CHAPTER – I
INTRODUCTION

1.0. INTRODUCTION

Visiting Pilgrimage site has been a travel motivation from the ancient time when the human beings had developed increasing faiths in Gods and Goddesses. As such, human beings are the creations of the cosmic power to grow harmoniously and peacefully. Anything and everything that occur in the universe is attributed to the actions of God as everything exits with the prior knowledge of God. Hence, this belief and faith on God is an integral part of the growth and development of human race and civilizations. As a result, it has become so intensive and extensive in the present world owing to the consciousness and broad understanding of people towards realizing a meaningful and productive life.

It is universally true that “Work is Worship” and Duty is God” are the two basic fundamental principles by which the actions and results of human beings are largely guided to achieve the success. Further, giving pains to the body by practicing long fasting, walking on barefoot, sleeping on open air and waiting in a long queue for long time to pay offerings are some of the beliefs and practices that Pilgrims wish to perform to realize the dreams or desires. Besides having faith in the actions, human beings set out the journey to achieve success by praying the Gods. Whether it is a scientific expeditions or the launch of Satellite or the Space Rocket, offering prayers to the cosmic power or the God has proved the strong relationship between the science and the existence of God in achieving milestones. Above all, the primary objective of undertaking Religious travel and offering prayers to the deities or shrines
is to lead happy, prosperous and peaceful life, thereby achieving self-realization and salvation.

In this background, the study has vociferously argued for the present human beings having strong faith in God to achieve the desires through the rigorous performance of Religious obligations at the sacred Religious sites. Moreover, fulfillment of desires by believing and doing the Religious practices has become a universal phenomenon. As a result, visiting the Religious shrines and performing the Religious rites and rituals has given rise to the motivation for undertaking Pilgrimage tours.

The age-old strenuous method of undertaking journey by the Pilgrims to the sacred Pilgrim centers has undergone significance changes. Gone are the days, Pilgrims were prepared to take the risk of travelling against all odds and difficulties to reach at the shrine and there was heavy loss of human life due to the lack of safety, security and basic facilities at the Pilgrim centers. Over the years, many popular Pilgrim centers are well developed with facilities and amenities that largely enable the devotees to have darshan of the shrine without much hassle and trouble. This has become possible when the government and Religious institutions are committed to the safety and basic facilities for the Pilgrims as most of the Religious shrines or Pilgrimage centers are located in the off-the-beaten track places.

Generally, Pilgrim tours are Religious-oriented travel that urges people cutting across the age, sex, income, religion, community, etc to visit the sacred places of importance. At the same time, there is an exponential growth of Pilgrimage Tourism
due to the provision of subsidized travel by government and the NGOs followed by the substantial improvement in the basic facilities and amenities at the Pilgrimage centers. Pilgrim Tourism is a significant constituent of domestic tourism and it is an inseparable form of Religious and Social Tourism. People of all faiths and religions have the obligations to visit the Pilgrimage centers for their own sake and for the sake of others. It is a tradition and custom that Hindu Pilgrims visit the four holy Dhams, the Muslim Pilgrims travel to Mecca and Madina, the Buddhist Pilgrims pay their visit to the Lumbini and Bodhgaya, the Jaina Pilgrims tour to the Dilwara at Mount Abu and the Christian Pilgrims Religiously visit to Jerusalem and the Rome.

Pilgrimage Tourism has become a growing form of domestic Tourism with the rising demand for Religious travel coupled with the fulfillment of Religious obligations. Apart from looking at the Pilgrimage Tourism as a means for providing opportunities for the Pilgrims to fulfill their Religious and spiritual purpose, it is identified as a catalyst for socio-economic development of the local community members working directly and indirectly for the Pilgrims during their sojourns at the Religious sites. Tour operators have considered the Pilgrimage Tourism as the bottom of the pyramid in the tourism business and several attractive and affordable packages add much value to the Pilgrimage travel.

With this backdrop, the present study has made a sincere attempt to understand the relationships between the Religious obligations and fulfillment of desire through Pilgrimage Tourism at the three famous Pilgrim sites, such as Thirunallar, Nagore and Velankanni. Each sacred Pilgrim site represents the Religious faith of the devotees from the Hinduism and Islamism and Christianism.
1.1. **EVOLUTION OF PILGRIMAGE TOURISM**

Tourism in India dates back to ancient times. Travel for the purpose of learning, Pilgrimage and trade have always been an integral part of the social fabric of this huge subcontinent. Carrying on this long tradition, Pilgrimage Tourism in the country today, has attained unprecedented levels. In fact, Tourism is being used as a means to earn maximum foreign exchange by almost all countries. The same cannot be quietly justified for India. The purpose of foreign exchange is also an important part for the country, but not in all. Being vast in size, India needs a force to bind all diversities what she has. India is often named as subcontinent, means a small world in character.

It is religion which has been a common thread to pivot different languages, religion, customs and diversities. If one looks over the location of Pilgrim centers of India, one will find the role of religion in national integration. From extreme North to Southern most part of the country and from Eastern most to Western most part everywhere, it is Religious centre which makes people to travel and indirectly to understand the custom and tradition of different part of the country strengthening national integration.

