Chapter – I

Introduction
INTRODUCTION

1.1 BACKGROUND

The concept of sustainability has become an indispensable part of development in the global arena since the Brundtland report namely “Our Common Future” got introduced in 1987. The world is yet to realize the objectives of the Report in most of the cases, including the practices in tourism development. It remains challenging and evokes intensive discussions due to misconception about it. Tourism is one of the frontier areas of development and it is a medium of socio-economic development in the host regions. Many mass and alternative tourism destinations have been benefited from different forms of tourism development. Tourism is widely recognized as a complex phenomenon (McKercher, 1999; Hall, 1995) which fails to manage its resources effectively due to lack of understandings and cooperation from tourism suppliers for self-centric unsustainable profits. Increased awareness about environmental degradation and non-availability of resources for the long run has made to reassess tourism developmental activities and to find its possible negative impacts despite positive benefits.

The World Travel & Tourism Council (WTTC) appealed in Rio Earth Summit in 1992 to promote Travel and Tourism as a catalyst for sustainable development. However, Travel and Tourism activities largely rely upon natural, cultural and human resources to make the beaten as well as off-the-beaten-track tourism destinations more popular. With the rising acceptance of sustainable principles worldwide, tourism industry tries to adopt practices for curtailing its costs and optimizing benefits by the ways of conserving resources and environment. This can be achieved with the active participation of local people.
Although Sustainable Tourism Development (STD) is widely acknowledged as a fundamental objective for the tourism industry, it has become uncertain at its execution phase (Weaver, 2000; Sharpley, 2000). It is apparent from literature that Sustainable Tourism Development is interpreted in many forms by various authors and people are biased with their approaches according to their usages (Heinen, 1994). The differences in opinion among various stakeholders of tourism industry create unexpected conflicts while taking actions to promote sustainable tourism destination. Therefore, there is a necessity to realize the perceptions of various stakeholders and their values before implementing the principles of sustainable tourism development.

Studies on STD tend to focus mainly on natural attractions with reference to ecological impacts of tourism and give little attention to the conservation of cultural heritage attractions and its environment. Cultural heritage sites showcase the masterpieces of ancestor’s creativity to reflect the traditional values of the society. It enhances the esteem and pride of local people, offers opportunities to communicate and understand tourists with diverse cultural background from the various reigns.

Cultural Tourism can otherwise be called as Heritage Tourism (Christou, 2005). It includes the movements of persons for essentially cultural motivations such as study tours, performing arts and other cultural tours, travel to festivals and other cultural events, visit to sites and monuments and travel to study nature, folklore or art or pilgrimages (World Tourism Organization, 1985, p. 131). Thus, Cultural Tourism has several manifestations and it has been expressed in many ways by various scholars (Hall, 1992; Ivanovic, 2008). According to Mason (2008), “the prime factors of cultural practices of tourism are handicrafts, language, traditions, gastronomy, art and music, history of the area including visual reminders, types of work engaged in by residents, architecture, religion, education systems, dress and leisure activities”.

22
Cultural tourism is playing a magnificent role in the modern tourism industry and acting as a drawing force to enhance the number of tourists and their experiences (Esu & Arrey, 2009). The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization’s (UNESCO) is a nodal international agency entrusted with the task of enlisting credible World Heritage Sites (WHS). It plays the active role in the preservation of cultural tourism sites and provides innumerable benefits to the host destination as well as to the people of cultural interest.

Cultural and Heritage Tourism offers job opportunity including disadvantaged people in the tourism industry; develops art, entertainment events and attractions to inspire young tourists round the year; helps to curtail social costs and induces restoration of degraded historical sites etc. (Goeldner & Richie, 2009). It expands the choices of tourists by broadening different offers and reduces seasonality in the destination (Patuelli et al., 2013). Cultural Tourism at the WHS is often promoted and justified for heritage conservation. However, the Elizabethan Grand Tour around historical destinations in quest of cultural knowledge in early 16th century followed by travelling to WHSs in 20th century as a passion among tourists has made cultural properties as a marketable commodity. Many scholars have argued that marketing WHSs have become instrumental in wooing tourists in large number, benefitting tourism service providers and local community. Unlike other forms of tourism, Cultural Tourism at WHS with its unique products and multiple services requires support from various suppliers for its dynamic market to sustain.

