

SOUTH INDIAN TOURISTS SATISFACTION TOWARDS UDHAGAMANDALAM

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ABSTRACT

The tourism industry is an indicator of the degree of internationalization, modernization, economic development, income generator, foreign exchange earner and employment generator of a country. Tourists' satisfaction is an important factor to determine tourism industry in long run. Tourists' satisfaction is the final target of total quality management, and many attempts have been made at its measurement. Due to the increasing competition in the leisure and tourism market, satisfaction-related studies and researches have been gaining attention. This study investigated the south Indian tourists' satisfaction towards Udhagamandalam. A total 200 tourists are responded all the questions of interview schedule at the various tourists place of entire district. There were 19 variables used to measure tourists' satisfaction. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics to report demographic variables and responses to the interview schedule. The inferential statistics was used to test various hypotheses relating to tourists satisfaction. Results of the analyses showed that the respondents have high levels of satisfaction during the trip, Udhagamandalam natural diversity attraction had secured first place followed by Climate and weather conditions, Scenic beauty, Sightseeing, Flora and fauna, varieties of flowers and trees. The analyses also revealed that tourists have lower level satisfaction to the various facilities such as basic amenities, road connectivity, entrée fees, shopping facilities, medical facilities. This research study is finally concluded 83 percentages of tourists expressed overall satisfied Udhagamandalam tour trip, 79 percentages of tourists also have mind to revisit in this place in future.

Keywords: *Tourism Industry, Udhagamandalam, Tourists Satisfaction, Foreign Exchange Earnings, Leisure.*

Introduction

India is one of the oldest civilisations in the world with a kaleidoscopic variety and rich cultural heritage. India has a unique culture and greatest civilizations of the world. It stretches from the snow-capped Himalayas in the North to sun drenched coastal villages of the South, the humid tropical forests on the south-west coast, the fertile Brahmaputra valley on its East to the Thar Desert in the West. It covers an area of 32, 87,263 sq. km. It has achieved all-round socio-economic progress during the last 62 years of its Independence. India has become self-sufficient in agricultural production and is now the tenth industrialised country in the world and the sixth nation to have gone into outer space to conquer nature for the benefit of the people. As the 7th largest country in the world,

India stands apart from the rest of Asia, marked off as it is by mountains and the sea, which give the country a distinct geographical entity. Bounded by the Great Himalayas in the north, it stretches southwards and at the Tropic of Cancer, tapers off into the Indian Ocean between the Bay of Bengal on the east and the Arabian Sea on the west. India's rich cultural and natural heritage, its ancient civilization, vibrant culture, many landscapes, and rich biodiversity are of great interest to global tourist markets and give it a tremendous potential for tourism development. India has great tourism potentials for it is our unique diversification of cultural and natural attractions which contribute the resource for this industry.

India has an ancient civilisation that is preserved in its religion customs, Traditions and architecture. It has a distinctive culture and way of life. It abounds in temples that would certainly interest many visitors. Its traditional dances and music are loved by all. It has varied and spectacular scenery including snow-clapped mountains, Glaciers, geysers, boiling pools, unique glow warm caverns, beautiful lakes, fine beaches and appealing mountains, with exciting wildlife, lovely deserts, manifestation of history which goes back to 5,000 years. This has resulted in historical monuments of great antiquity like the stupas in Sanchi, of beautiful movement of love – Taj Mahal, and many other illustrations in art and architecture of fabulous temples, mosques and churches. In this region are represented the great faiths of the world – Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism and Islam. This region offers to the tourists, the most exciting costumes, foods and festivals. Indian's unique varieties of cultural and natural attractions constitute the resources for this country.

