

FACTORS AFFECTING SATISFACTION OF TOURISTS IN VALPARAI, COIMBATORE

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ABSTRACT

Tourism sector helps to understand the international facts and also supports the local cultural activities as well as handicraft items. In this context, the present paper is an attempt to explore the factors which affect the tourist satisfaction in hill areas. The study has been done with special reference to Valparai hill station. The place is located in the district of Coimbatore. The respondents are the tourists of Tamil Nadu who visited Valparai. The technique of sampling used to select the respondents is convenience sampling and the sample size of the study is 100. The tourists are asked to fill in a questionnaire for getting the required data of the study and the method used for analysis of data is Regression Analysis. The findings of the analysis show that there is significant relationship exists between factors and tourist satisfaction.

KEYWORDS: Tourist Satisfaction, Valparai, Coimbatore, Factors Affecting Satisfaction

INTRODUCTION

Several beautiful hill stations are located in the state of Tamil Nadu. The hill stations of India got their fame and bounce during the rule of the British in the 19th century. The places which are located in remote area and in high elevation from sea level are referred to as hill stations. The British rulers transformed these hill stations as their summer capital for withstanding the hot summer in India. They got recreation and rest in such places in summer. In recent times, these hill stations are opted by many people as the destination of rest and peace.

The concept of hill tourism can be seen to have high scope in Tamil Nadu. Several popular hill stations are located in Tamil Nadu which has got the potential of attracting several tourists. However, many less-known and unexplored hill stations still continue to exist. The other name for hill tourism is mountain tourism. Hill tourism is the travel undertaken towards the hill stations for enjoying the attractive landscapes, flora & fauna, foggy clouds, temples, mountain peaks and waterfalls. The present article focuses over the factors which attract the tourists

towards the hill stations like Valparai.

Tourism in Mountain Stations

The industry of tourism is service-oriented and as far as India is concerned, it is second-largest one. The industry of tourism has got a better opportunity of growth in the mountain or the hill regions. According to Badan (1986), the environment of a mountain exhibits ideal situations for the recreation purposes and to be specific for tourism. In the current busy world, most of the individuals all around the globe make a move towards natural destinations for tourism, like mountains, in order to get a relaxation from the busy polluted world. Such individuals wish to have a beautiful and peaceful atmosphere for enjoying their free time. In order to get this type of relaxation, they opt for mountain regions as their destination of peace. Further, they go in for hotels that are eco-friendly for accommodation.

An atmosphere which is attractive, climatic conditions which soothes the mind, peaceful surroundings are some of the factors which attract both the inmates of the nation as well as foreign tourist towards such places. The Tamil Nadu government has announced and listed forty-seven places as of tourism importance in our state, Tamil Nadu. Some tourism locations which are famous include Valparai, Rameswaram, Madurai, Kancheepuram, Mahabalipuram, Kodaikanal, Ooty, Chidambaram, Tanjore, Kanyakumari (Anon, 2005). Though a lot of tourism destinations exist in the country, many domestic as well as the foreign tourists people opt for the hilly regions for tourism. The reasons may be mind-blowing climatic conditions, an opportunity of getting closer to the nature, eco-friendly atmosphere and specifically for the tourists who wish to go in for adventurous activities.

The hill station of Valparai can be seen to be located in the district of Coimbatore, over the Anaimalai Hills in Western Ghats. The hairpin bends are generally more in hill stations and this counts up to forty in Valparai. The hill station of Valparai is surrounded with several cardamom, coffee and tea estates. This hill station is the home for Nilgiri Tiger, leopards and elephants. Indira Gandhi wild-life sanctuary, presently referred to as Anamalai Tiger Reserve, Nirar dam, Upper Solayar Dam, Monkey falls, Aliyar Dam, Panchmugavinayagar temple and Balaji temple are considered to be a few tourist places in Valparai. For attracting increased number of tourists every year, summer festival is also arranged in Valparai.

SCOPE OF THE STUDY

The research presented here is an attempt to extend a support for the development of tourism. The research has been undertaken through an analysis of the policy for tourism regarding the hill stations during the period of 2008 to 2013. The study has been done by considering the 3 A's of tourism (amenities, accessibilities and attraction). The scholar has also tried to examine the development of the tourism sector in the selected hill stations of Tamil

Nadu. The intense competition amongst the service providers facilitate in achieving best service. It is also a fact that this industry too is faced with a few unhealthy competitions. In this regard, the scholar has tried to identify the factors which help in the promotion of the tourism in hill stations like Valparai. The study is also anticipated to assess the needs of the tourist people travelling to hill stations and also proposes the means to provide the requirements of the tourists.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The unanticipated heave of the cases of Covid-19 has resulted in the crush of the hopes and lives of many tourism entrepreneurs and owners of home-stay, in Tamil Nadu. To be specific, the conditions of Valparai can be seen to be still worse. The tourism entrepreneurs were very hopeful that their business would get a high pick up with the increase in number of tourists. But every hope has transformed itself to hopeless situation due to the restrictions in travel and the regulations for containment zones. Because of the pandemic situation of the last three years, the tourism entrepreneurs and the owners of homestay in hill stations are greatly affected. With the slow-down of COVID-19, situations were returning to normal when it was again hit by the second wave of the same. Tourism got affected because of the restrictions for travel. It was anticipated that if the situation continues, the small tourism entrepreneurs would be pushed to a great fall.