As the demand for Cultural and Heritage Tourism is growing significantly in the global market with several positive and negative impacts, studies on Impact Assessment in cultural and heritage attractions have become imperative with reference to the perception surveys of visitors (Ramsey & Everitt, 2008) and local communities (Nicholas
et al., 2009). Hence, this piece of research work attempts to throw light on impacts of tourism at WHS in Mahabalipuram, Tamilnadu by studying the perception of residents and tourists for promotion of Sustainable Tourism Development while analysing its prospects and challenges.

1.2 TOURISM AND WORLD HERITAGE SITES

Tourism is making much advancement with the deregulation of the airline industry, coupled with technological advancement and attitudinal changes of people. Consequently, more tourism destinations are being promoted globally for socio-economic development through the revenue generated by it. The WTTC has estimated that the direct contribution of Travel and Tourism to the world’s GDP is expected to reach US $ 3689.61 billion by the year 2021. Several types of tourism destinations such as Rural Tourism, Nature-Based Tourism and Ecotourism are being promoted to make use of the economic benefits from tourism industry. However, Cultural Tourism has emerged as the most vibrant form not only in demonstrating the material and non-materials objects, but also for creating income and employment with minimum infrastructure development.

The tag of UNESCO-enlisted WHS is used as a powerful instrument for tourism campaigns. Nevertheless, the WHS belong to all the peoples of the world, irrespective of the territory on which they are located. All those sites have become assets for tourism industry in many countries of European continents (Nzama, et al., 2005). Of 981 WHS, 759 sites possess incredible qualities to become Cultural attractions enticing tourists worldwide. Keeping all the countries behind, Italy, China and Spain have the privilege of owning 49, 45 and 44 WHS respectively. Indeed, India has 30 WHS within it (refer Table 1.1) Italy has got sites inscribed in the world heritage list from Rock Drawings in Valcamonica in 1979 to the latest Medici Villas and Gardens in Tuscany and Mount Etna.
in 2013. China with its recent addition of two sites such as Cultural Landscape of Honghe Hani Rice Terraces and Xinjiang Tianshan in 2013 has surpassed Spain’s 2nd position. These Sites have not only received appreciation for its unique and outstanding features, but also a token of acknowledgement for conserving it by efficient management practices (Edroma, 2004).

Moreover, if sites get inscribed in the world heritage list, the UNESCO offers financial and technological support to restore and uphold those sites (particularly in low-income countries, heavily depending on tourism for economic growth). Consequently, the WHSs have become key destinations for the tourism planners and local governments for regional development as it is found to be an ideal tool for perennial revenue and employment generation (Li et al., 2008). These benefits encourage both Union and State governments to make essential steps for obtaining official declaration from the UNESCO for their creditable cultural heritage attractions.

WHS are the common heritage of all people which requires integration of wider landscape enclosing the tourism destination for beautification and appealing visitors. The “Outstanding Universal Value (OUV)” label to the cultural and natural properties of the world attracts tourism developers and tourists. These are the most promoted destinations with higher tourist footfalls in many parts of the world (Buckley, 2004).

On the one hand, tourism provides financial support to preserve these sites. On the other hand, uncontrolled tourism practices cause severe socio-cultural impacts by compromising its OUV (Borges et al., 2011). Therefore, a balance between tourism development and protection of WHS must be ensured by evolving methodical plan to promote and sustain tourism in the destinations.
1.3 WORLD HERITAGE AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

The year 1972 was propitious for the Stockholm Conference and Convention concerning the protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage towards the protection of environment globally. However, the concept of sustainability was not figured in these deliberations. The call for long-term solutions and development through sustainable development was coined by International Union for Conservation of Nature’s (IUCN) during the World Conservation Strategy in 1980. It was the foremost document identified the relationship of preservation of nature along with the development process for human requirements. This paved the way for further expansion of the concept of sustainable development in the Brundtland Commission in 1987.