Today, Pilgrim Tourism forms an important segment of domestic Tourism and though accurate figures are difficult to arrive at, it is estimated that this segment alone generates a movement of around 150 million people all over India. With rising affluence, the middle-class Pilgrims in the country have increasingly started linking visits to Religious places with pleasure outings. This large number of Pilgrim Tourists contributes to the economy of the local area in many ways. However, since this
segment’s paying capacity is not very high, their conversion in large numbers often tends to strain the basic infrastructure of these Pilgrimage sites. India is not only a vast country in size, but in many other fields too as it is considered to be unique in the world. It is the only country in the world where god wishes to be born. It is a land of about thirty-three Crore Gods and Goddesses. Consequently, the number of Pilgrim centres are scattered throughout the country. India is a land of lord Rama, lord Krishna and Lord Buddha.

The great philosophy of life namely the Geeta is a paramount contribution of India to all human beings. What the science is proving now, had been the very part of ancient culture and religion. It is the land where the most pious river Ganga flows. It has been the land of many sages and scholars. The Himalayas inspired many scholars and sages for meditation since the time immemorial. Self actualization or salvation has been the ultimate aim of life from the dawn of Hindu civilization. For this purpose, people always prefer the lap of nature in the Himalayas. It is India which originated many religions, cults and sects without any fear for the betterment of life.

India is endowed with the rich resources of Pilgrimage Tourism. Almost in every region there are a good number of Pilgrim centers developed as Religious destination promoting local economy and spearheading national integration and regional harmony. The major constraint in the way of development is the lack of infrastructure. But, it is lack of awareness which hinders the growth of Religious Tourism in the country. For example, the shrine of Vaishno Devi in Jammu was not a popular Pilgrimage center earlier as much as it is today. The credit to popularize the destination goes to the late Gulshan Kumar, the owner of T-series super cassettes
industries. Here it is worth to note that there are a number of such places like Poornagiri and Vindhyachal would have developed into popular Religious destination as Vaishno Devi if there were proper infrastructure and promotional measures.

The popular Pilgrimage destinations that catered to the largest number of Pilgrims soon became stereo-typed due to the Tourist Ghettos. All these centers looked alike and offered standardized facilities. Today, as new destinations are emerging and the international stereotype is giving way to ethnic type, it has an underlying uniformity with a viewer of local culture and identity. The development of Tourism products are done in keeping in mind the future prospects. Today, sustainable development is becoming a central issue in international trade and commerce. Sustainability means paying balanced attention to economic, ecological and social impacts of change or some of us prefer to call it a wise growth.

1.2. DEFINITION OF PILGRIM

Mather (1702) defines that “Pilgrim, one who travels to a shrine or other sacred place out of Religious motives. Pilgrimages are a feature of many religions and cultures. Examples in ancient Greece were the Pilgrimages to Eleusis and Delphi. Pilgrimages are well established in India (e.g., to Varanasi, or Benares, on the sacred Ganges River). Daniel Webster (1620) described Pilgrim as, “one who leaves his/her homeland to travel in foreign lands. Also: A person who travels to another place for Religious purposes or to worship. Boston (1702) stated that “a Pilgrim is a wanderer with purpose. The Archaeology Dictionary (1801) defines that Pilgrim is a person who undertakes a long and arduous journey in order to worship at the shrine of a particular saint and to earn both spiritual and physical salvation. The greater the
hardship and danger endured in making the journey (Pilgrimage), the greater the eventual rewards were deemed to be. The Columbia Encyclopedia (1880) specified that Pilgrim is one who travels to a shrine or other sacred place out of Religious motives. Pilgrimages are a feature of many religions and cultures. Examples in ancient Greece were the Pilgrimages to Eleusis and Delphi. Pilgrimages are well established in India.

Bierce (1709) stressed that a Pilgrim Father was one who, leaving Europe in 1620 because not permitted to sing psalms through his nose, followed it to Massachusetts, where he could personate God according to the dictates of his conscience. Tutor (1809) emphasized that Pilgrim is one who leaves his/her homeland to travel in foreign lands. Also: A person who travels to another place for Religious purposes or to worship. Kiethnowlands (1801) pointed that a Pilgrim is one who undertakes a Pilgrimage, literally ‘far afield’. This is traditionally a visit to a place of some Religious or historic significance; often a considerable distance is traveled. Examples include a Christian or Jew visiting Jerusalem or a Muslim visiting Mecca.

Kart (1998) explained that a Pilgrim is one who organizes and follows a pre-planned schedule to visit a particular, tangible and sacred site. Then the trip becomes a Pilgrimage and the tourist a Pilgrim. Peter (1980) mentioned that a Pilgrim is the person who only visits the destination sacred to his/her own religion. Currie (1989) found that the diverse motives for the Pilgrimage mean that the Pilgrims are not drawn from any one class, rank or even religion. The Pilgrim offers a means of escape from the hierarchy and obligations of the social structure. The Pilgrim leaves behind his social role and the role playing games which embroil his personality in main fold
guiles, guilt’s and anxieties. Thus, every step the mystic takes is a symbol of the journey to Mecca. If the Sufi theorists say that the journeys of a Pilgrim and mystic have something in common, it is legitimate to deduce that their destinations and lifestyles there are not dissimilar.

Bratt (1856) refers that Pilgrimage is when someone travels a distance to pay their respects to a Religious icon. Some people go on Pilgrimages so they can be healed by someone holy. People go on Pilgrimage to find peace. Bunyon (1678) explained “Pilgrimage is an inward and outward journey”. Pilgrims seek to strengthen and renew their faith through travel. Morton (1669) outlined that Pilgrimage is a journey to a sacred place or shrine or a long journey or search, especially one of exalted purpose or moral significance. The Daniel Webster (1825) proved that Pilgrimage is a journey to a shrine or other sacred place or a journey or long search made for exalted or sentimental reasons. Hemans (1829) explained that Pilgrimage is a long journey or search, especially one of exalted purpose or moral significance. Mather (1702) states “it is a journey to a shrine or other sacred place or a journey or long search made for exalted or sentimental reasons”.

