

**Assessing Tourism Potentiality Cultural Heritage Site – A Case of
Darasuram Temple Kumbakonam Taluk, Tamil Nadu
(UNESCO World Heritage Site)**

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Abstract

Historical environments that provide connections with people and the environment are also very important symbols of continuing human values. Historic environments are an awe-inspiring indication of a community's creativity. Details of the social and economic structures of past civilisations lie in this environment. The development of tourism activities all over the world for appreciating natural beauty, historical cities, different societies, interesting local traditions, and archaeological remains has led to the development of opportunities for interaction between the past and the present (Kaya & Aytakin 2009; Topay 2013).

From ancient civilizations to the present, Darasuram kumbakonam has mirrored the social, economic, and social qualities of the encompassing area and being an image of its old Dravidian heritage. This region ought to be passed on to future eras of humankind; to advance the security of this site, special exercises ought to be arranged that utilize it in the most ideal way. In this study, I assess the potential for the overseers of the antiquated city of Darasuram inside kumbakonam to set up present day preservation approaches, parity its protection and use inside the structure of social tourism, and decide issue regions and opportunities. This structure is proposed to build up a coherence of forward-looking tourism. With regards to the locals and the information got from studies led in the prompt region, and by assessing research thinks about and the writing this will guarantee its assurance, equalization, and maintainability, and also leading scene plan and creating tourism activities in the area.

Key words - Tourism, Heritage, Kumbakonam, Culture, Temple

JEL Code: L83, R10, Z12

Introduction

Tourism and travel industry is the world's largest and most diverse industry. Many nations rely on this dynamic industry as primary source for generating revenues, employment, private sector growth and infrastructure development. Tourism is low capital, labour intensive business with high economics multiplier. It is a business particularly suited for part-time and seasonal employment and thus encourages first time entrants and women in the labour force. But as tourism has emerged as a key sector of the world economy, it has become a major force in global trade. Tourism development is encouraged particularly among the developing countries around the world.

Tamil Nadu has an ancient civilization. It is located in the southern most part of the Country. It has a long coastline of more than 1000 kms abutting the Bay of Bengal and Indian Ocean. The State is endowed with a multiplicity of cultures and regional variation in climate and in flora and fauna. It encompasses hills and dales, beaches, backwaters, mangrove forests, dry farm land, rivers, lakes, tanks and an irrigated delta. Its history and ancient culture is revealed in the many monuments dotting the length and breadth of the State, its temples and forts. Wild life and bird sanctuaries, tribal habitations, hill resorts and a wealth of talent among its people in terms of dance, music and the arts is an important feature. Tamil Nadu is also a modern State with infrastructure facilities for trade, industry and commerce and highly skilled and educated population. It is the policy of the State Government to promote the State as a Tourism Destination for the people of the Country and the World under the branding "Enchanting Tamil Nadu".

Tamil Nadu was ranked second in India in the domestic tourist arrivals next to Andhra Pradesh and also Second in foreign tourist arrivals next to Maharashtra in 2012. In 2014, Tamil Nadu stands first in India in domestic tourist arrivals as well as foreign tourist arrivals.

Table -1 Share of Top 10 States/UTs of India in Number of Domestic Tourist Visits - 2014

Share of Top 10 States/UTs of India in Number of Domestic Tourist Visits - 2014			
Rank	State/UT	Domestic Tourist Visits in 2014	
		Number	Percentage Share (%)
1	Tamil Nadu	327555233	25.6
2	Uttar Pradesh	182820108	14.3
3	Karnataka	118283220	9.2
4	Maharashtra	94127124	7.3
5	Andhra Pradesh	93306974	7.3
6	Telangana	72399113	5.6
7	Madhya Pradesh	63614525	5.0
8	West Bengal	49029590	3.8
9	Jharkhand	33427144	2.6
10	Rajasthan	33076491	2.6
Total of top 10 States		1067639522	83.3
Others		214312733	16.7
Total		1281952255	100.0