Tourism is a basic and most desirable human activity deserving the praise and encouragement of all people and all governments. It is an industry concerned with attracting people to destination, transporting them there, housing, feeding and entertaining them upon arrival and returning them to their homes. Tourism has been pivotal in social progress as well as an important vehicle of widening socioeconomic and cultural contacts throughout human history. A wide array of interests - entertainment, sports, religion, culture, adventure, education, health and business – drives tourism. With the advancement of transport, communication and improvement in general economic well being the demand for tourism has increased concomitantly. Tourism facilitates business contacts, widens markets and helps diffusion of growth impulses across territories to promote broad based employment and income generation. Investment in tourist infrastructure adds to economic growth, catalyses generation of income and employment, which in turn, leads to further growth in demand for tourism and stimulates subsequent rounds of investment in a virtuous circle. Tourist expenditure generates multiple effects with extensive outreach along its value chain. Adding to the demand for a variety of goods and services, tourism offers potential to exploit synergies across a large number of sectors such as agriculture, horticulture, poultry, handicrafts, transport, construction - the sectors, where growth of income has favourable impact on poverty alleviation.

“Tourism has become, over the years, one of the most dynamic and successful industries of the world. Its capacity to create employment, combined with its capacity to generate foreign revenue through tourism receipts, has made it a priority sector for

many governments intent on using the benefits of tourism in promoting socio-economic development. Tourism has become an integral component of the modern lifestyle and while possible, households will prefer to modify their holiday patterns rather than eliminating them altogether". Tourism has been recognized as a viable and practical tool in addressing economic, environmental and social imperatives. The sector has the potential to play an important role in combating the challenges currently facing our planet. Tourism and travel can emerge a stronger and more environmentally friendly industry.

Significance of the Tourism

Tourism plays an important role in maintaining peace and world unity by building bridges between different cultures and encouraging tolerance through cultural exchange. Tourism also provides opportunities in remote areas and in places with a high value on natural resources and culture, all of which favour the poor. Tourism-related services are a very important or the most important foreign exchange earner. Tourism's capacity to confront globalization whilst enhancing cultural and environmental diversity and strengthening ties between nations. Tourism shares the social responsibility of promoting the positive aspects of globalization and as such must direct these global networks towards balanced and sustainable development. (Gordon Brown, UK Prime Minister) Tourism is a great industry, millions of jobs depend on it and it creates a huge amount of wealth. (Luiz Inacio "Lula" da Silva, President of Brazil) Tourism is the most effective and least expensive way to bring about social inclusion. It is an activity that can generate work for millions of adolescents.

"The tourism sector is a huge employer, creator of economic security and contributor to society". (Jacob Zuma, President of South Africa) "Tourism holds huge potential as a sector for job creation, as both a driver of infrastructure investment and a beneficiary of large scale public infrastructure investment. It is a key generator of foreign exchange, and is seen as a socially and environmentally responsible champion in our economy" (Taleb Rifai UNWTO Secretary-General) "Tourism is furthermore the main growth and trade driver for the world's poorest countries. Tourism means jobs – a phrase that in the current climate might become the employment mantra of a new generation. The contribution of this sector to the economies of countries cannot be over-emphasized. It is the world's largest industry and every year it pumps billions of dollars into some of the poorest countries in the world. It reduces poverty, builds new roads, airports, hotels and hospitals".

(Ban Ki-moon United Nations Secretary-General) "Tourism has proved one of the leading ways for the least developed countries to increase their participation in the global economy". Due to its strong economic multiplier effect as a sector dominated by small and medium enterprises, tourism and travel, if properly encouraged, can play a more important role in economic stimulus and building consumer confidence than is generally recognized. Travel fuels business growth, makes entertainment possible and sustains rural destinations. It also strengthens trade by boosting income for the poorest countries as well as for global suppliers. (Ban Ki-moon United Nations Secretary-

General) Tourism and biodiversity are closely intertwined. Millions of people travel each year to experience nature's splendour. The income generated by sustainable tourism can provide important support for nature conservation, as well as for economic development. Furthermore, sustainable tourism can help to raise awareness among tourists and local communities of the importance of biodiversity to our everyday lives.