1.3. CONCEPTUAL OVERVIEW OF PILGRIMAGE TOURISM

A Pilgrim is different from being a tourist. For a tourist, travel is an end in itself. For a Pilgrim, travel is a means to an end. Pilgrims with Pilgrimage Tourism is one of the fastest-growing Tourism in the world. Pilgrimage Tourism offers tremendous opportunities of generating revenues earning foreign exchange and providing employment. Pilgrimage Tourism earns over 3.5 trillion US dollar worldwide. For India, it is presently the third largest export industry, but the share of
India in international tourist inflow is only 0.62 per cent. Besides economic, social and environmental gains of Tourism, it is considered as an ambassador of peace and international brotherhood. It brings better understanding between different nations and civilizations. Likewise it helps in protecting environment, old monuments and cultural heritage places.

From time immemorial, Pilgrimages have been a major component of Tourism. India’s booming domestic Tourism is substantially composed of Pilgrim Tourists. The interplay between Tourism and Pilgrimage, however, is not always as simple as it appears to be. It is often said that the link between the two is very old and that the Pilgrims were the first Tourists. This simple statement, however, raises many difficult issues. It is well known that the term ‘Tourism’ represents the sum total of a large number of inter-related activities. The description of the World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC) that there are more than 30 activities at the core of what is called ‘Tourism’ has already been discussed.

For example, Jape (2001) in his article on “Pilgrims and Other Travelers” has appropriately described some of the different types of travelers - conquerors, prospectors, explorers, traders, scholars Tourists, missionaries, job-seekers, exiles, immigrants, refugees and the Pilgrim. In this description, the Tourist and the Pilgrim co-exists as separate identities within a wider generic group of travelers. But, Pilgrim Tourism or Religious Tourism comes only as a sub-group of Tourism, sometimes even as a sub-group of another group that is generally called cultural or heritage Tourism. Again, forms of Tourism also differ depending on the motivation for travel based primarily on the apparent motivation for travel, many forms of Tourism have
emerged as leisure travel or holiday Tourism, ecotourism, cultural Tourism, adventure Tourism, rural Tourism, Religious Tourism, educational Tourism, business Tourism, and even political Tourism. And, the horizons are ever-expanding. Yet, quiet often, the distinction between different forms is not very clear nor are they easily distinguishable. There may be many transitional motivations hidden within the major objective for travel. The same journey can achieve several objectives.

Cohen (2002) in his article “Who is a Tourist- A Conceptual Clarifications” and “Pilgrimage and Tourism: Convergence and Divergence” has presented the difference between Pilgrimage and Tourism in terms of the direction of the journey undertaken. The ‘Pilgrim’ is seen as one who travels towards the socio-cultural centers of his or her society while the tourist moves away from it towards the periphery. When the individual destination is not a Pilgrim centre of his religion, but belongs to the realm of another religion, culture or society, the individuals travelling to it can be classified as a traveler – tourist. However, subsequent studies and experiences have shown that even when the destination is towards a Pilgrim centre of his religion, it need not entirely be a Pilgrimage. Smith (2005) has defined Tourism as an activity depending on three operative elements--discretionary income, leisure time and social sanctions permissive of travel. Thus, Pilgrimage also requires these three fundamental elements during the travel. Therefore, to make a distinction based on the direction of travel will be unrealistic.

Turner (2002) known for his extensive work on the subject has very appropriately described a tourist as ‘half a Pilgrim if a Pilgrim is half a tourist‘.
Individual’s belief is another salient factor that distinguishes Pilgrims from Tourists. Tourists are attracted by such belief to places related to Religious or spiritual heritage. Smith (2006) has referred to the case of an elderly teacher devoting every vacation during her long career to travel and whose final ambition was to see the China’s Great Wall before his death. Thus, faith is the key element identifying whether a journey is Tourism or Pilgrimage. The term ‘faith’ itself can have a very wide connotation. Smith (2006) has concluded that because of the increased secularization in the west, distinction is between Pilgrims and Tourists are quiet diffused. The distinction is blurred in most countries, not necessarily depending on the degree of secularization.

Without going into the philosophical debate about the degree of secularization in the West or in the East, it is better to accept the fact that the two terms often overlap each other in connotation. He describes the situation beautifully, that perhaps, the Pilgrim-tourist path should be considered as two parallel interchangeable lanes. One of which is a secular knowledge based road and the other the sacred road of faith and belief. Then, every guest worldwide could travel either lane or switches between them depending on personal needs or motivations. As appropriate to time, place and purity of them ‘Pilgrimage’ and the true Pilgrim may look doubtfully. Nevertheless, it is a true depiction of the reality as one can get.

In the reviews article, “Pilgrim and Other Travelers”, Paranjape (2005) has identified a ‘Pilgrim’ as one who has reverence for the place or is travelling to and is accompanied by vows and abstentions and by rituals of self-abasement or humility. A Pilgrim of this type even if he comes from different social background, but he follows
all the rituals which are different from his demarcated everyday life. In that sense, there is a role reversal and the normal order of values changes. The travelers who seek to dominate in the place travelled to, culturally and otherwise, are also influenced by a similar reverse behavior. In some context, such role reversal has been called the “away from home syndrome” or the syndrome of a traveler behaving in ways that he would not back home.

