

The Dynamics of Tourism Management in World Heritage Sites of Tamilnadu

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ABSTRACT

Heritage pronounces the age old culture, traditions and customs of a country. Heritage Tourism involves visits to historical or industrial sites that may include ruins, battle grounds, mausoleum, railways, etc. This form of Tourism has progressed substantially over the years in India and there is immense scope for development that can be achieved through synergized efforts of both the public and private sector. UNESCO has recognized some important historical structures of India as World Heritage Sites. This includes the famous architectural marvels like Taj Mahal, Qutb Minar, Hampi, Fatehpur Sikri, etc. These inclusions have definitely boosted the credibility and stability of India as one of the premier architectural tourism destinations in the world. The conversion of heritage structures like palaces, havelis and forts to heritage hotels by providing the visitors a royal ambience and regal experience is a milestone in the annals of Indian Tourism. The preservation, restoration and refurbishment of historical monuments are indeed the need of the hour for the sustainable management of heritage resources. This is particularly significant in the context of promotion and marketing of the fabulous heritage resources that our country boasts of which can attract huge foreign tourist influx and thereby optimize the forex earnings. Furthermore, the importance of protection and management of cultural heritage has been realized as an increasing number of tourists are visiting heritage attractions; consequently impacting the structures and environment. Tamil Nadu holds a unique position in the sphere of culture as it is a distinguished region where the cultural symbols of the country is preserved in its original form. The resplendent repertoire of the state's cultural heritage consists of fascinating monuments, architectural splendors, religious shrines, performing arts and the customs and traditions of the people. 'Enchanting Tamil Nadu' is a much sought after destination owing to the spectacular mix of ancient and modern tourism products. UNESCO has conferred World Heritage status to some monuments and heritage manifestations in Tamil Nadu. This study elucidates on the World Heritage Sites in Tamil Nadu and its tourism potential. Efforts are made to evaluate the promotional strategies carried out by various tourism stakeholders vis a vis perception of tourists. This work also deals with the preservation measures centered on the World Heritage Sites in Tamil Nadu. Based on the study certain recommendations are proposed keeping in view the prospects.

KEY WORDS: *Heritage, Tourism Potential, Management, Preservation, Promotion, Tradition*

INTRODUCTION

India is promoted as a major heritage tourism destination by the planners and policy makers. The nation has always been famous for its ancient culture and rich and vibrant heritage. The monumental heritage of India dates back to the days of Harappan Culture. The magnificent heritage of the country is amply reflected in the forts, palaces, monuments, places of religious importance, museums, ruins, excavation sites, etc. The heritage tourist influx as regards foreign tourism and domestic tourism is steadily increasing. Among the popular heritage tourism destinations in India are Agra with its enchanting Taj Mahal, the Shore Temple of Mahabalipuram, forts and palaces of Rajasthan, sites of Buddhist importance in UP, Bihar, Orissa and Andhra Pradesh, the spectacular heritage structures in

Belur, Aihole and Halebid in Karnataka....the list is remarkably exhaustive. Furthermore, the caves are treasure troves of the finest heritage manifestations. Ajantha and Ellora in Maharashtra, Belum and Borra caves in Andhra Pradesh, Edakkal Caves in Kerala and the cave temples of Mahabalipuram are frequented by tourists. Some of the renowned tourist spots like Puducherry has introduced the concept of Heritage Walk, which has become hugely popular. This destination boasts about the French connection and retains the names of the streets christened in French language. The colonial architectural marvels in Puducherry are relished by the participants of Heritage Walk.

Heritage tours are gaining immense ground in Indian Tourism industry. This is primarily because Indian heritage has a strong secular- popular content which is pluralistic in character. This plurality in certain instances is the consequence of a common origin (the case of Indian languages); in other cases of mutual transaction of heritage (as in the case of music, art and architecture, etc) and in certain cases due to the movement against invasion of imperial forces. The composite heritage symbols are the hallmark of Indian tradition and attracts foreign tourists to its shores. The quality of assimilation is a very strong element in the various perspectives of Indian heritage. This is evident from the values like tolerance and adoption of new forms of heritage through history, rites, rituals, principles, beliefs, attire, religious observances, marriage customs, etc.