Salient Features of the Udhagamandalam District

"Nilgiris" the name is Sanskrit means BLUE MOUNTAINS and in Tamil NEELAMALAI. The Nilgiris District is situated in the Western Ghats. It is surrounded by the Coimbatore District, Kerala State and Karnataka State on the eastern, western and the northern side respectively. The Nilgiris District is a celebrated summer resort for the tourists from all of India. Udhagamandalam popularly called, as Ooty is the Queen of Hill Stations in India. Udhagamandalam is the capital of the Nilgiris district. The economic activities of this district is accelerated by the visit of tourists to a considerable extend which increase the income capacity of the people engaged many fields. The Nilgiris Hill forms a part of the Western Ghats. The name Nilgiris was due to by the blue haze envelops the range with most distant hills of considerable size. Doddabetta, the highest peak in South India with an altitude of 2,595 Meters lies in this District. The other prominent hills of this District are Elk hills, Devarshola peak, Hulical hill and Cairn hill.

Natural forest wealth is the one of the main factors adding to the natural beauty and economic importance of this District. The general climatic condition in this district is cool. There are many waterfalls in this District. Almost between every pair of mountain runs a river or a stream. Important amount them are the Pykara streams rising on the slopes of Mukkuruthi peak. The Segoor River has an origin near the slopes of Udhagamandalam. The Gathadahalla near Kotagiri and Coonoor is a tributary of river Bhavani. The important among the waterfalls are Kulacomбай falls, St.Catherine's falls, Upper and Lower Pykara falls, the Kateri falls, Kallaty and the laws falls.

The main tourist attraction in this District is the Botanical Garden. Besides the Botanical Garden there are several other places. The important among them are the boat house near Bus-stand, the Rose Garden, the Deer Park, and the Doddabetta peak in Udhagamandalam. Sim's park, Pasture Institute, Kateri falls, Lamb's rock and Dolphin's nose are the Important Tourist sports in Coonoor. In Kotagiri block Kodanadu view point and St. Catherine's falls are the two main tourist attractions. In Gudalur block the main tourist attraction in Mudumalai wild Life Sanctuary. The below table 1 clearly exhibited the tourist arrivals for the period of 1999 to 2009. The majority of year tourist arrivals increasing trend with some shot decline trend. This also clearly showed tourism is important source economic activity in this place. Foreign tourist arrivals start with 22763 in 1999 and grown up to 38329 in the year 2007 and ends with 29642 in the year 2009.

Table 1 : Tourist Inflows during period of 1999 to 2009

Year	Foreign Tourists	Domestic Tourists	Total
1999	22,763	18,88,928	19,11,691
2000	18,440	15,52,711	15,71,151
2001	20,654	20,11,165	20,31,819
2002	23,590	20,32,400	20,55,990
2003	25,000	20,20,525	20,45,525
2004	24,500	15,00,500	15,25,000
2005	23,606	19,05,755	19,29,361
2006	32,134	21,70,127	22,02,261
2007	38,239	22,36,915	22,75,154
2008	33,569	23,28,614	23,62,183
2009	29,642	22,25,214	22,54,856

Source: Commissioner of tourism Tamil Nadu, www.tn.gov

Domestic tourists were also indicated starting with 1888928 in the 1999 and ends with 2225214 in the year 2009. This was also displayed in the above table overall follow of tourists start with 1911691 in the 1999 and grown up to 2362183 in the year 2009 and some small changes in 2009 tourist inflows.

Review of literature

Aijaz A. Khaki and Musadiq A. Sahaf (2011) measured the satisfaction level of tourists visited the Kashmir Valley. Tourist information, tourist Infrastructure and tourists' services and facilities used three important attributes to evaluate tourists' satisfaction. The result showed satisfaction tourists depends on the overall quality of these three critical attributes at tourists' destination.

Siriporn McDowall & Emily Ma (2010) examined whether international and domestic Thai tourists differ in their demographic characteristics, their evaluation of Bangkok's performance as a tourist destination, their satisfaction, and their intent to revisit Bangkok or to recommend Bangkok to others. The results revealed that international and domestic Thai tourists differed in their demographic characteristics, evaluation of Bangkok's performance, satisfaction, and intention to revisit.

David Bowie and Jui Chi Chang (2005) analysed the variables that are related to customer satisfaction during a guided package tour service encounter, including the role of the tour leader and the service performance by suppliers – itinerary arrangements, auxiliary support and service delivery. The findings point out that the tour leader is a significant determinant psychologically, spiritually and practically in influencing the success of the tour product. In this backdrop, the focus of the present study is to measure the South Indian Tourists Satisfaction towards Udhagamandalam.