Source: State/ UT Tourism Departments

Figure-1 Source India Tourism Statistics at a Glance 2014 Ministry of Tourism

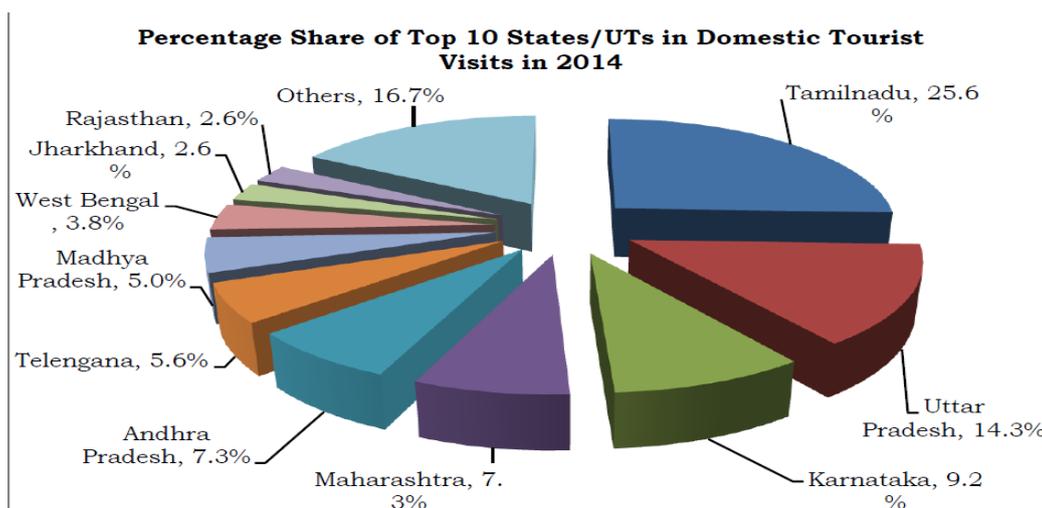


Figure -2 Source India Tourism Statistics at a Glance 2014 Ministry of Tourism

Table-2 Share of Top 10 States/UTs of India in Number of Foreign Tourist Visits – 2014

Share of Top 10 States/UTs of India in Number of Foreign Tourist Visits in 2014			
Rank	State/UT	Foreign Tourist Visits in 2014	
		Number	Percentage Share (%)
1	Tamil Nadu	4657630	20.6
2	Maharashtra	4389098	19.4
3	Uttar Pradesh	2909735	12.9
4	Delhi	2319046	10.3
5	Rajasthan	1525574	6.8
6	West Bengal	1375740	6.1
7	Kerala	923366	4.1
8	Bihar	829508	3.7
9	Karnataka	561870	2.5
10	Haryana	547367	2.4
Total of Top 10		20038934	88.8
Others		2528716	11.2
Total		22567650	100.0

Source: State/ UT Tourism Departments.

Figure -3 Source India Tourism Statistics at a Glance 2014 Ministry of Tourism

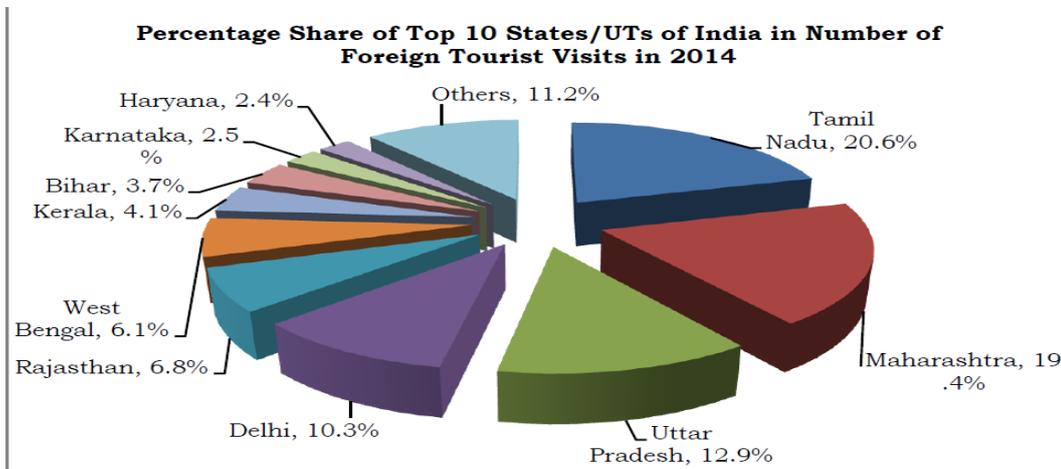


Figure -4 Source India Tourism Statistics at a Glance 2014 Ministry of Tourism

Methodology

The main site of this study is darasuram, in the township of kumbakonam, which includes the ancient city and its circumventions. The coordinates of this research area are 10.9493° N, 79.3550° E, as shown in Figure 1. The methodology of the proposed study based on extensive field surveys and desk research work. Frequent visits were made to the study sites