The realization has drawn upon all stakeholders of tourism in the country that if we fail to conserve our environmental heritage then it becomes extremely difficult, as compared to other facets of heritage because these are mainly dependent on environment for their survival. This is in sync with the policy implications that emphasize the natural and environmental heritage of India as possessing exemplary potential to offer a life time experience to the visitors.

India's historical heritage is also very significant as it consists of secular and religious monuments dedicated to various faiths, havelis, traditional homes (Nalukettu, Ettukettu in kerala), rock cut caves and also the living heritage. The artistic and cultural heritage of the country is viewed as a USP by promoters and destination designers. According to various estimates, heritage tourism accounts for more than 60% to the overall share of tourists coming to India. It is overwhelming to note that 80% of the foreign tourists are interested in visiting rich heritage sites like Delhi, Jaipur and Agra.

Tourism industry in India is being utilized as a powerful tool to facilitate international understanding and enable building of broader cultural horizons. As per the report of World Economic Forum, India occupies 11th position in the Asia- Pacific region and 62nd overall in a list of 133 assessed countries in 2008, up three places since 2007. The contribution of travel and tourism to the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) is 6% (US\$67.3 billion) in 2009 forecasted to raise to US \$187.3 billion by 2019. Export earnings from international visitors and tourism goods generated 6% of total exports in 2009 and is expected to grow to US \$51.4 billion in 2019.

Tourism is the largest service industry in India, with a contribution of 6.23% to the national GDP and 8.78% of the total employment in India. India witnesses more than 5 million annual foreign tourist arrivals and 562 million domestic tourism visits. The tourism industry in India generated about US\$100 billion in 2008 and that is expected to increase to US\$275.5 billion by 2018 at a 9.4% annual growth rate. The Ministry of Tourism is the nodal agency for the development and promotion of tourism in India and maintains the "Incredible India" campaign.

According to *World Travel and Tourism Council*, India will be a tourism hotspot from 2009-2018, having the highest 10-year growth potential. The *Travel & Tourism Competitiveness Report 2007* ranked tourism in India 6th in terms of price competitiveness and 39th in terms of safety and security. Despite short- and medium-term setbacks, such as shortage of hotel rooms, tourism revenues are expected to surge by 42% from 2007 to 2017.

Objectives of the Study

- **To elucidate on the dynamics of tourism and the potential of World Heritage Sites in Tamil Nadu.**
- **To evaluate the promotional strategies initiated by tourism planners and operatives**
- **To study the perception of tourists as regards the World Heritage Sites in Tamil Nadu**
- **To outline the efforts of preservation**

Heritage Tourism Spectacle of Tamil Nadu

Tamil Nadu is known for its excellent temple architecture. Kancheepuram, also called the “Golden City of Temples” was once a proud capital of the Pallavas, Cholas and Vijaynagar Kings. Dravidian style of temple architecture is visible in most of the temples of Tamil Nadu. These temples are huge in size and sometimes encompass entire townships. Many of them are huge with towering structures called gopurams. Bharatanatyam is one of the oldest dance forms of India that originated in Tamil Nadu. It was originally performed in temples as part of the religious ritual. This classical dance of the ‘devadasis’ (temple dancers) is now famous throughout the world. Bharatanatyam combines melody, rhythm, facial expressions, hand gestures, and postures of the body to portray narratives of devotional themes. Tamil Language and literature have greater antiquity than most of the Indian languages. The Sangam literature from the 2nd Century BC to the 2nd Century AD is considered a landmark in the literacy and cultural history of Tamils. The greatest literary work of the Sangam age is Thiruvalluvar’s Thirukkural, composed with 1330 couplets dealing with morality in public and private life. Even after the Sangam age, Tamil Writers continued to produce excellent literary works under the patronage of royal dynasties. Silapathikaram (200 - 300 AD) by Ilango Adigal and Manimekalai (200 - 300 AD) by Sathanar are such great Tamil epics. Over the ages the south produced great poets like Kamban who composed the Tamil version of the Ramayana. The history of architecture and sculpture in Tamil Nadu begins with the Pallava Temples of the Dravidian Style. UNESCO declared monuments like living Chola temples at Thanjavur, Darasuram and Gangaikondacholapuram monuments at Mahabalipuram and Nilgiris Heritage Train, as World Heritage. The temples of Tamil Nadu reverberate with spirituality and music. Madurai, Rameswaram, Kumbakonam, Chidambaram, Thanjavur and Tiruchirappalli have innumerable temples with different deities. The finely hewn grandeur sculptures radiate artistic excellence and cultural vibes.

