CHAPTER – III

PROFILE OF THE PLACES OF TOURIST ATTRACTIONS
– A PYRAMIDAL VIEW

*Tourism is like a bridge.
It connects our countries and it can connect people to each other.*

- Karen Chen

3.1 INTRODUCTION

Tourism promotes national integration, tolerance and understanding of different cultures. It encourages preservation of monuments, heritage properties and eco-sanctuaries, helps survival of traditional art forms, crafts and culture. It has achieved rapid strides due to its capacity to earn foreign exchange, generate employment opportunities and inculcate a sense of heritage and fraternity in the minds of people. Tourism is the third highest foreign exchange earner for India.

The word “tour” originated from the Latin word “tornus” which was later changed into tours, standing for lath or turnover’s wheel. As the full turn of the wheel or lathe forms a circle or circuit, the word “tornus or tourn” also means a round journey in which one returns to the starting point. The word tour was first used for a journey in which one travelled and visited a number of places in circuit or sequence, thus meaning a circuitous or circular journey (*Joseph Antony, 1999*).

Tourism encompasses travel for pleasure during holiday, wanderlust, health, business and trade, pilgrimage and social purpose, historical and geographical research, educational purpose, foreign offices and other official functions. The perspective of travel spreads over many fields of human activity such as cultural, religious and sociological thereby influencing the social and economic aspects of international trade, transport and finance. Centuries back, the King of Babylon, established protected roads, rest houses and gardens for travelers. The Romans used to travel for pleasure. They rode hundred miles in a day on horseback to see the monuments of Egypt. Olympic Games were also a reason for their travelling from their houses of Olympia. In the fifth century the downfall of Roman Empire accounted for the setback for tourism (*Ibid*).
The earliest recorded evidence of tourism could be traced back to the Roman Empire. The Romans visited temples and shrines, attended festivals and took baths for health and amusements. With the fall of the Roman Empire, tourism ceased to exist till the middle ages. In the middle ages, thousands of pilgrims made journey under the existing difficult conditions. The development of trade and commerce, religious activities, etc., between the eleventh and fifteenth centuries gave added impetus to the movement of merchants, soldiers and pilgrims. Thus travel before the Industrial Revolution was largely a matter of pilgrimage and to a limited extent of business and for official purposes (L.J. Lickorish, 1975).

Between the sixteenth and eighteenth centuries, especially in advanced countries, travel became very common and this encouraged the elite to go abroad. Travel also had been recommended as a part of curriculum development. In fact foreign travel was a part of education of the aristocratic men in those days. During the same period, domestic travel to sea resorts and hill resorts for health reasons became part of entertainments.

In the nineteenth century, the professional travel agencies were established. Overseas tour was organized for the first time during 1860s. In the later years of that century, developments such as holiday with pay in certain countries, establishment of travel and tourism club etc, added new dimension to tourism. In the first half of the development in the transport industry and other factors, travel by private cars and coaches for the first time became popular in the 1910s (M. Salam, 1989). Tourism has been sensitive to world peace and prosperity after the world war periods, i.e., from 1950 onwards. Tourism has got another boost as most of the Governments of the third world countries have started patronizing tourism as an important economic activity.

### 3.2 Definitions of Tourism

There is no universally accepted definition of tourism and even now the term “Tourism” is defined by different authors in various ways. Tourism refers to the temporary movement of people to destinations outside their normal place of work and residence, the activities undertaken during their stay in those destinations and the facilities created to cater to their needs. Tourism is the sum of phenomena and relationships arising from the interactions of tourists, business suppliers, host Governments and host communities in the process of attracting tourists.
Swiss Professor Walter Hunzikar and Kurt Krapf (1994), describe the concept of tourism: “Tourism is the sum of phenomena and relationship arising from the travel and stay of non-residents, in so far as they do not lead to permanent residence and are not connected with any earning activity.” As per the International Union of Official Travel Organization (IUOTO), now called as World Tourism Organization (WTO), has defined tourist as a temporary visitor staying for at least 24 hours in a country visited when the purpose of the journey can be classified under one of the following headings –

a) Leisure: recreation, holiday, health, study of religion and sports or
b) Business, family, mission meetings.

As per the IASET and Tourism Society of Cardiff in 1981, “Tourism may be defined in terms of particular activities selected by choice and undertaken outside the home environment. Tourism may or may not involve overnight stay away from home.”

Herman Von Schullard, An American Economist, defined it as, “The sum of the total operations, mainly of an economic nature which directly relates to the entry, stay and movement of foreigners inside and outside a certain country, city or region.”

According to Tourism Society in Britain, “Tourism is the temporary short-term movement of people to destination outside the place where they normally live and work and their activities during the stay at their destinations, includes movement for all purposes, as well as day visit or excursions”.

In 1981, the International Conference on Leisure-Recreation- Tourism, held by Tourism Society in England, defined it as, “Tourism may be defined in terms of particular activities selected by choice and undertaken outside the home environment. Tourism may or may not involve overnight stay away from home”. This definition was subsequently accepted by the IASET (Burkart & Medlik, 1974).

All the above definitions bring out the following distinct features of tourism.
(a) Involvement of a mobile population of travelers who are stranger to the place they visit.
(b) Their stay is of a temporary nature in the area visited.
(c) It is essentially a pleasure and recreational activity.
(d) Their stay is not connected with any remunerated activity or an activity involving earnings.

WTO has taken the concept of ‘tourism’ beyond a stereo type image of ‘holiday making’. The official accepted definition in the report is: “Tourism comprises the activities of persons travelling to and staying in places outside their usual environment not for leisure, business and other purposes”.

WTO has classified three types of tourism

a) Domestic Tourism: It consists of residents visiting within their own country. No formalities are required in this kind of travel.

b) Inbound Tourism: Comprises non-residents travelling into a country of their choice.

c) Outbound Tourism: Comprises residents of a nation travelling out to foreign country.

These three basic forms of tourism can be in turn being combined to derive three categories of tourism.

a) Internal Tourism: This comprises domestic and inbound tourism.

b) National Tourism: Domestic and outbound tourism.

c) International Tourism: Inbound and outbound tourism.

Geographers study the spatial expression of tourism as a human activity, focusing on tourist generating and tourist receiving areas. The study can incorporate a variety of scales, climate, tourist resources to local landscape, resorts etc. From the geographical point of view, tourism has three main components:

1) The tourist from one country to another country is known as generating areas.

2) The destination area of tourist receiving countries or region or local areas.

3) The route travelled between respective destinations.
Tourism flow depends on pull and push factors. Push factors depend on the stage of economic development in generating market, number of holidays available and income. Also pull factor influence on tourist flow, it includes accessibility and the relative cost.

The *Tourism Society in Britain* in 1976 defined tourism as, “Tourism is the temporary, short-term movement of people to destinations outside the places where they normally live and work and their activities during the stay at these destinations; it includes movements for all purposes, as well as day visits or excursions” (Ratendeep Singh, 1994).

Hermann V. Schullard defined tourism as, “the sum total of the operators, mainly of an economic nature, which directly relates to the entry, stay and movement of foreigners inside and outside a certain country, city or region” (Ibid).

According to Hunziker and Krapf, “Tourism is the totality of the relationship and phenomenon arising from the travel and the study of strangers, provided the stay does not imply the establishment of permanent residence and is not connected with a remunerated activity” (A.K.Bhatia, 1997).

The *International Conference of Leisure, Recreation, Tourism* in 1981 defines tourism as: “Tourism may be defined in terms of particular activities selected by choice and undertaken outside the home environment. Tourism may or may not involve overnight stay away from home”.

(Source: Leiper, 1990)
3.3 WORLD TOURISM

World tourism is considered as a significant factor in the economy of many nations. Today tourism related infrastructure in various parts of the country has improved the quality of life of the local people and helped to promote local arts and crafts. Tourism has contributed to increase awareness about conservation of the environment and the cultural heritage. Tourism is the fastest growing industry in modern world. People have always travelled to distant parts of the world to see monuments, arts and culture, taste new cuisine etc. The term tourist was firstly used as official term in 1937 by the League of Nations. Tourism was defined as people travelling abroad for period of over 24 hours.

The word tour gained acceptance in the 18th century, when the Grand Tour of Europe became part of the upbringing of the educated and wealthy British noblemen. Tourism is a service industry, consisting of transportation, accommodation and hospitality. The term tourism and travel are often used interchangeably though literally there is a difference. A person who indulges in tourism is known as tourist. Tourism is multi-faceted phenomenon which involves movement to and stay in destination outside the normal place of residence. Tourism is composed of three basic elements:

a) A dynamic element which involves travel to a selected destination or destinations.
b) A static element which involves the stay in the destination.
c) A consequential element resulting from the two preceding elements, which is concerned with effect on the economic, physical and social subsystems with which the tourist is directly or indirectly in contact.

Due to growing economic significance of tourism, it has a spectacular increase in tourism worldwide and increase in tourist earning. That money is absorbed by the local economies of the nation, and helps to increasing jobs as well as opportunities. Tourism mostly depends on the range and types of accommodation available at the destination. Accommodation is a core of the tourist industry, and plays a distinctive role in the development of this ever - expanding industry. Tourism also tends to give support to local handicrafts and cultural activities; both in urban and rural areas. Expenditure by tourists has a multiplier effect and also generates considerable tax revenue for local economy.
Tourism has become a major and an integral part of economic, social and physical development. It comprises complete system of nature, the universe, the space and the galaxy which includes the man and his activities, wildlife, mountain and valleys, rivers and waters, forest and trees, social and cultural system, flora and fauna, weather and climate, sun and the sea. The whole system requires an environmental and ecological preservation, which can be expressed in terms of following equation.

\[ \text{Tourism} = (N + W + M)^{EE} \]

Whereas,

\[ N = \text{Nature}, \quad W = \text{wildlife}, \quad M = \text{Man and his activities}, \quad EE = \text{Environment and Ecology}. \]

The environment and ecological aspect on all the components as regard to the development of tourism. The equation can further simplified in nature-

\[ \text{Tourism} = (\text{Wildlife} + \text{Man})^{EE} \]

Without planning and controlling mechanism the development of tourism may end by having social cultural and economic distortions, which will be reflected in the relationship between tourists and local people. As soon as tourism grows and expands, it brings the social and economic changes in the respective region. This can be positive as well as negative.