The Nobel laureate Prof. Amartya Sen identified the interconnections between culture and development related to the ends and means of development. The UN Resolution on ‘Culture and Development’ in 2010 mentioned that “Culture is a source of enrichment and an important contributor to the sustainable development of local communities, peoples and nations, empowering them to play an active and unique role in development initiatives”. It also pointed that heritage should be managed in a sustainable way to have continuous contribution to society.

In 2011, the UNESCO promoted a World Heritage and Sustainable Tourism Programme to construct an international framework for the cooperative and coordinated achievement of shared and sustainable outcomes related to tourism at World Heritage properties. It describes ‘Sustainable Tourism as sustainable livelihoods which should uphold the culture and environment of the host community, its economy and its traditional lifestyle, indigenous behaviour, and patterns of local and political leadership”. In addition to that, it recommends the hosts to get engaged in planning and
implementation process with regular assessment of tourism impacts for sustaining the universal treasure for future generations as well.

1.4 CULTURAL TOURISM AT WORLD HERITAGE SITES IN INDIA

Indian Tourism is known for its unique natural, cultural and man-made attractions to satisfy the diverse travel motivations. One such principal motivation is historical monuments inherited from past generations. Cultural and Heritage Tourism has become one of the main sources of revenue for many developing countries. India is also taking steps to attract more tourists for improving its GDP by restoring its heritage destinations.

India is one of the top preferred tourist destinations in the world for its glorious arts and vast number of cultural heritage sites that attracts both domestic and foreign tourists (Chawdhary, 2000). Besides, inbound tourism provides major sources of foreign exchange earnings and contributes to the Compounded Annual Growth Rate (CAGR) of 9.1 per cent during 2001 to 2010 as against 3.6 per cent for the world during the same period (Ministry of Tourism, 2011). The booming accommodation industry has created various job opportunities and brought international investment in Indian hotel industry (Kaul and Gupta 2009) and facilitated tourists to see, learn and understand the richness of cultural beauty.

As of 2013, India is blessed with 30 WHSs (24 cultural sites & 6 natural sites) recognized by UNESCO (Figure 1.1). The first Indian cultural site got recognised in the World Heritage List at the Seventh Session of World Heritage Committee in 1983. Recently, six Hill forts of Rajasthan such as Chittorgarh Fort, Kumbhalgarh Fort (Rajsamand), Ranthambore Fort (Sawai Madhopur), Jaisalmer Fort, Amber Fort (Jaipur) and Gagron Fort (Jhalawar) have received sanction to be the 30th WHS at the 37th Meeting of the World Heritage Committee in Phnom Penh, Cambodia, 2013.
The World Heritage Sites in India are presented in Table 1.1. These historical sites are the extraordinarily fabulous samples of great artistry and the pillars of India’s cultural heritage. For example, Rajasthan tourism has achieved many milestones in its heritage attractions (Banerjee, 2013).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sl.No</th>
<th>World Heritage Sites In India</th>
<th>State</th>
<th>Year of Inscriptions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Agra Fort</td>
<td>Uttar Pradesh</td>
<td>1983</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Ajanta Caves</td>
<td>Maharashtra</td>
<td>1983</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Ellora Caves</td>
<td>Maharashtra</td>
<td>1983</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Taj Mahal</td>
<td>Uttar Pradesh</td>
<td>1983</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Group of Monuments at Mahabalipuram</td>
<td>Tamilnadu</td>
<td>1984</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Sun Temple, Konarak</td>
<td>Orissa</td>
<td>1984</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Manas Wildlife Sanctuary</td>
<td>Assam</td>
<td>1985</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>Kaziranga National Park</td>
<td>Assam</td>
<td>1985</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td>Khajuraho Group of Monuments</td>
<td>Madhya Pradesh</td>
<td>1986</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.</td>
<td>Group of Monuments at Hampi</td>
<td>Karnataka</td>
<td>1986</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.</td>
<td>Churches and Convents of Goa</td>
<td>Goa</td>
<td>1986</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13.</td>
<td>Fatehpur Sikri</td>
<td>Uttar Pradesh</td>
<td>1986</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14.</td>
<td>Sundarbans National Park</td>
<td>West Bengal</td>
<td>1987</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15.</td>
<td>Great Living Chola Temples</td>
<td>Tamilnadu</td>
<td>1987</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16.</td>
<td>Elephanta Caves</td>
<td>Maharashtra</td>
<td>1987</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17.</td>
<td>Group of Monuments at Pattadakal</td>
<td>Karnataka</td>
<td>1987</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20.</td>
<td>Qutb Minar and its Monuments, Delhi</td>
<td>Delhi</td>
<td>1993</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21.</td>
<td>Humayun's Tomb, Delhi</td>
<td>Delhi</td>
<td>1993</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22.</td>
<td>Mountain Railways of India</td>
<td>West Bengal, TamilNadu, Himachal Pradesh</td>
<td>1999</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23.</td>
<td>Mahabodhi Temple Complex at Bodh Gaya</td>
<td>Bihar</td>
<td>2002</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24.</td>
<td>Rock Shelters of Bhimbetka</td>
<td>Madhya Pradesh</td>
<td>2003</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25.</td>
<td>Chhatrapati Shivaji Terminus (formerly Victoria Terminus)</td>
<td>Maharashtra</td>
<td>2004</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26.</td>
<td>Champaner-Pavagadh Archaeological Park</td>
<td>Gujarat</td>
<td>2004</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27.</td>
<td>The Red Fort complex</td>
<td>Delhi</td>
<td>2007</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28.</td>
<td>Jantar Mantar</td>
<td>Rajasthan</td>
<td>2010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29.</td>
<td>Western Ghats</td>
<td>Kerala, Karnataka, Tamilnadu, Maharashtra</td>
<td>2012</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30.</td>
<td>Hill Forts of Rajasthan</td>
<td>Rajasthan</td>
<td>2013</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: UNESCO Website
1.5 RESEARCH OVERVIEW