World Heritage Sites – In Perspective

A UNESCO World Heritage Site is a site (such as a forest, mountain, lake, desert, monument, building, complex, or city) that is on the list and is maintained by the international World Heritage Programme administered by the UNESCO World Heritage Committee, composed of 21 state parties which is elected by the General Assembly for a four-year term. A World Heritage Site is a place of either cultural or physical significance.

The program catalogues, names, and conserves sites of outstanding cultural or natural importance to the common heritage of humanity. Under certain conditions, listed sites can obtain funds from the World Heritage Fund. The programme was founded with the *Convention Concerning the Protection of World Cultural and Natural Heritage*, which was adopted by the General Conference of UNESCO on November 16, 1972. Since then, 186 state parties have ratified the convention.

As of 2009, 890 sites are listed: 689 cultural, 176 natural, and 25 mixed properties, in 148 states. Italy is home to the greatest number of World Heritage Sites to date with 44 sites inscribed on the list. UNESCO references each World Heritage Site with an identification number; but new inscriptions often include previous sites now listed as part of larger

descriptions. Each World Heritage Site is the property of the state on whose territory the site is located, but it is considered in the interest of the international community to preserve each site.

There are 890 World Heritage Sites located in 148 countries (state parties). Of these, 689 are cultural, 176 are natural and 25 are mixed properties. The World Heritage Committee has divided the countries into five geographic zones: Africa, Arab States (composed of North Africa and the Middle East), Asia-Pacific (includes Australia and Oceania), Europe & the Americas (includes North America and South America).

Russia and the Caucasus states are classified as European, while Mexico is classified as belonging to the Latin America & Caribbean zone. The UNESCO geographic zones also give greater emphasis on administrative, rather than geographic associations. Hence, Gough Island, located in the South Atlantic, is part of the Europe & North America region because the government of the United Kingdom nominated the site.

The table below includes a breakdown of the sites according to these zones and their classification:

Zone	Natural	Cultural	Mixed	Total
Africa	33	42	3	78
Arab States	4	60	1	65
Asia-Pacific	48	129	9	186
Europe & North America	56	375	9	440
Latin America & Caribbean	35	83	3	121
Total	176	689	25	890

Sites Configured in the Study: (Information is partially retrieved from the sites given in Webliography)

The following World Heritage sites in Tamil Nadu accredited by UNESCO are taken for the study.

1. Dharasuram
2. Gangaikonda Cholapuram
3. Brihadeshwara Temple
4. Nilgiris Mountain Railways
5. Mahabalipuram

DHARASURAM

Darasuram or **Dharasuram** is a panchayat town located 3 kilometers from Kumbakonam in Thanjavur district, Tamil Nadu, India. The town is known for the Airavateswara temple constructed by the Rajaraja Chola II in the 12th century AD. The temple is a recognized UNESCO World Heritage monument. The earliest records of the temple mention the name of the town as Rajarajapuram. It is believed that this name might have been corrupted to Darasuram with the passage of time. This temple is a storehouse of art and architecture. The *vimana* is 85 feet high. The front mandapam itself is in the form of a huge chariot drawn by horses. The temple has some exquisite stone carvings. The main deity's consort Periya Nayaki Amman temple is situated adjacent to Airavateswarar temple. The Great Living Chola Temples. (A UNESCO World Heritage Site) at Thanjavur, Gangaikonda Cholapuram and Darasuram were built by the Cholas between the 10th and 12th centuries CE and have a lot of similarities. The legend is that Airavat, the white elephant of Indra, worshipped Lord Siva in this temple; so did also the King of Death, Yama. Tradition has it that the presiding deity Airavateswarar cured Yama himself (the God of