Tourism 2020 vision is the World Tourism Organization long-term forecast and assessment of the development of tourism up to the first 20 years of the new millennium. An essential outcome of the Tourism 2020 vision is quantitative forecasts covering a 25 years period, with 1995 as base year and forecasts for 2000 and 2020. Tourism 2020 vision calls these motivating factors the three E”s - Entertainment, Excitement and Education.

Attraction, accommodation, supporting facilities, and infrastructure are the basic elements of tourism. For the better development of tourism, these facilities should be developed in respective areas and for this public as well as private sector should take a lead. The flow of domestic tourists will depend on the location of tourist spot and population density of an area. Accessibility is an essential factor for better development of tourism.
3.4 TOURISM IN INDIA

India can always boast of its rich cultural heritage. Travel and Tourism in India is an integral part of Indian tradition and culture. In ancient times, travel was primarily for pilgrimage—as the holy places dotting the country attracted people from different parts of the world. People also traveled to participate in large scale feasts, fairs and festivals in different parts of the country. In such a background, cultural tradition was developed where ‘Athithi Devo Bhava’ (the guest is god) and ‘Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam’ (the world is one family) became bywords of Indian social behavior. Since times immemorial, the rulers in different parts of India built luxurious palaces, enchanting gardens, marvelous temples, grand forts, tombs, and memorials. These bear testimony to the exquisite inheritance of this land, and are examples of unparalleled craftsmanship of the people of the bygone ages. The beauty of India’s cultural heritage and the richness of nature’s endowments make India “paradise.”

Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru often remarked, “Welcome a Tourist and send back a friend”. That was the essence of India’s approach to tourism in the post-Independence era. Tourism was seen as an important instrument for national integration and international understanding.

The dimensions of tourism changed as trade and commerce developed. The spice trade brought India in contact with the world more than before. The silk route trade also opened up India’s immense cultural heritage and natural beauty to the world outside. The establishment of the Indian Railways by the British, modernization of the ports, development of hill stations- all these added to the growth of the Indian tourism industry in the 19th and early parts of the 20th century. The growth of modern, organized tourism however was slow. Systematic information, even if inadequate, has been available only during the post – Independence era. It was only after the 80s that tourism as an industry picked up speed.

3.4.1 Nature and State of International Tourism in India

Today tourism is the largest service industry in India with a contribution of 6.23% to national GDP and providing 8.78% of the total employment in the year 2011. On an average more than 5 million foreign tourist arrivals and 562 million domestic tourists visits are witnessed by India annually.
India is ranked 68th among the world’s 139 most attractive destinations and scores very high on natural resources (ranked 8th) and cultural resources (24th); with 30 world heritage sites and strong creative industries in the country. India’s air transport network is ranked 39th, the ground transport infrastructure however remains underdeveloped (ranked 43rd). India is ranked first with regard to tourism air attendance. The promotional campaigns and marketing strategies to attract tourists remain average (ranked 53rd). The World Economic Forum study states that India also benefits from excellent price competitiveness, ranked 6th overall, with low ticket-taxes and airport charges along with low prices in the economy as a whole. These rankings are based on the Travel & Tourism Competitive Index (TTCI) 2011, which measures the different regulatory and business related issues.

Moreover, India has been ranked the “best country brand for value for money” in the Country Brand Index (CBI) survey conducted by Future Brand, a leading global brand consultancy in the year 2011. India also claimed the second place in CBI’s best country brand for history”, as well as appears among the top 5 in the best country brand for authenticity of art and culture and the fourth best new country for business. India made it to the list of rising stars or the countries that are likely to become major tourist destinations in the next five years, led by the United Arab Emirates, China and Vietnam.

The below table indicates the Foreign Tourist Arrivals (FTAs) and Foreign Exchange Earnings (FEEs) from tourism in India during 2000-2012. It also shows the annual growth rate in percentage.

**TABLE 3.1**

Table showing Foreign Tourist Arrivals (FTAs) in India during 2000-2012

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>FTAs in India</th>
<th>Annual Growth %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>FTAs</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>2649378</td>
<td>6.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>2537282</td>
<td>-4.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>2384364</td>
<td>-6.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>2726214</td>
<td>14.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>3457477</td>
<td>26.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>3918610</td>
<td>13.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year</td>
<td>FTAs in India</td>
<td>Annual Growth %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------</td>
<td>---------------</td>
<td>----------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>4447167</td>
<td>13.5</td>
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<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>5081504</td>
<td>14.3</td>
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<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>5281504</td>
<td>4.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>5167699</td>
<td>-2.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>5775692</td>
<td>11.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>6309222</td>
<td>9.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>6577745</td>
<td>4.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Ministry of Tourism, Govt. of India

3.4.2 Major Policy Initiatives taken by Indian Government

An Overview of Indian Tourism Policies

The Ministry of tourism headed by the Union Minister for Tourism is the nodal agency for the formation of national policies and programs related to tourism. It also coordinates all the activities of the central government agencies, state government undertakings and the private sector for the development and promotion of tourism. The administrative head of the ministry is the secretary (tourism) who also acts as the Directorate General (DG) tourism. Directorate General of tourism has 20 offices within India and 13 offices overseas. The work of the ministry is divided into 10 divisions which are headed by either a Director or Deputy Secretary level officer. These include administration, public sector undertakings (PSU) planning & coordination, division, publicity, international cooperation and IT & Events divisions, market research division, overseas marketing division, hotels and restaurants division, travel & trade division, integrated finance, egovernance division, official language division, human resource development and domestic tourism division and parliament vigilance, administration & public grievances divisions. The first conscious and organized efforts to promote tourism in India were made in 1945 when a committee was set up by the government under the chairmanship of Sir John Sargent, the then Educational Advisor to the government of India (Krishna, A.G., 1993). Thereafter, the development of tourism was taken up in a planned manner in 1956 coinciding with the second five year plan. The approach has evolved from isolated planning of single unit facilities in the second and third five year plan. The sixth plan marked the beginning of a new
era when tourism began to be considered as a major instrument for social integration and economic development. But it was only after the 80s that tourism activity gained momentum.

3.4.3 Peak Seasons for Tourists Arrival in India

The table below shows the peak season of foreign tourist arrivals in India. It clearly indicates that India’s fairs and festivals attract tourists from various corners of the world and the period from October to March is the peak season of foreign tourists’ arrivals in India.

**TABLE 3.2**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Months</th>
<th>Reasons</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Oct-Nov</td>
<td>Maximum festivals Dusshera, Durga Pooja, Diwali, Pushkar fair (in Rajasthan).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December</td>
<td>Christmas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January</td>
<td>Republic Day, Lohri</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March</td>
<td>Holi</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3.4.4 Tourism Attractions in India

India is a country popularly known for extending its lavish hospitality to all visitors, no matter where they come from. Due to its belief in the philosophy of “Vasudeva Kutumbkam” its visitor friendly traditions, varied life styles, vast cultural heritage and colorful fairs and festivals, it holds multiple attractions for the tourist. The other attractions include beautiful sun drenched bathing beaches, forests and wild life, majestic rivers, glorious architecture, fascinating fauna and flora and beautiful landscapes for ecotourism, snow clad mountain peaks etc for adventure tourism, technological parks and science museum for science tourism, centers of pilgrimage for spiritual tourism, heritage trains and hotels for heritage tourism, yoga, ayurveda and natural health resorts and hill stations also attract tourists. Indian handicrafts particularly jewellery, carpets, leather goods, ivory and brass work are the main shopping items of foreign tourists. Despite the economic slowdown, medical tourism in India is the fastest growing segment of tourism industry. Factors such as low cost scale and range of treatments provided in the country add to its attractiveness as a medical tourism destination.
The major tourist attractions in India can be explained by dividing India into four zones. The major tourist attractions for foreign tourists in North India are New Delhi, Agra, Shimla and Dehradun. New Delhi is the capital city of India and has a rich cultural past. Red Fort, India Gate, Qutub Minar, Jama Masjid are the important places for tourism in Delhi. Agra is the city of Taj Mahal and one of the greatest spot for tourist attractions in India. Shimla is a splendid hill station in the Himalayas. Dehradun, the capital of Uttranachal is famous for its fantastic scenery.

In East India the major tourist attractions are Kolkata, Guwahati, Shillong, Patna, Jamshedpur, Allahabad, Varanasi and Bhopal. Kolkata—a heritage city and the cultural capital of India. Many places to visit in Kolkata are Victoria memorial, Fort William, Nanda theatre, Race Course, National Library, Eden gardens, Botanical gardens, Allipur Zoo. Guwahati is an important base for tourism in the region. Shillong is the capital of Meghalaya and famous for its breath taking lush green landscapes. Patna is one of the oldest cities in India and famous for its historical relics. Jamshedpur is an important industrial township, home of Tata industries. Allahabad is the city of Prayag and the world famous fair-Kumbhmela. Varanasi is the most auspicious city of the Hindus, famous for its temples and ghats. Bhopal is the capital of Madhya Pradesh and an important center of Tourism.

In West India the major tourist attractions are Mumbai, Panjim and Udaipur. Mumbai is the commercial capital of India and the city that never sleeps. Panjim the capital city of Goa is famous for its Golden beaches and pristine waters. Udaipur is famous for its floating palaces in the middle of Lake Pichola. In South India the most important tourist sites are Kerala, Chennai, Bengaluru, Cochin, Trivandpuram and Ooty. Kerala, known as “God’s own country” is very famous among tourists for its lush greenery, coconut canopies and exotic beaches. Chennai is the automobile capital of India. Bangalore the silicon valley of India is famous for its software companies and has a pleasing weather round the year. Trivandpurum is the city of the famous Kovalam beach. Cochin is a coastal city famous for its historical relevance. Ooty is a fabulous hill station in the Nilgiris famous for its verdure valleys.

3.4.5 Service Providers of Tourism Industry in India

In India, Indian Association of Tour Operators (IATO) (established in 1982) is the apex body of the tourism industry having 1100 members covering all segments of tourism industry. IATO has international acceptance, and linkages. It has close connections and
constant interaction with other tourism associations in US, Nepal and Indonesia, where USTOA (United States Tour Operator Association), NATO (Nepal Association of Tour Operators) and ASITA (Association of Indonesia Tour and Travel Agencies) are its member bodies and is increasing its international networking with professional bodies for better facilitation to the international traveler visiting not only India but the entire region.