during both the peak and low seasons to collect relevant data to know the views and opinion of visitors, tourism entrepreneurs and other stakeholders. In addition, available primary sources and secondary sources comprising of available books, journals, periodicals specifically prepared by government and non- governmental organization has also been consulted. At the cessation of the stage is the tourism orchestrating proposal, which is denoted to amend

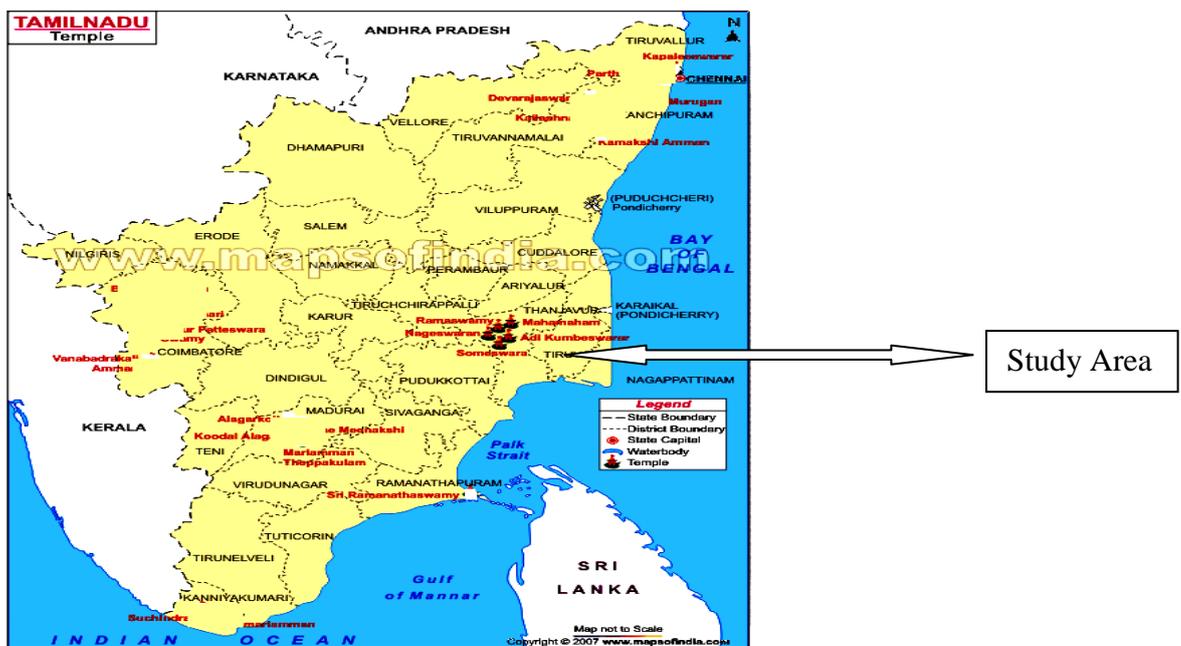


Figure 5. The location of the ancient city of Darasuram and its surroundings in Kumbakonam

Objective of the study

This study reveals that although the natural and cultural landscape of the antediluvian city of Drasuram in kumbakonam has potential for tourism activities, the site has not reached its potential; the preservation of valuable historical and cultural sites should be undertaken at the national and international levels and promoted to a wider audience. I withal propose goals for the development of tourism activities in the archaic city of by studying the socioeconomic plan for the region and discussing how to ascertain its efficacious use.

