CHAPTER 4 PROFILE OF THE STUDY AREA

Chapter on profile of the area explains the Geography, History, and Map of Tiruchirapalli and Coimbatore districts in Tamil Nadu, India, which is the study area for the research. The tourism destinations, festivals, accessibility, airports, and tourist arrival statistics are briefly presented in this chapter so as to have a clear idea about the profile of the study area.

4.1 PROFILE OF TIRUCHIRAPALLI DISTRICT

4.1.1 Geography of Tiruchirapalli District

Tiruchirapalli is located at 10.8050°N 78.6856°E. The average elevation is 88 m (289 ft). It is located almost at the geographic centre of the state of Tamil Nadu, India. The topology of Tiruchirapalli is almost flat with a few isolated hillocks rising above the surface, the highest of which is the Rock fort. The city is spread over an area of 146.7 km²; it is situated on the plains between the Shevaroy Hills to the north and the Palni Hills to the south and south-west. The city is situated at the head of the Cauvery Delta, which commences 16 km² west of Tiruchirapalli where the Cauvery River branches into two streams of Cauvery and Kollidam forming the island of Srirangam.
4.1.2 Map of Tiruchirapalli District

Source: www.mapsofindia.com

Figure 4.1 Map of Tiruchirapalli District
4.1.3. History of Tiruchirapalli District

There are several deliberations about the origin of the name of the place. The name Tiruchirapalli is derived from the Sanskrit word “Trishirapuram” which comes from two words “Trishira” which means three heads and “Palli” or “Puram” which means city. It is believed that the three-headed demon Trishira prayed to Lord Shiva near the city and received favours. A rock inscription from the 16th century mentions Tiruchirapalli as “Tiru-ssila-palli” which means “Holy-rock-town”. Some scholars believe that the name is derived from the word Tiruchinna-palli which means “holy little town”. According to the Madras Glossary, the origin of the word Tiruchirapalli is from the word Tiruccinappalli meaning holy (Tiru) village (Palli). During the rule of the British, Tiruchirapalli was referred to as Trichinopoly which has been shortened to Tiruchirapalli or Tiruchi.

The city is believed to be of significant antiquity and has been ruled, at different times, by the early Cholas, Early Pandyas, Pallavas, Medieval Cholas, Later Cholas, Later Pandyas, Delhi Sultanate, Madurai Sultanate, Vijayanagar Empire, Nayak Dynasty, the Carnatic state and the British. The archaeologically important town of Uraiyur which served as the capital of the Early Cholas is a suburb of Tiruchirapalli. The city has a number of historical monuments, the Rockfort, Ranganathaswamy temple at Srirangam and the Jambukeswarar temple at Thiruvanaikaval being the most prominent among them.

Tiruchirapalli is one of the oldest inhabited cities in Tamil Nadu, its earliest settlements date back to the second millennium BC.

4.1.4. Tourism Destinations in Tiruchirapalli District

4.1.4.1 Rockfort/Ucchi Pillayar Temple

This rock is one of the oldest in the world—approximately 3800 million years—which makes it as old as the rocks of Greenland and is considered to be older than the Himalayas. It is 83 m high, with 344 steps hewn out of rock which leads to the top. Rockfort or Ucchi Pillayar Kovil is a combination of two famous 7th century Hindu temples, one dedicated to Lord Ganesh and the other dedicated to Lord Shiva, located on the top of a small rock in the centre of the city. This temple is mystic in nature with awe-inspiring rock architecture. The Ganesh
temple is much smaller with an access through steep steps carved on the rock and provides a stunning view of Tiruchirapalli, Srirangam and the rivers Cauvery and Kollidam.

4.1.4.2 Sri Ranganathaswami Temple

The temple of Lord Ranganatha is one of the largest vaishnavite temple in India and is of particular significance to all Hindus. It is located at a distance of about 7 km from Tiruchirapalli. In Srirangam, lord Ranganatha is in the reclining form of Lord Vishnu. Srirangam is surrounded by water of river Cauvery on one side and on the other side its tributary Kollidam forms 600 acres of island-town. There are 21 gopurams, among which the Rajagopuram is the largest in South Asia and it is 72 m in height.

4.1.4.3 Sri Jambukeswara Temple

This temple is situated 2 km east of Srirangam. This beautiful Shiva temple is a fine example of excellent architectural design and exquisite stone carvings. The temple is named after the elephant, which is believed to have worshipped Lord Shiva here. The Lingam is partially submerged in water and is meant to represent that god got incarnated as water in this particular temple. The entire temple is built around a Shiva Lingam partly submerged in water that comes from a spring in the sanctum sanctorum.

4.1.4.4 Samayapuram Temple

This temple is situated 20 km form Triuchirappalli town. The goddess Mariyamman is considered to be the goddess of health. It is an important pilgrim centre for all people of Tamil Nadu and this region. People of Tamil origin who have settled in different countries, like Singapore, Malaysia, Sri Lanka, Mauritius, Canada, Australia, Newzealand, Europe and United States of America, visit this temple during their visit to India.