IATO interacts closely with all Government Ministries/Departments, Chambers of Commerce and Industry, Diplomatic Missions etc. on all critical issues affecting the tourism industry in India with the highest priority to tourism facilitation. IATO has five categories of membership: Active, Allied, Associate, International and Honorary. All its active members are recognized and approved by the Indian government's Department of Tourism and should have at least three years’ experience of handling international tourists to India, before being admitted to the IATO fraternity. All IATO members observe the highest standards of professional ethics and offer personalized service to their clients.

IATO's affairs are managed by an Executive Committee, elected by the active members every two years. The Executive Committee is headed by the President with a team of six office bearers and 9 executive members. The Executive Committee meets every month to discuss current tourism industry and membership issues. IATO networks through its State Level Chapters at the local level where all local issues are handled at the appropriate level. IATO has 13 Action Committees; each focused on a specialized area headed by a Convener who is assisted by his committee members. They are:

- Adventure Tourism Development Committee
- Civil Aviation, Press & PR Committee
- Domestic Tourism Development Committee
- Grievances Committee
- Guides Coordination Committee
- Host Committee
- Hotel Relations Development Committee
- IATO News Committee
- Legal Affairs, Insurance & Consumer Committee
- Privilege Card Development Committee
- Railways Co-ordination & Development Committee
3.4.6 Competitiveness of India as an International Tourist Destination

The following discussion illustrates the state of competitiveness of Indian tourism industry:

3.4.6.1 Security and Safety

India is highly lacking on this attribute of competitiveness. The major reasons being the internal community riots and also the terrorist attacks faced from time to time, the country is highly unsafe for females and there is poor discipline as well as political instability in the country. In the TTCI index of 2011 India was ranked 78th out of 139 economies showing poor security environment of the country.

3.4.6.2 Maintenance and Cleanliness

The general cleanliness and sanitation level of the country is also very poor. Out of the top 10 polluted cities of the world two cities of India –Ludhiana is on the 5th position and Kanpur is on the 10th position.

3.4.6.3 Information & Communication

Though the official languages of the republic of India are Standard Hindi and English yet the government of India has given 22 languages of the 8th schedule the status of official languages. Because of such diversity in the regional languages the foreign tourist has to face the problem of communication with the locals. Also the official website of Incredible India campaign of Ministry of tourism, Government of India is less informative which could have otherwise solved this language and communication problem. There is improvement in the mobile phone networking of India and currently India has a total of 15 mobile network operators with Idea, Vodafone and Reliance Communications bagging the top three positions.

3.4.6.4 Infrastructure

As per the TTCI rankings of 2011 India’s Air transport infrastructure and the ground transport infrastructure bag 39th and 43rd position respectively out of 139 countries, which is pretty well. Efforts made by the government of India are also commendable which are visible
in the form of opening of Terminal 3 at the IGI airport, Delhi which can alone handle 34 million passengers providing ultra-modern facilities. This airport was ranked 6th in the world in the year 2011 whereas it was not even among the top 100 in the year 2007. This showcased the seriousness and dedication of the Indian government for developing its infrastructure. The mobile teledensity of India is 74.15% and that of the world is 86%. Various schemes are being implemented with financial support from Universal Service Obligation Fund (USOF) for providing access to telecom services to people in the rural and remote areas as an effort of the Ministry of Communication, Government of India to provide better telecom infrastructure.

3.4.6.5 Prices

India is highly competitive when prices of general commodities, airfare and accommodation charges and prices of food items at tourist spots are discussed. In the list of top 10 least expensive nations of the world India bags 4th position. But the policy of the Indian government to earn foreign revenue through charging more entry fees from foreign tourists at tourist spots is highly criticized.

3.4.6.6 Facilities

India has a sound banking system with its five banks among the top 300 and two among the top 100 banks of the world in the year 2011 (State Bank of India 64th, ICICI 81st, Punjab National Bank-239th, HDFC 242nd and Bank Of India 263rd). The medical facilities are among the best in India with Fortis hospital, Bangalore rated 1st in the list of world’s best hospitals for medical tourists.

3.4.6.7 Attractions

India has vast diversity in weather and climatic conditions. India's geography and geology are climatically pivotal. Though the Tropic of Cancer (the boundary between the tropics and subtropics) passes through the middle of India, the bulk of the country can be regarded as climatically tropical. Analyzed according to the Koppen system, the climate of India resolves into six major climatic subtypes and is largely subject to four seasons: winter (January and February), summer (March to May), monsoon (rainy) season (June to September), and post-monsoon period (October to December). But the environmental hazards cannot be ignored as India accounts for 5.83% of the world’s carbon dioxide emissions adversely affecting its competitiveness. It has a large pool of historical monuments and
cultural heritage with more than 3680 historical monuments as listed by archaeological survey of India. It has uniqueness of local blend but still India is lacking on the grounds of manmade attractions such as amusement parks, adventure sports and nightlife which need strengthening.

3.4.6.8 Behavior of Country Residents

India is particularly lacking on this ground as there is lack of education among the taxi/auto rickshaw drivers and the service providers of tourism in India. Foreign tourists are ill-treated at tourist spots. The number of rape cases have increased manifold in India since 2010 and India is the 9th most dangerous country for travelers in the world. The locals are just not willing to help a foreigner in normal circumstances.

3.4.6.9 Factors Affecting the Purpose of the Visit

India is blessed with vast natural resources and is ranked 8th out of 139 countries by TTCI report 2011 for its natural resources. But this blessing has yet to be optimally utilized as we are lacking on the grounds of tourism infrastructure (89th out of 139 as per TTCI report 2011).

3.4.6.10 Other Factors

There is widespread begging and cheating in the country at various tourist spots which makes the whole environment at these places unpleasing and embarrassing. The corruption level is also very high and India scores 3.1 out of 10 in the corruption perception index of 2011 and is ranked 95th in the list of least corrupted nations of the world making it one of the highly corrupt nations of the world. The extent of terrorism is also rapidly rising and adversely affecting the competitiveness of India as an international tourist destination.

3.5 PRESENT SCENARIO OF TOURISM IN INDIA

The Indian Tourism sector is one of the largest service industries in the country in terms of its contribution to the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and Foreign Exchange Earnings, as well as for providing employment to millions. The sector in fact is expected to generate around US$ 42.8 billion (INR 1,897.7 billion) by 2017, according to an industry research. The amount of foreign direct investments (FDI) inflow into the hotel and tourism sector during April 2000 to April 2013 was worth US$ 6,664.20 million. Foreign tourist
arrivals (FTA) during the Month of June 2013 stood at 0.44 million as compared to FTAs of 0.43 million during June 2012, registering a growth of 2.5 per cent and the domestic tourism is expected to increase by 15 per cent to 20 per cent over the next five years.

Tourism in India is witnessing widespread growth on the back of increasing inbound tourism by the burgeoning Indian middle class, rising inflow of foreign tourists and successful government campaigns for promoting ‘Incredible India’. Infrastructure development holds the key to India’s sustained growth in the Tourism sector. Further the government has also allowed 100 per cent foreign investment under the automatic route in the Hotel and Tourism related industry. Significantly, the country has the potential to become a major global tourist destination, with the Tourism sector expected to contribute around INR 3,414.8 billion (US$ 77.0 billion) by 2021. India is currently ranked 12th in the Asia Pacific region and 68th overall in the list of the world's attractive destinations.

Foreign tourist arrivals in the country have increased substantially during the past decade motivated by both, business and leisure needs and are further expected to grow at a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of around 8 per cent during 2010-2014. Visitor exports are a key component of the direct contribution of the sector. By 2021, international tourist arrivals are forecast to total 11,149,000, an increase of 6.1 per cent pa generating expenditure of INR 1,344.7 billion (US$ 30.3 billion). The country has received 3.3 million foreign tourists during the period January to June 2013.

3.6 DRIVERS BEHIND INCREASE IN TOURIST TRAFFIC

The main driver for increase in tourist traffic to India has been the following factors:

3.6.1 Domestic Tourist Traffic

- Rapidly increasing purchasing power of the middle class
- Better road connectivity
- Evolving lifestyle

3.6.2 International Tourist Traffic

- Value for money/economical holiday destination
- Business cum pleasure destination
- Development of Kerala and Rajasthan as the most popular tourist destinations in India with their distinctive brand image
- Opening of the sectors of the economy to private sector/foreign investment
- Reform in the aviation sector such as Open Skies Policy has led to better connectivity with many countries with India
- Success of “Incredible India” campaign and other tourism promotion measures.

3.7 FORMS OF TOURISM IN INDIA

India offers various tourism options due to its vastness and diversity, attracting tourists from all over the world. The country boasts of natural treasures like mountains, ocean, seas, deserts, rainforests, valleys etc. on one hand, while world-class healthcare infrastructure on the other, which provides varied kinds of tourism options such as adventure and rural tourism, sustainable tourism/eco-tourism, cruise tourism, golf tourism and medical tourism to the travelers.

3.7.1 Rural Tourism

The Ministry of Tourism started the scheme of rural tourism in 2002-03 with the aim to showcase art, rural life, and culture and heritage to the tourists at various rural locations and villages. The Ministry intends to help the local community economically and socially, together with facilitating interaction between the local population and tourists, through this scheme. On 28 February 2011, 169 rural tourism sites in 28 States/Union Territories have been sanctioned by the Ministry of Tourism. This segment has also been winning accolades in the international circuits as well. For instance, the Rural Tourism Project at Hodka village in Kutch District of Gujarat won the Pacific Asia Travel Association (PATA) award for the year 2010 under the Heritage category.

3.7.2 Cruise Tourism

Cruise tourism is emerging as one of the most dynamic segments of the leisure industry globally. India with its vast and beautiful coastline, forests and undisturbed idyllic islands, rich historical and cultural heritage, can be a fabulous tourist destination for cruise tourists. The Cruise Shipping Policy of the Ministry of Shipping was approved by the Government of India on June 28, 2008. The objectives of the policy are to make India an attractive cruise tourism destination with the state-of-the-art infrastructural and other facilities at various parts in the country; to attract the right segment of the foreign tourists to cruise shipping in India; to popularize cruise shipping with Indian tourists.
3.7.3 **Adventure Tourism**

Adventure travel involves exploration or travel to remote, exotic areas. Adventure tourism is rapidly growing in popularity as a tourist seeks different kinds of vacations.

3.7.4 **Sustainable Tourism/Eco Tourism**

Sustainable Tourism growth is in the process of evolving the Sustainable Tourism Criteria for India. In recent years tourism industry in India has registered a considerable growth. A Steering Committee with representatives from all the sectors of the tourism and hospitality industry of India has been constituted to develop draft Sustainable Tourism Criteria which would eventually be adopted by the different sectors of the industry.

