



## Strategies for conversion of visitors to tourists: A study with reference to Thirumoorthy hills

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### Abstract

Tourism is an evergreen industry. Tourism is related with all the sectors like Transport, Hospitality and Medical sector. Tourist in the initial stage went for medical treatments and pilgrimage reasons. Thus, this study was conducted with the objective to find out the factors which are responsible for strategies for the promotion of pilgrimage tourism in Thirumoorthy hills as a tourist destination. Data of this study was collected from 180 pilgrimage tourists visiting Thirumoorthy hills. Appropriate statistical analysis such as simple percentage, chi-square test and fried man rank test were used according to respective objectives. Forest department and charitable trust and Government should take necessary steps to co-ordinate with other all relevant departments in the development of Thirumoorthy hills as a tourist destination. The study will help the Ministry of Tourism for the further development of the Thirumoorthy hills.

**Keywords:** tourist, satisfaction and destination

### Introduction

The pilgrimage tourism is the tourism organized to religious places like temples, churches, mosques etc. It is travelling for devotion, meditation and prayer. Indians go to pilgrimage centres like Tirupati, and Kasi which are very famous pilgrimage centers in India.

Pilgrimage tourism motivates the tourists for the achievement of religious practices and attitude. It offers fabulous opportunities for generating revenues, earning foreign exchange and providing employment in the destination. Tourism is differing from pilgrims. Pilgrimage tourism is one of the highest emergence tourism segments in the planet. Tourism has always been one of the fastest growing industries in the world. It is an evergreen industry. Tourism is related with all the sectors like Transport, hospitality and medical sector. Tourism involves movement of people from one place to another for pleasure and recreation and not for earning purpose and not less than 24 hours. Tourism initially started in 600BC by Roman and Greek people for the purpose of spiritual, pleasure, medical treatments to spas. The environmental factors, monuments, heritage, cultures, pilgrimage centers, vegetations, climate, flora, fauna, mountains, coastal areas, rivers, lakes, historical buildings, medical centers, spa, culture, life style and world wonders are the basics of tourism industry.

### Review of Literature

Shivani Agarwal (2017) <sup>[1]</sup> studies "Factors affecting tourist's satisfaction level at religious visit: a study of Brij-Kshetra" in her objective find out the factors affect to tourist's satisfaction visiting at Brij-Kshetra. Methodology of the study both primary and secondary data of 300 respondents are selected to this study. The study has revealed that aesthetic appeal,

accessibility, supporting infrastructure, food & service and health & guide service these are more influenced to tourist's in Brij-Kshetra.

Patil, Bhole and Dhake (2009) <sup>[2]</sup> have found that "A study of hill station tourist satisfaction-A case study of Mahabaleshwar" in their objective of the study is to assess the level of satisfaction of tourist and to identify the area requiring special attention. Methodology of the study both primary and secondary data used to analyze 100 respondents. Satisfaction Index Method used to this study. In their findings of the study are most of the tourists are enjoyed recreational activities like visits to picnic spots, horse riding and boating on lake. In peak season inadequate facilities in hotel industries are arise.

### Statement of the Problem

Thirumoorthy hills are a potential tourism destination which at present is not perceived so. The visitors who come to visit for pilgrimage reason and nature enjoyment spend very limited hours and so these visits do not bring any benefit like revenue or employment opportunity. With this back drop an attempt has been made to bring out strategies to convert the visitors into tourists. Thirumoorthy hills have many positive attributes while housing some negative aspects too hindering tourist loyalty. Identifying and establishing Thirumoorthy hills as a tourism destination and development of the same will be instrumental in improving the economy, raise the standard of living of the people, protect plants, cultural resources, provide banking facility, medical facility, transportation, communication, attractions, entertainment, ensure unity between religious and develop the dam as a reservoir of good water all year round for agriculture and tourism. The tourism development in the destination will help to increase our national income and GDP value.

### Objectives of the Study

1. To study the socio-economic impacts of pilgrimage tourism in Thirumoorthy hills.
2. Strategies for the promotion of pilgrimage tourism as a tourist destination in Thirumoorthy hills.

### Methodology

The data for this study was collected from the tourists engaged in pilgrimage tourism activities in the religious site of Thirumoorthy hills. Primary data collected from 180 respondents in visiting Thirumoorthy hills. The data collected through questionnaire was tabulated, analyzed and interpreted using Simple percentage analysis, Chi-square test and Friedman rank test. The entire hypothesis was tested at 5% level of significance. The secondary data was collected mainly based on secondary data derived from sources such as Government publications, brochures and the internet.

### Limitations of the Study

1. The study is conducted on limited samples and there might be some variations in the results.

### Thirumoorthy Hills – An Over View

Thirumoorthy hills are located in the Western Ghats mountain

range in the foot of Anamalai hills near Udumalpet taluk in Tiruppur district. It is famous for the Amanalingeswarar temple, for it gives the darshan of three gods – Shiva, Vishnu and Brahma at a single temple. Panjalinga falls is an important tourist place and the same is utilized for bathing and is located in the place two kilometers away from Amanalingeswarar temple. The climate is always quite cool and the best time to visit is from September to December. The temperature level is between 25 and 30 degree Celsius during summer 20 and 25 degree Celsius in winter and the average rain fall is 1550 mm. Panjalinga falls is an important tourist place and the same is utilizes for bathing and is located in the place two kilometers away from Amanalingeswarar temple. Swimming pool and fish show are the main attraction of this hill. Many visitors like to swim in the swimming pool, play and enjoy. A Thirumoorthy hills is also home to Universal peace foundation, an International non-profitable organization and its fundamental aim to encourage Universal peace through individual peace. The Thirumoorthy hills also a major cine spot in Tiruppur district.

