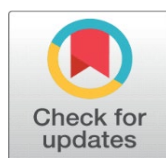
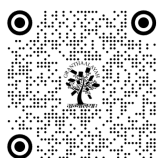


IDENTIFYING THE SCOPE OF PILGRIMAGE TOURISM AS A SOURCE OF LIVELIHOOD SUPPORT IN SRIVANJINADHAR TEMPLE-SRIVANJIYAM - A CASE STUDY IN THIRUVARUR DISTRICT, TAMIL NADU

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ABSTRACT

Pilgrimage tourism play a significant revenue in the form of both cash and kind to the development of temples and surrounding regions. The present study aims at understanding the scope of Srivanjinadhar temple at Srivanjiyam in Thiruvavur District as a source of livelihood for the rural poor. The present study aims at understanding the connection between the rural poor and the rural pilgrimage destinations as sources of livelihood support. As a temple being located in the rural area, the temple supports rural entrepreneurship and thereby stands as a source of livelihood promotion. This place is famous for Lord Srivanjinadhar who blessed Yama who is also worshipped here. The female deity is Lord Mangalambika and the temple is very old and has lot of interesting histories for the interest of the pilgrims. The present case study aims at exploring the livelihood opportunities in Srivanjiyam as a destination for tourism in rural areas and how further it can be strengthened. The study also aims at understanding the various capitals available in Srivanjiyam in the light of Sustainable Livelihoods Framework-DFID model.

Keywords: Pilgrimage Toruism, Sustainable Livelihoods, Tourism, Development

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1. INTRODUCTION

India is considered as a country with great socio-economic background. It depicts a variety of religious systems which are practicing till from the ancient age. In India mainly follows mainly 5 religions such as Hinduism, Islam, Christianity, Sikhism, Buddhism and other religions such as Tribal Religion (including Sarnaism, Bon, Animism, Kirat Mundhum, Donyi-Polo), Jainism, No- religion (including Atheism, Agnosticism, Secularism and Unanswered), Baha'i Faith, Zoroastrianism, Judaism (Census, 2011). Each of these religious groups has their own place to worship and so on. In Hinduism, temples are considered a holy place where they can worship and connect with their God. In the ancient times, the temples were not only places of worship but also place for discussing social, religious and political matters.

So, it is a part of the community and it became a center for development of performing arts such as dance, music, and drama (Admin,2014). Ancient Indian texts, a temple is a place of pilgrimage and it welcome through carved pillars, statues and artistic diversity that showcase and celebrate the four necessary principles of human life (Artha, Kama, Dharma and Moksha). Temples in India are not symbols of a religion. They mean a healthy and meaningful life for all humanity (Thulasingham, 2016). Temples are tall buildings compared to other buildings in the city. It was built in such a way that differently abled, elderly and sick people who cannot worship in the temple can visit the temples even from their homes. In all temples, a water tank will be constructed near the temple premises for temple purpose. Moreover, it helps to collect rainwater and recharge the groundwater in the vicinity.

The Indian people are highly religious and cultural in nature and because of that the scope of pilgrimage tourism also relatively high. The government of India earned around 51,587 INR through Foreign Exchange Earnings due to pilgrimage tourism (Pawar 2019). Tamil Nadu are very well known and used to generate revenue through religious and pilgrimage tourism (Sivakumar, Saranya, 2019). There is a market scope in pilgrimage because it is important to meet tourist need. So, the economic condition and infrastructure will improve.

2. TEMPLES AND LIVELIHOODS

The concept of pilgrimage transforms to New Age pilgrim which it not only focused with just a 'power place' but also several external factors which are connect with it and it also against the capitalist pilgrimage (Adrian Ivakhiv, 2003). Hence there is a wider scope of promoting the traditional pilgrimage in collaborate with contemporary livelihood measures.

Srivanjinathar Swami Temple, Srivaanjiyam is a Shiva temple administered under Hindu Religious & Charitable Endowments Department (HR & CE), Government of Tamil Nadu. Sri Vaanjiyam village is located with a geographical area of 428.27 hectares and belongings to a Delta region. It is in the Nannilam taluk of Thiruvarur district in Tamil Nadu, India). The total population of the village is about 2,518 peoples, out of which male population is 1,268 while female population is 1,250 and 643 households. Literacy rate of Srivaanjiyam village is 73.23% out of which 81.31% males and 65.04% females are literate. Most of the villagers are farmers and they depend on agriculture for their livelihood.