3.7.5 **Wellness Tourism**

Wellness tourism is about travelling for the primary purpose of achieving, promoting, or maintaining maximum health and a sense of well-being. Health Tourism holds immense potential for India. The Indian systems of medicine that is Ayurveda, Yoga, Panchakarma, Rejuvenation Therapy etc. are among the most ancient systems of medical treatment of the world.

3.7.6 **Medical Tourism**

India is one of the most lucrative medical tourism India is one of the most lucrative medical tourism markets in the world. The sector is witnessing remarkable growth on the back of Government support through policies and initiatives, low cost, less waiting time and healthcare infrastructure. The growth in India’s medical tourism market will be a boon for several associated industries, including hospital industry, medical equipments industry and pharmaceutical industry.

3.7.7 **Religious Tourism**

This segment of tourism has been growing in popularity. Bihar, for instance, holds a very important position in such a touristic destination as it has association of five religious circuits of country. The Buddhist Circuit, a pilgrimage route including sites of significance related to the life of the Buddha, is sacred to 500 million Buddhists and also attracts non-Buddhist tourists interested in historical heritage sites. The four main sites are Bodhgaya in
Bihar, Sarnath and Kushinagar in Uttar Pradesh. The Shirdi-Shanishignapur circuit in Maharashtra clocked over 10 million tourists between October 2011 and March 2012. Apart from Shirdi, the most favoured destination, and Siddhivinayak temples, other places that drew the crowds were Trymbakeshwar in Nashik and Tuljadevi in Osmanabad.

3.8 SUB-SEGMENTS OF TOURISM INDUSTRY

The tourism industry in India can be categorized under three major sub segments as depicted below:

Exhibit - 3.2
Chart showing the Sub-segments of Tourism Industry

Source: Ministry of Tourism, Govt. of India

3.8.1 Hotels and Restaurants

The Hotel and Restaurants Industry has contributed between 1.2% and 1.5% of the GDP over the last seven to eight years. The Ministry of Tourism estimates that there are more than 8,700 hotels at 54 key locations across the country with a total room supply of about 174,000 including hotels in the classified, approved but not classified, and licensed by the state governments but not approved categories.

Major Players

In the large/luxury hotels segment there are about 11 long-standing players such as ITC Hotels, Asian Hotels, The Oberoi Group of Hotels, Hotel Leela Ventures, ITDC, Indian Hotels, The Park Hotels and international players like Hilton Hotels, Marriott International, Le Meridien Hotels & Resorts, and Radisson Hotels & Resorts. There are about 16 listed
hotel groups in the mid-segment including Bharat Hotels, Oriental Hotels, Nehru Place Hotels, Jaypee Hotels, Piem Hotels, and Taj GVK Hotels.

In addition, there are more than 90 listed hotels and resorts in the small/mid-sized segment including Country Club, EIH Associate Hotels, Kamat Hotels, and Mahindra Holidays and Resorts. Apart from these, as mentioned earlier, there are a number of guest houses and hotels, particularly in the budget and small hotel segments, which are primarily run by localized players.

3.8.2 Tour Operators

The tour operators, tourist operators and adventure tour operators in the country follow strict guidelines. As per the estimate of Ministry of Tourism, there are nearly 6,000 travel trade companies and firms comprising of tour operators, travel agents, and tourist transporters.

Major Players
- Thomas Cook India Pvt Ltd.
- Cox & King India Pvt Ltd.
- Kuoni India Ltd.

3.9 Tourism in Tamil Nadu

Tamil Nadu, a place of peace and serenity in the far south of the Indian sub-continent with its feet washed by the Indian Ocean, is a paradise for tourists. People who come here go back with an everlasting memory of the land and people. Tamil Nadu is a land of magnificent temples that remain intact exposing the marvel and glory of the Dravidian culture, art, architecture and spiritual values. Not only temples but Churches and mosques too, declare the inbuilt secularism of the land: Maximum population is Hindu (88.67%), followed by Muslims (5.47), Christians (5.69%), Sikhs (0.01%), Jain (0.12%), and Others (0.04%).

Numerous festivals and fairs, throughout the year add color to the scenic beauties at numerous destinations. The ancient glory and modern hub of life mingle amazingly well, giving joy and soothing comforts. Long, sandy and sunny beaches abound to brace one’s health and enhance happiness.
It is also a land of sanctuaries for birds and animals, forests, mountains, hill stations, natural sceneries and waterfalls – enough to forget everything else and be immersed in enchanting beauty. Modern amusement theme parks have come up in various places to provide heart-throbbing and thrilling experience to young and old. The people of Tamil Nadu are traditionally hospitable and friendly – making one feel at home while being there.

3.9.1 Climate

The climate of Tamil Nadu is essentially tropical and there is little difference between the summer and winter seasons. April, May and June are the hottest months when the mercury may soar above 40° C (43° C maximum; 18° C minimum) near coastal regions, the climate is warm and humid and one cannot avoid perspiring. But sea breeze sets in the afternoon making the evenings and nights cooler. A mild winter falls between the months of December and February, the most ideal time to visit Tamil Nadu. The weather is then pleasantly cool (35° C and 17° C maximum and minimum temperatures) with no perspiration. The rainy season is marked by the onset of the North East monsoon between mid-September and mid-December. Cyclonic storms occur during this time due to the depression in the Bay. The rainfall ranges between 25 and 75 inches. The most precipitation falls in the Nilgiris and other hill areas.

3.9.2 Tourist Destinations in the State

The State of Tamil Nadu, situated in the southern part of the Indian Peninsula has over 20 centuries of cultural heritage and historic significance as some of the most dynamic dynasties like the Cholas, the Pandayas, the Cheras and the Pallavas had ruled this region. Tamil Nadu has been bestowed by nature with a long Coramandel coast line, as well as hilly regions of Eastern and Western Ghats, very rich in diverse plant and animal life besides scenic beauty. With water resources from the several east flowing rivers, Tamil Nadu has the advantage of several water bodies in the form of lakes, waterfalls and others besides having some of world’s most beautiful natural beaches along its coastline.

General public in Tamil Nadu is hospitable and communicates well with outsiders in spite of the language barrier. Tamil, the Dravidian language which is the language of the land in Tamil Nadu is one of the oldest languages in the world; perhaps even older than Sanskrit. The foremost of important tourist attractions in Tamil Nadu are its impressive temples, which are true edifices of a great and ancient culture vibrant and lively even today.
Next only to the pilgrimage and heritage locations in Tamil Nadu comes the scenic beauty of nature in and around the state in the form of forests, wildlife sanctuaries, hill stations and the long bio-diverse coastline. These locations provide immense opportunities for sightseeing, pleasure and leisure, to the visitors of various categories including adventure tourists.

Based on the importance, potential for attracting tourist population and uniqueness, the tourist destinations in the state of Tamil Nadu can be broadly covered under the following classifications namely:

- Pilgrimage destinations;
- Heritage locations including monuments and places of historical interest;
- Locations of scenic natural beauty such as hill stations, water bodies, wildlife sanctuaries and beaches;
- Tourist Festival locations;
- Adventure destinations; and,
- Leisure destinations.

Many locations have one or more of the above attractions for the tourist. Based on information available from various sources as well as those collected during the visits of our expert teams to various locations in Tamil Nadu, a sample situation analysis in respect of representative tourist destinations in the state has been attempted in this chapter. The locations have been chosen to represent and cover various types of tourist destinations/places of tourist attraction. The listing though does not cover all existing locations, no doubt covers significant ones that are representative and typical of the areas/regions where they are located.

### 3.9.3 Pilgrimage Destinations

Temples are a marked feature of the landscape of Tamil Nadu not only in important cities and towns, but also in small obscure villages. Any small hillock on the highway, even if there is no habitation around it, has an ancient temple built on its top. It all began during the age of Bhakti and many of these temples were patronised by the kings and local rich men. Visiting sacred places for worship has been a custom and a common practice. Thus, such pilgrimages have created a kind of national integration. Pilgrims who visit Kashi and Badri in the North make it a point to bring Ganga water for the bathing ceremony of Abhisheka and
worship at Rameshwaram and Kanyakumari. The style of temple buildings that evolved in Tamil Nadu is commonly known as Dravidian style. To this belong the well-known temples of Thanjavur, Madurai, Srirangam, Chidambaram, Rameshwaram, etc. The tradition of Tamil Nadu includes 63 Shaivite and 12 Vaishnavite saints. They came from all castes and walks of life. Few of the prominent places of pilgrim interest can be identified as – Madurai, Chidambaram, Kancheepuram, Kanyakumari, Nagore, Palani, Rameshwaram, Thiruvannamalai, Srirangam, Thanjavur and Velankanni. The main attraction at each of these places as indicated below and equally spectacular specimens of Dravidian art and culture are available in plenty in the surrounding areas as well.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Place</th>
<th>Main Attraction</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Madurai and around</td>
<td>Meenakshi Temple</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chidambaram and around</td>
<td>Nataraja Temple</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kancheepuram</td>
<td>Kamakshi Temple</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kanyakumari</td>
<td>Shore Temple</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Palani</td>
<td>Hill Temple</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rameshwaram</td>
<td>Seashore Temple</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thiruvannamalai</td>
<td>Temple and surrounding hills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Srirangam</td>
<td>Ranganatha Swami Temple</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thanjavur</td>
<td>Brahadishwara Temple</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nagoor</td>
<td>Dargah of Hazrat Mian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Veilankanni</td>
<td>Shrine of Lady of Health</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 3.9.4 Heritage Locations and Historic Monuments

In the state of Tamil Nadu, there are a large number of heritage sites which even today reflect the cultural, social and ethnic background of this region in various forms. Some of the significant locations, which were studied, include:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Place</th>
<th>Main Attraction</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Gangaikonda Cholapuram</strong></td>
<td>Chola Temple</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mamallapuram</strong></td>
<td>Shore Temples</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Chennai</strong></td>
<td>Fort St. George, Santhome Church, Kalashetra,</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3.9.5 Tourist Festival Locations