Objectives of the study

The main objectives of the study are to examine the profile of the Tourists and to investigate the tourists' satisfaction towards Udhagamandalam District.

Data collection and Research Methodology of the study

In this study has used both primary and secondary data. It was collected from various reports of Central ministry of tourism of India, Ministry tourism of Tamil Nadu, Various research articles from journals, news papers and other reports from different tourism promoting agencies of all over the world. Primary data were collected from tourists in Udhagamandalam. This study covers entire Udhagamandalam District taken purpose of the Study and study period was April 2012 to May 2012. The personal interview schedule method used. The study was adopted convenience sampling method to collect sample from tourists. In this study used the various descriptive statistics tools such as, averages, mean and standard deviation used to arrive results and inferential statistical tools Chi- Square Test were used to arrive results.

Hypotheses

The following hypotheses are tested with help of various statistical tools.

1. Gender and Natural Attraction relating to Tourist satisfaction,
2. Types of Tour package and Natural Attraction relating to Tourist satisfaction, and
3. Mode of transport Vehicles and Traveling relating to Tourist satisfaction.

Result and Discussions

In this research study finds out the majority of the respondents 58 percentage were male and remaining 42 percentage tourists were Females. This place attracted tourists from different parts of south India. Place of the residence of tourists indicated into Tamil Nadu tourists were 35 percentage, 20 percentage of the tourists were Andhra Pradesh, 19 percentage Karnataka tourists were Kerala state tourists share were 17 percentage and rest shared by the Pondicherry 10 percentage. The large number of tourists showed in the age group of 25 to 35 years of age 33 percentage. Below 24 age group of respondents were came in second place 18 percentage and 16 percentage of the tourists hold by the age group of 45 to 54 years. The fourth major share of tourists was the age group 25 to 44 years 15 percentage. Last two age groups of the respondents were in the category of 55 to 64 years of age 12 percentage and rest of tourists 5 percentage came in the age group of senior citizens. Websites and tour operators' services were the important medium communication used by tourists 24% and 20% to know the information about destination. 17% of the respondents were got information from of friends and relatives.

Televisions/Radios and News papers advertisements were another resource to know the destination 11% and 9%. The various state, central governments tourist

offices and information centres 6.5% were also used to know the places and its products. The other media also contributed significant amount 5% some information about tourist Destination to tourists. 1/5th of the tourists were used tour package offered by the different type tour operators and rests of the tourists were used to own arrangements to reach the Destination.

Table 2: Demographical and Socio Economic Background of the Tourists

1	Gender		%		Purpose of the Visits		%
	Male	116	58		Leisure, recreation and holidays	105	52.5
	Female	84	42		Visiting friends and relatives	13	6.5
	Total	200			Business and professional	10	5
					Religious/ pilgrimage	40	20
2	Place of Residence				Health & Medical	20	10
	Tamil Nadu	70	35		Shopping	2	1
	Kerala	33	17		Others	10	5
	Karnataka	37	19		Total	200	
	Andhra Pradesh	40	20				
	Pondicherry	20	10	7	No. of accompanying		
	Total	200			Nil	47	23.5
					1	63	31.5
3	Age				2 to 3	41	20.5
	Below 24	36	18		4 to 5	30	15
	25 to 34	66	33		5 and above	19	9.5
	35 to 44	30	15		Total	200	
	45 to 54	34	16				
	55 to 64	24	12	8	Educational Qualification		
	65 and above	10	5		Illiterate	49	24.5
	Total	200			SSLC	29	14.5
					HSC	21	10.5
4	Source of Information				Under Graduates	41	20.5
	Websites	47	24		Post Graduates	27	13.5
	Friends and Relatives	33	17		Research Scholars	20	10
	TVs/Radio	22	11		Others	13	6.5