Tourism is basically considered to be less environmentally destructive than other forms of development. Conversely, the Manila Declarations in 1980 have highlighted and predicted the ill-effects of global tourism industry. It explicitly outlined the protection of natural resources and environment at the natural-based tourism sites, cultural and historical destination for the tourism development globally. This declaration also cautioned that requirements of tourism industry to satisfy the needs of tourists should not be detrimental to the environment (WTO, 1980).

The World Cultural Heritage Sites are the architectural wonders of human creations showing stupendous universal features with the depiction of history, arts and/or science. However, the increase in economic growth from tourism industry and concern over the environmental degradation, lack of resources due to uncontrolled tourism have emphasised the need for Sustainable Tourism Development (STD) in the Union and State tourism policies in India. Thus, the STD is defined as “the process of tourism development which meets the needs of present tourists and host regions, while protecting and enhancing opportunities for the future”. Hence this study focuses on Mahabalipuram, the first UNESCO-enlisted WHS in Tamilnadu as a case study and tries to identify the prospects and challenges for STD by studying the perceptions of tourists and local residents.

1.6 NEED FOR THE STUDY

Mahabalipuram was a 7th Century-old Port town which contains around forty monuments of different magnitude. These monuments are inscribed under the UNESCO World Heritage list in 1984 as a cultural heritage site. Tourism has grown consistently in Mahabalipuram and attained the maximum number of tourist arrivals between December
and January every year. Majority of the inhabitants of Mahabalipuram are dependent on the tourism industry directly and indirectly.

As tourism is becoming increasingly commercialized in Mahabalipuram, the government has reported the violations of rules and guidelines by tourism service providers. Many hoteliers have diluted policies and regulations for economic benefits by ignoring the importance of primary economic sector, cultural and environmental protection which has led to the fundamental rights of human at risk. The global economic crisis and other unprecedented events have hindered the inflow of foreign tourists to the destination, disturbing the livelihood of local small and medium entrepreneurs enormously. Hence a proper study is essential to evolve actionable solutions for promoting STD in Mahabalipuram.