Potential and Prospects in Tourism Sector in Darasuram Kumbakonam

Kumbakonam, additionally spell as Coombaconum in the records of British India, is a town and a special grade municipality in the Thanjavur region in the southeast Indian state of Tamil Nadu. It is found 40km (30miles) from Thanjavur and 273km (170miles) from

Chennai and is the home office of the Kumbakonam Taluk of Thanjavur region. The town is limited by two streams, the Kaveri River toward the north and Arasalar River toward the south. As indicated by the 2011 registration, Kumbakonam has a populace of 140,156 and has a strong Hindu dominant part; however it likewise has sizeable Muslim and Christian populaces. Kumbakonam is known as a "temple town" because of the pervasiveness of various sanctuaries here and is noted for its Mahamaham festival which pulls in individuals from everywhere throughout the globe

Kumbakonam goes back to the Sangam period and was ruled by the Early Cholas, Pallavas, Medieval Cholas, Later Cholas, Pandyas, the Vijayanagar Empire, Madurai Nayaks, Thanjavur Nayaks and the Thanjavur Marathas. It rose to be a noticeable city between the seventh and ninth hundreds of years AD, when it served as a capital of the Medieval Cholas. The town achieved the peak of its thriving amid the British Raj when it was a noticeable focus on European instruction and Hindu society; and it gained the social name, the "Cambridge of South India". In 1866, Kumbakonam was formally constituted as a region, which today includes 45 wards, making it the second biggest region in Thanjavur locale.

Description of attraction

Table-3

Nageswaran Temple	Constructed as a chariot, the Nageswaran temple is an important Shavaite temple. A piece of genius Chola architecture, it is an important Shavaite temple. The temple is a marvellous example of the Chola's architectural prowess as the constructed the temple in a way so that it will only let in sunlight during the month of March-April.
Adi Kumbeshwara Temple	Believed to have been constructed in the 7th century A.D by the Cholas, Adi Kumbeshwara Temple is one of the grandest and the oldest Shiva temple in the town. The temple has a magnificent architecture with the trademark style of the Cholas. It is dedicated to Lord Shiva and houses a unique Shiva lingam.
Sarangapani Temple	One of the three major shrines of Lord Vishnu and one of the Divya Desams, the Sarangapani temple is a giant temple with twelve

	storey high tower was constructed in its present form by the Nayak Kings in the 15th century. The largest temple in the town, it's designed in the form of a chariot
Religious Institutions	Kumbakonam is home to the famous Maharaja Kala Shre Govindha Theekshidar Veda Kavya Pada Salai, which is engaged in training youth in Vedic literature and other religious activities. Sankaramadam, Govinda Kudi and Ahobila madam are other major institutions in Kumbakonam
Environmentally sensitive areas	These include the numerous holy tanks and riverfront areas and include the renowned Mahamaham tank (famous for its Mahamaham festival held every 12 years during which devotees throng to Kumbakonam to take a holy dip in the tank), Porthamarai Theertham, Paga Theertham and Ghats of River Cauvery and Arasalar.
Minor Heritage areas	These include the traditional settlements of various social groups. The traditional houses are linear and endowed with architectural features including the Columnar Thinai, Madam, Muttrum etc.

Gap Analysis

The ancient city of kumbakonam holds cultural and conventional worth, and its tourism potential is high. Be that as it may, it has been arduous to survey its conceivable outcomes for advancement, because of an inability to draw in an adequately high number of tourists to the old city. It is paramount to set out the variables that ought to be considered at the formative level.

Unfortunately, there is still a gap between the practice and theory of cultural heritage management. In practice, there is a consequent delay in shifting to a more holistic approach, where orchestrating and management is concerned, most certainly by local regimes. In theory, there is a lack of research to identify and design innovative approaches, and to document and disseminate best practices for the management cultural heritage facilities in this area. Whether local, national or international, regimes share the responsibility for the auspice of these facilities for present and future generations. Thus, it seems only fitting that due attention is paid to their congruous management. The lack of opportune management at

heritage sites causes physical and gregarious impacts, these places lose their sense of spirituality; they shift from being sacred to secular places.

A SWOT (strengths, weakness, opportunities, threats) analysis of the ancient city and the strengths and weaknesses of the area have revealed opportunities and threats in the current environment. As a result of this analysis, a number of planning and design proposals have been developed, as shown in Table 1.

Table 4. A SWOT analysis of the ancient city of Darasuram and its surroundings. SWOT analysis of the area.

