



INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF RESEARCH IN COMMERCE, IT AND MANAGEMENT

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TOURISM POTENTIAL IN VELLORE REGION - AN EMPIRICAL STUDY

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ABSTRACT

In India, the importance of Tourism is ever increasing process. This will create lot of possibilities to grow like economic, social & cultural components in India. In this paper an attempt has been made to identify the potential of Tourism in and around Vellore region in Tamil Nadu. The city of Vellore is 135 Km away from Chennai, situated on the national highway from Chennai to Bangalore. Vellore is located on the banks of Palar River. It is named as historical City by its nature of origin. There are many major and popular towns potentially supporting tourism in Vellore region. Since, this region has been blessed with many geographical components like forest, waterfalls, religious temples, mountains, botanical and zoological parks etc and in addition to that it also well supported by historical events in past. The city also highly equipped with world renowned medical facility and educational facility, brought the scope of increasing floating population to the study area, which in turn prepares the grounds for tourism potential. This also well connected by both rail and road from other parts of India like northern and southern. This is the major gateway to many places in southern part of India like Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka & Kerala. Recently, the Government of Tamil Nadu has honored the Vellore City to the level of Corporation with additional benefits

KEYWORDS

Vellore, Historical city, Tourism Potential, Gateway.

INTRODUCTION

The city of Vellore is 135 Km away from Chennai, situated on the national highway from Chennai to Bangalore. Vellore is located on the banks of Palar River. It is named as historical City by its nature of origin. Vellore is slowly improving in its expansion as more and more industrial units are coming up. Apart from the famous Vellore Fort which is oldest and strongest fortresses in South India, the city is also blessed with the world renowned Christian Medical College Hospital (CMC), which attracts many patients and researchers from all over the world. It is one of the best health centers in India. Apart from this historical charisma, it also owns world class University like Vellore Institute of Technology popularly known as VIT - University, in which it attracts students from all over India as well as from many countries like, China, Australia, Singapore, Kenya, Bhutan, Nepal, Uganda, Germany etc.. Further, other several reputed educational Institutions are situated here including Voorhees College, Auxilium College for women, Govt. Medical College, Thiruvallur University, Private Agricultural College and Govt. Law College other than numerous Private Engineering and Arts and Science colleges. On the other hand, several major Industries of both Public and Private sectors are contributing their services towards economic advancement of the country. To represent various religions there are places of worship of heritage value. Recently, the Vellore-based Sri Narayani Peedam constructed with GOLD, popularly known as the "Golden Temple of the South" for the goddess Sri. Mahalakshmi. This has started attracting flow of tourists from many southern parts of India, particularly, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Kerala, Tamilnadu, and Puducherry. As a recent development in records, the Tamil Nadu Tourism Development Corporation Ltd. has started a daily trip from Chennai to Vellore focusing the Golden temple Visit and Tourism Development Corporations of Govt. of Andhra Pradesh as well as Govt. of Karnataka also plying their services from major cities of their respective states to Vellore. Thus, Vellore region has proved its name and fame as the 'Fort City', Health City, Education City and Spiritual City.

DEMOGRAPHICAL PROFILE OF VELLORE DISTRICT: Vellore district has an area of 5928 Sq. kms. The total population as per 2001 Census is 3,477,317. The average of literacy rate is 72.36. Major and Popular towns in the district include Arakkonam, Arcot, Tiruppattur, Elagiri, Sholinghur, Vaniyambadi, Gudiyattam, Karigiri, Ranipettai, Vellore, and Walajapet.

OBJECTIVES

With due consideration of all the above mentioned points, the researcher has decided to study on the scope of tourism development in Vellore with the following objectives:

- To study the demographic factors of the selected respondents,
- To analyze the migratory behavior pattern of the respondents,
- To categorize the various landmarks recognized by respondents in the study area,
- To know the respondents' opinion about the various tourism places & their potential to support tourism and
- To know the respondents opinion about the availability of various living amenities to support tourism.