	News paper	18	9		Total	200	
	Magazine	17	8.5	9	Annual Income		
	Tourist info centres	13	6.5		Up to Rs.100000	54	27
	Tour operators	40	20		Rs.100001 to Rs.200000	46	23
	Others	10	5		Rs.200001 to Rs.300000	26	13
	Total	200			Rs.300001 to Rs.400000	38	19
					Rs.400001 to Rs.500000	20	10
5	Types of tour Package				Rs.500000 and above	16	8
	Packaged	40	20		Total	200	
	Non packaged	160	80	10	Amount spend for this trip		
	Total	200			Up to Rs.1500	70	35
					Rs.1501 to Rs.2500	58	29
6	Mode of transport				Rs.2501 to Rs.5000	42	21
	Tour operator Vehicles	40	20		Rs.5001 to Rs.7500	18	9
	Own Vehicles	87	44		Rs.7501 to Rs.10000	9	4.5
	Rental Vehicles & others	73	36		Rs.10001 and above	3	1.5
	Total	200			Total	200	

This research study finds out the large number of tourists were used own vehicles for destination 43 percentage followed by the rental and other vehicles contribution was 36 percentage. The tour operator vehicles were shared by rest of the tourists 20 percentage. More than half of tourists 52.5 percentage was the major purpose for visiting for leisure, recreation and holidays. Religious/ pilgrimage 20 percentage, Health and Medical 10 percentage purpose were next reason for visiting this place. 6.5 percentage of the respondents were came to visiting friends and relatives and rest of tourists 5 percentage for came to business and professional purposes. 31.5 percentage tourists were accompanying with the one person and 23.5 percentages of the tourists were come in alone. 20.5 percentages of the respondents were come with 2 to 3 persons and the 15 percentage of the tourists came with 3 to 4 persons. Only (9.5%) of tourists were coming as group with 5 and above persons.

More than 3/4th number of tourists was literate 75.5 percentage and rest of 1/4th of tourists was illiterate (24.5%). Among literature the under graduates were 20.5 percentage, SSLC 14.5 percentage were shared first and second position in literate category. Another 12.5 percentage of the respondents were having HSC as an educational qualification and remaining 13.5 percentage of the tourists having post graduate. Next 10 percentage of the respondents were research scholars and 6.5

percentage of the tourists were having other Educational qualification.

The highest number of tourists having annual income 27 percentage indicated in to Rs. 100000 category and followed by 23 percentage of the tourists Rs. 100001 to Rs. 200000. Tourists having Rs. 300001 to Rs. 400000 were 19 percentage and 13 percentage of the respondents having annual income of Rs. 200001 to Rs. 300000. 10 percentage of tourists having the annual income of Rs. 400001 to Rs. 500000 and rest of the tourists 8 percentage having annual income of above Rs. 500000. More than 3/4th of tourists were spend for this up to Rs. 5000 category 85 percentage. The majority of the tourists amount spend for this trip up to Rs. 1500 category was 35 percentages and 25 percentage of the tourists was spent Rs. 1501 to 2500 category. The remaining tourists were to spend more than Rs. 5000 for this trip.

Hypotheses Testing

Gender and Natural Attraction relating to Tourist satisfaction

H₀ = There is no association between the Gender and the tourists natural attractions.

H₁ = There is an association between the Gender and the tourists natural attractions.

Table 3. Gender and Natural Attraction relating to Tourist satisfaction

Chi Square Test	Degrees of freedom	Level of significance	Calculated Value	Table Value	Result
Gender Vs. Natural Attractions	D.F = 2	5%	6.54	5.991	Reject

The critical value of the Chi Square test with 2 degrees of freedom at 5 percent level significance is 5.991. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected. This means that there is an association between gender and natural attractions towards tourist satisfaction.

Types of Tour package and Natural Attraction relating to Tourist satisfaction

H₀ = There is no Significant difference between Types of tour packages and the tourists natural attractions.

H₁ = There is Significant difference between Types of tour packages and the tourists natural attractions.

Table 4 : Types of Tour package and Natural Attraction relating to Tourist satisfaction

Chi Square Test	Degrees of freedom	Level of significance	Calculated Value	Table Value	Result
Types Tour package Vs Natural Attractions	D.F = 2	5%	21.34	5.991	Reject

The critical value of the Chi Square test with 2 degrees of freedom at 5 percent level significance is 5.991. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected. This means that there is significant difference between Types of tour packages and the tourist's natural attractions towards tourist satisfaction.

