

8.1. Introduction

The literary and archaeological evidences of recent years place the beginning of the early historic period of Tamil Nadu to well before 3rd BC. What is known of the Tamil society before the medieval times is mostly from the Sangam literature, composed during some six centuries before AD 300 and compiled thereafter. It is said that the old Tamil poets sang about traditions already ancient in a mythical literary convocation, called *sangam* at Madurai; the capital city of one of the major dynasties viz. the Pandyas, and it is after this convocation south India's first historic period of 300 B. C. to 300 A. D. was defined and christened Sangam. The Sangam portrays diversity in both the ecosystem and society, with its attendant localism of social experience and identity. This not only typified the south Indian culture during that period, but also laid the foundation for the coming generations¹.

Tourism has emerged as an instrument for employment generation, poverty alleviation and sustainable human development. Tourism promotes international understanding and gives support to local handicrafts and cultural activities. It is an important segment of the country's economy, especially in terms of its contribution towards foreign exchange earnings, generation of additional income and creation of employment opportunities. The foreign exchange earnings from tourism during the year 2000 were estimated at about Rs. 14,408 crores with an estimated direct employment of about 15 million, which is about 2.4% of the total labour force of the country. Tourism is the third largest foreign exchange earner for India².

8.2. World Heritage Sites

At the instance of UNESCO, each member country is required to pledge to conserve cultural and natural sites within its borders that are recognised as being exceptional and of universal value. Such significant sites have been defined in the World Heritage List,

and their protection is supported by the World Heritage Fund.

Two World Heritage Sites have been identified by UNESCO in Tamil Nadu and they are the Mahabalipuram Group of Monuments (No. 249) and Brahadeeswara temple at Thanjavur (No.250). These two sites have been taken up for preservation by Archaeological Survey of India. In addition to these two sites, the ASI has also taken up other important sites and monuments for preservation. A succinct description of the two World Heritage Sites is herewith provided⁴.

8.2.1. Thanjavur

Brahadeeswara Temple, Thanjavur with Brahadeeswara and Dakshinameru as the presiding diety is a celebrated Saiva temple. The temple is the grandest creation of Chola emperor Rajaraja (AD 985-1012). It was inaugurated by the king himself in his 19th year of reign (AD 1009-10). Architecturally, it is the most ambitious structural temple built of granite. The temple is within a spacious inner *prakara* of 240.9 m long (east-west) 122 m broad (north-south), and has a *gopura* in the east and three other ordinary *torana* entrances, one at each lateral side and the third at the rear. The *prakara* is surrounded by a double storied *malika* with *parivaralayas*⁵.

The *sikhara*, a cupolic dome, is octagonal and the *adhishtana* are common to all; the axially placed entities like *ardhamaha* and *mukha-mandapams* are linked to the main sanctum but approached through a north - south transect across the *ardha-mandapa* which is marked by lofty *sopanas*. The moulded plinth is extensively engraved with inscriptions by its royal builder who refers to his many endowments, pious acts and organisational events connected to the temple. The *brihad miswara-linga* within the sanctum is 8.7 m high. Life-size ichnographic representations on the wall niches and inner passages include Durga, Lakshmi, Sarasvathi and Brikshatana, Virabhadra, Kalankata, Natesa,

Ardhanarisvara and Alingana forms of Siva. The mural paintings on the walls of the lower ambulatory are the finest examples of art during the Chola period.

8.2.2. Mamallapuram

The city of Mamallapuram derives its name from the title bestowed on a Pallavan ruler, Narasimhavarman -I (AD 630-68). It was a sea-port during the time of Periplus (Ist Century AD) and Ptolemy (AD 140) and many Indian colonists sailed to South -East Asia through this port town. While there is evidence of architectural activity going back to the period of Mahendravarman -I (AD 600-30), the father of Mamalla, most of the monuments like rock-cut *rathas* (chariots), sculptured scenes on open rocks like Arjuna's penance, the caves of Govardhanadhari and Mahishasuramardini, the Sthala-Sayana Perumal temple (the sleeping Mahavishnu or Chakrim at the rear part of the Shore temple complex) are attributed to the period of Narasimhavarman -I Mamalla.