The cultural life in Tamil Nadu follows a simple pattern. The village drama is a dynamic institution. Music in Tamil Nadu is very popular. Known as Carnatic music, it is practised all over the state. Tamil Nadu is a magical blend of timeless traditions and colourful festivals – a seat of cultural heritage. With its roots deep in culture and with an eye on technological advancement, Tamil Nadu is a harmonious blend of ancient culture and modern day thinking. Festivals, fairs and cultural events add a note of vibrant character to the state. Some famous Fairs and Festivals are enlisted below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Place</th>
<th>Main Attraction</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Summer Festivals</td>
<td>Hill Stations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saaral Festival</td>
<td>Courtallam</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Silk Festival</td>
<td>Kancheepuram</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sculpture Fair</td>
<td>Perambalur</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pilgrim Festival</td>
<td>Rameshwaram, Madurai, Chidambaram, Vailankanni and Nagoor.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dance Festival</td>
<td>Mamallapuram, Chidambaram, Madurai and Tiruvannamalai.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3.9.6 Summer Festivals

[Venue/Place: Udhagamandalam, Kodaikkanal, Yercaud, Yelagiri and Kolli Hills]  
[Month: May-June]

Tamil Nadu has an interesting topography. It is dotted with lakes, hills, mountains and beaches. Come summer, people flock to the hill stations to beat the heat. The annual summer festival is celebrated with pomp and splendor at all popular hill stations in Tamil Nadu. Cultural programmes, adventure sports, boat races, flower and fruit shows add to the festivities. Located 200 km from Chennai and about 1150 MSL, Yelagiri has lush forests, picturesque trekking routes and a lake. The route uphill has several hair pin bends that offer a panoramic view of the valley. The Kolli Hills or Kollimalai situated in Namakkal district. The highest point is nearly 1500 m asl. It has a pleasant climate and serves as a nice tourist attraction as well as picnic spot thanks to its picturesque ravines and high peaks.

3.9.7 Saral Festival

[Venue/Place: Courtallam; Month: July]

It is popularly said monsoon, happiness, waterfalls and Courtallam go hand in hand. The waterfalls on rocks and tiny droplets are sprinkled into the air, giving a fog-like appearance. The breeze carries this fog far. The phenomenon is called Saral in Tamil. This is the only spa of its kind in the south. During this festival, tourists come in droves from all over the country to participate in the ritualistic bathing. The falls are known for its therapeutic value. The Saral Festival is replete with cultural programmes, competitions, fun and frolic. A pleasant climate during the peak season sets the right mood for festivities.

3.9.8 Silk Festival

[Venue/Place: Kancheepuram; Month: October]

The Silk Festival at Kancheepuram showcases silk saris in all its resplendent glory. It highlights the master craftsmanship of the weavers of Kancheepuram. Saris in different hues
and shades take your breath away! A must see for anybody who appreciates the subtle elegance of silk saris and also a congregation of buyers and sellers.

3.9.9 Sculptor Fair

[Venue / Place: Perambalur District; Month: November]

Arumbavur Sculptor Fair, a tribute to temple art and architecture, attracts sculptors from all over India who congregate to display their masterpieces. Prizes are given to the best sculptors to encourage the best talent. The hamlet is 90 km from Tiruchirapalli in Perambalur District.

3.9.10 Pilgrim Festival

Rameshwaram, Madurai, Chidambaram, Velanganni and Nagore which attract large number of pilgrimage tourists during the pilgrim festivals.

3.9.11 Dance Festival

[Venue/ Place: Mamallapuram, Thiruvannamalai and Chidambaram]  
[Months: November, December, January, and March]

Dancers and musicians from all over India and abroad come together in this spectacular event to enthrall dance enthusiasts every year. Apart from classical dance expressions, folk dances of India also find a place in this classical art form extravaganza.

Mamallapuram

It is quite an experience to watch leading dancers perform at this ancient seaside town on an open-air stage with the incredible monoliths serving as a backdrop. A festival similar to the dance festival at Mamallapuram is also organised by the State Tourism Department for a period of fifteen days. Exponents of various dance forms from all over the country perform in this festival.

Thiruvannamalai

Thiruvanamalai has numerous temples dedicated to Shiva. The most important is the Arunachala Temple that is famous for its architecture and craftsmanship. It is against this historic backdrop that the Dance Festival is conducted.
**Chidambaram**

Lord Nataraja, according to the Hindu mythology, is called the Lord of dances. Dancers from all over India come together, to perform and to pay their tribute to Lord Nataraja at the Natyanjali Festival, a 5-day utsav in the months of February starting from the day of Mahashivaratri, at Chidambaram situated along the coast of the Bay of Bengal, 75 km South of Pondicherry.

**3.9.12 Tea and Tourism Festival**

*Venue/ Place: Udhagamandalam; Month: November*

A 3-day festival which is a huge draw among tea lovers. On display are varieties of tea also available for tasting. Cultural extravaganzas, cuisines of the South and a pleasant climate form the right blend. A must see for lovers of the cuppa.

**3.9.13 Pongal Festival**

*Venue/ Place: All over Tamil Nadu; Month: January*

Pongal or the Harvest Festival is celebrated by way of paying tribute to the sun, nature and cattle for helping them with a rich harvest. The 3-day festival is celebrated with great pomp and splendour. Bogi is celebrated the first day. Homes are given a fresh lick of paint and old articles are removed. The second day is Pongal, the main festival. Sugarcane, Pongal (a sweet variety of rice) and festoons of mango leaves mark this auspicious day. Mattu Pongal is celebrated the third day. On this day people pay tribute to the cattle for bringing in prosperity. Jallikattu or Taming the Bull, the most popular sport in Tamil Nadu, is part of the Pongal celebrations. This game of valour is held in the villages with great pomp and splendour though only as a popular sport. People from the neighbouring villages throng the open grounds to watch man and beast pitting their strength against each other.

**3.9.14 Music Festival**

*Venue/ Place: Thiruvaiyaru, Thanjavur District; Month: January-February*

Situated on the banks of the river Kaveri, 13 km from Thanjavur, Thiruvaiyaru has an old Shiva temple, known as Panchanatheeswar temple that attracts pilgrims in large numbers. This town is renowned for its association with Saint Thyagaraja, who, along with Muthuswami Dikshitar and Shyama Sastri, comprises the Trinity of Carnatic music. It is on
the banks of the river which has the samadhi of saint Thyagaraja, that the Thyagaraja Aradhana festival is held every year. This solemn event is attended by ardent fans of classical music. It is a musical treat for fans to watch the favourite doyens of classical music perform. Budding classical singers consider it an honour to participate in this festival. They perform here by way of invoking the blessings of saint Thyagaraja.

3.9.15 Adventure Destinations

Preservation of ecology/ environment is increasingly gaining prominence. Befitting, eco-friendly adventure tours are also gaining momentum. Tamil Nadu boasts of several ideal locations to attract the visitors, who have concern on preservation of ecology. The Eco Friendly areas of Tamil Nadu are for exploring the Nature at its best and to be a part of it.

3.9.16 Trekking

A tropical land with evergreen forests, dry deciduous/ thorn forests and scrubs covered hill ranges; Tamil Nadu offers sylvan trails for trekking admirers. Following are some of the popular places for trekking, they are:

- **Udhagamandalam**
- **Anamalai Hills**
  - **Circular Treks**
  - **Linear Treks**
- **Kodaikanal**
- **Yelagiri Hills**
- **Kolli Hills**
- **Kalakkadu – Mundathurai**

3.9.17 Aqua Sport

The seas on Coramandel coast are rough and strong and rolling, suitable for surfing, but in places they are rocky. Backwaters are there to provide shallow water spreads for wind surfing.
Muttukadu

35 km South of Chennai lies Muttukkadu, an ideal location for wind surfing. TTDC and other operators provide necessary sails and windsurfing equipments to try surfing on backwaters. Plans to provide, water scooters and other aqua-sports are also on the anvil.

3.9.18 Hang-Gliding

Though hang-gliding is not popular in this part of the country, the Madras Hang Gliders Association is keen on popularising this adventure sport. Now, to train those who are interested in this adventure activity, motorized hang-gliders are being provided by the Madras Hang-Gliders Association. The St. Thomas Mount, an outcrop or hillock on the outskirts of Chennai, the hills or Kodaikanal and Udhagamandalam are the best locations for Hang-Gliding. In the summer months, the adventurers can do hang gliding at Kalhatty Ghat. The take-off point is exhilarating. One can fly over dense shoals and beautiful waterfalls and streams.

3.9.19 Angling

Angling is an interesting pastime for the tourists. There are several water resources in Tamil Nadu are identified for the Angling. In the Nilgiris the waters of Mukkanthi Lake and the river, Gurumund river and reservoir, Avalanchi and Emerald river, Peermund, Chambar, Kallkundi Streams, Upper Bhavani Reservoir, Billithadakulla River, Bhavani Puzha, Aradha Puzha, Parsons' Valley Stream and Reservoir, Kings Dhar Stream, Western Catchment Reservoir, Thirupanthurai, Emeri Puzha, Silent Valley streams etc. are the water for excellent trout fishing. In Kodaikanal hills, trout streams are Pulavachiyar and Konalar. Carp fishing is recommended in Kodai Lake. In addition the state's 900 km long coastal line provides you for ample marine fishing. For fishing, licence fee has to be obtained from the fisheries department. The locations are:

- Kodaikanal: Observatory Road, Kodaikanal
- Udagamandalam: Assistant Director of Fisheries, Fish dale, Udhagamandalam.

At Ooty, trout fishing is available in Avalanche and Sandinalla lakes with prior permission from the Fisheries Department, located near the bus stand.
3.9.20 Water Surfing

With a backwater and estuary, Muttukkadu is ideal for rides on motorized boats or for water surfing. One can hire a pedal boat or a row boat for cruising leisurely. Muttukkadu is ideally suited for angling and fishing. TTDC’s runs boat services and a cafeteria here. It is 36 km from Chennai.

3.9.21 Leisure Destinations

Golf

Outdoor Sports are the best pass-times. However certain sports need special arrangements to play. Golf is one such sport that requires a vast area to play with. The lush green lawns, serene ambience of this sport are really alluring the player and the onlookers as well.

Tamil Nadu is bestowed with hilly terrains, where the nature, blessed the land with green pastures and valleys that are ideal for the golf. Similarly certain areas in this tropical state are developed to fit enough to play golf. Five best golf courses are in Tamil Nadu, which offer golfers a vivid and memorable experience.