4.1.4.5 St. Joseph’s Church

This church was built in the year 1812. This Church of Our Lady of Lourdes is the replica of the Basilica of Lourdes, the world’s famous place of pilgrimage in Southern France. The architecture of the church has louvered doors
which open to convert it into an airy pavilion. This is located near to Rockfort and Teppakulam in the Maingaurd gate area.

4.1.4.6 Natirsha Dargah

This Dargah is an important holy place for Muslims. It was built more than 1000 years ago. It has a famous festival “urs”, which is the death anniversary of Sufi saint Moinudin Chisti, he was the founder of chistiya Sufi order in India. This is celebrated in a very grand manner every year. Devotees from many parts of the state visit this Dargah and believe that they get self-satisfaction when they offer their prayers at this holy place.

4.1.4.7 Government Museum

This is located on Bharathidasan Road in Tiruchirapalli. There are very fine sculptures of Stone and bronze displayed in this museum. The major attractions of this museum are the sculptures of Mahavira, Gautam Buddha and Lord Vishnu. There are some of the rare collections of Zoology, Historical records, Geology and Many more.

4.1.4.8 Subramaniya Temple, Vayaloor

This temple is situated at Kumara Vayaloor. It is about 12 km from Tiruchirapalli, near Kuzumani, the village surrounded by lush green fields and small canals. It is one of the most popular Lord Muruga temples of this area. The kandar Sasti festival during October–November is celebrated in a grand manner here. The other important festivals which are celebrated are Karthigai Deepam, Thaipoosam, Panguni Uthiram, Full moon days, etc.

4.1.4.9 Gunaseelam Temple

This temple is situated 24 km from Tiruchirapalli, on the north bank of Cauvery River, in Tiruchirapalli–Musiri road. This is a Vaishnavite Temple and the name of the presiding deity is Lord Prasanna Venkateshwarar. The Vaishnavite communities from this region worship this lord as it is their family god. Where ever they are settled in any part of the globe, they make it compulsory to visit this temple when they visit India.
4.1.4.10 Koranganatha Temple

This temple is situated on the banks of river Cauvery at Srinivasanallur, it is about 50 km from Tiruchirapalli. The temple has some of the finest early chola stone sculptures with a very good architecture. This is a heritage temple, declared by Archaeological society of India.

4.1.4.11 Prasanna Venkatachalapathi Temple

This temple is situated at the top of Perumalmalai, near Thuraiyur. This was constructed by the grandson of Karikala Cholan. There are musical pillars present in this temple. Hundreds of devotees take part in the girivalam procession around the perumalmalai hillock on full-moon days.

4.1.4.12 Grand Anaicut (Kallanai)

It is one of the greatest engineering marvels of India. The Kallanai is an ancient dam in Tamil Nadu. It was built by Karikala Cholan in the 2nd century AD to harness the waters of the river Cauvery. It is made of stone. The dam is 329 m in length and 20 m wide and is still used for irrigation. This is a beautiful picnic spot for the residents of Tiruchirapalli and the neighbouring towns. This place is visited during weekends and holidays.

4.1.4.13 Mukkombu (Upper Anaicut)

This is situated 18 km from Tiruchirapalli. This Anaicut is about 685 m in length. Constructed in the 19th century across river Cauvery, it consists of three sections instead of one long stretch because of the shape of the island where it is built. This is also a good spot for picnics. There are beautiful gardens with amusement parks and play area for children.

4.1.4.14 Pachamalai Hill Station

Pachamalai is a wide spread green hill range. It is about 80 km from Tiruchirapalli. Its altitude is 1000 m. This mountain range has small regions like the Para Nadu, Kombai Nadu, Athi Nadu and Vannadu. It is a good range for trekking, where one can really enjoy nature to its best. Small streams and water falls add to its beauty. It is a very good destination for promoting eco-tourism.
4.1.4.15 Puliancholai

It is situated on the foot hills of Kollimalai 72 km from Tiruchirapalli. It is a place of scenic beauty with full of greenish tamarind groves in this forest region. There are beautiful streams, in the higher hills there is a water fall known as the Agaya Gangai. The distance from Puliancholai to Agaya gangai falls is about 5 h trekking. During this trekking route, one can see fantastic views of caves, curved rocks, different shaped stones, etc. It is a very good destination for trekking and eco-tourism.

4.2 PROFILE OF COIMBATORE DISTRICT

4.2.1 Geography of Coimbatore District

Coimbatore is located on the North Latitude between 10°10’ and 11°30’, East Longitude between 76°40’ and 77°30’ situated at an elevation of 398 m above the average sea level. The city has a tropical wet and dry climate, with moderate summers and winters, and average annual rainfall of 700 mm. Coimbatore is situated in the west of Tamil Nadu, India, bordering the state of Kerala. It is surrounded by the Western Ghats mountain range on the west and north, with the reserve forests and the Nilgiri Biosphere Reserve on the northern side. The river Noyyal runs through Coimbatore and forms the southern boundary of the corporation. The city sits amidst Noyyal’s basin area and has an extensive tank system fed by the river and rain water.
4.2.2. Map of Coimbatore District

Figure 4.2 Map of Coimbatore District
4.2.3 History of Coimbatore District

The region around Coimbatore was ruled by Sangam Cheras and it served as the eastern entrance to the Palakkad Gap, the principal trade route between the west coast and Tamil Nadu, India. The Kossar tribe mentioned in the second century Tamil Epic Silappathikaram and other poems in sangam literature is associated with the Coimbatore region (Kongu Nadu). Large numbers of Roman coins and other artefacts have been unearthed around Coimbatore, indicating the region’s ties with Roman traders. The medieval Cholas conquered the Kong Nadu in the 10th century. The Nayaks introduced the palayakkarar system under which Kongunadu was divided into 24 palayams. This is the reason why there are many places in and around Coimbatore named as different palayams. The Coimbatore region played a prominent role in the second Poligar war (1801) when it was the area of operations of Dheeran Chinnamalai.