The monolithic *rathas*, from single to triple - storied, display a variety of architectural forms while the Dharmaraja, Arjuna, and Draupadai Rathas are square in plan, the Bhima and Ganesa rathas are rectangular and Sahadeva ratha, apsidal. Although monolithic sculpturing, both cut-in and cut out, continued even during later period (Atiranachanda cave, Pidari rathas and Tiger cave), the structural architecture was introduced on a grand scale by Pallava Rajasimha (AD 700-28), culminating in erection of the world famous Shore temple. After Rajasimha there was a lull in the architectural activity of the place, except for a few additions during late- Pallavan and Chola times. The grandiose Vijayanagara phase here is represented by the Raja Gopurams and the Sthala-Sayana temple, juxtaposed to the carved boulder of Arjuna's penance.

8.3. Department of Archaeology, Government of Tamil Nadu

The Government of Tamil Nadu established the Department of Archaeology in the year 1961 and appointed a special officer, with the chief aim of preserving the historical monuments in Tamil Nadu². In course of time, this department has been expanded for the following activities, viz., conservation, epigraphy, excavation, photography, site museum, printing and archaeological laboratories. The Government Oriental Manuscripts Library was brought under the control of this department in the year 1980. The GoTN has also enacted an Act called the 'Tamil Nadu Archaeological Sites and Remains Act, 1966' to declare monuments for conservation and posterity. The ASI, Chennai Circle, has hitherto unearthed the archaeological evidences, many invaluable artifacts as well as ancient structural remains. Excavations have been conducted at Mahapalipuram, Gingee, Chennai and Keeranur.

One of the most notable traditions in south India is of the Choultries or Chatirams, and Tamil Nadu is no exception to this. Choultries are old heritage buildings constructed in centres of pilgrimage by benevolent individuals or institutions for pilgrims to stay. Many of these choultries and some of the other distinguished buildings have been identified and protected by the State Archaeological Department.

8.4. Strategy for promotion of tourism

Tourism plays an important role in the socio-economic development of our country. It is also one of the major sources of foreign exchange. Tourism also generates employment in rural and urban areas, which may arrest large scale migration of rural mass to urban centres and in turn help avoid formation of more slums. Tamil Nadu, with its

picturesque hills, beaches, waterfalls, wildlife sanctuaries, temples, ancient monuments, places of worship for all faiths and centres of art and culture, has lot to offer to domestic and international tourists. There has been a steady increase of tourist (domestic and international) inflow into the state³ (Table 8.1).

Organising fairs and festivals in and outside Tamil Nadu.

Appointing marketing agents inside and outside the country for effective promotion of tourism.

Promoting beach tourism by developing and maintaining beaches along the coastline.

Table 8.1 Tourist trend in Tamil Nadu

Year	No. of Domestic Tourists Visited in Lakhs	Growth Rate in %	No. of Foreign Tourists Visited in Lakhs	Growth Rate in %	Total in Lakhs	Growth Rate in %
2000	229.82	8.7	7.86	8.9	237.68	8.7
2001	238.12	8.6	7.73	(-) 1.7	245.85	8.4
2002	246.61	8.6	8.05	4.1	254.66	8.6
2003	270.59	9.7	9.02	12	279.61	9.8
2004	300.77	11.2	10.58	17.8	311.35	11.4

Source: Department of Tourism, Chennai -02.

The Government of Tamil Nadu has taken steps to strengthen existing infrastructure in popular tourist destinations and also identify and develop new areas of tourist importance.

The strategy for promotion of tourism in Tamil Nadu is as follows :

Augmenting infrastructural facilities at existing tourist centres.

Promotion and development of places of local importance and identifying new areas with tourism potential.

Evolving a programme for publicizing with the appropriate use of films, newspaper, magazines and websites.

Providing facilities for recreation and adventure sports at select tourist places for attracting tourists from other states and abroad.

Encouraging the private sector participation to provide adequate accommodation and travel facilities and also to set up amusement and theme parks.

Producing quality guides in coordination with the Anna Institute of Management, Chennai.

8.5. Tourist wealth of Tamil Nadu

Tamil Nadu is an enchanting state where modern technology and contemporary vitality co-exist with tradition and old architecture. The tourist wealth of the State can be broadly grouped under the following heads

- a) **Hill Resorts :** These resorts consist of mountain ranges, pastoral landscape, exotic plants and shrubs and grassy hillocks. Notable hill resorts are Udhagamandalam, Kodaikanal and Yercaud. Udhagamandalam known as the queen of hills is all set to add more feathers to its Cap. The Nilgiris mountain railway, which was inaugurated in 1899, is likely to get world heritage status. Similarly the rose garden at Udhagamandalam is likely to be declared as the "Garden of Excellence" by the International Rose Federation.
- b) **Beach Resorts :** Tamilnadu has 1076 KM long spectacular coastline which is one seventh of the country's total coastline. Tamilnadu 's coastline has

sugar white bays and sun drenched beaches. Marina beach is the second longest in the world.