Golf courses in Tamil Nadu are situated in Chennai, Salem, Kodaikanal, Udhagamandalam, Coonoor and Coimbatore. All these clubs are maintained by a forum of members. Golf clubs are therefore normally restricted to the members and/or guests of members. However certain clubs offer permissions to walk-in golfers as well. The walk-in golfers have to play on weekdays whereas the weekends are exclusively for the members.

3.10 TOURISM IN SALEM REGION

Salem region includes four districts namely; Salem, Dharmapuri, Namakkal and Krishnagiri. For the administrative convenience districts Salem, Dharmapuri, Namakkal and Krishnagiri were bifurcated. The study area includes all the said four districts. Every district in Salem region has tourism specialties of their own. Now an attempt has been made to explain the tourism specialties in all the individual districts.

Salem District

Salem is a city and a municipal corporation in Salem district in the Indian state of Tamil Nadu. Salem is located in the north central part of the state, about 340 kilometers.
South west of the state capital was Chennai. Salem is the fifth biggest city in Tamil Nadu in terms of size after Chennai, Coimbatore, Madurai and Tiruchirappalli respectively. It is the fifth municipal corporation, located at the base of the popular tourist destination of Yercaud hills. This town is surrounded by hills on all sides. Nagaramalai to the north, Jarugumalai to the south, Ganjamalai to the west and Godumalai to the east.

Salem has an airport which is located on Salem – Bangalore high way in a place called Kamalapuram, now the services are cancelled due to poor patronage. It is 20 minutes drive from the city. The air service in Salem is easily accessible by NH 7, NH 47 from all parts of the state. Salem has a railway junction.

Tourism Specialities – Entertainment Tourism, Parks

There are three parks in Salem namely, Kurumbappatti zoological park, Anna park near four roads and Ramakrishna park. The Kurumpappatti zoological park was not maintained properly. It is located 7 kilometers from Salem city and the road is also very poor. But recently an up gradation was done to attract the tourists. During weekend local people go there with families to entertain children. Anna Park is an entertainment centre focused on children with many games for the children. Ramakrishna Park became extinct and now it is only a bus stop.

Religious Tourism Sites

Tharamangalam Kailasanathar Temple

It is a lord Siva temple, the most beautiful of its kind in Salem. Parts of the temple existed in tenth century itself and the temple was completed during 17th century by Vanangamudi cholan. The structure and architecture of the temple is magnificent. It is beyond explanations. It attracts pilgrims from all parts of the state and foreign tourists also visit there. every year on February 21 and the consequent three days, a great solar and architectural wonder can be seen in the temple during the sunset the rays of the sun travel through the front Gopuram source at the temple’s entrance gate and travels across the front plane to fall directly on to the statue of Siva, making the lingam appear to glow. The movement of the sun beam can be witnessed. It is a miracle of architectural expertise. Recently Tamil Nadu has declared Taramangalam temple as a heritage temple.
Sugavaneswarar Temple

It is also a very important shrine in Salem. Mythology records that Suga Brahma Rishi worshipped the lord here. Arunagirinathar has sung a song on lord Muruga in this temple. It was constructed during 13th century by Mamannar Sundara Pandian. No frogs ever lived in the pond of this temple. The historians and pilgrims say that the temple lives for four yugas. This ancient temple should also be declared as a heritage temple.

Siddhar Koil

It is about 10 kilometers from Salem city towards Ellampillai (Siddhars are saints who could perform miracles – Siddha is a system of medicine developed by them). It is believed that Kalanginathar a famous Siddhar lived in the nearby Kanjamalai and attained Samadi here. The local people throng this temple every new moon day to other prayers and to take bath in the nearby stream believed to have medicinal values.

Kandashramam

It is located 10 kilometers from Salem city towards Attur road. It is located on a hill which is famous for the temples dedicated to goddess Ashtadasa Bhuja Mahalakshmi and lord Murugan.

Kumaragiri

It is about 5 kilometers from Salem city, towards Attur. It is abode of lord Muruga. The pilgrims need to climb up a tedious journey to worship lord Muruga.

Sri Kothandapani Ramar Temple

Sri Kothandapani Swami temple at Ayyodhiyapattanam represents the spiritual ancestry of our temples without any pomp and splendor as the very qualities of Sri Rama but majestic in its appearance. This place has derived the name as it had the foot prints of lord Sri Rama. Every stone of the temple bears an immortal poetry. Every pillar is an outstanding example of temple architecture arresting the attention of the visitor. Each produces music when tapped. It is the conclusion of the learned that one need not visit the Ayodhya in the north and it would suffice if they visit the temple at Ayyothyapattanam. It is 10 kilometers from Salem city towards Attur road and needs a left hand turning near Ayodhyapattanam railway gate.
Thanthondreeswarar Temple - Belur

It is an abode of lord Siva - one of the ancient temples in India. The famous Kannampullar Nayanar hailed from this place. It is about 20 kilometers from Salem city.

Yercaud

Yercaud is a hill station near Salem, Tamil Nadu in the Shervarayan range of hills in the Eastern Ghats. It is at an attitude of 1515 meters above the mean sea level. It attracts the tourists throughout the year, since the climate is very appealing and pleasant even during the winter. Neither the summer will be too hot nor is the winter too chill. It has many tourism attractions. It is called poor man’s Ooty.

Tourism Spots in Yercaud - Lake

When the tourists enter Yercaud town, the lake welcomes them with its cool breeze. Boating facility is provided by the TTDC. Rowing boat, pedaling boat and motor boats are available. Self rowing is not allowed to the tourists.

Anna Park

Just opposite to the lake Anna park is located. It is where flower show is celebrated every year. Anna park is meant for children. Many games are available here to entertain children. Tourists come there with their children enjoy their time pleasantly take their lunch or Tiffin there which they brought. Entrance fee rs.20 is collected here.

Ladies Seat

It is about 3 kilometers from the lake. It provides a panoramic view of Salem from there. Many tea shops and snack shops are there. Spices are also sold here. The TTDC provides telescope viewpoint here.

Gents Seat

Just half-a-kilometer from ladies seat gent’s seat is located. The tourists should climb 35 steep steps to have a better view of the hair pin bends and Salem city.

Children’s Park

To entertain the children with games the children’s park was opened just half-a-kilometer from Gents seat. The tourists can enjoy the cold breeze and in the winter, tourists will be embraced by the mist here.
**Pagoda Point**

It is seven kilometers from lake. Comfortable seating arrangements are made here for the tourist to take rest. A view point is also located here. Lord Rama’s temple is also here. Parking fee is collected here. From the view point tourists can have magnificent view of the villages under the foot hills.

**Deer Park**

It is located just adjacent to the lake. To entertain the tourists and children deers, birds and other small animals are here. Many games for the children are provided here. The dense trees in the park make the tourists to get rid of the tediousness of the journey. It is provided with water facility where tourists can have their food. Entrance fee is collected here also.

**Aquarium**

It is a new endeavour in Yercaud to attract the tourists. Varieties of fishes are displayed here.

**Manjakuttai**

It is a very beautiful view point. Very recently the TTDC has built a view point here. The tourists can have a pleasant view of the ravines and villages from here. But now fence is built by the neighbor and the sun rise view point lost its charm.

**Raja Rajeswari Temple**

It is located on the way towards Shervarayan temple. It is hardly 3 kilometers from the lake. It is a place of religious tourism. The deity and the positive vibrations in the temple are to be worshipped and experienced respectively.

**Sherveroyan Temple**

This is the peak of Yercaud hills. An ancient temple is here. The deity’s name is Sherveroyan. The hill received its name only from the deity. A large plain ground is near the temple is an additional admiration here. The tourists can conveniently park their vehicle, relax, can have a thrilling view of the villages downhill, enchanted by the mist. Every year during the summer, there will be a festival in the temple, people from all the nearby villages gather in thousands.
Kiliyur Water falls

It is 6 kilometers away from the lake. Now only the road is laid to the falls. All tourists cannot go to the falls because the approach road is missing. The tourist should get down from the hill, where there are no steps. It is 2 kilometers tedious journey to the falls. The tourist should jump, bend twist and at times crawl step by step to reach the falls. It is really adventure tourism. Getting down to the falls is very tedious and climbing back from the falls is very tiresome. Woman tourists cannot go there.

Karadiyur View Point

It is a new tourist spot in Yercaud. There is a watch tower built by the forest department. It is 6 kilometers away from the lake. The approach road is not properly laid. The panoramic view of the dense forests, ravines and mountains from the watch tower makes the tourist to forget the journey risk and pain taken and compels them to come again and again.

Maha Meru Temple

This is newly built one and rare of its kind, 5 kilometers away from the lake towards Karadiyur. Maha Meru is an architectural wonder and has mythological value. It attracts tourists and pilgrims from all places.

Mettur Dam

It is one of the tourism attractions in Salem district. The Stanley reservoir which is commonly known to people as Mettur dam is 128 feet high. It is a grand view when the dam is in its fall capacity. Near the dam there is a big park. Tourists use to come there, spend their time very leisurely, children play there, and eat there. It is an ideal picnic spot. Muniyappan temple near Mettur dam attracts tourists and pilgrims throughout the year.

3.11 TOURISM IN DHARMAPURI DISTRICT

Dharmapuri is a town and the head quarters of Dharmapuri district, in the state of Tamil Nadu. It is located 65 kilometers north of Salem. It was then a part of the Salem district. It was one of the taluks of Salem district. Dharmapuri district was formed as a separate district on 02-10-1965 with its head quarters at Dharmapuri.

Hogenakkal Falls

Hogenakkal waterfall on Kaveri river, Dharmapuri district. Hogenakkal falls is located at the border of Karnataka and Tamil Nadu, around 46 kilometers from dharmapuri.
In Hogenakkal, the Kaveri river enters Tamil Nadu as a big river with gushing water. The name ‘Hogenakkal’ is derived from Kannada means smoky rocks. When the river falls on the rock below, the gushing force of water causes a smoke-like mist, leading to the origin of the name. At Hogenakkal, the water spreads for miles around and cruising on country – made dinghies (parisal) is possible. Hogenakkal is considered the grand canyon of India in terms of the unique landscape and the wild Kaveri river flowing there for ages. It is also sometimes referred to as the Niagara falls of India.

**Theerthamalai Temple**

Theerthamalai is a sacred place in Harur taluk. The temple is located at the top of a hillock. Chola and Vijayanagara kings donated liberally to this temple. a lot of devotees come to the temple during the Maha Shivarathiri. It is believed that lord Rama created the waterfall to do Abhishek for lord Shiva, after waiting for a long time for hanuman to bring water.