In 1865, Coimbatore was established as the capital of the newly formed Coimbatore district and in 1866 it was accorded municipality status. Sir Robert Stanes became the first chairman of the Coimbatore city council. Industrialization of the region began in 1888 and continued till the 20th century. The city experienced a textile boom in the 1920s and 1930s due to the decline of the cotton industry in Mumbai. The region played a significant role in the Indian independence movement. Post independence, Coimbatore has seen rapid growth due to industrialization. In 1981, Coimbatore was constituted as a corporation.

4.2.4 Tourism Destinations in Coimbatore District

4.2.4.1 Eachanari Vinayagar Temple

This temple is situated in Coimbatore city on the Pollachi highway. It is one of the pilgrimage temples. This is one of the ancient temples in Coimbatore city as it was built in 1500 AD. The main deity of this temple is Lord Vinayagar and this temple is very close to the hearts of Vinayagar devotees of this region. The deity of Lord is 6 feet in height and 3 feet in width.
4.2.4.2 Perur Shiva Temple

This temple is situated 6 km from the Coimbatore city. The temple was built by Karikala Cholan and it is constructed on the banks of the river Noyyal. The Perur Shiva temple is purely dedicated to Lord Shiva and the deity in the shrine is called as Patteeswaras and his Consort, Pachai Nayaki. The buildings in the outer edge were constructed by the sawyers of Madurai during the 17th century. The inner place of worship is quite very old. The temple is also called as Mel Chidambaram.

4.2.4.3 Marudhamalai Hill Temple

This temple is situated 15 km in the northwest of Coimbatore city. It is at a height of about 500 feet in the highland on the Western Ghats. The place has an excellent salubrious weather with natural terrains. The Marudhamalai temple has the deity of Lord Muruga. There are medicinal herbs grown on this hill, which are used for making ayurvedic medicines. It is the most popular Lord Muruga Temple in this region.

4.2.4.4 Vellingri Hill Temple

This temple is situated about 40 km from Coimbatore city. This temple is purely dedicated to lord Shiva and the overall altitude of the hill is 6000 feet. This temple is considered as the most popular worship place. Throughout the year lot of tourists visit this temple and offer their prayers. The hill is familiar for its extravagant natural resources. There are several varieties of essential herbs grown on the hill, which are used for medicinal purposes. The Vellingri hill temple has a pleasing atmosphere throughout the year. This is a very good location for trekking.

4.2.4.5 Koniamman Temple

This temple is situated in the heart of the city near the Town Hall area. It was built about 600 years ago by a leader of the Irula tribe called Covan. Coimbatore got its name because of this ancient Koniamman temple. The village around the temple was named as “Covanputhur” which later became Coimbatore in due course. The presiding deity of this temple is Koniamman. The yearly Ther
(car) festival is celebrated in a very grand manner and a local holiday is declared in Coimbatore city on this particular day.

4.2.4.6 Khadi Gandhi Gallery

Successive to the Gandhi gallery in Madurai, the Government of Tamil Nadu had set up Khadi Gandhi Gallery in Coimbatore on 15th July 1970. This is located at the heart of the city. The gallery exhibits pictures of Gandhiji from his childhood to death. These photographs, taken from all the major events occurred in his life, are arranged in sequence in separate sections. Rare photographic collection such as “Journey through Life”, “Family”, “Friends”, “Independence Struggle”, “Jail Life” and “Peace Talks” are also exhibited in this gallery. Gandhi Jayanti is celebrated here with much splendour along with Bhajans and other activities.

4.2.4.7 Forest College

This is situated in the centre of the city. It has a sprawling campus surrounded with plenty of trees that gives the green cover for the entire area. It is one of the oldest institutions of this kind in the country. It has a beautiful museum. The state forest college is one of the premier institutions under the aegis of Directorate of Forest Education, Ministry of Environment & Forests. This museum is very interesting to people of all ages.

4.2.4.8 Bethesda International Prayer Centre

This is situated 25 km from Coimbatore city. The prayer centre is set amidst the foot hills of Siruvani Hills. The architecture of the prayer centre is unique, nestled with beautiful garden around the centre. People of all religions come and pray here. It is believed that Lord Jesus appeared in front of a security person while he was on night duty. Hence, this place is considered as one of the sacred places and people offer their prayers here believing that all their problems in the life will be set right.

