple tourism destination, which may limit how well our findings apply to other areas or tourism contexts. Second, we relied on questionnaire data, and responses reflect business owners' perceptions, which may include subjective bias. Finally, while we used simple descriptive methods to ensure clarity, this approach limits deeper statistical analysis.

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