

**A STUDY ON TOURIST PERCEPTION TOWARDS SERVICE QUALITY OF TOURISM SERVICES IN DINDIGUL**

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**ABSTRACT**

Tourism is now one of the world largest industries and one of its fast growing economic sectors. It also creates opportunities for employment in the service sector of the economy associated with tourism. A sample of 300 tourists in Dindigul district randomly selected and surveyed. Female are very much interested to visit tourism place as compared to male, youngsters who pertaining to the age group 26 years to 35 years and married people are eager to visit that place. Most of the tourist visit place for sightseeing purpose. It is concluded that even offers quality service to tourist their expectation are more than they perceived.

**Key words:** Tourist Perception, Service Quality, Tourism development, Tourist Visit

**INTRODUCTION**

Tourism is a major source of income for many countries and affects the economy of both the source and host countries. The word "tour" is derived from the Latin "tornare" and Greek "tornos" meaning "a lathe or circle" the movement around a central point or axis. Tourism is the travel for recreation, leisure, religious and business purposes usually of a limited period. Tourism has become a popular leisure activity. Tourism can be domestic or international. Tourism is now one of the world largest industries and one of its fast growing economic sectors. Tourism is seen as a main instrument for regional development as it stimulates new economic activities. Tourism may have a positive economic impact on the balance of payment, on employment, on gross income and production.

Today Tourism related to infrastructure in various parts of the country has improved the quality of life of the local people and helped to promote local business. Tourism is the fastest growing industry in modern world. People have always travelled to distant parts of the world to see monuments, arts and culture, taste new cuisine etc. Tourism brings in large amounts of income into a local economy in the form of payment for goods and services needed for tourists. It also creates opportunities for employment in the service sector of the economy associated with tourism.

In the changing economic global scenario, the Government of India and the state government have understood the importance and significance of tourism industry. India is very poorly placed when it comes to foreign tourist arrivals and foreign exchange earnings. Moreover the destination competitiveness of India is by and large adversely affected by poor man made attractions. To enhance India's ranking as a global tourist destination; efforts have to be made in this line particular. In this way, India could better utilize its blessed natural factors and thereby increase the number of foreign visitors.

**TOURISM DEVELOPMENTS IN INDIA**

Indian history dates back to 3000 BC. Excavations in Punjab and Gujarat reveal that the Indus Valley civilization was a highly developed urban civilization. In fact the two cities of Harappa and Mohenjo-Daro, situated on two sides of the river Ravi, are known to have been built on a similar plan. But that only meant a new wave of urbanization was taking place along the Ganges around 1500 B.C. This has been recorded in the Rig Veda the earliest known literary source composed during the period that sheds light on India's past.

The history of tourism developed mainly through indirect sources in the early period. In India, in the early days of agricultural abundance, export of cash crops created an important trade link. Manufacture of iron-ore into steel for weaponry was another important item of trade by the later Vedic period. Tools and textiles were other renowned Indian products. Contemporary Greek and Hebrew scholars have noted the wonders of India and her fabled wealth. Owing to the predominance of trade routes over land crossing between Asia and Europe, trade tours were an important development during the period.

After 1980 tourism activity gained momentum. The Government took several significant steps. A National Policy on tourism was announced in 1982. Later in 1988, the national committee on tourism formulated a comprehensive plan for achieving a sustainable growth in tourism. In 1992, a National Action Plan was prepared and in 1996 the National Strategy for Promotion of Tourism was drafted. In 1998, the New Tourism Policy recognizes the roles of Central and State Governments, Public sector undertakings and the Private Sector in the development of tourism. The needs for involvement of Panchayati Raj Institutions, Local Bodies, Non-Governmental Organisation and the Local Youth in the Creation of Tourism facilities have also been recognized.

### **OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

1. To Study on Socio Economic Factors of Tourists in Dindigul.
2. To Analyse the Tourists Perception towards Service Qualities in Dindigul.