OBJECTIVES

The aim of the study is to identify the factors which affect the satisfaction of the tourists in Valparai, Coimbatore.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

H. Ramakrishna (2011) stated that the development of travel & tourism helps in the development of the social and economic situations of the tourism entrepreneurs like the home-stay owners, travel operators, resort-owners, guides and their dependents. Tourism industry also makes a huge contribution towards the development of the economy of the state. Hence, it becomes essential to promote the tourism industry through establishment of effective policies both by the state and the central governments. As far as India is concerned, the tourism sectors do not come under the control of the state government. But, the areas such as the implementation of the luxury tax over accommodation, issue of license and certification for travel and tourism falls under the control of the state government. Hence, for developing the tourism industry, the role played by the state has to be considered and given more importance. As per the policy of the national tourism, the state government becomes responsible to establish effective policies for attracting increased number of tourists to their states. The state has also got the duty to present varied products of tourism that are available in their respective states. The paper presented here was an examination of the initiatives taken by the state government to market the products of

tourism.

Chavan Rajashri Ramesh (2013) performed a study for getting aware of the perceptions of tourism regarding the attractions towards the products of tourism. The author had also tried to get aware of the factors which motivate tourism, perception regarding the tourism pricing, determine the opinion and awareness regarding the other places of attractive tourism in the Satara district. Further, the author had also tried to know about the tourist's opinion regarding the tourism potential in the Satara district. The author had carried out a macro study. The tendency of the Satara district to develop as a destination for tourism was studied from the perspective of the tourists.

Balamuraly & Arun Lawrence (2021) reported that digital marketing is a new form of marketing which had grown in recent times. Digital marketing engages the consumers and the business people with the help of internet and this includes social media and electronic instruments like the game consoles, digital billboards, telephones, smartphones, tablets and computers. The authors had also stated that there had been a change in the tourism business of India which had been affected by the impact of the global pandemic of COVID-19. The manner in which businesses were carried out were changed by the digital platforms. These platforms were also seen to change the way in which people were attracted with the help of advertisements and retained the loyal customers. As far as the tourism industry of India is concerned, the preferences and expectations of the travelers had changed in a massive way. The growing tourism business of India is confronted today with the challenge of doing regular communication to the global or local audience regarding the vacation packages. In this perspective, the concept of digital marketing offers tour agencies and operators with the strategies and tools which they require for bridging the lucrative and developing tourism industry. The aim of this paper was to understand the role played by digital marketing as well as the challenges which they confront due to the effect of the COVID-19. The study was done with reference to the tourism industry of India. The authors had tried to examine the difficulties faced by the customers on using the digital platforms for organizing the travel, after the effect of the global COVID-19 pandemic. Primary data had been used by the authors for the purpose of the study.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study presented here has been carried out among the tourists of Valparai. The sample size of the study is 100 and the sampling method used to select the respondents of the study is convenience sampling. The instrument used for data collection is a questionnaire and the tool used for analysis of the data is regression analysis.

ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	F	Sig.
1	.780 ^a	.608	.569	15.532	.000 ^a

Coefficients ^a						
	Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	1.444	.293		4.935	.000
	Quality of Road	.021	.079	.042	.268	.789
	Public Convenience along Roads	.226	.083	.397	2.743	.007
	Garbage Disposal	.085	.061	.165	1.385	.169
	Traffic Mgt	.159	.053	.241	2.993	.004
	Availability of Commercial Transportation	.049	.054	.093	.924	.358
	Availability of Hotels	.125	.061	.183	2.039	.044
	Parking Facility at The Tourist Attraction	.100	.065	.144	1.537	.128
	Conservation of Heritage Sites	-.139	.059	-.231	-2.363	.020
	Telephone/Mobile Services	.039	.056	.052	.700	.486

a. Dependent Variable: Purchase Intention

Findings show that all statement of factors had positive relation. The analysis was done by executing regression. Among seven factors one factor was not influence over the tourist satisfaction. The coefficient value, R2 , was estimated to be 0.608 through regression, which shows that 60.8 percent of the independent variables had an influence on the tourist satisfaction

of respondents. The F value was found to be 15.532 and p value = <0.000. The finding reveals that there is significant relationship exists between factors and tourist satisfaction.

CONCLUSION

The social and economic development of India greatly relies over the development and growth of tourism. Tourism is also considered to be one major source in terms of earning the foreign exchange. As far as employment in the urban and rural areas is concerned, tourism offers wider opportunities. Such an opportunity helps to stop the migration of people from rural places to urban areas. When the state of Tamil Nadu is concerned, there are more opportunities to develop international and domestic tourism with the help of beautiful mountains, waterfalls, beaches, temples, wild-life sanctuaries, worship areas for all religions, ancient monuments and artistic places exhibiting the culture of the nation. This is true even in the case of the hill stations like Valparai which has got several mind-blowing places of visit. The finding reveals that there is significant relationship exists between factors and tourist satisfaction.

The area of the study contributes to the successful implementation of the efforts in tourism industry to create a major platform for the increased tourists towards the tourism platforms. The development of the tourism sector has got the potential to evade the problems of unemployment, poverty, economic recession and regional imbalance.

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