In modern times, the motivations for travel lie in Pilgrimage or Tourism, but both are getting more and more blurred. Smith (2006) also refers to ‘wish fulfillment ‘as another powerful and jointly share motive that provides the impetus to travel. It is Tourism that the human species, although endowed with its enlarged brain and association areas, regularly face problems irresolvable by human means. It is an appeal to and dispensation from some form of the supernatural Pilgrimages that are often thought of as journeys undertaken in anticipation of a future betterment, but they need not necessarily be sacred”.

It is the belief that largely motivates people to travel and the terminally ill-seeking a miracle at Lourdes, thousands visiting holy places, holy-men or miracle-makers in India or elsewhere for succor. Are they Pilgrims or half Pilgrim – half Tourists? It is not that “hope” of betterment or relief from supernatural powers was a major motivation for travel only in the olden days. Even today, with all the scientific advances, it remains a major impetus to travel. The unbelievable scientific developments of the 20th century have transformed the attitude towards life and beliefs. The ever-increasing number of Tourists is less and less motivated by such beliefs in supernatural powers to travel.
The western scholars, of course, believe that Christianity as a religion had the most direct link to the age of discovery, industrial revolution and the rise of humanism in the Post-Industrial society. Smith (2007) has grouped western thoughts in relation to Pilgrimage and Tourism into four periods. He states that the biblical scholars usually mark the Judaic–Christian–Islamic history with the Pilgrimage of Abraham, who in obedience to the world of the lord went to the Promised Land as early as the 2nd century. Thus, the Christian Pilgrimages started with visits to places associated with relics. The crusades renewed this spirit of Pilgrimage. Though most writers believe that the few privileged and the rich could travel in those days only, but as many as half a million of Pilgrims visited Santiago in the 11th and 12th century. Many chronicles outline about the likeminded people who went on Pilgrimages not out of devotion, but out of curiosity and the novelty of the experience.

From 1517 to 1859, it was a period of renaissance and reformation of colonialism of adventure and discovery during the great industrial revolution. This led to the motivations for seeking knowledge, immigrating to avoid Religious persecution and spirit of adventure. This is why travel became much more common place and fashionable product to make Thomas Cook to venture into the world of travel in1841.

Smith (2006) found that the survey of passengers in Jerusalem indicated that 55 per cent of the 1.52 million surveyed were Christians and 40 per cent had come for a holy land Pilgrimage. The survey entails a relevant question “are they true Pilgrims on a spiritual journey or were they just Religious Tourists visiting the holy land for the purpose of identify with and knowledge of its historic sites?”. This
question is lust like the overlapping meaning of Pilgrimage and travel. This question opened up the distinction between Pilgrims on a ‘spiritual journey’ and ‘Religious Tourists’. However, “Pilgrimage” as a motivation does not have an independent identity in statistical categorization. It is often grouped under the category of others.

In India, Pilgrims are not classified as an independent category. Perhaps, they are covered under “others” or may be under culture and heritage. Whereas a large numbers of domestic Tourists are primarily categorized as Pilgrims. The numbers of domestic Tourists to the holy Pilgrimage centers at Vaishnodevi in Jammu & Kashmir, Sabarimala in Kerala or Tirupati in Andhra Pradesh show that Pilgrimage is very strong motivation for travel. Turnbull (1981) started those Pilgrimages in all its vitality is at work in India today, where for the masses, Tourism is economically unthinkable.

Domestic Tourism has grown by leaps and bounds over the last few years and so has outbound Tourism, domestic Tourism has increased from 136 million in 1995 to more than 650 million in 2011. The number of Indians going abroad has similarly gone up to 11 million in 2011. The growth in outbound Tourists from India similarly has been remarkable. This growth in domestic Tourism does not include the large number of Pilgrims for the purpose of Pilgrimages. As mentioned earlier, many of them perhaps are ‘half Pilgrims’ and many of the Pilgrims perhaps will be ‘half Tourists’.

Turnbull’s (1989) observation, however, raises another question. Smith (2005) had pointed out that greater secularization of the world leading to a lesser number of
pure Pilgrims. Does the large number of Pilgrims in India imply the secularization permeating common philosophical outlook of the Indians? Such a question would apparently appear irrelevant in a country like India which has enshrined ‘secularism’ in its constitution. This tendency of the modern generations to keep Religious beliefs as purely personal has been described by Smith as “privatization of religion”. Cohen (2006) has carried the already blurred distinction between Pilgrims and Tourists into a further classification of Pilgrim-Tourists and Traveler-Tourists. He has further emphasized that this is not merely a classificatory difference rather the attitudes and demeanor of the two kinds of visitors.

The impact of Tourism on places of Pilgrimages has been studied widely and worldwide. The celebrations of some of the traditional festivals at the popular Pilgrimage centers in Thailand tend to become highly commercialized due to the development of modern Tourism (Cohen, 2006). Tourism promotion often triggers apprehensions that sometime cultural and religious values can be eroded but there are many instances of a positive impact of Tourism and of Tourism reviving old dying art and craft forms.