Death) who was suffering under a Rishi's curse from a burning sensation all over the body. Yama took a bath in the sacred tank and was rid of the burning sensation. Since then the tank is known as Yamateertham. It gets its supply of fresh water from the river Kaveri and is 228 feet in width. Pilgrims make a point to bathe in the tank. In the recent past Raja Raja Chola and Karikala Chola worshipped the Siva Lingam in this temple. Volume II of the South Indian Temple Inscriptions deals with a number of endowments of the Pandya Kings also. On the temple walls these inscriptions are given, from which it is seen that the temple was known in those days as Raja Rajeswaran and Raja Rajapuram. Two such inscriptions are copied here. Inscription No. 563 at page 557. No. 23 of 1908 on the inner *Gopuram* of the temple, right of entrance. Record dated in the 10th Year, Tai 11, of the reign of the Pandya King Maravarman alias Tribhuvana Chakravartin Srivallabhadeva registering the provision made for repairs and for celebrating festivals in the temple of XXXI Ra (ja) ra (ja) isuram Udaiyanayanar, by the residents of Uttattur-nadu, a sub-division of Kulottunga-valanadu.

Inscription No. 564 at page 558. record dated in the 31st Year, Makara, Ba. Dvitiya, Uttarashada (probably a mistake for Uttaraphalgunya) of the reign of the Chola king Tribhuvana Ghakravartin Sri Rajarajadeva registering the grant of land (Irandu Ma mukhani araikani) 23/160 of a veli to meet the expenses of worship, offerings, etc., to the God by a native of Peruchchalipuram, a village in Kilar-kurram, a sub-division of Pandyakulapati-valanadu.

The Goddess in this temple is known as Deva Nayaki. Whatever remains of the sculptural part of the temple is on the inside wall of the outer prakaram, about a foot from floor level. Very many styles of physical feats shown by both men and women have been carved in the stone. With heavily ornamented pillars accurate in detail and richly sculpted walls, the Airavateswara temple at Darasuram is a classic example of Chola art and architecture. The main mandapam is called Raja Gambira as the elephant draws the chariot. The wheels were put back by the ASI at a later date. The ceiling has a beautiful carving of Shiva and Parvathi inside an open lotus. All the dancing poses of Bharatanatyam are carved in the stone. They are referred to as the Sodasa Upasaras. There is a carving showing the village womenfolk helping in the delivery of another female, who has both her hands on the shoulders of the two ladies, who are pressing their hands and the abdomen of the lady to help her deliver. "These are very skillful and artistic works of superb style. This may give a glimpse into the social conditions of the past. The stone image of Ravana carrying Kailas is a fine specimen of workmanship. One finds sculptures of Buddha, Bhikshatana, Saraswathi without her Veena, and a sculpture of Ardhanarishwara Brahma and Surya.

At the very entrance to the temple two Dwarapalakas, Sankhanidhi and Padmanidhi, are imposing figures, giving vivid anatomical expressions of the exuberance of youth. In front of the temple, there is a small mandapa, which can be reached by three steps in the form of a ladder. The steps are stones, which give different musical sounds when tapped. All the seven swaras can be had at different points. It is feared that if proper care is not taken soon, the stones will be damaged.

Thanjavur Big Temple

The Thanjavur "Big Temple" (Peria Kovil) turned one thousand years old this year. Rajaraja Chola I commissioned this greatest edifice of Tamil history and performed the sacred dedication of the temple in the year 1010, in the 25th year of his reign. It was the jewel-in-the-crown of Rajaraja, an extraordinarily powerful king, a grand monarch with a style of his own, a conqueror who also understood art and architecture, and a true devotee of Siva. It is a matter of pride that a Tamil King built the finest example of Tamil architecture, stupendous in proportion, yet simple in design. Siva in this temple is known as Brihadisvara - the Lord of the Universe. A gigantic stone "lingam" fills the sanctum sanctorum, sheltered by a vimanam (towering roof) which pierces the sky at 216 feet.