4.2.4.9 Dhyanalinga Yogic Temple

This is situated about 30 km from Coimbatore city; at the foothills of Velliangri. The dhyanalinga yogic temple is popularly known for its beautiful architecture. It is a huge dome-shaped structure without any pillars. The elliptical
dome that houses the Dhyanalinga is 76 feet in diameter and 33 feet in height. It was built without using steel, cement, or concrete but with brick and mud mortar stabilized with lime, sand, alum and herbal additives. It is the only structure of its kind in this locality. The design of the dome proves that it could be at least 5000 years old. It is one of most beautiful tourist destinations for people of all religious faith. This is an excellent centre for meditation. Hundreds of tourists and followers visit this place from different parts of India and abroad.

**4.2.4.10 Kallar Horticulture Farm**

This is located on the Mettupalayam Ooty highway on the first hairpin bend in the Ghat road. This farm is situated at an elevation of 360-m above mean sea level at the foot of Nilgiris. This place has astonishing scenic beauty with waterfalls complementing. It attracts thousands of tourists from in and around Coimbatore. This farm is part of the state Horticultural farm under the department of Horticulture. This place receives an average rainfall of 1200 mm, spread over 70–80 rainy days. Humidity range from 70 to 80% during most of the days in the year. The place is open to tourists with minimal charges; Facilities are provided to sit and enjoy the serene panoramic view. Kallar is also known as a “Museum of Crops” as it nurtures a myriad variety of horticulture crops.

**4.2.4.11 Kulanthai Velayuthaswamy Temple**

This temple is situated about 24 km from Coimbatore city. It was built about 750 years ago. The architectural aspects of the temple are fabulous. This temple is located on a hill covered with Kurunda trees and hence it has got the name “Kurunda Malai”. The natural sceneries around this temple adds beauty to this temple.

**4.2.4.12 Salim Ali Centre For Ornithology and Natural History**

This centre is situated at Anaikatty, located 24 km from Coimbatore city. It was inspired by and named in honour of Dr. Salim Ali, the leading pioneer of ornithology in India. It is a national institution devoted to the cause of conservation of India’s biodiversity with focus on birds. The 55-acre campus at Anaikatty, amidst the foothills of the Nilgiri Biosphere in the backdrop of Western Ghats is one of the “hot spots” of biodiversity in the world. The
trijunction of Kerala, Tamil Nadu and Karnataka in the Western Ghats, is considered to be one of the best wildlife areas in the country with large number of Protected Areas. It is just a few hours drive from this place. It is best place for bird watchers, tourists and researchers.

4.2.4.13 Swami Dayananda Saraswathi Ashram

This is located about 25 km from Coimbatore city near Anaikatty in the picturesque Nilgiri Mountains. Sri Swami Dayananda Saraswathi is a distinguished traditional teacher of Vedanta. He has been teaching Vedanta in India for more than four decades. He is also teaching it around the world since 1976. Established in 1990 by Swami Dayananda Saraswathi, an eminent teacher of Vedanta and an erudite scholar in Sanskrit, the Gurukulam is patterned after the ancient gurukulams of India.

Gurukulam offers Indians and Westerners similar opportunity to study the Upanishads, Bhagavad Gita, Brahmasutras and other related classic texts. Here Vedanta is taught true to the sampradaya, the traditional way of teaching, in a setup which is as modern as it is traditional. The students come and live with the teacher, learning how to live in the Gurukulam and also from the teaching at Gurukulam. The students are selected from all over the world based on their interest and commitment to learn the subject.

4.2.4.14 Then Tirumalai

This temple is located 40 km from Coimbatore city. Like the Srivari temple in Tirumala–Tirupati in Andhra Pradesh, the Srivari Temple in Coimbatore is located on a natural hill amidst sylvan surroundings at an elevation of about 1000 ft above (Mean Sea Level), and could be seen from at a distance. The majestic looking Gopuram above the sanctum sanctorum and the temple complex in white and grey add to the grandeur of the shrine against the backdrop of the greenish blue Nilgiri Mountains. The tall and beautiful coconut and areca nut palms form the natural boundary and the evergreen mango and banana plantations and flower gardens that hedge the long central pathway leading to the main temple are a delight to the eye that would enchant any visitor. This is one of the
temples in Tamil Nadu which has got an International Standardization Organization (ISO) certification for management of in house prayer services.

4.2.4.15 Topslip

This is located 75 km from Coimbatore city and 37 km from Pollachi. Topslip is located at 800 feet (240 m) above sea level on the Anamalai mountain range. It is popularly known as Anamalai Hills. It is a small place in Indira Gandhi National Park and Wildlife Sanctuary that lies in the Coimbatore District of Tamil Nadu at the southern part of the Nilgiri Biosphere Reserve. Topslip “The pollution free heavenly land” is located in the Anamalai Tiger Reserve. It stands majestically with Green Spread Mountains and forest all around. The unique teak forests, Bamboo forest are also located near Topslip.

The Sanctuary is highly diverse in its topography, altitude, rainfall, climate and temperature. Therefore, it naturally supports a wide variety of flora and fauna including several rare, endemic and endangered species of plants and animals. Diversity of landscape and its components enchants one and all alike to be there as a tourist, a trekker, an anthropologist, a wild lifer or a naturalist. On working days depending on the weather conditions elephant safari and other locomotive safari trips are conducted to see the wildlife in their natural settings.