- c) **Wildlife sanctuaries** : Mudumalai, Anamalai, Mundanthurai, Kalakadu are the important wild life sanctuaries which transform magically from the tropical wet evergreen to the dry deciduous and thorn forests.
- d) **Zoological Park** : The Aringnar Anna Zoological park at Vandalur, Chennai draws huge crowds and one can see a variety of wildlife in simulated natural habitat.
- e) **Bird Sanctuaries** : Notable Bird sanctuaries are as follows:-

Table: 8.2. Bird sanctuaries in Tamil Nadu

Place	District
Vedanthangal	Kancheepuram
Pulicat	Tiruvallur
Koonthankulam	Tirunelveli
Karaivetti	Perambalur
Kodiakkarai (Point Calimere)	Nagapattinam

Source: Forest Department website

- f) **Botanical/Horticultural Gardens** at places like Ooty and Coonoor are immaculately maintained to provide visual feast³.
- g) **National Parks** are Guindy, Gulf of Mannar, Indira Gandhi, Mudumalai, and Mukurthi⁶.
- h) **Crocodile farms** There are 4 Crocodile farms in Tamil Nadu under the control of Forest Department. They are: 1. Hogenakkal in Dharmapuri, 2. Kurumbapatti in Salem, 3. Amaravathi in Pollachi. 4. Sathanur Dam, Tirupattur⁶.
- i) **Lakes**: The Pulicat Lake in Tiruvallur District is the second largest saltwater lagoon in India after Chilka Lake in Orissa³.

There are various facets to tourism in Tamilnadu, they are leisure, pilgrimage, heritage, adventure, business, medical, fairs and festival, social and academic tourism. Tamil Nadu, with its picturesque hills, beaches, waterfalls, wildlife sanctuaries, temples, ancient monuments, places of worship for all faiths and centres of art and culture, has lot to offer to domestic and international tourists. There has been a steady increase of tourist (domestic and international) inflow into the state (Table 8.3).

Table 8.3 Tourist Arrivals in Tamil Nadu

Year	Domestic	Foreign	Total
1993	14211900	435473	14647373
1994	16026000	498121	16524121
1995	17214000	585751	17800751
1996	18202700	613982	18816682
1997	18928044	636642	19564686
1998	20413193	636400	21049593
1999	21136941	722442	21859383
2000	22981882	786165	23768047
2001	23812043	773073	24585116
2002	24661754	804641	25466395
2003	27059002	901504	27960506
2004	30076832	1058012	31134844

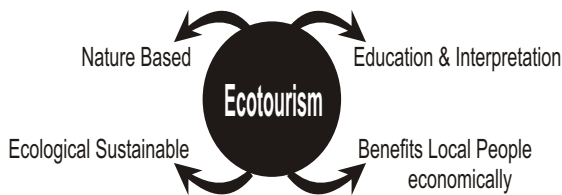
Source: Commissioner of Tourism, Chennai-2.
Department of Economics and Statistics, Statistical Hand Book 2005

Ecotourism is a purposeful travel to natural areas to understand the cultural and natural history of environment, taking care not to alter the integrity of the ecosystem, while producing economic opportunities that make conservation of natural resources beneficial to local people. In short, ecotourism can be conceptualized as : Any tourism programme that is:

- (a) nature based,
- (b) ecologically sustainable,

(c) where education and interpretation is a major component and

(d) where local people are benefited



8.6. Tourism and Water Resources

Tourism industry needs water for various uses viz. for consumption of water by the tourists and their stay, preservation and maintenance of the sites, need for amusements parks and water needed by the wildlife in wildlife sanctuaries. The water demand for the above activities is met by local surface or groundwater sources. In Tamil Nadu, the current demand for water by the tourism industry is not only limited, but is also low in comparison to the requirement of domestic water supply. However, certain amusement and theme parks that are located south of Chennai and in cities such as Coimbatore and Madurai are an exception to this since these use 'water' as the central theme for amusement and recreation. These users must be encouraged to install and utilize water recycling mechanisms, and limit the use of fresh water.