1.7 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Mahabalipuram as a UNESCO heritage site, its potential is exposed to the world with several promotional campaigns and publicity. Apart from domestic tourists, foreign tourists from Europe, Australia, America and other parts of Asia visit Mahabalipuram round the year. Although Mahabalipuram provides economic benefits to the government and local people, it creates several problems such as environmental degradation, increase vehicular traffic and accidents, and lack of co-operation among local people, tourism providers and Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) officials in tourism management plans.

Hoteliers have utterly failed in the duty of sharing resources for protection of ecology and environment. However, different categories of accommodation operators are driven towards maximizing profits without having concern for sustainable tourism development. Majority of hoteliers are more tourists centric without adhering to the
environmental management practices directly leading to depletion of resources. Thus questions for the sustainability of Mahabalipuram as tourism destination need to be answered with proper justification. In order to find practical solutions for sustainable tourism development, perceptions of residents and tourists have been studied to guide planners to implement the principles of sustainable tourism. An in-depth study with the following objectives has revealed several hidden obstructions for the development of tourism in sustainable manner.

1.8 MAJOR OBJECTIVES

- To study the trend of tourist arrivals and tourists travel behaviour in Mahabalipuram
- To measure the gap between the tourist expectation and satisfaction in Mahabalipuram
- To examine the perceptions of tourists toward STD in the destination
- To assess the residents perception of tourism impacts, and their relationship towards tourism planning and for the promotion of STD in the destination
- To identify the prospects and challenges for STD in Mahabalipuram

1.9 METHODOLOGY

Data pertaining to this study, both qualitative and quantitative have been collected through the primary and secondary sources.

1.9.1 Secondary Data

Secondary data pertaining to this study were collected from the record of Tamilnadu Tourism Development Corporation (Chennai), Mahabalipuram Tourist Office,
Mahabalipuram Special Grade Town Panchayat, Mahabalipuram Electricity Department, Mahabalipuram New Town Development Authority, ASI office (Mamallapuram Sub-Circle), Indiastat.com etc. In addition to that, information was also collected from the national and international referred journals, periodicals and national and local dailies.

1.9.2 Primary Data

Primary data have been collected from tourists and residents in Mahabalipuram through two independent structured questionnaires. The questionnaire designed for tourist respondents captured information about their demographic profiles and travel behaviour, attributes revealing their expectations and satisfactions at the destination, and their perceptions towards STD in Mahabalipuram. The questionnaire designed for local community members captured information about socio-economic profile, perception about tourism impacts and perception towards STD in Mahabalipuram.

Besides the structured questionnaire, information has been recorded through the formal and informal talks with the executives of Mahabalipuram Special Grade Town Panchayat, Mahabalipuram Electricity Department, Mahabalipuram New Town Development Authority (MNTDA) and employees of hotels, resorts, restaurants etc., as a part of qualitative research method.

1.9.3 Sampling Method, Sample Selection & Its Size

Sampling method is used to achieve major representation from the whole population. Therefore, the sample should be collected in a manner to represent the population from which it is taken (Jennings, 2001). Keeping in view of the characteristics of resident population, simple random sampling method was used to select the samples of residents in Mahabalipuram. This village contains 10 wards, with a view to giving due
representation to each ward, a sample of 50 respondents from each wards were selected. Samples of native residents by birth and non-native residents living more than three years in Mahabalipuram were only considered for this study. After excluding the incomplete questionnaires, the sample size of 370 respondents was used for analysis.

Convenience sampling method was used to select the sample of tourist respondents. This method was used mainly because tourists were in the mood of enjoying a lot rather than spending more time in providing actual feedback about the destination and their tour. Therefore, selection of sample respondents plays the significant role in which they should be helpful, unbiased in disclosing their perception and more importantly they should spend enough time to understand and respond the question exactly. Hence convenience sampling method was used to select tourist respondents from the heritage sites such as the Five Ratha, Mahishasura Mardini Cave and Seashore temple and from the premises of few hotels & resorts. A total of 400 samples were selected from different spots and finally 384 respondents were selected based on the population size of tourists by using power sampling method and by eliminating the incomplete or inconsistently filled questionnaire.