**Sir Thomas Munro Pillar - Dharmapuri**

This pillar was erected by the British India’s government of madras to mark the association of Dharmapuri with Sir Thomas Munro who lived here from April 1792 to march 1799 as assistant to the superintendent of revenue in the Baramahal. His house and his favorite garden were few yards away from this place near at Vel milk depot.

**Hanuman Theertham**

This place is situated on the bank of Pennaiyar at a distance of 10 kilometer from Uthangarai and traditionally associated with Tirtamalai. It is believed that hanuman was instructed by lord Rama to bring water, but after waiting for a long time, Rama created a waterfalls, hanuman was said to have thrown down the vessel in which he brought the holy water and this spilled water is believed to be the “Ranumantatirtham”.

**Adhiyamankottai**

The capital of Adhiyamans, ancient rulers of Thahadoor, was Adhiyamankottam which is situated on the Salem -Dharmapuri road, 7 kilometer from Dharmapuri. The ruins of the roughly oval shaped fort are still there. The Chenraya Perumal temple there is a protected monument and is thought to have been constructed both by the King Krishna Devaraya and the Hoysala kings. There is a Mandapam which leads to the sanctum sanctorum. There are paintings in the ceiling depicting scenes from the Mahabharata, Viswarupa Darshan of lord Krishna and some scenes from the ramayana. all the paintings belong to the 13th century.
**Kottai Kovil**

This is one of the temples built for lord Shiva. It is located on the northern side of Dharmapuri. It has been renovated and is maintained by the government and people of Dharmapuri. There are rare sculptures and paintings contained in it. The main specialty of this temple is the ‘Hanging Pillar’. There is also a legend that there was a secret passage that connects this temple to Adhiyamankottai.

**Subramaniya Siva Memorial**

Subramanya Siva was born on 19 September 1884 in Vathalagundu, Madurai. He was a revolutionary independence fighter who worked closely with other freedom fighters, such as V.O Chidambaram Pillai and Subramanya Bharathi, and inspired many young men to join the freedom movement. He was the first political prisoner of the Madras presidency and described his jail experiences in a book, jail life. He also published Gnana Bhanu, a collection of poems. He was an admirer of the philosopher, Swami Vivekanandha and his religious master Ramakrishna Paramhamsa. Siva disagreed on many things with Gandhian philosophy. He believed in using violent methods where constructional methods had failed. Siva died on 23 July 1925. A monument has been built in memory of siva in the government school name after him at pauparapatti, pennagaram taluk.

**C.S.I. Zion Church**

C.S.I ZION church is one of the C.S.I churches located in Dharmapuri district. It is the head of all the other C.S.I churches in Dharmapuri district. The youths of this church along with other church members are doing many social activities including helping poor people, visiting leprosy people & providing them old usable clothes, celebrating festivals with orphans, etc.

**Sacred Heart Cathedral**

The sacred heart cathedral is the seat of the Roman Catholic diocese of Dharmapuri.

**Mount Carmel Church**

Mount Carmel church is situated in B.Pallipatty, which is known for its grotto festival. This is a three-day feast celebrated on the second Friday after Easter and is attended by more than a lakh (c. 100,000) people seeking to receive the blessing of our lady of Lourdes.
3.12 TOURISM IN KRISHNAGIRI DISTRICT

KRISHNAGIRI

Krishnagiri is a municipal city and the headquarters of Krishnagiri district in the Indian state of Tamil Nadu. It is located 90 kilometers from Bangalore and 45 kilometers from Hosur. Mango is cultivated as the main crop and it is considered the birth place of mangoes. The land here is extremely fertile with rich access to fresh water and is amenable to growing crops. Krishnagiri is a rapidly growing town and is the site of significant business and residential development. The Krishnagiri dam is currently undergoing expansion and a variety of small scale industry zones are being set up.

The historical importance and potential growth in education, economy and tourism of present Krishnagiri made it necessary to create a separate district. Krishangiri was formed 30th district by the government of Tamil Nadu. Krishnagiri district was carved out of Dharmapuri district on 9th February 2004 with five Taluks and ten blocks. Thiru.Mangat Ram Sharma, I.A.S has administered the office as first collector of Krishnagiri district.

Krishnagiri and Mangoes

The national fruit of our country as well the state of Tamil Nadu is mango and the major crop of Krishnagiri district with 300.17 km square of cultivation is mango. The district produces 300,000tones annually. Almost 20% of the mango varieties like ‘Thothapuri’ and ‘Alphonso’ that are produced in this district are processed into pulp. In addition to mango pulp processing, tones of mangoes are processed into juice every year in this district. A large scale, mango export zone has been approved for the Krishnagiri district. This will allow growing as well as processing of mangoes thus yielding higher profits for the farmers.

Approximately 25 industries located in these district process mangoes. much of the population in this district is employed through mango cultivation directly and other labor class benefit through employment in mango processing units. There are about 150 mango nurseries which produce mango saplings in and around ‘Santhur Village’. The district exports mango based products worth over 500 crores. Under the horticulture development program, government owned horticulture farms are functioning here. Through these units, about 3 lakhs of fruit saplings are produced and distributed under different schemes. Apart from production and export, Krishnagiri also hosts mango exhibition every year which is the unique in its kind in line with the annual exhibition held at New Delhi.
Tourism in Krisnagiri

Thousands of visitors visit Krishnagiri each year. Majority come from Hosur / bangalore and Chennai. KRP (Krishnagiri Reservoir Project) dam constructed in 1960’s during the rule of the chief minister kamaraj located near the town, is a nice picnic spot. Nearby, sayed basha hills have a fort that was the fortress of the ruler, Tippu Sultan. Treks to the nearby hills / mountains as well as farm houses are located in the outskirts. The boat house is situated 8km from the central bus stand which also a houses children’s park. There are a variety of ancient temples in the vicinity of Krishnagiri. Nearby Ramapuram is the site of a 500 year old Rama temple that draws many visitors each year.

Religion

Krishnagiri houses more than 50 temples famous and important temples of them are as follows:

- Kattu Anjanaeyar temple located in outskirts of the town attracts many devotees everyday
- Subrahmaniya Swamy Temple In Katnampatti Near Govt.Arts college famous for kavadi
- Narasimma Swamy Temple In Pudupet
- Dharmaraja Temple In Oldpet Is Famous For Bharatham(Annual Mahabharatham Recitation) And Terukkuttu
- Sivan Temple In T.V.Malai Road

Churches like C.S.I Christ church (more than 350 member’s families); fathima church – Vincent De Paul Parish (a traditional roman catholic church) and i.e., L.C Church are all situated in the Bengaluru road. A lot of mosques are found inside in the town as well as the areas surrounding the national highway. Krishangiri Dharga located near new bus stand is significant in this district. Syed Basha hill also houses a mosque which is crowded during the festivals. A big Dyana Mandapam for the Jains is also found at the center of the town. Krishnagiri Samithi of the Sathya Sai organization located opposite to govt. girls school is famous in this district.
3.13 TOURISM IN NAMAKKAL DISTRICT

Namakkal

Namakkal district is an administrative district in the state of Tamil Nadu, India. The district was bifurcated from Salem district with Namakkal town as headquarters on 25-07-1996 and started to function independently from 01-01-1997. The district has 4 taluks (subdivisions); Tiruchengode, Namakkal, Rasipuram, velur and kolli hills (in descending order of population) and has two revenue divisions; Namakkal and Tiruchengode. It was ranked second in a comprehensive economic environment index ranking of districts in Tamil Nadu not including Chennai prepared by institute for financial management and research in August 2009. It was major source of Tamil Nadu economy. As of 2011, Namakkal district had a population of 1,726,601 with a sex-ratio of 986 females for every 1,000 males.

A city and an administrative district, Namakkal is one of the most popular tourist destinations of the southern part of India. Located in Tamil Nadu Namakkal offers a wide range of attractions to people from varied interests. The city is renowned for its well-maintained infrastructure and environment. It is famous as a historical city, an educational city, a poultry city and transport city. It officially became a district in 1997 after it was separated from Salem district. The history of Namakkal dates back to the 7th century.

Geography

Namakkal district is bounded by Salem district on the north; on the east by Attur taluk of Salem district, perambalur and tiruchirapalli district's; by karur district on the south and on the west by erode district. Namakkal district comes under the north western agro climatic zone of Tamil Nadu. It is situated in the dividing portion of two watersheds between cauvery and the vellar system with the taluks of Attur, rasipuram and Namakkal on the east and Salem, omalur and mettur on the west. Tiruchengode taluk alone is placed under western agro-climatic zone. Besides the above two zones, kolli and a few isolated hills and ridges are scattered over Namakkal, rasipuram and Tiruchengode and along with the valleys and rolling hills, make up the characteristic topography of the district.

Demographics

According to 2011 census, Namakkal district had a population of 1,726,601 with a sex-ratio of 986 females for every 1,000 males, much above the national average of 929. A total of 150,699 were under the age of six, constituting 78,754 males and 71,945
females. Scheduled castes and scheduled tribes accounted for 20% and 3.3% of the population respectively. The average literacy of the district was 68.12% compared to the national average of 72.99%. The district had a total of 475,511 households. There were a total of 898,245 workers, comprising 152,497 cultivators, 228,614 main agricultural labourers, 35,156 in household industries, 422,885 other workers, 59,093 marginal workers, 5,976 marginal cultivators, 25,112 marginal agricultural labourers, 3,641 marginal workers in household industries and 24,364 other marginal workers.

**Industry**

The main occupation in the district is agriculture. The cultivation generally depends on monsoon rains, wells and tanks. Nearly 90 percent of the cultivated area is under food crops. The principal cereal crops of this district are paddy, cholam, cumbu and ragi. Panivaragu, Kuthiraivali, Samai Varagu and Thinai are some of the millets cultivated. Among pulses, the major crops are redgram, blackgram, greengram and horsegram. Among oil seeds groundnut, castor and gingelly (sesame) occupy important places. Of the commercial crops, sugarcane, cotton and tapioca are some of the important crops. Tapioca is used for the manufacture of sago.

Namakkal district is noted for Truck and Lorry external body building which dates back to 1956. Throughout India Tiruchengode is known for its Body Building industry for Trucks, Trailers, Tankers and Rig Unit. Finished trucks and Rig Units are even exported to foreign countries from Namakkal. Nearly 25,000 people are employed both directly and indirectly in truck body building activity and about 300 units in Namakkal and 100 Units in Tiruchengode are engaged in this activity.