Nevertheless, the concern about the adverse impact of Tourism on culture and the environment is manifested in many policy documents. The only reference that the report of the National Committee on Tourism (1997) makes to ‘Pilgrim Tourism’ is in respect of the damage caused to the environment by mass Pilgrimages. The report specifically refers to the damage to the environs around the Ganges in Varanasi. The ‘interfaith ceremony’ held in the Basilica of St. Francis in 1986 culminated with the
declaration on nature by the five participating religions – Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, Islam and Judaism.

The government’s policy statements relating to the overall subject of Tourism can be found primarily in the Five-Year Plan documents. Pilgrimage as a major focus of attention, has not figured in any of the policy statement, though there has been cursory references to Pilgrimage as a form of travel and Tourism. In the 1982 policy, there is no specific mention about Pilgrimage. There is a passing reference to it under the heading “domestic Tourism”. “For the large number of our people who travel on Pilgrimage or as Tourists, facilities provided are minimal.

In the 1992 action plan, there is a separate section devoted to Pilgrim Tourism, but it only talks about quantitative allocation to improve facilities for Tourists for Pilgrim centers.” Pilgrim flows account for a very large percentage of domestic Tourism. Infrastructure facilities for Tourists for Pilgrim centers need to be substantially improved. The draft National Tourism Policy of 1997 refers to the proper development of Pilgrimage Tourism.

Many of these, like the Hajj Pilgrimage, the Amaranth yatra, the Kumbhmela require extensive national commitment, and management. Pilgrimage in India – seasonal, regular or otherwise is an important part of Tourism, of culture, of heritage and of national activity. Often they create civic problem and put great pressure on the ecosystems and create environmental strain unless properly managed. Pilgrim Tourism, therefore, needs to be fitted more closely into the national Tourism planning.
Tomasi (2002) explained that Pilgrimage Tourism is rather a form of Tourism motivated partly or wholly by Religious motives closely or loosely connected with holiday making or with journey undertaken for social, cultural or political reasons over short or long distances. Bajpai (1954) proved that Pilgrimage Tourism as they tend to exhibit leisure-oriented travel with a focus on a trip to the destination rather than performing the journey though such a pattern of travel which includes both recreation and Religious needs is the mainstay of Pilgrimage Tourism. Tyrakowski (1994) refers that this new kind of religiously motivated journey on the whole, Pilgrimage and Pilgrimage sites tend to deviate from their original purpose with the discovery of their market value and more closer to the idea of holiday Tourism.

Shinde (1991) mentioned that Pilgrimage Tourism as a form of travel provides opportunities for people to visit sacred places and is a feature common to almost all societies. The key elements of Pilgrimage Tourism are motivation and Journey. Gill (1999) states that Pilgrimage Tourism is a long journey or search of great moral significance. Sometimes, it is a journey to a shrine of importance to a person’s belief and faith. Ray (1994) outlined that Pilgrimage Tourism is a specific type of Tourism whose participants are motivated either in part or exclusively for Religious reason. Das (1994) has identified that Pilgrimage Tourism is the most popular way of Tourism. It is Tourism to the Religious places. Mirsha (2000) defined that Pilgrimage is a single journey undertaken to the holy place of worship or shrine and to perform the prayers/rites as the first agenda and later do a site seeing activities along the line/way and to return home. Kumar (2002) stated that Pilgrimage Tourism is that when people travel to a place to observe something. People go on a Pilgrimage as the main event, but also contribute to Tourism at the same time.
Lal (1978) defines that it is a journey to a holy site for a Religious purpose. This form of travel will always remain at the forefront of Pilgrimage Tourism. Kiran Das (1987) discussed about Pilgrimage Tourism that is a Religious travel for the primary purpose of sharing faith and fellowship together as they explore the world. Krite (1999) pointed out that Pilgrimage Tourism is a type of travel to a Religious destination site. Philip (1985) found that Pilgrimage Tourism fulfills the purpose of sharing faith and fellowship together as they explore the world. Other reasons may also include seeking inspiration or ‘refreshment’ in one’s life, the desire to be in the presence of a significant Religious event or individual, or to assist others with humanitarian and spiritual needs. Sam (1998) described that Pilgrimage Tourism, also commonly referred to as faith Tourism, is a form of Tourism, whereby people of faith travel individually or in groups for Pilgrimage, missionary, or leisure (fellowship) purposes. Das (2001) explained that Pilgrimage Tourism is to understand different cultures, religions and faiths, people are searching out alternative Tourism experiences, including visits to temples, mosques, shrines, churches and other spiritual destinations.

1.4. PILGRIMAGE TOURISM IN TAMIL NADU

Tamil Nadu has been astonishingly impressive in Pilgrimage Tourism. The enchanting State is blessed with plenty of well-known Religious destinations. Pilgrimages to these destinations bring enormous economic gains to local residents. The number of people visiting Pilgrimage centers is almost equal to the population of Tamil Nadu. The State has scores of Pilgrimage centers and some of the major places are Kanchipuram, Karaikal, Mahabalipuram, Velankanni, Chidambaram, Tanjore, Tiruvanamalai, Madurai, Rameshwaram, Karaikal and Trichy. In addition, some of
the most visited temples are Meenakshi temple, Brihadeeswara temple, Ramanatha Swamy temple, Palani Andavar temples, Partha Sarathi temple, Swami Malai, Kapaleeswarar temple, Chayavaneashwara temple, Kumbeswara temple, Mailapur temple, Annamalai temple and Manakula Vinayagar temple.