The temple occupies an area measuring about 750 feet by 400 feet, in a fort, surrounded by a moat. It is a marvel of engineering, considering the technology of those ancient times. The towering vimanam is built up with stones with bonding and notching, without the use of mortar. The topmost stone, weighing about 80 tons, is still a matter of discussion for engineers who are baffled as to how the builders lifted it to that height without the help of modern contrivances. A charming tale is told about a ramp being built from a village - Sarapallam - four miles away, from where the giant stone was pulled up by elephants!

GANGAIKONDA CHOLAPURAM

Gangaikonda Cholapuram was erected as the capital of the Cholas by Rajendra Chola I, the son and successor of Rajaraja Chola, the great Chola who conquered a large area in South India at the beginning of the 11th century. It occupies an important place in the history of India. As the capital of the Cholas from about 1025 C.E. for about 250 years, the city controlled the affairs of entire south India, from the Tungabhadra in the north to Ceylon in the south. The great temple of Siva at this place is next only to the Brihadeshvara temple at Thanjavur in its monumental nature and surpasses it in sculptural quality.

The city was founded by Rajendra Chola to commemorate his victory over the Ganga dynasty. The name means the town of the chola who defeated the Gangas. It is now a small village, its past eminence only remembered by the existence of the great Siva Temple. Rajendra Chola-I (1012-1044 A.D) son of the Great Rajaraja-I, established this temple after his great victorious march to river Ganges on Northern India

Chola rulers were active patrons of the arts. The beautiful Nataraja figure was first conceived during the Chola Empire. They also constructed enormous stone temple complexes decorated inside and out with painted sculptures. While the stone sculptures and the inner sanctum image empowering the temple remained immovable, changing religious concepts during the 10th century demanded that the deities take part in a variety of public roles similar to those of a human monarch. As a result, large bronze images were created to be carried outside the temple to participate in daily rituals, processions, and temple festivals. Judging from the available literature and the remains it could be inferred that it was an extensive city, carefully planned and laid in accordance with the architectural treatises to suit the needs of a capital.

The city seems to have had two fortifications, one inner and the other outer. The outer was probably wider. The remains of the outer fortification can be seen as a moat running all around the palace.

The outer fortification built of burnt bricks, was about six to eight feet wide. It consists of two walls, the intervening space (the core) being filled with sand. The bricks are fairly large in size and are made of well-burnt clay. Systematic brick robbing by the local inhabitants has reduced this structure to its current state. The outer fortification was known as *Rajendra Chola Madil* and is mentioned in inscriptions. The inner fortification was around the royal palace, probably identical with the Utpadi vittu madil of the inscriptions.

"The temple of Gangaikondacholisvara is approached through the eastern entrance from the road. As one steps in, the great Vimana arrests the visitor's sight. The Vimana with its recessed corners and upward movement presents a striking contrast to the straight-sided pyramidal tower of Thanjavur but with octagon shape of Dravidian architecture. As it rises to a height of 182 feet (55 m) and is shorter than the Thanjavur tower with larger plinth, it is often described as the feminine counterpart of the Thanjavur temple.

NILGIRI MOUNTAIN RAILWAY

The **Nilgiri Mountain Railway (NMR)** connects the town of Mettupalayam with the hill station of Udagamandalam (Ootacamund or Ooty), in the Nilgiri Hills of southern India. Both towns are in the state of Tamil Nadu. It is the only rack railway in India and uses the Abt system.

The Nilgiri Mountain Railway is one of the oldest mountain railways in India. Under consideration since 1845, the line was finally opened by the British in 1908, and was initially operated by the Madras Railway Company. The railway is one of the few in the world that is dependent on steam locomotives.

The Southern Railway India, with headquarters in Chennai, Tamil Nadu which operates the NMR, incurs an annual shortfall of Rs 4 crores, (~US\$1 million). NMR comes under the jurisdiction of the newly formed Salem Division.

In July 2005, UNESCO added the Nilgiri Mountain Railway as an extension to the World Heritage Site of Darjeeling Himalayan Railway, the site then known as "Mountain Railways of India," after it fulfilled the necessary criteria, thus forcing abandonment of the modernisation plans. For the past several years diesel locomotives have taken over from steam on the section between Coonoor and Udhamandalam. Local people and tourists have led a demand for steam locos to once again haul this section. The NMR track is 1,000 mm (3 ft 3³/₈ in) gauge and the railway is isolated from other metre gauge lines.