Mode of transport Vehicles and Traveling relating to Tourist satisfaction

H0 = There is no association between the mode of transport Vehicles and the Traveling Experience.

H1 = There is an association between the mode of transport Vehicles and the Traveling Experience.

Table 5: Mode of transport Vehicles and Traveling relating to Tourist satisfaction

Chi Square Test	Degrees of freedom	Level of significance	Calculated Value	Table Value	Result
Types Tour package Vs Travelling Experience	D.F =3	5%	16.93	7.815	Reject

The critical value of the Chi Square test with 3 degrees of freedom at 5 percent level significance is 7.815. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected. This means that there is an association between the mode of transport Vehicles and the Traveling Experience towards tourist satisfaction. This study is also revealed that 83 percentage of tourists overall satisfied udhagamandalam trip. 79 percentage of tourists have mind to revisit this place in future and 71 percentage of the tourists to share the experience with his friends and relatives after trip as well as recommended for their holidays trip to this place.

Tourist's satisfaction

The following table showed the various variable used for measuring the tourists satisfaction. There were 19 variables were applied to measure level of satisfaction among the tourists of south India. Five point scales were used and given points to each scales Highly Satisfied (5 points), Satisfied (4 points), Neutral (3 points), Dissatisfied (2 points), Highly Dissatisfied(1 points). After the overall score computed and rank assigned each variable based on the score. The diversity natural attractions of Udhagamandalam such as, Botanical and Rose Gardens, Natural Waterfalls, Mountain, Government Museum, Ooty Lake, Glenmorgan, Western Catchment, Wenlock Downs, Elk Hills, Snowden Peak, Kalthatty Falls, Mukurhti National Park and peak, Mudumalai Wildlife Sanctuary, UNESCO Heritage site had secured first palace with overall score of 871 points. The next rank goes to climate and weather conditions of place followed by scenic beauty, sightseeing, and verities of trees and flowers. Photo digital camera facilities have secured 7th rank with score of 744 points and travelling facilities secured next rank with score of 738 points.

Table- 6: Tourists' satisfaction variables

Rank	Variables	Overall Score
1	Natural Attractions	871
2	Climate and weather conditions	857
3	Scenic beauty	843
4	Sightseeing	830
5	Flora and fauna	812
6	Varieties of flowers and trees	806
7	Photo and digital camera	744
8	Traveling	738
9	Communications connectivity	733
10	ATM and Other Bank Services	673
11	Accommodation	660
12	Tourist guide	654
13	Food	650
14	Parking facilities	646
15	Road connectivity	640
16	Entrée fees	617
17	Shopping facilities	613
18	Medical facilitates	611
19	Basic amenities	580

Communication facilities and communication connectivity 733 points, ATM and bank services facilities 673 points were secured 9th and 10th positions. The respondents have lower level satisfaction of various facilities such as accommodations of tourists have scored 660 points, tourist guide 654 points, food facilities 650 points, parking facilities 646 points, and road connectivity 640 points. Some of the tourist feels entree fees in various parts is high, so it's reflected in the score 617 points with 16th rank. The other facilities were secured the last three place shopping facilities 613 points, medical facilities 611 and basic amenities 538 points.

Conclusion

Customer satisfaction is the key to survival in today's stiff competition of any industry in the world. Tourism usually offers both tangible and intangible experiences to their customers which are complementary each other and perceived as the integral parts of a whole travel experience. Although the tangible and intangible products are dissimilar in characteristics, they can be distinguished by their effects on customer satisfaction or combined for improving customer satisfaction. The findings of the study revealed that the natural diversity of destination Such as natural attractions,

climate and weather conditions, scenic beauty, sightseeing, flora and fauna, varieties of flowers and trees are important to attract more tourists during the seasonal and non seasonal periods. This study concluded with suggestions for to improvement of various infrastructure facilities Parking facilities, Road connectivity, Shopping facilities, Medical facilitates and Basic amenities for of various facilities like create and improve various infrastructure facilities and basic amenities like drinking water facilities, road connectivity and other facilities which will brings more tourist from the different part of India and rest of the world in future. The results will contribute in the improvement of the services in the tourism industry.

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