4.2.4.16 Baralikadu

This is located about 70 km from Coimbatore city. Baralikadu is an excellent eco-tourism destination, just a few hours drive from Coimbatore. This is located near Pillur in Baralikadu. The way to this spot is a hilly terrain enriched with lush green vegetation with a pleasant climate providing many view points to have awe for these scenes. The coracle (Country boat) rides are beautiful with the natural settings. One can also trek in the forests there. Many self-help groups offer sumptuous food as well. It is a great getaway for a day’s trip.

4.2.4.17 Arivu Thirukovil

This is situated about 73 km from Coimbatore city. This is a temple of consciousness, teaching kundalini yoga and meditation guided by Shri Vethathiri Maharishi. It was founded by Shri Vethathiri Maharishi in the year 1985. It is located in the beautiful natural settings at the foothills of the Western Ghats with
the view of Aliyar reservoir. This temple of consciousness is the focus for a silent revolution, transforming the lives of thousands of people, irrespective of caste, creed, colour, race, religion or nationality. People from different states of India and abroad visit this place, throughout the year.

4.2.4.18 Masani Amman Kovil

This temple is located 65 km from Coimbatore city. Goddess Arulmigu Masani is the presiding deity here with four hands of which two of them are placed on the ground and two are raised above and the 15-feet high idol is seen in a lying posture. This is highly revered shrine situated at Anaimalai. The temple is nestled amid grassland interlaced with criss-crossing pathways and rivulets against the back drop of Anaimalai hills. It is situated at the confluence of Aliyar River and the Upper stream. Kundam festival celebrated here is a major draw attended by thousands of devotees amid much pomp and splendor.

4.2.4.19 Chinnakallar Falls

This waterfall is located 28 km east of Valparai. This is a geographically important place as it receives the second highest rainfall in India. As result of this it is known as Cherrapunji (Place with highest rainfall in the world, Meagalya, India) of Tamil Nadu. The hanging bridge built across the falls is full of enchantment and thrill. This area is always found wet and misty. Chinnakallar is full of green dense forest with tall majestic trees which gives a pleasant nature. The sound of the waterfalls is like a roaring lion.

4.2.4.20 Aliyar Dam

This is located about 65 km from Coimbatore city. The dam was constructed in 1962 across Aliyar River. The dam is located in the foothills of Valparai, in the Anamalai Hills of the Western Ghats. The dam offers some ideal getaways including a park, garden, aquarium, play area and a mini Theme-Park maintained by Tamil Nadu Fisheries Corporation for visitors enjoyment. The scenery is beautiful, with mountains surrounding three quarters of the reservoir. Boating facilities are also available.
4.2.4.21 Solaiyar Dam

This situated 20 km from Valparai, a hill station in the Anaimalai Hills of the Coimbatore district, Tamil Nadu, India. It is the second deepest dam in Asia. There is a hydroelectric project of Tamil Nadu for power generation. Special permission is required to visit the dam.

4.3 FESTIVALS IN THE STUDY AREA

Tamil Nadu is a land of festivals. There are various festivals observed throughout the year and there is no fortnight ever that passes without a festival. Most of these festivals are associated with religion and temples. People celebrate with a great enthusiasm and gay.

4.3.1 Pongal

This is the most important of all festivals to the people of Tamil Nadu. It is popularly known as “Tamilar Thirunal” or the prosperity day of the Tamils. It is celebrated on 14th of January every year and is also the harvest festival which celebrates the fresh harvest. This is a 4-day festival of thanksgiving to nature; Tamilians say “Thai pirandhaal vazhi pirakkum” meaning with the starting of this Tamil month Thai (Mid January to mid February) will lead to prosperity. New earthen pot is put on a fire in a central place in an open corridor and newly harvested rice and milk are cooked. As the milk boils over, people shout in chorus “Pongalo pongal! Pongalo pongal” Pongal means boiling. The preceding day is called as “Bhogi” means Bogam or enjoyment and was originally devoted to goddess Indra who is the Bogi or supreme enjoyer. The second day is called “Mattu Pongal”, bullocks and cows are worshipped on this day. The third days is “Kannum Pongal”, Kanum means seeing and visiting elders, relatives and friends and seek their blessings.

4.3.2 Vaikuntha Ekadashi

It is celebrated on Ekadashi that occurs during the Dhanurmasa period in the Hindu calendar (Corresponding to late December–January in English calendar). In Vaishnavism (Worship of Lord Vishnu) culture believes that “Vaikuntha Dwaram” or the gate to lord’s inner sanctum is opened on this day.
This festival is one of the main festivals celebrated in all vaishnavite temples. This is celebrated in a very grand manner in Sri Ranganathaswamy Temple, Srirangam and celebrations last for 21 days. People come from all over India and from abroad to witness and take part in the festivities. The entire town celebrates this festival. There are special reservation counters opened inside the temple premises to facilitate the pilgrims for their train reservations. During this festive season, all the trains passing through Srirangam stops at the Srirangam railway station, to facilitate the tourists coming to attend this festival.