These are some of the famous Pilgrimage sites visited by people all over the year. The Govt. of Tamil Nadu has taken recent measures to promote the various places of worship as a fine channel of Pilgrimage Tourism in Tamil Nadu. There have been some individual efforts too by a few tour companies in promoting some Pilgrimage festivals which unavoidably are the best times to experience Tamil culture and Religious rituals. Infrastructures are improved every year to accommodate the ever-increasing number of devotees. Even the Tourism Department runs several busses to link the various sacred sites through the State. Tamil Nadu, which over the pages of history, has evolved as an ideal place for Pilgrimage Tourism. It takes place in the Pilgrim centers of Tamil Nadu to see the architecture, the history, the legends, the festivals, the traditions, the rituals, and the music. All have given Tamil Nadu a mystical charm and an edge over all other states. Pilgrimage Tourism reveals the high positive effects of Pilgrimage season on income, employment and high standard of living of the residents in Tamil Nadu.

1.5. BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

Pilgrimage-tourist indicators and destination attributes are the two major parameters that decide on the conduct of Pilgrimage Tourism motivation to a particular destination. Motivation refers to the internal and external factors. The former comprises the aspects like social, psychological needs, high disposable income
and excessive leisure time. The later highlights on the quality of services, quality of basic facilities, quality of amenities, safety and security, people and culture and transport network as the external indicators to awake the Pilgrimage tourist to undertake travel. These are the tangible and intangible attributes that a Pilgrimage Tourism destination needs to attract the Pilgrimage Tourists. Pilgrimage travel motivations and attributes are mediated by travel motivations, frequency of visit, duration of stay, sources of information, gender, and age.

1.6. RATIONALE OF THE STUDY

The review of literature reveals that studies have been conducted in the areas of Pilgrimage Tourism. Moreover, attempts have not been made so far to identify the quality of services, quality of basic facilities, quality of amenities, safety and security, people and culture and transport network for the Pilgrimage Tourism. More studies have been undertaken from the Indian and western perspectives and those studies highlighted the only concept of Pilgrimage Tourism and Pilgrimage Tourism in a particular region. With this point, the researcher could find the need for the study on the Pilgrimage Tourism preferences and Religious obligations and Pilgrimage Tourism indicators such as quality of services, quality of basic facilities, quality of amenities, safety and security, people and culture, transport network. This forms to be first and unique study aiming to study this concept in Velankanni, Nagore and Thirunallar. It is a sincere effort to contribute to the existing theory related to the Pilgrimage Tourism motivations and Pilgrimage Tourism development indicators mentioned above. With this rationale, the researcher has studied this particular research work to identify the problems of Pilgrims and Pilgrimage Tourism in these three sacred Pilgrimage centers in Tamil Nadu.
1.7. MAJOR OBJECTIVES

The objectives guide for the sake of having a clear idea of how the research has to move. These objectives direct the whole research endeavour. The main objective is to identify the factors responsible for motivating Pilgrimage tourist to visit (Velankanni, Nagore and Thirunallar) in Tamil Nadu.

The study has made an attempt

- To develop a theoretical background by exploring the relevant gap in the study;
- To find out the preferences for visiting the Pilgrimage sites (Velankanni, Nagore and Thirunallar);
- To study the relationship between preferences for selecting the destinations and the fulfillment of Religious objectives
- To present the tourist arrivals and its corresponding infrastructure development;
- To assess the tangible and intangible attributes of these destinations supporting directly and indirectly to the Pilgrimage Tourism; and
- To suggest ways and means to position Pilgrimage Tourism as one of the vibrant forms in Tamil Nadu.

1.8. MAJOR HYPOTHESES

Based on the review of literature and the objectives, the hypotheses for the study were tentatively made. Its main aim is to study the various variables and the association between them. A hypothesis is defined as a proposition or a set of propositions set forth which can be put to a test to determine the relationship between variables through scientific methods. There are two types of hypothesis; a null
hypothesis denoted by H0; and alternative hypothesis denoted by H1. Based on the objectives of the study, the following null hypotheses have been framed to prove and disprove the theoretical statements.

**H0₁:** On the criterion of accommodation services, no significant differences of mean exist between the pilgrims/Tourists who visit once and more than once in the pilgrimage tourism circuits in Tamil Nadu.

**H0₂:** On the criterion of transport services, there are no significant differences of mean between first-time and repeat-time visitors in the pilgrimage tourism circuits in Tamil Nadu.

**H0₃:** On the criterion of basic facilities, there are no significant differences of mean between first-time and repeat-time visitors in the pilgrimage tourism circuits in Tamil Nadu.

**H0₄:** On the criterion of key factors of amenities, there are no significant differences of mean between first-time and repeat-time visitors in the pilgrimage tourism circuits in Tamil Nadu.

**H0₅:** On the criterion of religious obligations, there are no significant differences of mean between first-time and repeat-time visitors in the pilgrimage tourism circuits in Tamil Nadu.
H0_6: Three groups of sample Tourist respondents on the criterion of duration of stay do not significantly differ when they assess basic infrastructure of the pilgrim sites that they visited.

H0_7: No significant differences exit across three groups of respondents on the amenities provided to the pilgrims for their comfortable stay and visit.

H0_8: Significant differences of the three groups of sample respondents do not exist on the criteria of law and order as the key destination selection determinants.

H0_9: Differences of experiences between the sample respondents are not significant while taking religious obligations as one of the criteria for the destination selection.

H0_10: Experiences on the transport services that were used by the pilgrims/ Tourists while visiting the pilgrim Tourism sites are not significantly different.