### **REVIEW OF LITERATURES**

It is a critical analysis of a segment of a published body of knowledge through summary, classification and comparisons of prior research studies, review of literature and theoretical articles.

G.Ganesan and K.Chandrasekar Rao (2006) a study especially in Tamilnadu, the following suggestions are made for active and favourable consideration of legislators, policy makers and executing agencies in government as well as private sector stakeholders in tourism industry: They are by bringing together key large, medium and small players from the regions and the best players from across the states, the travel mart will help explore the destination, enhance business and create new possibilities to rural folks in order to give them employment opportunities. Market positioning research, customer relationship Management and Market Segmentation in tourism industry are also suggested.

Mahamad S, Latha G, Manikandan N and Chandrasekar V (2014) conducted, “A study of tourist inflow in Tamilnadu 2001-2012- A GIS based Study”. In this study they rightly pointed out that tourism has played a very decisive role to transform the world into a globalised economy where all nations can exchange free trade and culture and share their interest of mutual benefits based on tourism industry. India is one of the major destinations of the foreign tourists particularly the state of Tamil Nadu which has a rich cultural heritage among the Indian states. All over the world, the tourists are visiting it due to its climatic, scenic beauty and ecological resources. The research paper deals with the analysis of tourism arrivals in Tamil Nadu state and also growth rate of Tamil Nadu tourism in 2012.

Jacob Konwar and Deb Kr.Chakraborty(2015) a study on, “ Tourism and its associated aspects in the River Island Majuli, Assam: A Study from the Perspective of Visitors”, In this study respondents were classified as domestic tourists and foreign tourists, SERVQUAL Gap scale was done by comparing the opinion of the respondents after visiting the island and the perceptions of the respondents before visiting the river island Majuli. A Comparison of the visitor’s perceptions with their expectations about tourism elements in Majuli, using the paired sample t-test indicates a statistically significant difference in 12 variables out of the 20 tourism variables are considered for study. He concluded that there is significant difference in the opinion of the domestic and foreign visitors regarding the tourism related products and services in the river island Majuli before and after visiting it.

**METHODOLOGY**

The methodology includes the research design, sampling design, and period of the study, field-work and collection of data, data processing and tools of analysis. The study requires the data to be collected from two different sources i.e. the primary source and the secondary source. The primary data was collected through structured questionnaire from the respondents. Secondary data were collected from various sources, like books, newspapers, magazines, journals, brochures, souvenirs and websites.

**Sampling Design**

A sample of 300 tourists in Dindigul district randomly selected and surveyed. Questionnaire were personally distributed to and collected from each participant in order to reduce non sampling administrative errors.

**Data Processing**

Questionnaire was structured by the researcher. The collection of data was done by using Questionnaire. The data collected were mostly primary in nature. The coding was made with the help of a master table. The coded information was transcribed on transcription cards for further processing. Afterwards, classification tables were prepared for further analysis from transcription cards. The analysis of data was made with the help of computer. i.e. SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Science).

**ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION**

| <b>Socio Economic Factors</b> |                     | <b>Respondents</b> | <b>Percentage</b> |
|-------------------------------|---------------------|--------------------|-------------------|
| <b>Gender</b>                 | Male                | 140                | 46.67 %           |
|                               | Female              | 160                | 53.33 %           |
|                               | <b>Total</b>        | <b>300</b>         | <b>100 %</b>      |
| <b>Age</b>                    | Below 25 Years      | 43                 | 14.44 %           |
|                               | Between 25-35 Years | 77                 | 25.56 %           |
|                               | Between 36-45 Years | 75                 | 25.00 %           |
|                               | Between 46-55 Years | 42                 | 13.89 %           |
|                               | Above 55 Years      | 63                 | 21.11 %           |
|                               | <b>Total</b>        | <b>300</b>         | <b>100 %</b>      |
| <b>Marital Status</b>         | Unmarried           | 100                | 33.33 %           |
|                               | Married             | 200                | 66.67 %           |
|                               | <b>Total</b>        | <b>300</b>         | <b>100 %</b>      |
| <b>Education</b>              | Upto School Level   | 67                 | 22.22 %           |
|                               | Graduation/Diploma  | 150                | 50.00 %           |