<p>Strength</p> <p>Rich in history and, cultural Resources. Areas in this region of were a component of major Dravidian civilizations since ancient times. The area is a component of pilgrimage tour since Centuries. The famous annual festivals ceremonies Tourism products. There are many tourist itineraries in the region. Easy transportation</p>	<p>Weaknesses</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of Protection and preservation of identified heritage resources including the archaeological sites spread around the temple. • Inadequate provision of Health, recreation facilities, open spaces and other amenities for pilgrimages • Poor traffic management and inadequate provision for parking lots, particularly around temple areas. • Lack of recreational activities.
<p>Opportunities</p> <p>It has the right mix of Heritage resources, natural environs, cultural events and spiritual ambience to develop as an exclusive spiritual destination where high-end pilgrims come for physical and spiritual rejuvenation.</p> <p>Variety of craft (bronze, silk,</p> <p>Its status as a world heritage site ensures international and national interest, and potential for investment</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">SWOT Threats</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of urban reforms causing lacuna in implementation mechanism. <p>Limited local community involvement and pride in heritage preservation</p>

the foreigners. Most of the “North-Indians” do not understand the local language very

well. Though the sign boards are provided in English and Tamil a desideratum for English/Hindi sign boards, English/Hindi verbalizing guides are expected.

- The Non-availability of hygienic food as noted above was an eminent quandary faced by the tourists. Foreigners perceived it to be a major quandary. Beggars were a major quandary.
- Sanitation facilities were additionally among the highest quandaries just like the jams but with unequal replications. Non-availability of peregrinate information was withal a prominent issue for many of the tourists especially for the foreigners followed by the north Indians.
- Lack of Protection and preservation of identifying heritage resources including the archaeological sites spread around the temple
- Inadequate provision of Health, recreation facilities, open spaces and other amenities for pilgrimages
- Too much litter and garbage at the pilgrimage sites, clean toilets were destitute, and that touts and beggars were too truculent and spoiled the experience at the tourist sites.
- Poor traffic management and inadequate provision for parking lots, particularly around temple areas.

The ancient city of Drasuram as a cultural heritage and archaeological site is of paramount importance to the national and international people. Areas with cultural and natural heritage help trace the history of a region. Transferring the area to future generations is necessary to shed light on the history of humanity. In addition to increasing the national and international recognition of landscape planning and tourism activities for 'protection–use', it is necessary to ensure a balanced use of this site.

Discussion and suggestions

- Directional boards and signs should be placed at sundry corners of the temple so that FIT (Free Individual Tourists) tourists may eschew facing quandaries in proceeding further by guiding themselves. Furthermore, at all the ingressions the detailed map of the temple in an immensely colossal size should be placed so that devotees / tourists without any avail can guide themselves.

- Street Lighting at the main ingress to the temple.
- Public accommodation facilities at different locations path.
- Develop/engender light and sound show exhibiting the history, culture and tradition of temple
- Creating the heritage museum inside the temple involute.
- Strengthening of connecting link road in and around kumbakonam.
- Promote utilization of sustainable technology (alternative energy, recycling, etc.).
- Encourage companies to provide information to tourists on cultural activities that subsist in the destination, and to establish cognizance programs for the care of heritage and reverence for local customs.

Use of technologies in preservation of cultural heritage

The diversity of languages, national cultures and confessions is unique historical and cultural heritage of Tamil culture. It deserves to be represented in the world information space. This rich heritage must be processed, analyzed and prepared for introduction into the world information space. Now a day's electronic resource, it will unite electronic collections of different establishments of education, science and culture. Digitized museum exhibits, rare books, and manuscripts, unique architectural structures will enable any person to get acquainted with either cultural heritage of Drasuram and culture of separate nations or its individual manifestations, which satisfy personal, educational or scientific interest

Conclusion

The tourist facilities have additionally contributed to regional economic development by enhancing the tourism product, reaching to distant tourism markets, and connecting visitors to local businesses that accommodate their desiderata. They bring maxima into the community in several ways, and provide opportunities for businesses and civic enterprises to cooperate in community enhancement initiatives. Local and municipal regime plays a paramount role with deference to pilgrimage tourism for the region. Besides, the orchestrating, development, promotion, marketing and implementation of these products and accommodations can sustain cultural tourism as an economic activity that can ameliorate standards of living for people on the region. This paper addresses the critical shortages of resources, infrastructure and skills among tourism stakeholders, business, practitioners, communities, etc., and offers some

strategies as recommendations to ameliorate the regional market with incipient cultural products and accommodations. This analysis may be the commencement point for further research about pilgrimage and heritage tourism development, marketing and promotion on the region of kumbakoanam.

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