H0_11: There are no significant associations between Accommodation Services and Types of Accommodation.

H0_12: There are no significant associations between Amenities for the comfort of pilgrims at the pilgrimage centers and Frequency of Visit.

H0_13: There are no significant associations between Basic Facilities and Frequency of Visit.
There are no significant differences of mean ranks across the factors determining the source of information for travel plan, improvement of services, selection of accommodation, mode of payment of travel services, selection of transport services and selection of pilgrimage center.

1.9.  SCOPE OF THE STUDY

The proposed research has made an effort to study Pilgrimage Tourism in Velankanni, Nagore and Thirunallar. It has focused light on the scope of Pilgrimage sectors in Tamil Nadu and explored the new avenues of the Pilgrimage Tourism. This study is aimed to study Pilgrimage tourist motivators, tourist profile and problems and opportunities with regard to accommodation, accessibility, attractions and amenities. It is to study the infrastructural facilities and Pilgrimage Tourism avenues in Tamil Nadu. In addition, this study aims to suggest measures to make Pilgrimage Tourism economically viable and suggest appropriate and effective promotional strategy for promoting Pilgrimage Tourism in Tamil Nadu. The scope of the study has been limited to the three holy Pilgrim sites such as Velankanni, Nagore and Thirunallar. This study only included the Tourists as the respondents.

1.10.  NEED FOR THE STUDY

The first need for the study arises as these three Pilgrimage sites (Velankanni, Nagore and Thirunallar) are witnessing exponential growth in the tourist arrivals. With the increase of heavy tourist traffic to the sites, the demand for basic facilities and amenities has also become more. The second need for the study is felt when Pilgrims take a serious note of the facilities and amenities with their Religious need. The third need is based on the theoretical gap that has provoked much interest in
undertaking the study since Pilgrimage Tourism is major driver of the global Tourism industry and there is need to study this kind of Pilgrimage Tourism.

Modern Pilgrimage Tourism has already attracted non-religious followers as well as religious followers to travel to the Pilgrimage and cultural relics and tourist sites for the various purposes of Pilgrimage and sightseeing. During Pilgrimage season, numerous economic activities are taking place in the Tamil Nadu locality. Flow of Pilgrims bestows innumerable socio-economic benefits to the region. It is worthwhile to look at the questions like ‘How does Tamil Nadu Pilgrimage come to aid in giving manifold economic benefits to the Tamil Nadu locality?’, ‘Whether the region has succeeded in capitalizing the various advantages from the Pilgrimage Tourism and the economic and the other avenues remain unexplored for the improved utilization of Pilgrimage Tourism?’ . There is a need to comprehend the micro economic benefits obtained from the Tamil Nadu Pilgrimage by local economy and to examine the impact of Tamil Nadu Pilgrimage on the standard of living of people in the Tamil Nadu locality. The study is confined only to the economic dimensions of Pilgrimage and to improve the basic infrastructures in the midst of local residents of Tamil Nadu.

1.11. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The Study would contribute to identify the need for Pilgrimage Tourism development in Tamil Nadu with special reference to Velankanni, Nagore and Thirunallar. Pilgrimage Tourism helps in giving manifold economic benefits to Tamil Nadu. The present study had designed as an empirical one, based on the survey method. Three places of Tamil Nadu had identified as places where high positive
effects of Pilgrimage Tourism on income, employment and standard of living of local residents in Tamil Nadu have been analyzed. The research findings and suggestions can be referred to bring out the various strategies for making the Pilgrimage Tourism in Tamil Nadu a major facelift. Further, this study may be useful to other states, tour operators and hoteliers in Tamil Nadu also for tapping the Pilgrimage potentials. The study would contribute to identify the need for Pilgrimage Tourism development in Tamil Nadu with special reference to Velankanni, Nagore and Thirunallar.

1.12. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The process of research design includes the exploratory study consisting of literature survey and in-depth interview. The questionnaire has two parts highlighting on the demographic profiles of the respondents and various dimensions of Pilgrimage Tourism with regard to Nagore, Thirunallar and Velankanni. These statements were measured through the five point Likert scales. The sources of data collection consist of both primary and secondary sources. Data analysis was done by using mean and standard deviation along with Levine’s independent t test, Chi-Square, One-Way ANOVA and Friedman rank test.

1.12.1. Sources of Data

The process of research design includes the exploratory study which consists of literature survey and in-depth interview. In the initial stage, an extensive literature survey was done through the primary and secondary data sources. Various research journals, periodicals, databases, and books have been referred to elicit background information such as the origin, development and application of Pilgrimage Tourism development in Nagore, Thirunallar and Velankanni. These sources were used to
collect information to elucidate and understand the concept, roles, functions, issues, challenges, problems and prospects of Pilgrimage Tourism in these three sacred places. The published contemporary literature was thoroughly reviewed to find the gap in the study of Pilgrimage Tourism and formulate the research objectives and hypotheses.

1.12.2. Stages of Study

First Stage Dimensions of Concept

Second Stage Review of literature

Third Stage: Selection of Indicators

Fourth Stage: Selection of Quota, categorization of Tourists and Selection of Place and time for Data Collection

1.12.3. Sampling Method and Sample Size

The sampling method selected for the study is “convenience sample” in the non-probability category. Tourists were interviewed at the sites. In the study, the sample size of Tourists was 500.