|                      |                               |            |              |
|----------------------|-------------------------------|------------|--------------|
|                      | Post Graduation               | 83         | 27.78 %      |
|                      | <b>Total</b>                  | <b>300</b> | <b>100 %</b> |
| <b>Family Income</b> | Below Rs.10000                | 17         | 5.56 %       |
|                      | Between Rs.10001 to Rs.25000  | 50         | 16.67 %      |
|                      | Between Rs.25001 to Rs.50000  | 100        | 33.33 %      |
|                      | Above Rs50000                 | 133        | 44.44 %      |
|                      | <b>Total</b>                  | <b>300</b> | <b>100 %</b> |
| <b>Status</b>        | Student                       | 30         | 10.00 %      |
|                      | Employee (Private/Government) | 123        | 41.11 %      |
|                      | Business                      | 114        | 37.78 %      |
|                      | Professional                  | 33         | 11.11 %      |
|                      | <b>Total</b>                  | <b>300</b> | <b>100 %</b> |

Source: Primary data

The above table revealed that, female is interested to visit tourism place as compared to male, youngsters who pertaining to the age group 26 years to 35 years and married people are eager to visit that place. Further it should be noted that graduates are having interest as compared to other categories and families whose monthly income more than Rs.50000 are plan to come tourism place.

#### **PURPOSE OF VISIT**

| <b>Purposes of Visit</b> | <b>Total Score</b> | <b>Rank</b> |
|--------------------------|--------------------|-------------|
| Site Seeing              | 96                 | <b>I</b>    |
| Rest                     | 55                 | <b>II</b>   |
| Business                 | 18                 | <b>III</b>  |
| Education                | 11                 | <b>IV</b>   |

Source: Primary data

From the above table it should be clear that most of the tourist visit place for sightseeing purpose then for taking rest during vacation.

#### **QUALITY OF SERVICE PERCEIVED ABOUT TOURISM SERVICES**

| <b>SERQUAL Factors</b> | <b>Chi-Square Value</b> | <b>P value</b> | <b>Remarks</b> |
|------------------------|-------------------------|----------------|----------------|
| Assurance              | 8.69                    | 0.013          | Insignificant  |
| Reliability            | 95.75                   | 0.000          | Significant    |
| Responsiveness         | 111.92                  | 0.000          | Significant    |
| Tangibles              | 174.99                  | 0.000          | Significant    |
| Service Responsibility | 51.80                   | 0.000          | Significant    |

|                           |        |       |             |
|---------------------------|--------|-------|-------------|
| Service Product Dimension | 100.03 | 0.000 | Significant |
|---------------------------|--------|-------|-------------|

Source: Primary data

It is obviously identified that, there is a connection with over all perception in tourism services in Dindigul District with reliability, responsiveness, tangibles, service responsibility and service product dimension. Since P value is less than 0.01. Null hypothesis is rejected at 1% level of significance.

## SUGGESTIONS

1. The riding tracks of cycles, horses and pedestrian walk ways should be proposed and maintained.
2. Create more employment opportunities to youngsters by giving training in the field of tourist guides.
3. The tourist activities whether personal or commercial should not affect the nature of palani and kodaikanal in any way at any cause.
4. Take necessary steps for car parking system or automatic multilevel parking system to their customers.
5. Service providers should introduce modern equipment such as travel guidance notification, parking availability etc. more in number to support customer service and also to improve the efficiency, productivity and the quality of services.

## CONCLUSION

Tourism in India has registered significant growth over the years, which is led by rising incomes, increasing affordability, growing aspirations, increasing globalization and a growing airline industry along with improvement in travel related infrastructure. Tourism is considered as a tool for economic development in India. From this study it is concluded that even offers quality service to customers their expectation are more than they perceived. The service provider must understand to take necessary implementation to give quality service.

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