1.9.4 Questionnaire Design

Questionnaire enables the process of collecting primary data in a standardised manner with a set of formalized questions from the respondents. Designing a perfect questionnaire requires researcher to be focused with research problem and objectives by keeping the target respondents characteristics such as educational qualification, language etc., in mind. Questionnaire which fails to fulfill the above mentioned features generally leads to more number of ‘no opinion’ or ‘uncertain’ responses. Therefore, questionnaires were framed in a logical order with simple language to help the respondents catch hold of
the topic and to provide appropriate responses. Two different questionnaires were prepared for tourists and residents in Mahabalipuram.

The tourist questionnaire was designed following a review of studies conducted by several authors (such as Tribe & Snaith (1998); Chawdhary (2000); Master and Prideaux (2000); Hillery et al. (2001); Mercado and Lassoie (2002); Valle et al. (2006); Truong & Foster (2006); Hsu et al. (2010); Lee et al. (2011)) to examine the perception of tourists. This questionnaire contains various types of questions according to the requirements of the variables. It obtains data pertaining to their demographic profile, tour and travel behavior using categorical variables. This is followed by a set of 20 attributes for obtaining opinions on expectation and satisfaction of accessibility and attractiveness of the destination through five-point Likert Scale. The value of -4 denotes Strongly Disagree, whereas the value of +4 denotes Strongly Agree. This questionnaire also contains 40 statements framed in five-point Likert Scale highlighting tourist perception and contribution towards STD in Mahabalipuram where the value of one represents Strongly Disagree and the value of five represents Strongly Agree. Likert scale questions were liberally used by several tourism researchers for examining the opinion of tourists and local communities or residents (Getz, 1992).

The questionnaire designed for local community has captured their personal information such as gender, age, educational qualification, occupation, monthly income, type of house etc. It also contains a set of 50 statements to gather perception about tourism impacts and their interest towards STD in Mahabalipuram using three point Likert Scale where one denotes Disagree and three denotes Agree. Most of the statements of this questionnaire have been taken from the review of Ko and Stewart (2002), Oviedo-Garcia et al. (2008), Choi and Sirkaya(2005), Nicholas et al. (2009) and Vargas-Sánchez
et al. (2009). These questionnaires were also pretested with a small sample of 15 respondents each to eliminate possible misapprehension and to improve further by modifying the questionnaire with regard to their feedback. Thus the revised questionnaire was strengthened with its content validity by reviewing ample literatures. Reliability of data was measured by calculating Cronbach alpha after feeding the sorted data in Statistical Package of Social Sciences (SPSS).

1.9.5 Data Analysis

Detailed quantitative data analysis was done using the SPSS 17 version. While transferring the data from filled-in questionnaire, special attention was paid in naming the variables and identifying the missing data in it. Various statistical tools such as Exploratory Factor Analysis, Pearson Correlation, One-way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA), Leven’s Independent Sample ‘t’ Test, Chi-Square Test for Independence and Wilcoxon-Signed Rank Test were used in the analysis with respect to their appropriate variables to examine the perception of tourists and residents towards STD in Mahabalipuram. Moreover, the percentage analysis of secondary data and some of the primary data variables were represented in Charts using MS Excel 2007.

1.10 MAJOR HYPOTHESES

To prove the arguments of the study, the following hypotheses have been framed:

$H_0$: There is no significant association between types of tourist and their travel behaviour.

$H_0$: There is no significant difference between expectation and satisfaction of the tourists in Mahabalipuram.
H₀: There is no significant difference in the perception of tourists towards STD in Mahabalipuram with respect to their socio-demographic profile.

H₀: There is no relationship between tourist satisfaction and their perception towards STD in Mahabalipuram.

H₀: There is no significant difference between the residents perceived tourism impacts with regard to their job sector.

H₀: There is no relationship between the tourism impacts perceived by the residents and their perception towards tourism planning and STD in the destination.