METHODOLOGY

The researcher adopted the "DESCRIPTIVE DESIGN" to conduct the study on "Tourism potential in Vellore region". The period of study was designed between June to Oct. 2008. This study considers all those individuals residing at Vellore. From the chosen population, the researcher has selected totally 400 respondents as the sample size. Researcher used the "Judgment Sampling" method for selecting the required samples for the study. The researcher used the questionnaire method for the collection of data. Data was collected through a specially designed questionnaire, which constructed to measure the awareness of tourist places and development of tourism in Vellore. Respondents were encouraged to answer all questions, with the assurance that all responses would remain completely be used only for research purpose. Data thus collected was recorded and subjected to data analyses using percentage and weighted average method to derive meaningful results.

RESEARCH FINDINGS

REGARDING THE RESPONDENTS' PROFILE

- 60.5 percent were reported as male respondents and 39.5 were female respondents.
- 78.5 percent were identified under the age group of 18-39, out of which, 33.8 were in the age group of 29-39, 17.5 percent were under the age group of 40-50, and rest of 6.8 percent were under the age group of above 50 years.
- 54.3 percent were under the category of employed persons, 29.0 percent were under the category of business persons, 13.3 percent were identified as house wives, 3.5 percent were representing the category of students.
- 74.3 percent were reported as Graduates, out of which, 23.3 percent had completed up to the level of Post graduation, 6.8 percent had completed their Professional degrees, 14.0 percent had only completed up to School level, and 5.0 percent had completed their Diploma holders.
- 61.8 percent were under the monthly income group between above 5000 and up to 15000, out of which, 28.3 percent were fall under the monthly income

group of Rs.10001-15000, 19.9 percent were earning their monthly income higher than 15000, out of which, 4.1 percent were under the monthly income group 20001-25000, and 3.0 percent were under the monthly income group above 25001 and rest of them say 18.3 percent were earning their monthly income below Rs. 5000.

- 75.8 percent were identified as married and 24.3 percent were found single. 70.5 percent representing the category of nuclear type of family and 29.5 percent fall under the category of joint family. 79.5 percent were native of Vellore itself and 20.5 percent were migrated from outstation.

02. Regarding the MIGRATIONAL BEHAVIORAL PATTERN of the respondents.

- 82.0 percent were used to visit outstations during the summer vacation, and 18.0 percent were not shown their preference to visit any outstations during summer vacation.

- 66.6 percent of them were agreed that their friends or relatives visit to them regularly from outstation for more than 5 times in a year, out of which, 18.8 percent visit them for 3-5 times in a year, 14.8 have agreed that their friends or relatives visit them from outstation less than 3 times in a year and 18.8 percent of them were told that their friends /relatives never visit their place from outstation.

- 67.1 percent of the local population were usually visiting outstations for more than 5 times in a year, out of which, 20.3 percent were visiting outstations between 3-5 times in a year, the rest of them say 31.3 percent of them visiting outstations for less than 3 times in a year, and 1.8 percent denied their outstation visits.

- 77.5 percent traveled to outstation for family affairs like attending wedding, family functions, celebrating festivals and other family reasons out of which, 27.0 percent traveled to outstation for personal reasons, 22.5 percent traveled to outstation for business purposes, and for social affairs like public service.

- 37.5 percent of them were chosen train as their preferred mode of transport, 34.8 percent preferred their personal mode (own or hired) of transportation and 27.8 percent preferred Public transport (buses) on the road as their preference.

REGARDING THE LAND MARK OF VELLORE CITY

- 64 percent still recognized the CHRISTIAN MEDICAL COLLEGE HOSPITAL

- 16.4 percent recognized VELLORE FORT

- 7.3 percent of them opted the VIT UNIVERSITY,

- 4.8 percent were told The EYE HOSPITAL,

- 4.5 percent inferred the VELLORE PRISON and

- 3.0 percent were selected the RATHANAGIRI LOAD MURUGAN TEMPLE as the landmark.