The Srivanjinathar temple is one of the culturally eminent temples among the pilgrimage centers in the Kaveri delta region. The temple itself follows variety of deity worships and celebrates temple festivals.

3. METHODOLOGY

Case Study approach is applied for the present study with Srivaijiyam Temple as the unit of the study in understanding the association between the scope of rural pilgrimage tourism and livelihood promotion.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The Srivanjinathar Temple is situated 5km away from sub-district headquarter of Nannilam and 15km away from district headquarter of Thiruvarur (Villageinfo, 2017). The temple is over 1100 years old, and was built by the king Rajendra Chola in the year 850 CE. The temple structure includes 110 feet tall 5 tier Rajagopuram is

faced the east and it is curved on a marble stone fixed on the wall (shivatemple, 2017).

While detailing the cultural aspects of the temple, it is hardly and for Yama - the God of Death, is enshrined in daily worship. The sanctity of the temple has been described in Brahmandam, Skandam, Samboban and Agneya Puranas (Dinamalar, 2017). Out of these Srivaanjiyam is "One-Sixteenth" more sacred than Kasi (Varanasi) which situated on the Kaveri River. The central deity of the temple is the Lord Vanjinadha, a form of the Lord Shiva, and his consort is Mangalanayaki. Separate shrine to the Hindu god, Lord Yama and Chitrugupta, Lord Rahu and Kethu are curved out of a single stone. 'Pithru tharpana' is done in this place, considered sacred and equivalent to Kashi. Temple is even open during solar and lunar eclipse and not closed even any person dies in the village. The Gupta Gangai is considered as sacred and Yama Theertha which is famous for curing of nervous and stomach issues. There are several rituals and festivals celebrating in the temple such as 'Masi Magam' festivals in February-March, 'Theerthavari' is celebrated on Karthikai Sundays in November-December, 10-day festival is also celebrated following 'Aadi Pooram' in July-August (Temples Archive, Temples of Tamil Nadu, 2017).

Because of these strong historical and cultural background, it is well enough to encourage as a destination for pilgrimage tourism.

Pilgrimage tourism and local livelihoods are connected in this village strongly. This place is a point of rural pilgrimage attraction and many pilgrims visit the place. Accordingly the livelihood options are evolving in the form of flower sellers, coconut sellers, tourist guide in local areas, renting out cottages /rooms for pilgrims etc., This place is a very fertile place with paddy as a dominant crop grown here. However this pilgrimage tourism helps the rural poor to survive through livelihood options based on pilgrimage tourism.

This place is observed to be a center for livelihoods based on the pilgrimage tourism though in a smaller scale.

5. OPPORTUNITIES AVAILABLE THROUGH THE TEMPLE THAT CAN INFLUENCE THE LIVELIHOOD OF THE PEOPLE IN SRIVANJIYAM

Pilgrimage Tourism and Community Development are very much interconnected with each other because the temple is a Social Asset which can utilize as a Social Capital. Nearby premises of the temple is a source for livelihood. Overall, it serves as center for promoting Unity. The scope of pilgrimage tourism still not flourished well in the Srivaanjiyam village. Infrastructural facilities like road, water facilities in nearby areas are not much developed. Most of the nearby people are engaged in agriculture and Agri-related occupation. Caste and occupation-based settlement system is prevalent in the village.

As per DFID's Sustainable Livelihoods Approach, there are Five main livelihood assets such as Natural Capital, Human Capital, Social Capital, Financial Capital and Physical Capital and this is need to be harnessed to the maximum level to promote Socio-economic development. Human capital means the people who occupied nearby area includes the priests and other workers, people who sells flowers, spices, ritual necessities etc. They are residing nearby the temple and it is one of their sources of income. Physical capital includes the infrastructural facilities and Natural capital includes the land owned by the temple and it can transform for cultivation purposes. Social capital in terms of utilizing the temple infrastructure as a location for community gatherings, rescue spot during the time of any disaster occurs.

Temple pond as a community water resources especially during summer season. Pond is a source of ground water. Financial capital includes the income generated by the people, reduces economic vulnerabilities and improve well-being.