1.11 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

Mahabalipuram is one of the world renowned tourist destinations attracting hundred thousands of tourists and the same-day visitors, contributing maximum revenue to the state. However, tourism is a consumer of physical environments, historical sites, local culture and man-made infrastructure. All these natural and man-made tourism resources will be facing more serious threats if the destinations turn out to be extraordinarily developed and highly crowded in the future (Dumont et al., 2005). The successful destinations got enlisted in Conventions are facing unutterable threats due to the increased footfalls of tourists and extreme demands which were not expected at the time of establishment (Li et al., 2008).

Tourism development plans initiated by the Government of India and Tamilnadu have all possibilities to pose further threats to the ecology and environment of Mahabalipuram. Moreover, these forms of development have failed to generate and transfer the expected benefits to the underprivileged segment, as planning at earlier stage lacks vision of sustainable development. Nevertheless, the sustainable way of development has the enormous capacity to generate the expected socio-economic and
environmental benefits to the society. Hence, the STD is the need of-the-hour as it is identified as the significance of the study.

1.12 SCOPE OF THE STUDY

Sustainable Tourism Development is not only a complex multidimensional process, embracing visitors, residents and environment, but also dynamic approach of connecting all stakeholders in one thread. The uncontrolled conventional tourism poses several threats to natural and cultural endowments in Mahabalipuram. Increase in pollution levels and discharges of wastes into the sea leads to loss of natural habitat for marine species. The present study seeks to examine the perception of major stakeholders such as tourists and residents of Mahabalipuram with respect to prospects and challenges of the promotion of STD. This study has also estimated the extent of socio-economic and environmental impacts caused by tourism and has also probed into the factors that are acting as the barriers for promoting STD in Mahabalipuram.

1.13 CHAPTERISATION

This study on “Sustainable Tourism Development: Prospects and Challenges in Mahabalipuram, Tamilnadu” is presented in five chapters, giving importance to specific descriptions and discussions in each chapter.

Chapter I “Introduction” presents a detailed description of tourism and world heritage sites along with the discussions of its relevance in sustainable development. It also gives a brief introduction of Cultural Tourism at World Heritage Sites in India and proceeds with statement of the problem, objectives, methodology, hypotheses, significance, scope, limitations and structure of the thesis at the end.
Chapter II “Review of Literature” presents a detailed account of review of literature on the history of Mahabalipuram along with its salient features, promotion of Cultural Heritage tourism, tourism impacts, community participations and sustainable tourism development along with its indicators. This chapter also presents the review of empirical research works on characteristics and satisfactions of tourists, perceptions of residents on tourism impacts and the significance of ecological footprints.

Chapter III “Mahabalipuram – A World Cultural Heritage Site” focuses on the brief description of Mahabalipuram along with its temples and architecture during the Pallava period. In addition, also outlines the present scenario of Mahabalipuram with respect to the physical features, population details of its residents with respect to ward numbers, distribution of land for various uses, infrastructures etc. Issues like health and sanitation, education, solid waste management and ASI management are also described. Further, this chapter has also highlighted the significance of Mahabalipuram Dance Festival, other tourism sites and trends of tourist arrivals in Mahabalipuram.

Chapter IV “Results & Discussions” presents the growth rate of tourist arrivals in Mahabalipuram along with economic gains from tourist entry fees, parking charges etc. This chapter has also discussed the trends of road accidents, consumption of electric energy and production of solid waste in hotels. Further, the estimates of the Ecosystem Impact Factor to identify the impacts of tourism in Mahabalipuram have been outlined. This chapter also presents the outcomes of primary data collected from the tourists and residents with a detailed interpretation and discussions of the results.

Chapter V “Findings, Suggestions and Conclusion” includes the major findings of this study and suggestive measures for promoting sustainable tourism in Mahabalipuram. And finally conclusion is presented along with the scope for further research.
1.14 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

As many research works generally absorb vast data and time through fieldwork, this study also has its own restrictions.

The general limitation of the secondary data originating from government sources is incomplete and inaccurate, which cannot be ruled out.

Due to the lack of secondary data such as total number of foreign tourist arrivals from their native country, total number of migratory workers, environmental auditing data from accommodation sectors etc., ecological footprints is calculated in general.