Between Mettupalayam and Coonoor, the line uses the Abt rack and pinion system to climb the steep gradient. On this rack section trains are operated by 'X' Class steam rack locomotives manufactured by the Swiss Locomotive and Machine Works of Winterthur in Switzerland. These steam locomotives can be used on any part of the line (either with or without the rack section), but the newer diesel locomotives can only operate on the upper section, between Coonoor and Udhamandalam. The steam locomotives are always marshaled at the downhill (Mettupalayam). There is one train a day over the rack section, which starts from Mettupalayam at 07:10 and reaches Ooty at noon. The return train starts from Ooty at 15:00, and reaches Mettupalayam at 18:35. The train is scheduled to connect to the Nilgiri Express, which travels from Mettupalayam to Chennai via Coimbatore. A summer special service is also run during the months of April and May, starting from Mettupalayam at 09:30 and from Ooty at 12:15. Between Coonoor and Udhamandalam, there are four daily trains each way.

Even though the NMR stations have networked computerised ticketing systems for onward journeys, it still issues Edmondson style manual tickets for the Ooty-Mettupalayam journey to preserve the 'World Heritage Site' status of the railway. However, ticket booking is similar to other conventional trains and can also be done via the Indian Railways website. It is advisable to book tickets for this heritage train in advance, especially during peak season.

MAHABALIPURAM

Mahabalipuram also known as **Mamallapuram** is a town in Kancheepuram district in the Indian state of Tamil Nadu. It has an average elevation of 12 metres (39 feet). Mahabalipuram was a 7th century port city of the South Indian dynasty of the Pallavas around 60 km south from the city of Chennai in Tamil Nadu. It is believed to have been named after the Pallava king Mamalla. It has various historic monuments built largely between the 7th and the 9th century, and has been classified as a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Mamallapuram, built largely during the reigns of Narasimhavarman and his successor Rajasimhavarman, showcase the movement from rock-cut architecture to structural building. The mandapa or pavilions and the rathas or shrines shaped as temple chariots are hewn from the granite rock face, while the famed Shore Temple, erected half a century later, is built from dressed stone. What makes Mamallapuram so culturally vibrant are the influences it absorbs and disseminates. The Shore Temple includes many bas reliefs, including one 100 ft. long and 45 ft. high, carved out of granite. All but one of the rathas from the first phase of Pallava architecture are modelled on the Buddhist viharas or monasteries and chaitya halls with several cells arranged around a courtyard. Art historian Percy Brown, in fact, traces the possible roots of the Pallava Mandapa to the similar rock-cut caves of Ajanta Caves and Ellora Caves. Referring to Narasimhavarman's victory in AD

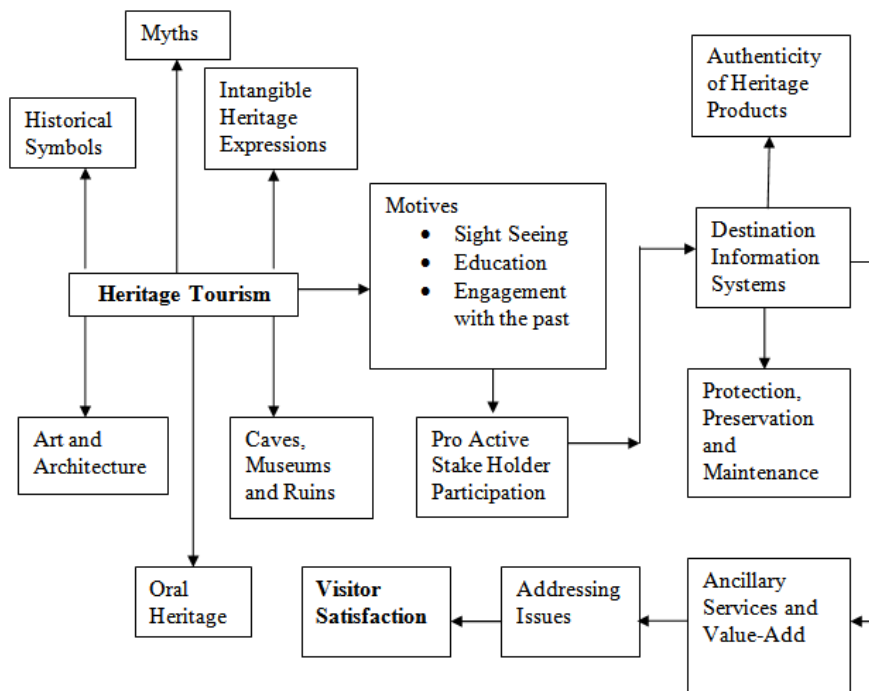
642 over the Chalukyan king Pulakesin II, Brown says the Pallava king may have brought the sculptors and artisans back to Kanchi and Mamallapuram as 'spoils of war'. The modern city of Mahabalipuram was established by the British in 1827. The monuments are mostly rock-cut and monolithic, and constitute the early stages of Dravidian architecture wherein Buddhist elements of design are prominently visible. They are constituted by cave temples, monolithic rathas (chariots), sculpted reliefs and structural temples. The pillars are of the Dravidian order. The sculptures are excellent examples of Pallava art.