Lack of proper frequent transportation facility, infrastructural barriers like accommodation facilities will prevent the pilgrimage tourists from considering Srivanjiyam as a tourist destination. Another major limitation is the lack of proper publicity about the destination and awareness on the scope of pilgrimage tourism among rural people.

The government of India launched the PRASAD (Pilgrimage Rejuvenation and Spiritual Augmentation Drive) scheme in 2014- 2015 under the Ministry of Tourism. The scheme focuses on identifying and developing pilgrimage sites across India. By developing infrastructure facilities, creating employment through active involvement of local, improve quality of tourism service by strengthen the measures for safety and security of pilgrims etc. There is a scope of pilgrimage tourism in Srivanjinathar Temple. When the temple become a pilgrimage site that will improve the livelihood of the community because the temple has a large number of human capital involvement.

The Department of Tourism, Government of India has framed and implementing various schemes for the enhancement of pilgrimage centers to provide toilets, drinking water, food outlets, dormitory accommodation, bathing facilities etc. in cooperation with charitable, institutions, trusts or local bodies responsible for maintenance of the pilgrim centers. Under the scheme central assistance upto 25% of the project cost is extended for creation of addition facilities in the selected pilgrim centers, the 75% being met by the bodies administering the pilgrim places (Vijayanand, 2012). These policies will promote the potential of each pilgrimage destination as a pilgrimage tourist destination.

There exists a direct influence of temples and livelihoods which is evident through Srivanjiyam.

The temple can be utilised as a pilgrimage site for Lord Shri Vanjinadha (Lord Shiva) and Lord Yama deva worship because of its religious specialties. It is evident that that the land area (Social Capital) is very fertile which has a direct influence on the economy of the rural poor. The implementation of pilgrimage tourism will increase the possibility of improving the job opportunities among nearby people. Improved job opportunities will impact the livelihood of the rural poor. By rising a pilgrimage site, it will improve the quality of life in the nearby community.

There exists a need of proper historical consciousness among young generation. Because a generation with proper historical consciousness also means a generation with more social consciousness along with the understanding of temples as source of livelihood promotion.

6. SUGGESTIONS

The study suggests on the implementation of more Infrastructural structures in relate with the temple which can attracts more pilgrimage tourists into the destination and later it can be develop as a well-known pilgrimage tourist destination. Awareness about the scope of pilgrimage tourism and associated job opportunities among the prospective stakeholders include temple administration committee, local people, pilgrimage tourists, scholars, entrepreneurs, government etc. is necessary to strengthen pilgrimage tourism. Establishing an active official website for the temple and update important events, festivals, virtual booking

system etc. will give more online publicity rather than word by publicity. At present, the temple has its own official website but still it should more efficient if the tourists can access. If there are any geographically indicated products like nachiyarkoil (another temple near Srivnanjiyam) is famous for manufacturing of traditional diyas, in the nearby areas, the temple can collaborate with the artisans and promote such products while emerging as a destination for pilgrimage tourism. The temple authority also can take initiatives to conduct an expert and detailed study over the possible scopes of the temple enhancement in order to propose before the respective Government authorities. The implementation of better infrastructural facilities, food and accommodation facilities including Hotels, Homestays and Auditorium, Transportation facilities including Bus/ Auto stands, Historical Museums, Heritage Park etc. will encourage the implementation of pilgrimage tourist destination.

7. CONCLUSION

India the country which is enriched with wide cultural diversity. Among the regions South India is famous for heritage sites. In Tamil Nadu, The district Thiruvavur is one among the heritage hubs. But most of them are still not recognised enough due to several reasons. Lack of awareness about the scope of pilgrimage tourism in rural area is one of the main issues. Srivnanjinathar Temple, Srivnanjiyam is one among them and there is a wide scope for recognising it as a pilgrimage site. If the concept of introducing the temple as a pilgrimage tourist destination is successful, it will improve the livelihood and leads to better social status and it leads to overall wellbeing of nearby community. The attempt is not only in responsible with temple administration, but also in the hands of other prospective stakeholders. A combined effort is needed for identifying the Srivnanjinathar temple, Srivnanjiyam as a source of livelihood support and the scope of promoting the destination for the purpose of pilgrimage tourism.

CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

None.

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