8.7. Policy Response

8.7.1. Development plan for heritage towns

In Tamil Nadu, there are more than 3000 temples, which have given the state the title 'Land of Temples'. Exclusive temple circuits combined with hill and beach resorts are popular tourist circuits in the state for domestic and international tourists. However, most of these tourist centres are characterised by poor investments in heritage development and inadequate infrastructure.

Concerned by the deterioration in general environment and the worsening of sanitary conditions in our priceless heritage towns in particular, the Government of Tamil Nadu has taken up conservation. This conservation programme is based on the principle that efforts should go beyond preservation of monuments and encompass already built up areas.

As part of the action programme for conservation and development of historical, cultural and 'priceless monuments', the GoTN has identified 38 towns as Heritage areas and constituted a Working Group. The Department of Town and Country Planning has been requested to function as the nodal agency and has been entrusted with the task of preparing development plans for the identified towns.

8.7.2. Eco Tourism in Tamil Nadu

Eco-tourism is considered one of the most viable tools to enable economic growth and ecological security. Eco-tourism is considered 'inclusive' since local considerations and demands are woven into the programme. One of the key points of eco-tourism is that smaller players like local residents, tribal groups etc get to participate and benefit from the programme.

Ecotourism is a sustainable form of natural resource-based tourism which focuses on experiencing and learning about nature. It is ethically managed so that minimal impact is caused on the immediate environment. Ecotourism should be able to contribute to the conservation of natural areas and maintain species and their habitats by either directly contributing to conservation and/or indirectly, by providing revenue to the local community. The provisions should be sufficient for local people to value and therefore protect the wild life heritage as a source of income. Ecotourism should also be planned and managed to improve the quality of life of residents and should strive to preserve natural and cultural resource capital.

The state of Tamil Nadu has a great potential for the development of eco-tourism initiatives, especially in view of its cultural and natural diversity. It is also recognized that ecotourism requires that certain issues be strictly enforced. For instance, dumping wastes should be banned and safe management of waste and toxic material should be planned and implemented. Further, sale of products made from endangered species like plants or animals should not be allowed. Care should be taken to ensure that animals and plants are not disturbed. Environmentally sound transportation should be encouraged, and vehicular movement should be strictly regulated. Energy and environmental conservation should be patronized. Pollution of water bodies should be prevented. Use of synthetic materials like plastics, which are not bio-degradable, should not be allowed in the tourism spots. The Nilgiris district, Hogenakkal, Kodaikannal, Rameswaram, Valparai, Yelagiri, Yercaud and Thirumoorthy falls are have been declared as throw away plastic free zone.

8.7.3. Government of India assisted schemes

The Department of Tourism, Government of India has been assisting the States for the development of tourist infrastructure through the Central Financial Assistance Schemes. During the tenth five year plan (2002-2007) the following schemes are being implemented³.

A) Integrated Product / infrastructure and destination development scheme

- i) Integrated Development of Mamallapuram
- iii) Development of Yercaud

B) Integrated development of Tourism Circuit.

- i) Development of Adi Sankara Circuit (Kancheepuram)
- ii) Development of Vivekananda Travel Circuit (Ramanathapuram and Kanniyakumari)

c) For the development of beach tourism,

Development Corporation to commence the work at Muttom and Thekkurichi beach fronts in Kanniyakumari District.

d) Development of Eco-Tourism Circuit (Point Calimere Wildlife Sanctuary,

Proposed to establish an Eco-Tourism Circuit covering the following places.

- 1) Point Calimere - Nagapattinam District
- 2) Muthupet - Thiruvarur District
- 3) Pichavaram - Cuddalore District

8.7.4. Archaeological activities

The excavations at historically important places are being conducted every year. So far excavations have been carried out at 25 historical sites and valuable antiquities have been unearthed; they are being preserved in 14 archaeological site museums situated in various districts of the State. Under the scheme of Archaeological excavation at historical sites programme, two historical sites 1) Andipatti in Chengam Taluk of Thiruvannamalai District 2) Modur in Dharmapuri District have been selected for the year 2004-2005. The excavation work has already been started in the above sites and the works are in progress.

Proposed schemes

- During the year 2005-2006, it has been proposed to conduct excavation at the early historical site of Marakkanam in Villupuram District and at Parikulam, a prehistoric site located near Poondi in Tiruvallur District.

8.8. References

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