Some important structures include:

Thirukadalmalai, the temple dedicated to Lord Vishnu. It was also built by Pallava King in order to safeguard the sculptures from the ocean. It is told that after building this temple, the remaining architecture was preserved and was not corroded by sea. Descent of the Ganges - a giant open-air bas relief. Arjuna's Penance - relief sculpture on a massive scale extolling an episode from the Hindu epic, The Mahabharata. Varaha Cave Temple - a small rock-cut temple dating back to the 7th century. The Shore Temple - a structural temple along the Bay of Bengal with the entrance from the western side away from the sea. Recent excavations have revealed new structures here. The temple was reconstructed stone by stone from the sea after being washed away in a cyclone.

Pancha Rathas (Five Chariots) - five monolithic pyramidal structures named after the Pandavas (Arjuna, Bhima, Yudhishtira, Nakula and Sahadeva) and Draupadi. An interesting aspect of the rathas is that, despite their sizes they are not assembled — each of these is carved from one single large piece of stone.

Fig.1 Model on Heritage Tourism Management



Data Interpretation and Findings

The data analysis and findings have been summarized in the following paragraphs.

Responses from Curators, Site Managers and Tourism Promoters

TABLE-1 : Role of Government in Heritage Preservation

Involvement	Frequency	Percentage
Infrastructure	14	28.0
Legal Restrictions	6	12.0
Publicity	30	60.0
Total	50	100.0

Mean-2.32, Median-3.00, Mode-3, Standard Deviation-0.891, Variance-0.793, Range-2

An overwhelming majority of respondents (60 percentage) are positive about the publicity campaign undertaken by the government as regards the preservation of World Heritage Sites in Tamil Nadu. A substantial percentage (28 percent) acknowledged the provision of infrastructural facilities as of primary importance. The rest ie, 12 percent gave weightage to legal restrictions, as they felt, as a measure of enforcement it can effect preservation of heritage centering on World Heritage Sites in Tamil Nadu.

TABLE-2 : Effectiveness of Promotional Strategies devised by Destination Planners

Promotional Strategies are effective	Frequency	Percentage
Agree	33	66.0
Disagree	17	34.0
Total	50	100.0

Mean-1.34, Median-1.00, Mode-1, Standard deviation-0.479, Variance-0.229, Range-1

The responses clearly indicate a vast majority (66 percent) agree to the fact that promotional strategies in vogue are immensely beneficial to the prospects of tourism advancement in World Heritage Sites of Tamil Nadu. 34 percent respondents opined that there were some lacunae in the overall promotional design.