4.3.3 Adiperukku

This festival is a unique south Indian and especially a Tamil festival celebrated on the 18th day of the Tamil month Adi (Corresponding to Mid July in English calendar). It is otherwise called as “Padinettam perukku”. Padinettu signifies eighteen, and Perukku denotes rising levels of water due the onset of monsoon. It is peculiar to all the perennial river basins and a major lake of Tamil Nadu to pay tribute to water’s life-sustaining properties. On this day, you can witness thousands of pilgrims on the banks of river Cauvery in Tiruchirapalli district, Bhavani and Noyyal Rivers in Coimbatore district.

4.3.4 Navarathri

This is festival of nine nights, “Navam” means nine and “Rathri” means night. It is the festival of Goddesses Durga, Lakshmi and Saraswathi. The first 3 days are devoted to Durga or Parvathi, the goddess of valour. The next three days are devoted to Lakshmi or goddess of wealth and the last 3 days are devoted to Saraswathi, the goddess of education. On the ninth day a pooja for Saraswathi is performed in a traditional way by keeping the books. This day is called “Ayudha Pooja” which mean to offer prayers to the machines, vehicles, tools and instruments. The next day is called “Vijayadasmi” or the day of victory. During this period most of the Hindus celebrate kolu festival. In this the dolls are arranged on steps and decorated with festoons. Origin of this festival is traced back to the vijayanagar period.
4.3.5 Deepavali

This is one of the most important festivals for Hindus. It is popularly known as “Festival of lights”. Deepavali falls between mid-October and mid-November. “Deepam” means lamp and “Avali” means row. It is believed that it is a day of triumph of good over evil. It commemorates the death of Narakasuraa at the hands of Lord Krishna. It is believed that Narakasura, a wicked demon, tortured common people and they prayed to Lord Krishna to defeat him. The people then celebrate Narakasura’s defeat with sparkles, lights and crackers. This celebration was continued down the generations as Deepavali. The day begins with an early morning oil bath, wearing new clothes, visiting temples, bursting crackers and exchange of sweets between the neighbours. Deepavali is declared as an official holiday in India, Singapore, Malaysia, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Myanmar, Mauritius, Guyana, Trinidad & Tobago, Suriname and Fiji, as there are lot of Tamil communities settled in these countries.

4.3.6 Vinayaka Chaturthi

The date usually falls between 19th August and 20th September. The festival lasts for 10 days. Ganesha Chaturthi is the Hindu festival celebrated on the birthday (rebirth) of Lord Ganesha, the son of Shiva and Parvathi. It is believed that Lord Ganesh bestows his presence on earth for all his devotees during this festival. It is this day Shiva declared his son Ganesha as superior to all the gods, barring Vishnu, Lakshmi, Shiva and Parvathi. Ganesha is widely worshipped as the god of wisdom, prosperity and good fortune and traditionally invoked at the beginning of any new venture or at the start of travel. The festival, also known as Ganeshotsav (festival of Ganesha). While celebrated all over India, it is most elaborate in Maharashtra, Goa, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Odisha and Chhattisgarh. Outside India, it is celebrated widely in Nepal and by Hindus in the United States, Canada, Mauritius, Singapore, Malaysia, Thailand, Cambodia, Burma, Fiji, Trinidad & Tobago and Guyana.
4.3.7 Karthigai Deepam

This is a Tamil Hindu festival. The festival is observed in every home and every temple, and falls in the month of Kārttikai (mid-November to mid-December) as per Tamil calendar. This occurs on the day when the moon is in conjunction with the constellation Karthigai and purnimai. This constellation appears as a group of six stars in the firmament in the shape of a pendant from the ear. Many legends and lyrical poetry have grown around this star. The six stars are considered in Indian mythology as the six celestial nymphs who reared the six babies in the saravana tank which later were joined together to form the six-faced Muruga. He is therefore called Karthikeya, the one brought up by the Karthigai nymphs. Houses are lit up with rows of oil lamp (Deepam) in the evening of the festival day. This is celebrated in a very grand manner at Subramaniya temple at Vayaloor in Tiruchirapalli district and Marudhamalai Hill Temple in Coimbatore district. This is celebrated in all Lord Muruga temples in Tamil Nadu. Huge celebrations take place in Thiruvannamalai Shiva temple.

4.3.8 Panguni Uthiram

This festival falls during the month of March–April. Panguni is special because of the coming together of the star Uthiram and Pournami. Panguni Uthiram is a much talked about festival of many temples throughout South India. Devotees flock to temples nearby and some of the famous temples which assume a lot of importance during this festival is Shiva temple in Perur-near Coimbatore, Subramaniya swamy temple, Vayaloor near Tiruchirapalli. It is believed that the wedding of Rama and Sita was celebrated on Panguni Uthiram. So divine marriages are celebrated on this day. As an annual event all temples take their utsava murthis to the kalyana mandapam of the temple and perform the marriage of the presiding God and Goddess there. For instance, the Thirukalyanam of Siva–Parvathi, Lord Subramanya–Deivanai, Vishnu–Lakshmi, Rama–Sita are celebrated in a grand manner in all temples.
4.3.9 Theppam and Ther (Car Festival)

There are many of these Theppam festivals in both Tiruchirapalli and Coimbatore Districts. In this, a float is prepared and the presiding deity of the temple is taken into the central mandapam of the tank where it is kept and special pooja’s are offered. Temple cars are chariots used to carry representations of Hindu gods. The car is usually used on festival days called Ther Thiruvizha and is conducted once in a year, where many people gather around the temple and pull the car. When one thinks about wheels, mythology and Indian culture, Temple Cars (chariots) also form part of the oeuvre and Tamil history and literature has a lot of references about Temple Car (Kovil Ther).