### Analysis and Interpretation of Data

The results of the analysis of the collected data are presented below:

**Table 1:** Socio-Economic Profile of the Respondents

S. No	Factor	Demographics	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1	Gender	Male	146	73%
		Female	34	17%
	Total	180	100%	
2	Age (in years)	11-20	65	36%
		21-40	97	54%
		40-60	16	9%
		Above 60years	2	1%
	Total	180	100%	
3	Occupation	Self-employee	64	36%
		Agriculturist	68	38%
		Private employee	28	15%
		Government	20	11%
	Total	180	100%	
4	Status	Single	134	74%
		Married	46	26%
	Total	180	100%	
5	Annual Income	Below 100000	151	84%
		100001-300000	18	10%
		300001-500000	7	4%
		Above500000	4	2%
	Total	180	100%	
6	Nationality	Indian	180	100%
		Foreigner	-	-
	Total	180	100%	

**Source:** Primary data

The above table reveals the socio-economic profile of the respondents. From this it should be clear the males are highly interested to visit Thirumoorthy hills, the respondents who are belonging to the age group of 21-40 are highly make a visit to Thirumoorthy hills, majority of 74% of the respondents are

unmarried, majority of the respondents are agriculturist, most of the respondents have an annual income of below Rs.1, 00,000 and all the respondents are Indian.

H0: There is no significant association of travel arrangement with sources of information for touring Thirumoorthy hills.

**Table 2:** Distribution of respondents across travel arrangement by sources of information

Sources of information	Travel Arrangement			Total
	Independently	Tour Operator	Travel Agent	
Internet	2	0	3	5
Friends & Relatives	125	3	21	149
Media	3	0	1	4
Books	2	0	2	4
Travel Agency	5	0	13	18
Total	137	3	40	180

Chi-Square 37.845

DF 8

P value .000(s)

Table 2 shows that out of 180 respondents 149 of them visited Thirumoorthy hills through the information from friends & relatives, 18 of them visited Thirumoorthy hills through information provided by travel agencies, 4 of them got information through media and books & guide maps are each percentage for travel arrangement to Thirumoorthy hills. It is also found that 137 out of the total 180 respondents make their travel arrangement themselves as majority of them find their sources of information about Thirumoorthy hills through friends and relatives. 40 of them find make their travel arrangement through travel agents.

Thus, it is inferred that friends & relatives give information about Thirumoorthy hills and it motivate the visitors to undertake independent visit along with the former.

H0: There is no significant difference among the factors related to expenses in Thirumoorthy hills.

**Table 3:** Fried man rank test on the expenditure

Ranks	Mean Rank
Food expense	3.63
Travel expense	2.58
Entertainment expense	1.96
Site seeing expense	1.84

Chi Square Value 217.233

Df 3

P value .000

The above table shows fried man rank test, shows that the expenditure of the respondents on the variables like food, travel, entertainment and site seeing expenses. The pilgrimage visitors have given first rank to food expense showing a mean value of 3.63, second rank to travel expense with mean value 2.58, third rank is given to entertainment expense showing a mean value 1.96 and site seeing expense given the fourth rank showing a mean value of 1.84. These results explain that food expense and travel expense are given priority by the respondents who visited Thirumoorthy hills. To test the significance level of the test it is found that the p value is significant at .000 ensuring 100% confidence level, having a chi square value of 217.233. Therefore, the null hypothesis "There is no significant difference among the factors related to expenses in Thirumoorthy hills" is rejected.

Thus, it is found that food expenses and travel expenses are given importance and so many facilities have to be created to increase the pilgrimage visitor flow and further converting them from pilgrimage visitor to tourists.

**Suggestions as Strategies**

- Constructing accommodation amenities like dormitories, hotel, lodges etc will enhance the tourist arrivals to Thirumoorthy hills enabling.
- The economy of Thirumoorthy hills is very much considered by local visitors, the Government should take proper planning and publicity to proliferate more number of tourists, domestic as well as foreigner.
- Both Central and State Government should take valuable measure to develop Thirumoorthy hills in all aspects attracting tourist arrivals to witness a notable increase.
- Forest department and temple Aranilayathurai and Government should take necessary steps to co-ordinate with other all relevant departments in the development of Thirumoorthy hills as a tourist destination.
- Thirumoorthy hills located in the southern tip of Udumalpet taluk are a best natural place which is not popular. The Government and private sectors should take necessary steps to promote it to bring more tourists by creating awareness.
- The Thirumoorthy hill is a place where wild life is found. Designing of animal zoo should be helpful to increase tourist arrivals. Therefore, the Government should take effort to start zoo.
- Massive publicity through Electronic/ Print Media should be undertaken through release of advertisements in the national and international travel magazines, dailies, satellite TV channels, FM radio as well as printing of folders etc.

**Conclusion**

The Thirumoorthy hills is very most considerable place for tourism motivations as nature is the most important attribute and Amanalingeshwarar temple is culturally important in Tamil nadu, because of the three (Moorthis) Gods darshan available in the temple. But it is not popular among the domestic tourists as well as the foreign tourists. Thirumoorthy hills are a destination which can be visited by any level of income earners to relieve themselves from stress, tension and heat. The Government should take necessary steps for providing various basic facilities like entertainment factors, amenities, attractions, accommodation, tourism information etc. If these shortfalls are overcome it will help to develop the destination loyalty and conversion of pilgrimage visitors as tourists.

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