Data Analysis and Findings of Survey among Tourists

TABLE-3 : Preferences of Tourists

Preferences	Frequency	Percentage
Cultural manifests	29	58.0
Hospitality	4	8.0
Cleanliness	1	2.0
Maintenance	16	32.0
Total	50	100.0

Standard deviation-0.676, Variance-0.458, Range-3

Tourists' preferences reflect the mindset regarding their wants and interests when visiting a destination of heritage importance situated in a different pedestal. The data

throws light on the perception of modern day tourists on sites patronized by a globally renowned agency. A vast majority (58 percent) of the respondents expressed that cultural manifests holds the key while visiting a heritage destination. It is quite interesting to note that a good number of respondents (16) stated that they considered maintenance to be a significant factor which is utmost vital in a World Heritage Site. It is a paradox that only 8 percent of the respondents viewed hospitality to be of any relevance in a World Heritage Site. A very low (2 percent) attributed importance to cleanliness.

TABLE-4 : Tourism Development will not be harmful to the Heritage Sites

Tourism Development will not be harmful	Frequency	Percentage
Agree	33	66.0
Disagree	17	34.0
Total	50	100.0

Mean-2.54, Median-3.00, Mode-3, Standard deviation-0.676, Variance-0.458, Range-3

The above table clearly indicates that a substantial proportion (66 percent) of respondents agree that tourism development is conducive to the World Heritage Sites in Tamil Nadu. The rest (34 percent) were of the view that tourism can adversely affect the World Heritage Sites.

Other Findings

Ten questions were posed to the stakeholders to the tourists. The analysis of data also includes the following.

- Thirty Five percent of respondents strongly opined that tourism activities need to be regulated and properly monitored as well as streamlined. An equal percentage was happy with the proceedings as of now.
- The majority ie, 47 percent strongly agreed to involve the private sector in preservation of heritage through Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR). 20 percent of the respondents disagreed to the proposition.
- Sixty percent of the respondents stated language was not a barrier in the overall destination experience. Yet, Forty percent opined that language posed some hurdles in the transactions.
- An overwhelming majority ie, 63 percent felt that tourism would act as a catalyst in the economic development of the area.
- It is interesting to note that a three-fourth of the respondents expressed in the negative on the quality and contents of promotional literature and other documents on World Heritage Sites in Tamil Nadu.
- Thirty Eight percent respondents commented that package tours operated by Tamil Nadu Tourism to the World Heritage Sites in Tamil Nadu leaves scope for improvement.
- More than half of the respondents wished to be repeat visitors.
- Fifty Six percent respondents opined in the affirmative on encouraging friends and relatives to visit the World Heritage Sites in Tamil Nadu
- It is paradoxical that a vast majority (86 percent) did not subscribe to the idea of volunteering for preservation work.

Conclusion and Suggestions

Tamil Nadu is an awesome destination with rich cultural heritage and ecological resources. This study assumes importance in the context of tourism promotional activities centered on World Heritage Sites in Tamil Nadu. The promotional campaign spearheaded

by Tamil Nadu Tourism under the banner “Enchanting Tamil Nadu” has fetched great benefits both economic and cultural for the state. The World Heritage tag is not an easy proposition and the destination has to strive religiously to maintain and nurture it. It can obviously boost the destination image and create a niche among international and domestic tourists. Novelty measures like deploying tourism police cum guides could work in favor of the recognized World Heritage Sites in Tamil Nadu. Even the private sector can be roped in like some European countries (Spain, for instance) to offer pro-active support to the destinations. Knowledgeable and well trained guides could be posted in the World Heritage Sites in Tamil Nadu to disseminate information and assist tourists. In the realm of publications on World Heritage Sites in Tamil Nadu, more initiatives are required from the part of all stakeholders. The package tours to World Heritage Sites can indeed be a value addition as indicated in the survey.

World Heritage sites of UNESCO are going through a critical phase when even its very identity is questioned by the emerging choices of entertainment and other factors. The entrance of world class entertainment in the country has shaken the visitor records in World Heritage Sites. But the interests of the serious tourists who really want to learn about the culture, heritage and history are working in favor of the World Heritage Sites.

Providing new packages and complete customer service and satisfaction are the major challenges before the World Heritage Sites in Tamil Nadu in the modern day.

Tamil Nadu is rich in its cultural heritage and history. Its invaluable treasures and artifacts, if attended and managed well with proper resource support can attract the tourists in large numbers and help in promoting heritage and historical tourism and thus furthering the overall tourism development in Tamil Nadu.

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