4.4 ACCESSIBILITY

Tiruchirapalli is located at the centre of the state of Tamil Nadu and it is well connected by road with other cities, by both state highways and national highways. This in turn provides transit facilities for people travelling from north to south or east to west by road and crossing Tiruchirapalli. Coimbatore is located in the western part of Tamil Nadu, well connected with three national highways to other cities of Tamil Nadu and neighbouring state of Kerala. As there is huge volume of traffic coming into the city and going out, there is heavy traffic flow in the highways during both day and night times.

The Southern Railway Company was established in 1853 with its headquarters at Tiruchirapalli. Tiruchirapalli is an important railway junction in central Tamil Nadu and constitutes a separate division of the Southern Railway. There are direct trains to Chennai, New Delhi, Mumbai, Kolkatta, Bangalore, Hyderabad, Trivandrum, Kochi, and Mangalore. Also all the other cities in Tamil Nadu are well connected from Tiruchirapalli Railway junction to other major cities in India.

Coimbatore has reasonably good rail connectivity to most of the cities in Tamil Nadu and neighbouring states of Kerala, Karnataka and the rest of the country. The main issue here is some of the trains are passing through Coimbatore junction and some of them through Podanur junction which is located in the
outsskirts of the city. Hence the availability of seats, berths in all classes are very limited and very much lower than the demand. As a result in a long waiting list during normal course of time and during vacation it is very difficult for the commuters to secure a seat or berth in the trains from Coimbatore to most of the destinations.

Regarding the accessibility to Tiruchirapalli and Coimbatore by road, rail and by air is economical in terms of cost. It has got convenient connectivity by all means of transportation. There are no language barriers for tourists as English is spoken by all the travel and tourism operators and they are fluent in some of the foreign languages like French, German, Italian and the regional languages of India.

4.5 AIRPORTS

Tiruchirapalli International Airport was established in the year 1938. Tata Airlines commercial flight used to stop at Tiruchirapalli on Karachi — Colombo route. In the year 1948, Air Ceylon commenced daily passenger flights between Tiruchirapalli and Colombo via Jaffna. This airport provides both domestic and international air connectivity. It is the second largest International Airport in the state and the tenth largest International Airport in the country in terms of aircraft movements and size. At present there are regular flights to International destinations like Singapore, Kuala Lumpur, Sharjah, Abu Dhabi, Colombo and domestic flights to Chennai, Bangalore, Mumbai and Calicut. Being one of the oldest airports in the country providing international air connectivity, even at present the international connectivity is very good when compared to the domestic connectivity. There are many low-cost airlines or budget airlines operating from this airport. Hence there is lots of outbound tourism growth in this area.

Coimbatore International Airport is located at Peelamedu which is 11 km from the heart of city. The airport commenced its operations from 1940 as a civil aerodrome with Indian Airlines operating smaller aircrafts. Later in 1987, it was modernized and runways extended to receive larger aircrafts like Boeing 737.
This led to more air services from Coimbatore to Mumbai, Delhi, Kolkatta, Chennai, Bangalore, Kozikode and other cities. Later on, it was upgraded as an International airport and now there are international flights to Sharjah and Singapore. Coimbatore airport has got very good domestic connectivity but lacks international connectivity. Owing to this most of the International air travels are taken up either at Chennai or Mumbai.

4.6 TOURIST ARRIVAL STATISTICS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>No. of Tourists</th>
<th>Percentage of Domestic Tourists on Total Tourists Arrival</th>
<th>No of Foreign Tourists</th>
<th>Percentage of Foreign Tourists on Total Tourists Arrival</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>7,20,535</td>
<td>93.20</td>
<td>51,245</td>
<td>6.63</td>
<td>7,71,780</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>7,52,486</td>
<td>93.13</td>
<td>55,479</td>
<td>6.86</td>
<td>8,07,965</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>8,05,823</td>
<td>93.24</td>
<td>58,357</td>
<td>6.75</td>
<td>8,64,180</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>9,10,254</td>
<td>93.79</td>
<td>60,246</td>
<td>6.20</td>
<td>9,70,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>10,04,367</td>
<td>93.88</td>
<td>65,457</td>
<td>6.11</td>
<td>10,69,824</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>12,07,258</td>
<td>94.36</td>
<td>72,157</td>
<td>5.6</td>
<td>12,79,415</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>13,08,368</td>
<td>94.48</td>
<td>76,369</td>
<td>5.5</td>
<td>13,84,737</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Tourist office, Tiruchirapalli, Department of Tourism, Government of Tamil Nadu.
After analysing the tourist arrival data from 2006 to 2012 it is interpreted that there is very good inflow of domestic tourists in Tiruchirapalli District. The graph shows the upward trend in the case of domestic tourists. In International arrivals there was a decrease in number of arrivals from 2007 till 2012. It is apparent that the gap or the difference between the domestic arrivals and the international arrivals are huge.
### Table 4. 2 Tourist Arrivals Statistics in Coimbatore