STATE OF AWARENESS OF TOURIST PLACES IN VELLORE REGION

- It is found that all respondents have their opinion uniformly, that, Vellore region got his potential for tourism development.

- Among the tourist places in Vellore region, majority of them were recorded the places like: JAVATHU HILLS, MORDHANA DAM, DELHI GATE – ARCOT, JALAGAMPARAI – WATER FALLS, TIPPUMAHAL – ARCOT, KAVALUR OBSERVATORY, MOSQUE – FORT, PALAR ANAICUT DAM, BALAMATHI HILLS, AND VIRENJIPURAM TEMPLE as the known places to them.

- The other places like: YELAGARI, VELLORE FORT, JAALKANTESWARE TEMPLE –FORT, ST.JOHN'S CHURCH –FORT, AMIRTHI FOREST, RATHANAGIRI TEMPLE, VALLIMALAI, SRIPURAM GOLDEN TEMPLE, AND GREEN THUNDER were seen by them once.

- However, none of the places were recorded under regular visit.

STATE OF LIVING CONDITIONS FOR SUPPORTING TOURISM IN VELLORE REGION:

The study has grouped certain living conditions like, COST OF LIVING, EDUCATIONAL FACILITIES, ROAD AND TRAFFIC CONDITIONS, HOUSING FACILITIES, SHOPPING, BANKING FACILITY, TRAVEL BOOKING MODE, LOCAL TRANSPORT under FAVORABLE one to influence the scope of tourism development in Vellore region.

Further, they were few unchanged conditions like, WATER SHORTAGE, LAW AND ORDER SITUATION, SOCIAL SECURITY, ETHICAL PRACTICES, CLIMATIC CONDITION, AVAILABILITY OF HYGIENIC FOOD, ENVIRONMENTAL CLEANLINESS AND WORKING CONDITION OF LOCAL ADMINISTRATION need to be improved further to facilitate the tourism potential.

POLICY IMPLICATION OF THE STUDY

The above study reveals that, the scope of tourism potential in Vellore could be possibly attained through implementing the following policy implications:

- The scope of tourism normally enriches with the quantum of floating population from other part of our country. Since the Vellore has got the historical importance of its own, this will take only a minimum time to propagate the scope for tourism development.

- If proper arrangements made to develop tourism, it will also improve the living conditions like, boarding and lodging, communication, social security, law and order situations & environmental cleanliness in the order of priority.

- Even if improve few important places like Yelagari, Amirthi Forest, Sriipuram Golden temple, and Green thunder by means of proper infrastructure like road, & local transport support, hygienic drinking water, that in turn add amenities to promote other areas in the profile..

- Encouraging social projects which will prevent global warming through 'Green Vellore' initiated by VIT University and 'Afforestation' initiated by Sri Narayani peedam trust, Vellore will certainly challenge the present state of undesirable climate into desirable one.

- Cross cultural, hospitality, educational, technological and spiritual transformation is possible in due course that in turn improves the ethical part of business standards and employment opportunities

- Cultural heritage can be transformed and which is certainly lead to further research in the national & global level.

- The activities and developments corresponding to the Tourism projects should attain the expected positive outcomes and minimize adverse impacts on the heritage and lifestyles of the host community, while responding to the needs and aspirations of the visitor.

- Improving the needed Infrastructural facilities & living conditions may certainly bring revolution on the part of future accountability.

- Proper affiliations of private & public partnership could possibly improve the living standards of its own.

- Earning potential of the region will improve significantly over the period of time.

- More live project operation will commence based on basic requirements like sanitation, transportation, pollution control mechanism, water reservoir, hospitality, extension of city area and so on will give more comfort to local population.

- Since the Vellore city is the gate way in the road map between South to North and Eastern part of India, it will naturally attract more crowd once it is developed as tourist destination.

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