PREFACE AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Tourism in India dates back to ancient times. The tradition of travel, be it for pilgrimage or visiting relatives, friends or attending fairs and festivals, is an ancient tradition of our country. Shankaracharya perhaps was the first promoter of tourism in India. By placing the four dhams in Puri, Dwarka, Badrinath and Sringeri, he became initiator of tourism.

Tamilnadu is a land known for temples with rich Cultural Heritage and Civilization. The heritage of Tamilnadu is revealed by St. George Fort, Museums, Art Gallery, Vedanthangal Birds Sanctuary, Mahabalipuram, Kanchipuram, Thiruvannamalai, Madurai, Thirupparankuntram and Rameswaram. The Pallava, Chola, Pandya and Nayak rulers enriched the towns with temple and monuments.

The traditional forms of tourism were basically Cultural Tourism and Religious Tourism. Countries with rich culture and tradition are all much sought-after by the tourists across the world. Heritage is the off-shot of the culture. India is one such country, since its culture and heritage known for its antiquity.

Tamilnadu is one of the states in India, enjoying legacy of classical language, particularly rich cultural heritage and hoary tradition. Besides having rich cultural heritage of that region, a large number of places of worship, reveal their heritage in Tamilnadu such as excellent artistic work of temples, the colourful fairs and festivals. This kind of natural and man-made heritages attract, both domestic and international tourists throughout the year.
The present study entitled, "Heritage Tourism (with special reference to Tirunelveli District)" is an attempt to bring out the important heritage places of tourism in this district along with people's cultural activities.

Many of the tourists visiting Tamilnadu after visiting Madurai cross over to Kanyakumari, neglecting Tirunelveli. Hence this study is an effort to bring out the glorious heritage resources of the district and is offering suggestions and ways and means to promote them as areas of tourist attraction.

For this study the researcher has used of both primary and secondary sources. In addition to the primary and secondary sources information has been gathered by way of interviewing respondents selected at random across Tirunelveli district. This helps to understand the cultural heritage of the people who are real inheritors of the past.

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