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Domestic Tourists</th>
<th></th>
<th>Foreign Tourists</th>
<th></th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No. of Tourists</td>
<td></td>
<td>No. of Tourists</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Percentage of Domestic Tourists on the Total Tourists Arrival</td>
<td></td>
<td>Percentage of Foreign Tourists on the Total Tourists Arrival</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>15,15,374</td>
<td>98.61</td>
<td>21,341</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>15,36,715</td>
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<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>18,62,247</td>
<td>99.13</td>
<td>16,246</td>
<td>0.86</td>
<td>18,78,493</td>
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<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>23,18,784</td>
<td>98.84</td>
<td>27,185</td>
<td>1.15</td>
<td>23,45,969</td>
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<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>25,59,926</td>
<td>98.74</td>
<td>32,634</td>
<td>1.28</td>
<td>25,92,560</td>
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<tr>
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<td>98.86</td>
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<td>1.13</td>
<td>23,19,517</td>
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<tr>
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<td>99.81</td>
<td>4,586</td>
<td>0.18</td>
<td>24,66,186</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>33,04,952</td>
<td>99.94</td>
<td>1977</td>
<td>0.05</td>
<td>33,06,929</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source:* Tourist office, Coimbatore, Department of Tourism, Government of Tamil Nadu.
After analysing the tourist arrival data from 2006 to 2012 it is interpreted that there is excellent inflow of domestic tourists in Coimbatore District. The graph shows the upward trend in the case of domestic tourists. In International arrivals there was a huge decrease in number of arrivals from 2008 till 2012, and it has gone to the very minimum extent of 0.05%. It is apparent that the gap or the difference between the domestic arrivals and the international arrivals are huge.
4.7 SECONDARY DATA ANALYSIS

Triuchirapalli has the advantage of being in the centre of the state of Tamil Nadu. There is a good connectivity by trains to the entire state and major cities of the country. Highway connectivity is excellent throughout the state and there is bus service to the entire state and the neighbouring states. International air connectivity is very good. Flights are available to Sri Lanka, Malaysia, Singapore, Dubai and Sharjah. Regarding domestic connectivity there is no good connectivity to major cities of India. In terms of tourist attractions there are only temples for tourists and a few destinations for trekking, etc. There is no entertainment for tourists.

Coimbatore is known as the Manchester of south India, it well-known for its textile mills, textile mill machinery manufacturing power looms, heavy and light engineering industries motors, pump sets, wet grinders and foundries. It is also famous for automobile components, steel pipes, tubes, gold jewellers exports, etc. Since there are a plenty of industries, huge number of business travellers visit the city for business purposes. In The Coimbatore District Small Industries Association (CODISSA) there are plenty of Conferences and Exhibitions conducted throughout the year for which the participants come from different states of the country.

In Coimbatore, there are lot of domestic tourist movement. This is mainly due to visitors going to Ooty and the business travellers visiting Coimbatore for business purposes. There are lot of educational institutions in and around the city. Hence it is known as the education hub of Tamil Nadu. Coimbatore city has one of the best agriculture universities in India, also the Bharathiar University, Karunya University, Amrita University, Avinahsilingam University, Karpagam University, plenty of Autonomous colleges, Aided colleges and Forest Colleges are also present. These important educational institutions cater to the students community from India and abroad.

In Coimbatore district, there are good number of temples and other varied tourist attractions on the Western Ghats. These destinations contribute towards the eco-tourism of the region. There are many well known national and international
spiritual institutions that are spread out around Coimbatore district under the green canopy of Western Ghats, located amidst excellent surroundings. There is no entertainment other than cinema theatre and few theme parks around the Coimbatore city.

4.8 SUMMARY

In terms of tourist attractions, Tiruchirapalli district has only temples and a few destinations for trekking. In Coimbatore district, there are varied tourist attractions like temples, Eco-tourism destinations on the Western Ghats, Wild life sanctuary, dams, Ornithology centre, waterfalls and spiritual centres attract more number of tourists across the globe throughout the year. Apart from theatres there is no entertainment for tourists in both the districts of the study area. There is reasonably good connectivity by trains within state and major cities in India. The highway connectivity is excellent throughout the state and bus services to the entire state and the neighbouring states are available in plenty. Since Coimbatore city is located in the western part of the state, it does not have the locational advantage as in the case of Tiruchirapalli. With the existing infrastructure facilities in both the districts, if the tourism entrepreneurs adopt “Entrepreneurial Approach” to promote the destinations a lot more can be achieved in terms of tourism development and it can be made to tourist friendly. International connectivity is good in Triuchirappalli but lacks in domestic connectivity. International air connectivity from Coimbatore is less with only two flights to Singapore and Sharjah. Domestic connectivity is excellent with flights to all major cities of the country.