Poultry development has been rather phenomenal in the district of Namakkal. The district is also well known for its poultry and dairy industries, accounting for a bulk of supply of poultry products to neighbouring industries. In fact, Namakkal produces about 65% of the egg output of Tamil Nadu.

**Transport**

Transport is the major field of work in Namakkal. Large number of bulk carriers and Lorries run through all over India from Namakkal. In south India 80% bulk carriers operated from here covers Tamil Nadu, Puducherry, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Goa, Kerala, Maharashtra and other states. A lot of lorry (truck) body building workshops are located in
Namakkal. Egg production in this district is large, so transport facilities are good. It is the main centre for linking other districts via bus routes especially to the North side (Salem, Villupuram, Dharmapuri, Krishnagiri, Bangalore), East side (Tiruchirapalli, Thanjavur), South side (Karur, Dindugal, Madurai, Tiunelveli, Kanyakumari) and the West side (Erode, Coimbatore, Tirupur, Udthagamandalam (Ooty).

Aiyaru River

Beautiful river, its constituent streams are Aroychi Aru, Kanappadi Moolai Aru, Maasimalai Aruvi, Nakkattu Aru, and Thazhigai Aru. It Origianates in the Siddhan Kuttu Peak (4500) as Vellaipazhi Aru. At various points of its course in the kolli malai, this river is known as the Arappalli isvarar Aruvi. Beyond the Arappalli isvarar Kovil it falls down as Akaasa Gangai and flows out of the district at Puliyamsolai to join with the Kaveri.

Anjaneyar Koil

Namakkal is famous for a life size Hanuman Statue (Anjaneynar) of about 200 feet height carved out of a single stone. The city lies at the foot of a huge rock, upon which there is a fort.

Arthanareeswarar Koil

The only Siva temple in Tamil Nadu dedicated to the Halved-woman lord. The temple is situated on the Thiruchengode Mountain at a height of 465 metres. The chief deity is a statue of 5' high and is believed to have been created by siddhas out of a herbal compound. The temple also contains shrines for Murugan (Chengottu Velavar) and Vishnu.

Kailasanathar Koil

This Siva temple is known as the Keezh Kovil (Lower temple) with reference to its location in the town as against the Mael Kovil (upper temple) of Arthanari Isvarar, which is up on the hill. Its chief deity was referred to as Vikrama, Pandeeswarar after the Pandian King Vikrama who is said to have begun the construction of the temple. A well in the south eastern part of the town is still known as the Parian Pazhi.

Namakkal Dhurgam Fort

It is one of the naturally strong forts steeped in bloody history of the district. It was retaken by Hyder Ali a few months afterwards and was lost again to the British in 1792.
Kavignar Ramalingam Pillai Memorial Illam

He was born on 10-10-1888. He had the distinction of being appointed as 'Aasthana Kavignar' (poet of the state) and later honoured with the title of 'Padmabushan'. As a mark of respect his memorial was opened on 21-02-2000. His Memorial Illam is located in 39, Kavinger Ramalingam Street.

Kolli Hills

Kolli Hills is a major mountain range and is an outliner of the Eastern Ghats. It is eighteen miles (28 Kilometers) long (north south) twelve miles (19 Kilometers) wide (east/west) and the Koll Block covers 441.4 square kilo meters. It falls within the following coordinates. Rest Longitude 78º 17'05" to 78º 27'45" and North Latitude 11º 55' 05" to 11º 21’10". The name Kolli Malai refers to the mountain's once hostile nature; the unsuspecting and unaccamatised aliens, attracted by natural beauty. Viewed from plains of Namakkal the mountain appears as a flat-topped mass. The mountain has been inhabited from prehistoric times. It is much celebrated in the Tamil Literature of the Sangam period; at least eleven poets mention it in their poems.

As per Census 2011, the population of the Kolli Hills is 36852. There are 14 village panchayats and 275 hamlets. The population predominantly consists of scheduled tribes called Hindu Malayali whose spoken language is only Tamil. In two pockets SC population is found which around 700 acre. Cultivation of Jack Fruit, Guvava, Hill Banana, Pineapple, Pepper, Coffee, Cardamom, tapioca, honey and rice are the main agricultural activities.

The government reserve forests are seen in Ariyur, Puliyan Solai, Selur and Vazhavandhi Nadu. An area of 200 hectares is in the process of reforestation. Tigers and elephants which were once common in it are now extinct; only small animals such as black bears, hares, porcupines, and wild dogs are seen. Legends have it that the hills were part of the famous Madhuvanam (Honey Forest) reserved by Sugriva of the epic Ramayana. The Maximum elevation ranges from 3500' to 4500' with the tallest peak Vettakaramalai, is rising to 4663’ above sea level.

The hills formed a natural boundary between the Kongu Nadu and Chola Nadu. At the beginning of the Christian era the Mountain and its habitants were rules by Mazhavars and the King Valvil Ori ws much celebrated among them. Legends have it that he was a great archer and released a arrow by him pierced first and elephant, then went through the open
mouth of a tiger, then a deer and the a pig and then hit a monitor lizard killing instantaneously all. A statue was erected to honour the king in 1975 by Thiru Kalaingar M. Karunanidhi, Hon’ble Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu and the Government sponsored festival (Valvil Ori Vizha) every year named after him. Apart from known abode of the Saints, the Buddhists, the Jains set up a number of retreats, those fell prey to time. A stone image of Theerthangar reminds the existence of the earlier Jain influence. The famous Shiva Temple called Arappaleeswarar Temple dating back to 12th century situates at periakoviloor near the famous waterfalls Akasa Gangai. Reportedly an ancient and powerful deity called Kolli Paavai of Ettukkai Amman is also at Kolli Hills. It attracts large pilgrims on fiew moon days originally a Jain retreat. The glory of Kolli Hills and the Charity of the King Valvil Ori is liberally sung by the Sangam literature like Agananooru, Purananooru, Kurunthogai, Pathitrupathu and Natrinai.

Numerous streams originate from Kolli Hills. The major rivers traversing the hills are Aiyar, Varattar etc. At present Kolli Hills could be reached through a ghat road which was 70 hairpins bends. The village at the foot hill is Karavalli.. From Namakkal to Kolli Hills the distance is 55 KMs.. The ghat road alone 26 KMs. The district administration taking steps to form another ghat road called Nariankadu-Mullukurichi road which, when formed will have only 2-3 hairpin bends.

For the convenience of the tourists the Panchayat Union has constructed six cottages at Semmedu. At near Arappaleeswarar Temple a Youth Hostel is also available which could accommodate up to 30 persons. This could also be used as a training center. An excellent lawn and a rose garden greets the visitors. The inmates can avail the tasty Kolli hill food supplied from the canteen run by the Women Self Help Group. All these accommodations are available for rent from the Commissioner, Kollimalai Panchayat Union, Semmedu. Apart from these at present two private lodges with boarding facilities are available.

**Water Falls – Akasa Gangai**

Akasa Gangai is an enchanting 300 feet waterfall of river Aiyaru, located near Arappaleeswarar temple. Thousands of steps lead down to the falls. It is situated in a beautiful valley surrounded by the mountains at all sides. Enroute, the natural beauty of the valley and the vegetation-covered peaks. The location is ideal for trekking and the breeze is
pleasant, the cascade of silvery water touching and brushing the innumerable herbs which are abound in Kolli hills keeps everyone spell bound and fresh with its herbal qualities.

**Flora and Fauna**

The wilds of Kolli Hills are known for their medical herbs and plants. The vast expanse of forests of Kolli Hills boasts varieties of rare medical plants and these are regular sources for the preparation of indigenous Indian Medicines. Major tree species are Neem, Veepaloai, Usil, Velvel, Neermathi, Tamarind, Seetha Odai, Naval, Illupai, Silver Oak etc. Lemon grass is also prominent in most of the Reserve Forest areas. Wild animals like Rabbit, Wild boar, Bear, Hare, Peacock, Jackal, Jungle cat, Monkeys and variety of birds are seen in forest.

**View Point**

The important sight seeing places are Telescope House (at Solakadu), Government Herbal Farm, Botanical Garden, and View Points at 34, 35, 36 and 37 hairpin bends. Picturesque vies point at Solakkadu, at Akasa Gangai, Selur Nadu view point, Boat lake at Vasalurpatti, view point at Seekkuparai. Arappaleeswarar temple, Kolli Paavai Temple, Jain temple and ofcourse a pleasant never ending landscape crisscrossing 441 Kilo meter Kolli Hills range.

**Arappaleeswarar Temple**

A Shiva temple in the Valappur Nadu situated on the stream Aiyaru. Its is dedicated to Arppalleeswarar. The deity's other names are Thiru Arappalli Ashavar, Thiru Arappalli Mahadhevan and Thiru Arappalli Udaiyar, The Deity's consort is Archalai. It is a 12th century temple. Valli Amman, also known as Sucmathamba, and Thayammai. Because of the belief that Arppalleeswarar resides in the small fish of Aiyaru, the temple has also the name of Fish temple. It is customary for the pilgrims to catch the sacred fish by hand, adorn them with gold or silver nose rings in fulfillment of vows. The Hindu legends of the temple’s origin claim that the lingam in the main shrine was unearthed during the ploughing of a field. The scar on its top is supposed to have been caused by the plough.
Weather

Like the rest of South India, Namakkal experiences severe summer climate, hence the best time to visit the city is after the monsoons, during the months of October to March when the temperature is moderate.

How to reach Namakkal

Buses ply to cities in Tamil Nadu like Salem, Chennai, Coimbatore, Trichy, Madurai, Erode, Dindigul and Karur. Namakkal is connected to the rest of India through National Highway 7 (NH-7). Buses from Trichy, Madurai will pass through Namakkal to reach Salem and Bangaluru. A new broad-gauge railway line from Salem to Karur via Namakkal started its service on 25 May 2013. The nearest international airport is at Coimbatore International Airport (153 km) & Trichy (85 km) The nearest airport is Salem Airport had started from 15 November 2009, by the Kingfisher Airlines from Salem to Chennai. Trichy to Namakkal - 85 km, Coimbatore to Namakkal - 159 km, Yercaud to Namakkal - 75 km, Thanjavur to Namakkal - 139 km, Bangalore to Namakkal - 245 km, Chennai to Namakkal - 375 km.