1.12.4. Questionnaire Construction

The questionnaire is divided into two parts; the first part deals with the demographic data and the second part includes the variables pertaining to various dimensions of Pilgrimage Tourism in Nagore, Thirunallar and Velankanni. These statements were measured through the five point Likert scale. Annexure I presents the questionnaire containing the questions framed as pr the nominal, ordinal, interval and
ratio scale to elicit opinions from the respondents on personal information and travel related information along with tangible and intangible attributes for destinations selection and religious obligations.

1.12.5. Pilot Survey

A pilot survey was conducted to check errors in the questionnaire. This was done with the objective to reduce the anticipated difficulties to gain a very good result during the final survey. The pilot study was conducted with one questionnaire containing indicators and rank question on various parameters of Pilgrimage Tourism to measure the reliability of the instrument. After analyzing the responses, it was found that the instrument is valid as well as consistent on the basis of the results of Cronbach’s alpha.

1.12.6. Data Collection

The sources of data collection consist of both primary and secondary sources. The primary source of data collection was done through the structured questionnaire and data related to the understandings of tourist respondents on various dimensions of Pilgrimage Tourism. The secondary data collection comprises books, journals, periodicals, magazines, departmental records and reports. These were collected during the course of the research work. The researcher had visited various libraries, offices, trust offices and Tourism Departments in Nagore, Thirunallar and Velankanni.

1.12.7. Data Analysis

After the collection of filled-in questionnaires, responses were coded and processed through the help of “SPSS-17”software. Data analysis had done by using
mean and standard deviation along with t test, Chi-Square, Contingent Coefficient, Lambda One-Way ANOVA and Friedman rank test to find out the average response.

### 1.12.8. Statistical Tools Used for Data Analysis

The statistical tools such as mean and standard deviation have been used and a number of statistical techniques such as t test, Chi-Square, One-Way ANOVA and Friedman rank test were used to test the hypotheses to validate the study.

### 1.13. ORGANIZATION OF CHAPTERS

The current study has been presented in five chapters. Each chapter is unique in nature, but it is interrelated with other chapters. There has been perfect flow between the chapters enabling clarity pinpointing the essentiality of the study. All the chapters are interdependent and inevitable for the presentation of the study.

**Chapter I:** This Chapter aims at introducing the prototype of Pilgrimage Tourism. It explains the relevance of the Pilgrimage Tourism with respect to Velankanni, Nagore and Thirunallar. This chapter also highlights the literature on the evolution, meaning, concept and relationship between Pilgrimage and Tourism. This chapter explains in detail the objectives, significance and scope of the study in a methodical manner. The details of the research design are also presented.

**Chapter II:** The Review of conceptual and empirical works conducted on basic infrastructures in Pilgrimage Tourism, cultural impacts in Pilgrimage Tourism, marketing in Pilgrimage Tourism, religion, towards socio economic and Pilgrimage Tourism towards Religious obligations and Pilgrim, Pilgrimage Tourism, Pilgrimage
tourist and Tourism has been logically illustrated in the chapter. It further throws light on the issues that are considered relevant to the research.

**Chapter III:** The Third Chapter has focused on the overview of Velankanni, Nagore and Thirunallar and its history and Religious festivals celebrated in Velankanni, Nagore and Thirunallar. This chapter also provides the information on current Pilgrimage Tourism trends and its impacts in Velankanni, Nagore and Thirunallar and further it includes domestic and international tourist arrivals in Velankanni, Nagore and Thirunallar.

**Chapter IV:** The fourth chapter focuses on the primary data analysis. All the output of the primary data were analyzed and interpreted in this chapter. This chapter includes the primary data collected from Pilgrimage Tourists. Pilgrimage Tourism operators through structured questionnaires have been analyzed to explain objectives determined for the study. The analysis is divided into three parts; first part - the analysis of demographic data of Pilgrimage Tourists and the second part includes general opinions of Pilgrimage Tourists through cross tabulation, mean, standard deviation, rank analysis and hypotheses testing were analyzed and interpreted in this chapter.

**Chapter V:** The fifth chapter provides, findings, suggestions and conclusion and suggestive measures and interventions from the primary data analysis and suggestive measures interventions from the secondary data analysis and conclusion.
1.14. LIMITATIONS

Though the researcher has fully involved in the study, some limitations came across during the accomplishment of the same. The primary data were collected from the field visits conducted on the Pilgrimage Tourists who came to the Pilgrimages in Velankanni, Nagore and Thirunallar. Some respondents were in a hurry after their long worship and they spend some time with the researcher. This has the possibilities of random constraints in the responses. Hence, the data collected properly in Pilgrimages in Velankanni, Nagore and Thirunallar. Many of the respondents were not willing to give the information like their age, educational qualifications, income and some people were not interested in informing the place of the stay during their visit. The reasons for their Pilgrimage Tourism visits were not revealed since they considered them confidential. So, the responses might not be genuine. Time was the main constraint in this study. Explaining the study and convincing the respondents to participate in the survey itself was time consuming.

Some Pilgrimage centers in Tamil Nadu were not interested to participate in the survey for which only the secondary data were taken for the study. Their busy schedule, scary nature to reveal Pilgrimage centre administration information, and conservativeness made the respondents hesitant too to complete the survey questions. The tools that were used for the study have their own limitations worth mentioning here. The size of the sample is 500. The size of the sample is more. The researcher collected the data in proper way for more than 3 months. The use of the convenient sample only the researcher had collected data and the reliability of responses through questionnaire survey method is adequate.